FACES AND CAUSES OF ROMA MARGINALIZATION

Experiences from Hungary

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The **"Faces and Causes of Roma Marginalization in Local Communities"** inquiry explored the economic, political, demographic, and social forces at municipal and community level which shape practices and consequences of social exclusion and potential pathways to inclusion. ***Phase 2*** of this research focused on a representative sample of municipalities (20–30 per country) in Hungary, Romania, and Serbia to explore basic local social services and infrastructure provisions, conditions of political participation of the Roma, and local interventions targeting Roma inclusion. This research phase relied on structured field research collecting both quantitative and qualitative data. This short country report is based on the **Final Country Report on the Faces and Causes of Roma Marginalization in Hungary**, edited in June 2013 by Tünde Virág, with contributions from Márton Czirfusz, Katalin Kovács, Szilvia Rézműves, Gyöngyi Schwarcz, András Száraz, Dezső Szegedi, Gergely Tagai, Annamária Uzzoli, Monika Mária Váradi, and Zsuzsa Vidra. Katalin Fehér and Anna Hamar also contributed to the fieldwork.

For the full volume resulting from this research please see Szalai, Júlia and Violetta Zentai, eds. (2014) *Faces and Causes of Roma Marginalization in Local Contexts*. Budapest: Center for Policy Studies, Central European University.

Hungary

ABBREVIATIONS

AF	Autonomy Foundation
ERFA	European Regional Development Fund (*Európai Regionális Fejlesztési Alap*)
LHH	Most Disadvantaged Micro-Regions (*leghátrányosabb helyzetű kistérségek*)
RMSGs	Roma Minority Self-Governments
SEN	Special Education Needs
SMEs	Small and medium-sized enterprises
SZOCPOL	Social Housing Subsidy (*szociálpolitikai támogatási rendszer*)

LIST OF MAPS

1. The field

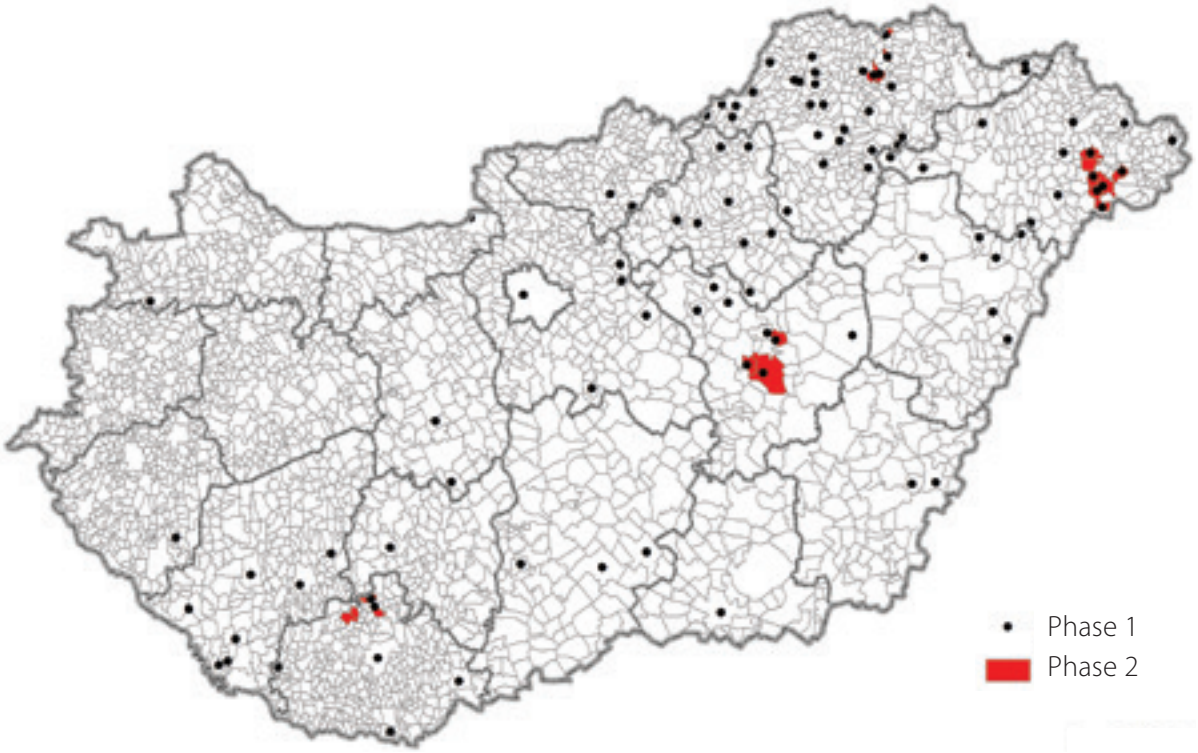
As part of the "*Faces and Causes of Roma Marginalization...*" project, our fieldwork-based research aimed to reveal, through statistical data, estimations, and interviews, the different causes and faces of Roma marginalization across 20 localities situated in four regions of Hungary. The selected research clusters, consisting of 3–5 settlements with administrative and organic (functional) linkages, represent Hungary's typical rural areas with significant residential segregation: two variations of hilly areas with tiny villages and two configurations of North Great Plain settlement patterns having larger towns and villages. All of them are in peripheral and disadvantaged regions, as measured in geographic and socioeconomic terms (Sásd and Törökszentmiklós belong to the so-called "inner peripheries", Encs and Mátészalka-Nagyecsed to the outer peripheries). The degree and the characteristics of segregated neighborhoods are, however, different between and within these clusters, providing good opportunities for a deeper understanding of the faces and causes of Roma marginalization.

The micro-regions of Encs and Sásd are areas with tiny villages where—due to decades of selective internal migration—ethnic and social homogenization, as well as the ghettoization of small settlements, had already started during the 1970s and 1980s; at the moment, these are the micro-regions of the cluster where the proportion of the Roma population is highest compared to the total population. The significant difference in social history between these two micro-regions is due to the fact that while several ethnic communities (Hungarians, Germans, Beash Roma and Hungarian Roma) have cohabited for a long time in the micro-region of Sásd, ethnic mixing is limited to Roma living alongside Hungarians in the micro-region of Encs. Various patterns of coexistence and cooperation have been formed between Roma and non-Roma in Sásd; in other words, among all the micro-regions where we have carried out fieldwork, it is the Sásd micro-region where local society has the highest degree of tolerance and acceptance of differences. Here the economic and possible spatial exclusion of Roma has not resulted in a deterioration of relations between Roma and non-Roma, and neither can one record the formation of ethnically segmented institutions.

Conversely, though non-Roma families do accept the realities derived from the superior numbers of Roma in the micro-region of Encs by necessity, they still restrict their utilization of the settlement's symbolic spaces and institutions. The micro-region of Mátészalka-Nagyecsed has medium-size villages located in the eastern periphery of the country; the characteristics of social history, ethnic composition and ethnic and religious mixing show different patterns in almost every village. There are settlements where Catholic Germans live alongside Hungarian Roma; others mix Protestant Hungarians with Vlach Roma; while some feature a combination of Protestant Hungarians, Vlachs and Hungarian Roma. Due to this variation, the patterns of inter-ethnic cooperation are also quite variable, ranging from extreme exclusion to everyday cooperation. Törökszentmiklós is a rural town on the inner periphery of the Great Plain Region; here Roma families live in a completely separate world. The "Roma town" situated at the edge of Törökszentmiklós, and the families who live there, have limited relations with the town itself; Roma are invisible to town dwellers, who remain "blissfully unaware" of the whole Roma neighborhood and its inhabitants. The societies of the two villages loosely attached to Törökszentmiklós within the same micro-region developed—as a result of the relationships between Roma and non-Roma, and the elimination of the local Roma settlements—in two radically different ways over the past few decades: one settlement has both Roma and non-Roma families coexisting without conflict

and cooperating with one another, while non-Roma families have basically "fled" the other one which has become a stigmatized ghetto settlement within the micro-region.

Map 1. The Hungarian sample



By Márton Czirfusz 2012.

2. Different faces of spatial marginalization of Roma segments

The elimination of segregated Roma neighborhoods started in the early 1970s and rearranged the spatial distribution of Roma families. Since to date no integration of habitation has taken place locally or nationally, segregation continues to determine spatial distribution.[1] The elimination of Roma segregated neighborhoods was a definitive intervention having strong effects upon the spatial and social segregation/coexistence of Roma and non-Roma. Since the programs were coordinated by the village/town councils, it was the power structures within the area of competence of the given council that designated the areas where Roma families could move from the populous Roma segments. The manner of eliminating segregated neighborhoods—i.e. whether the Roma families that moved into the village were given plots of land at the edge of

1 The Ministry for Social and Labour Affairs started its program for the elimination of Roma segments in 2005, re-regulating its general rules gradually year by year. The program, seeking radical changes in the habitation conditions of people living in ghetto-like environments, was operating exclusively with Hungarian resources, as the provisions of the ERFA Decree disallowed using EU resources. As a result, 31 settlements started such programs with varying experiences and results.

the village or further away, or whether they were scattered throughout the settlement—was primarily determined by the size of the Roma segment and the number of families living there, as well as by the previous coexistence between the Roma and non-Roma populations. Local villagers were trying to make certain that the village would receive only as many Roma families as the majority population could "tolerate." That allowed differentiating between Roma families. Eliminating Roma neighborhoods took place gradually, first by letting the "regular" Roma families deemed worthy of trust into the village which most thought as a sign of recognition by the majority society. At the same time, this course of action naturally left a concentration of "deviant" families unable to adapt in the Roma segment. Village society was more accepting towards those Roma families with whom they were sharing a workplace, whom they had known from earlier periods and with whom they had shared positive experiences and events which eroded feelings of mistrust. This was especially true in the Sásd micro-region where Roma and non-Roma men were working in the mines, while Roma and non-Roma women often worked together at the agricultural co-operatives. In villages where the majority society was unable to have control over the incoming Roma, non-Roma families were shocked by new Roma neighbors appearing daily, which frequently led to the "flight" of non-Roma families.

The conditions of habitation of Roma families have been significantly transformed over the past two decades: the state granted one-time, non-refundable assistance to every family for the construction or renewal of their home based upon the number of children (the so-called "social housing subsidy"[2]), and later a similar funding mechanism was created for increasing the availability of used flats or homes (called "half social housing subsidy"). During the Socialist era, this form of assistance extended to Roma families with regular income and provided them with an opportunity to establish homes; however, with the same assistance losing value, and with the lack of other sources of income after the system changed, it was barely sufficient to reproduce low-quality dwelling units. Although the subsidy was rather high, by itself it was usually insufficient to construct an entire flat or house. Without adequate drainage of water, sewage and insulation, the conditions of such houses quickly deteriorated, which was further aggravated by owners frequently heating only one room of the house during winter (Őrszigethy 1999). The municipal government appointed plots for the construction of "social housing subsidy" homes for poor/Roma families mostly at the edges of settlements. Thereby a new form of segregation began to appear in most settlements: the "social housing row." Frequently it was "habitation units of reduced value"[3] from the segregated housing of the 1960s and 1970s that were rebuilt during the new "social housing subsidy" campaign in the same neighborhood, effectively perpetuating exclusion of habitation.

The settlement policies of the 1960s and 1970s caused significant societal changes in areas with small villages and settlements at the peripheries; due to a lack of jobs, closing institutions, and a denial of development grants, everyone that was able to do so moved out of such settlements. Due to selective migration, the societies of such settlements were homogenized, both ethnically and from the point of view of their social composition. The most characteristic factor in the creation of the "Gypsy villages"—Roma-only localities formed as a result of such processes—was not the strengthening of ethnic concentration, but rather a process of selective migration based on

2 Its usual abbreviation in Hungarian is *szocpol*.

3 Designated as Category CS = "habitations of reduced value." This State program, started in the late 1970s, mostly sponsored single-room homes with kitchens but without "komfort" [the term "*komfort*" in Hungarian refers to bathrooms, water closet, modern heating, sewers and insulation] for the Roma moving in from the former segregated neighborhoods.

social status, independent of ethnicity. Stunted societies were formed in these villages where the overwhelming majority of the population has been affected by poverty, low levels of education, and permanent exclusion lasting for several generations (Havas 1999). Outmigration has been less characteristic or nonexistent in settlements—usually larger ones—with better transport and where jobs and operating institutions were easily accessible, either locally or by daily commute, thus keeping local societies differentiated and stable. Thanks to the successful strategies of assimilation based on continuous employment—primarily during the decades of socialism—and to the educational ambition which naturally appeared in the next generation, local Roma society was also differentiated in settlements enjoying more favorable circumstances. Though that process stopped at the time of the system change and reversed in many locations—since the overwhelming majority of Roma families today live excluded from the labor market and from the majority population—such differences between various types of Roma families, with respect to their relationship with the majority society and their survival strategies, have remained. These differences are also reflected by the spatial positioning of Roma within settlements, as well as in the character and extent of spatial and social segregation.

The spatial distribution of Roma families, their situation within settlements, and their connections to majority society are further complicated by the numbers and percentages of Roma within the total population. Though our research sampling included only settlements with a significant number of Roma families, there are a higher number of Roma inhabitants in the investigated towns (Törökszentmiklós, Nagyecsed, Encs and Sásd); however, Roma percentages within the total population are low in each of these four locations. While a Roma community counting several hundred people is barely perceptible in the everyday life of a larger settlement—due to spatial segregation within large settlements or country towns and the segregated use of institutions whereby Roma and non-Roma can get by without ever seeing each other, even a few additional Roma families in a smaller settlement of, say, 300-500 people, represents a significant ratio. In these contexts they cannot be ignored in everyday life or in the use of institutions. In other words, Roma and non-Roma families tend to establish an everyday practice of living together in settlements with smaller numbers—even if by necessity—while this is frequently avoided in larger, more segmented settlements.

Based on the above, we can differentiate three main types of spatial distribution in the local Roma communities in our sample:

1. There are settlements and parts of settlements where the entire Roma community lives apart from the majority society, in spatial as well as social exclusion, without forming a part of it, and the spatial and social boundary between Roma and non-Roma is sharp. The Roma families living in such contexts have no social ties with members of the majority society, or only to a very limited extent; as a result, their access to job opportunities, resources and information is also minimal. Most families living in settlements—or parts of settlements—separated by a sharp boundary only have access to segregated institutions. We can differentiate two subgroups of spaces segregated from the majority society by sharp boundaries.

    1.1 Roma families living in varying socioeconomic situations live in one location within the settlement, separated by sharp physical and mental boundaries that are maintained by the uncompromising exclusionary attitudes and practices of the majority society. Their contact with local institutions and organizations is minimal.

1.2 The societies of the neighboring settlements think about Roma-only localities, with the majority society drawing a sharp boundary around the entire village. Families living in such settlements are spatially and socially separated from other social groups, and moving out is next to impossible.

2. Due to partially accepting a behavior displayed by majority society—meaning that "regular" Roma families who are able to "assimilate" are accepted by the majority society—Roma live dispersed according to financial status and type (e.g. groups of origin, economic and social status, autochthonous and newcomers). This may result in a varied spatial positioning of Roma families within the settlement, mirroring the relationship of the majority society towards the various types of Roma families.

3. Generally, a peaceful coexistence has been established between the two ethnic groups in settlements with a high proportion of Roma—most from the small villages, for example—where the members of the majority society, unable to move away, cannot avoid Roma in their everyday lives, where some sort of cooperation has existed between Roma and non-Roma over the past decades (for example, employment or client/patron relationships), and where coexistence has largely been free of conflict. The rules for living together, spatial and social boundaries, and the access to institutions by Roma and non-Roma are constantly negotiated. Though the majority of Roma live in one or more well-defined streets within such settlements, the spatial and social boundaries between Roma and non-Roma are blurred. The former Roma neighborhood only exists in the local memory, and exclusion or segregation is not a part of the local practices or narrative.

2.1 Sharp boundaries—symbolic walls

2.1.1. Sharp boundaries within the settlements

Among the settlements we researched, the number of Roma is highest in Törökszentmiklós, where it is estimated to be 1,800–2,000 people, but their proportion of the total population is the lowest, at less than 10%. During the socialist period, while the majority of the local non-Roma worked at nearby factories and plants, they primarily commuted to Budapest, and many even moved there. Therefore, families frequently have relatives in the capital, and almost everyone has acquaintances there. Roma families live in two segregated areas near to each other which are slowly merging. A well perceived sharp boundary separates the streets of the segregated neighborhood from the other parts of town. Locals call it "The Great Berlin Wall", which is also an accurate depiction of the state of the wall's infrastructure. Though the ghetto lies a few kilometers away from the town center, ghetto dwellers often try to enroll their children—mostly unsuccessfully—at another school in the middle of the city which has a majority of non-Roma students. Due to the structural changes made by the municipal government and the churches (changes in the ownership of schools, amalgamation and reorganization of institutions), most Roma children will eventually end up in the segregated "Gypsy school" near the ghetto. In other words, the whole town is striving towards keeping the ghetto and its Roma families isolated from the center of the city and from majority society.

While the ghetto appears, in the eyes of the city, as a uniformly stigmatized and criminalized area, stepping inside the neighborhood one can find streets and houses of various statuses which can be understood as a reflection of the past 40 years of campaigns for eliminating Roma segments

as well as the different economic situations of the various Roma families. The dwellings along the former Roma segment are still inhabited to this day, having been transformed into homes with the support of the "social housing subsidy" program in the 1970s. The "buildings of decreased value" were built at the edge of town during the 1970s, followed by a number of "social housing subsidy" houses that were built in the 1990s. In the ghetto, better built and more livable homes are situated next to shacks that are ready to collapse. This demonstrates how Roma families in this town have only been permitted to live on this one street, irrespective of their financial situation. At the same time, all families living in the ghetto must contend with the mountains of refuse piling up in empty lots, stray dogs, and a preponderance of alcohol, drugs and prostitution in their neighborhoods. Many families suffer from these problems and people are aware of those responsible. But families remain largely helpless. Police will not take action in the ghetto if they can avoid doing so. What helps the everyday lives of families living in the ghetto is the presence of small congregations, especially from the Pentecostal Church, the Baptists, and the Assembly of Faith.

2.1.2. Sharp boundaries around settlements—differences between Roma-only localities

Villages we regard as being in the process of ghettoization are those which are increasingly homogenous from an ethnic or social point of view, have more Roma families than non-Roma, have a high proportion of children, and a low rate of employment. At the same time, there are significant differences between various settlements regarding the process of ghettoization, even when they have similar social or economic statistics. Most of these differences appear in the degree of organization of local society and its ability to lobby for its interests, as well as in its connections to the markets for informally organized, seasonal, or occasional work. Some spatial indicators of the degree of organization of local societies is whether there are fences around houses, a precondition for being able to keep at least a minimum degree of order around one's home and the ability to manage the garden; whether trees are still standing in public areas or yards; or whether elements of residential housing are torn down or spared. From the point of view of the cohesion of the Roma community, it is important if there are still some "exemplary families"—Roma or non-Roma—in the settlement whose examples and behaviors can be followed and emulated. With a certain degree of organization, processes leading towards poverty can still be turned around. All of our settlements are poor, but where poverty has remained unchanged for several decades, with no intervention to counteract it, the balance of the entire settlement has been upset; being poor has transformed itself into deep, sustained poverty. Only survival is valued for people contending with such adversity; should they need it, they will chop up parts of their own roof house for firewood, cut down a fruit tree right before it bears fruit, or even steal the bell from the bell tower of the local church.

One of the Roma-only localities we researched is an iconic symbol of deep poverty. The outer appearance of the village mirrors local society. The public institutions have varying degrees of neglect, with only one common denominator: they all have bars on their windows. The primary school is in a deplorable state; no renovation has taken place for years, and the paint is falling off the walls. The new preschool building has been operational for some years; a fence with locked gates and bars protects it from vandals. All the streets of the village look similar. Houses have been razed ("*here one house disappears every week*"); there are damaged homes without fences, with only temporary cables to hook up electricity. The ownership of homes is unclear as families frequently move from one house to the next, and relatives live with one another according to what seems best at any moment. At the same time, one can find a few exclusive homes on almost every street; there are homes with sophisticated workmanship, painted in garish colors,

surrounded by ornate fences with gates featuring lions. The lowest level of differentiation from local society is shown by the fact that more and more Roma families have recently enrolled their children in schools located in neighboring villages—which were otherwise struggling with an insufficient number of students—instead of the local school where *"all they would learn is to swear."* In other words, better-off families living in the village plan their futures elsewhere.

Omnipresent stray dogs also reflect the chaotic state of the village; the municipal authority has no funds to collect the animals, though everyone knows they run around unvaccinated for years. If you leave your home, you must carry a stick with you; this is simply a rule of everyday life. The struggle for survival naturally involves theft and break-ins every day. According to the estimates of family services, about 10% of the adult population is in jail. There is no permanent police station in the village, but drugs are present, as is prostitution, which involves more and more young girls between the ages of 15 and 17. Bankruptcy proceedings were started against the municipal government two years ago, and last year the District Attorney charged the mayor and a significant portion of the local representatives with the embezzlement of funds paid out under the "social housing subsidy" program. Though every one of the accused defends themselves, the municipal government has largely ceased to function. The family assistance administrators work every day, together with the district nurse for young mothers and childcare, and local school-teachers, trying to fill in for the functions of the state and its system of institutions.

The other Roma-only localities in the Encs and Sásd clusters function better. Within these settlements, the relatively dense network of client-patron relationships still helps maintain organization of everyday life. Although it also keeps Roma families in a state of dependency, it provides something akin to safety. There is a dead-end tiny village in the Encs cluster, where the village is interwoven with informal relationships and top-to-bottom hierarchical structures based upon personal relationships. The leaders of the village, including the mayor, the assistant mayor and the "village caretaker" (who is at the same time a representative in the municipal government) organize the everyday lives of families. It is the "village caretaker" who provides the availability of various institutions and services (health care, weekly shopping, pharmacy, and official administrative procedures), while it is the mayor who makes decisions on the resources received by the village. That all of this is conducted informally, based upon a paternalistic system, is exemplified by the welfare policies of the municipal government: there are no applications, no submissions, nor committee decisions; whoever is in need of money can ring the mayor's doorbell and have a conversation with him. The mayor will usually give loans, which are deducted from the next month's social assistance. The mayor's benevolence (or lack of) directly influences the lives and opportunities of families.

2.2 Spatial reflection of the differentiation and formation of layers among Roma families, a varied representation of segregation patterns

The town of Encs has all types of variation: a stigmatized ghetto across from a better-looking segregated neighborhood, a village-like area with blurred boundaries, and an area where some Roma families live scattered throughout town. One of our experts summed it up like this: "*There are three kinds of Roma families in Encs: the 'well-to-do' who can easily make a living, the middle category who will listen to what they're told, and a third type who no one can handle.*" That categorization appears in an even more differentiated form spatially: most of the "well-to-do" live along the other side of the railway line in the middle of a field, in "residential units of reduced value" built on a

street far away from the center of town, or in homes built under the social housing subsidy program in an orderly neighborhood—although separated from the rest of town—with cultivated gardens and domestic animals. We had an interviewee from the municipal government who did not even regard that part of town as a segregated neighborhood due to its orderly exterior. She placed that street within the mental map of the town, despite its physical distance. Some of the Roma families of Encs live in the poorer parts of town which look more like a village, designated in various development documents as a segregated neighborhood; however, we did not regard it as one in our research since none of our interviewees did. One reason for that is the status of this area has been greatly advanced by infrastructural developments in recent years.

Fügöd was a small village attached to the town in the 1970s, with patterns of segregation following those discussed above: there are a few elderly non-Roma people residing in the middle of the neighborhood/former village, along Main Street, where houses are relatively ordered, and about 300 Roma people live on three streets with buildings of "reduced value" at the end of the village in edifices constructed in the 1990s. There are no fences or yards; most households use illegally connected electricity; they have no bathrooms, plumbing, or modern heating; and families get water from public wells which are closed from time to time.

The spatial and social differentiation of Roma families is also reflected in the system of educational institutions: the primary school in the center of the micro-region in Encs has always been considered an elite school in the region and the town. Thanks to the good reputation of the school, it has been flooded with children from better-off families from the neighboring countryside and has never suffered from a lack of students. A side school[4] with primary classes has been operating in the neighborhood of Fügöd since the 1980s, taking exclusively Roma children from the Roma segment. The city school was unable to handle the behavioral problems and low knowledge base of the children arriving at the upper four grades from the segregated side school. The school leadership decided last year to "help the children" by starting the upper four grades at the Fügöd school as well. There has been a strong social expectation of the city to keep the ghetto school of Fügöd operational, and to extend it to an eight-grade institution—thus keeping "problematic children" away from the town and the "regular" children.

One typical reason for the separate Roma neighborhoods in the same settlements of the Mátészalka-Nagyecsed cluster is the difference between Hungarian and Vlach Roma. The eastern part of Nagyecsed—a historical part of that town—has been mainly populated by Vlach Roma; quite densely in certain parts though not on a single block. The boundaries of these parts have become blurred, partly due to the social hierarchy within the Vlach Roma community, and partly due to non-Roma also sinking into poverty. Hungarian Roma live at the other end of the town, where they reside along two streets mixed with non-Roma poor, but forming a clear majority on three additional streets. This neighborhood is physically as well as socially separated from the rest of the town, and though there are no sharp boundaries, everyone regards the streets at the edge of town as a segregated Roma neighborhood. Hungarian Roma living here traditionally have no social relationships with the Vlach Roma living in the other Roma neighborhood at the opposite end of town. Roma and non-Roma inhabitants generally feel that the Vlach Roma are better educated and wealthier, and they have living environments and procreation habits that more closely approximate the non-Roma population, while the majority of Hungarian Roma are uneducated, live in poor, mostly neglected environments, and have a larger number of children. We

4 A side-school (*tagiskola*) is a primary school for grades 4 through 7 subsumed as a sub-unit of a central school.

have not heard of conflicts and differences between Vlach and Hungarian Roma, but there are no mixed marriages between the two groups either. Today, two factors at play have started to build bridges between these two communities: one is the Assembly of Faith Church which enjoys great popularity among both Hungarian and Vlach Roma, so they frequent the local assembly together; the other is development programs, where Roma involved in the design of the projects come exclusively from the ranks of the Vlach, but in the majority of cases, they work with Hungarian Roma in order to advance their social integration.

2.3 Blurred boundaries, the necessities of living together/side by side

In smaller villages the growth of the number of Roma families, together with the proportion of Roma within the total population, have made the inhabitants realize that Roma families have become a part of their everyday life. Whether they like it or not, Roma and non-Roma have become neighbors, seeing each other every day in the street and at the supermarket, making it harder and harder to maintain segregation/separation. Roma families live on almost every street in the villages; a sort of coexistence by necessity has been established between Roma and non-Roma families. This "forced cohabitation" appears as peaceful coexistence in everyday life, and is reflected as such in the narratives of the people we spoke with in most settlements. There were some locations where it was summarized as follows: *"The Schwaben taught them [the Roma] to work"* (a village notary); while someone else commented, "*We all learned to live side by side with each other"* (a village notary); while again, others put it as follows, *"The question is no longer whether we exclude some people or not, it is whether we can live side by side"* (representative working on social affairs). Based on these responses, it appears that both Roma and non-Roma families accept the new boundaries created by the growing number of Roma. At the same time, hidden conflicts can be perceived under the surface in many settlements, as the majority society frequently marks out new boundaries. Even if they have to abandon segregation in terms of living space, they try to hold onto it in their use of institutions, primarily through access to schools and religious services.

Today in the village of Forró, located in the Encs micro-region, Roma families live on every street. Many can list streets with a majority or a completely Roma population. This is also signaled by the uniform row of houses built with the social housing subsidy, but the condition of these streets and the buildings are barely different from other parts of the settlement enjoying a higher status. These days almost everything has been reconstructed in the traditional Roma neighborhood of the settlement; all the buildings have been enlarged and newly built asphalt roads provide access to the homes. This is due to the fact that there are still members in a majority of those families who find jobs in the construction industry, thanks to their earlier work connections, and are thus able to provide a basic standard of living for their families. Another factor is that when the local government applied for infrastructure development tenders, they included all the streets of the village in their plans. The existence of the former Roma segregated neighborhood only remains in people's memories. Despite the fact that everyday coexistence between Roma and non-Roma is relatively free of conflict, and that the leaders of the settlement talk about local Roma in pleasant terms, non-Roma do not enroll their children at the local school, but rather at the primary school in the neighboring town; Roma do not participate in the strong Catholic community which includes the local elite.

Mindszentgodisa, in South Transdanubia, is a settlement established from three formerly separate villages, with Hungarian, Roma, and Schwabisch inhabitants. One street at the edge of

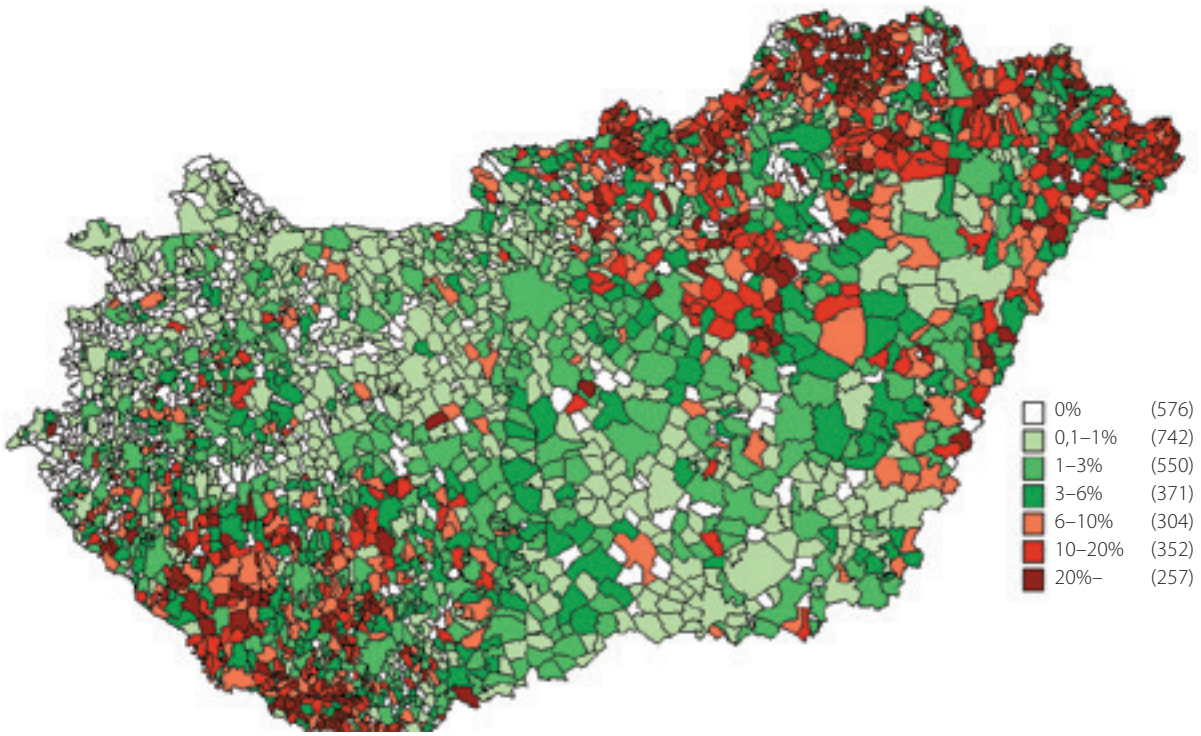
the former village of Godisa was established for the Roma families, who previously lived in a segregated neighborhood at the edge of the forest; its name is Újtelep [New Settlement]. Later generations of Roma in Újtelep gradually moved into the increasingly vacant houses, and now Roma form the majority in Godisa. Despite that history, the Roma and non-Roma we interviewed there were equally disinclined (with the exception of the mayor) to look at either Godisa or the streets inhabited by Roma as a world separated from the rest of the village, either in spatial or social terms. Local discourse on poverty and Roma does not see poverty as an ethnic problem, as it affects both Roma and non-Roma. Teachers talk about "*blonde Roma children*" born from mixed marriages. The collective memory of the village includes experiences of shared work, commuting, and pursuing leisure activities together, and there are still client-patron relationships between Roma and non-Roma who jointly use the institutions of the village such as the preschool and the primary school. (Another characteristic is that both educational institutions have Roma and German ethnic programs of education, and that not one local person expressed wonderment when a talented Roma student once participated in a county competition for the recitation of German poetry.) In this case, we can say that the mere fact that Roma—even if impoverished—live intermixed with others does not give rise to local inhabitants regarding their streets and areas as segregated or homogenous units from an ethnic or social point of view." It's the normal type of Gypsies that live in Újtelep. We've never even called it a 'Gypsy neighborhood' or anything like that. They're not 'kolompár',[5] they aren't loud; they don't fight each other loudly, the way you can see on TV. Újtelep is simply a street name; it could have any other name, Ady Endre Street for example." (Member of local council)

The local Roma were presented in the Baranya County area as peaceful, "regular" folks, and coexistence was unanimously described as being free of conflict. Where conflicts were mentioned at all, it was not linked to "our Gypsies," i.e. Roma families who had been living there for a long time, but rather to Roma who recently moved in, and who were perceived as having a different culture and an unwillingness to integrate.

At the same time, the appearance of peaceful coexistence reflects a delicate balance resulting from lengthy processes of bargaining and agreements, which could be disrupted at any moment by the change of a single circumstance or an extraordinary event that would bring hidden conflicts to the surface. As witnessed in other settlements, it could be enough to turn the life of the village—thus far seen as peaceful—upside down if a mayor is elected with a very strong commitment to a "law and order platform". Punitive measures regulating the poor and Roma, as well as an openly racist way of talking to the local elite, calls forth old grievances and prejudices from the memory of the majority, generating fear for Roma families. It can also happen that the area in which the Roma families live appears to be a "good investment" to someone speculating in property, or that the local actors in the economy simply feel more and more that their abilities to compete economically are harmed by the presence of Roma families. The leaders of the settlement cannot, or would rather not, represent the interests of Roma families over those of the economic entrepreneurs who are intertwined with the local elite. Another source of sharp conflict between local Roma and non-Roma is when a single, more populous Roma family happens to move into the settlement, which can "tip the balance" of Roma that can still be "sustained" by the settlement and its institutions (e.g. schools).

5 Vlach Roma are called *kolompár* by the Bheas of Baranya County – the original meaning of the word is "wandering metalworker".

Map 2. Settlements of Hungary in 2011 by the rate of self-declared Roma population



By Bálint Koós 2013.

3. Limited opportunities in public education

The system of public education in Hungary is selective, segregated, and polarized (Havas, Kemény, and Liskó 2002; Havas and Liskó 2005; Kertesi and Kézdi 2012). A close relationship exists between the level of education attained and the family background of students. School systems do not attempt to balance out the inequalities of children arriving from various economic, social, and cultural environments. In fact, they often exacerbate them. Most children coming from poor families, both Roma and non-Roma, face exclusion, will endure a school career replete with failure, and will probably not receive any qualifications that will allow them to enter the primary labor market. In other words, Hungary's system of education contributes to the cycle and permanence of poverty and social exclusion. This is despite the fact that attempts have been made by the Ministry of Education between 2002 and 2010 to remedy the extreme inequalities of the Hungarian public education system through several corrective measures. Free school choice by parents posed the greatest obstacle for the former government targeting integration for it had been the major cause of the phenomenon known as "white flight"; however, as of now no one expects any successive governments to deprive parents of that right, widely regarded as an important achievement of the 1989/90 regime change. Despite this, research has shown positive results for integration, such as the improvement of the results of students studying in integrated classes, as well as the improvement in their self-esteem and self-confidence (Kézdi and Surányi 2008). The government that came to power in 2010, however, talked about the total failure of integration policies; even the expression "integration" itself was replaced by "catching up" in the text of the new Act on Public Education, which also included other radical reforms.

3.1 At the edge of schooling—the situation of Special Education Needs children and private students

The number of Special Education Needs (SEN) children, as well as their segregated or integrated education, was developing in accordance with legal regulations and state financing. After the 2003 modification of the Act on Public Education, the number of SEN children did not decrease; the budgetary requirements put special emphasis on SEN and actually incentivized schools to classify as many children as possible as meeting SEN qualifications. Their numbers only started to decrease after another modification to the law in 2007. At the same time, the number of SEN students studying in integrated education consistently increased, while the number and proportion of students educated in a segregated environment decreased. In other words, both the notion of SEN and the labeling of such children were preserved, even though integration was being carried out (Erőss and Kende 2010).

The only school in our sample where both the number and the proportion of SEN children are sufficiently high so that only half are taught in integrated classes is the Encs primary school. Most pupils in that class are from the ghettoized part of town and could not be educated at the local side-school. In other schools we researched, the majority of SEN children were taught in an integrated fashion. Integration characteristically involves the introduction and the putting into practice of innovative methods of teaching that serve inclusive education.

A significant difference is seen among the teaching staff of the various schools based on their level of commitment towards taking concrete steps towards desegregation. There are institutions where the renewal of a teaching methodology has been necessary due to competition for grants, i.e. it was the only way for them to receive EU funds to renew their infrastructure. When methodological changes are implemented by force or necessity, against the will of the teachers, and when emotional acceptance is lacking, integration will remain only formal. The majority of teachers at the Sásd primary school still hold the opinion that the interests of SEN children suffer as a result of integrated teaching. They feel that SEN children can still enjoy success in their own smaller groups with methods customized to their skills, and that they are simply lost in large classes and plagued by failures due to a difference in ability too great to bridge, not to mention being ostracized by their peers. Since the attention of teachers is too focused on trying to cope with SEN children, the interests of the other non-SEN children suffer, and therefore some cannot develop at an adequate pace. There are schools where SEN education is officially integrated, but in practice SEN children are handled in separate classes (Hungarian grammar and literature, history, and mathematics), and are grouped with other students who suffer from learning disabilities or behavioral problems. We must add that teachers committed to inclusive teaching and who incorporate it into their daily practice have also emphasized that integration can only be successful in small classes and with a small number (e.g. 2–4) of SEN children per class.

The number and proportion of home-schooled students were extremely low in the schools we researched. The only exception was the side-school of the Encs primary school, where children coming from the ghetto soon became too old due to absenteeism, grade repetition, or early pregnancy, and as a result they were classified as private students. Typical practice at the majority of schools is that the process of qualifying someone as a private student is only initiated as a last resort, with the schools trying to keep children within the system of institutions for as long as possible, or at least until they complete eight grades of primary school. Unfortunately, in the settlements with the worst poverty, more and more girls are classified each year as private students due to pregnancy.

3.2 Patterns of segregation

In the primary schools of the settlements we researched, the proportion of Roma children was not simply higher than the national average,[6] it was also higher than the proportion of Roma compared to the total population: the estimated rate of Roma students at more than half of the schools exceeded 60%, especially in the villages (e.g. 13 of the 25 schools researched). In other words, one could declare that Roma and/or poor children study almost exclusively at village schools which lack the resources to finance the higher costs of commuting to city schools. At the same time the schools in cities or local centers are trying—even at the cost of losing possible development funds—to sustain segregation. The local elite and the middle class always find ways to keep their children away from the Roma and/or poor children. Non-Roma parents, and recently even Roma parents who are better off or who strive towards upward social mobility and have ambitions for the schooling of their children, rely upon the free choice of schools. Many refuse to enroll their children in the district where they belong, opting instead to send them to one of the neighboring small towns with a lower proportion of Roma, in institutions that purportedly provide higher levels of school services. In the micro-regions we researched, such schools existed in Nagyecsed, Mátészalka, Törökszentmiklós and Encs.

The high proportion of Roma children at the district schools in the settlements researched in the micro-region of Sásd (Mindszentgodisa, Vásárosdombó) is due to earlier instances of selective migration involving the small villages of the school districts, with the effect being the aging of the non-Roma society and the higher number of Roma children. "White flight" is generally not characteristic of the schools within the Sásd micro-region; with few exceptions, parents enroll their children at the district primary school, there is no traffic between the schools of the micro-region, and children are rarely enrolled in schools outside the micro-region. One reason given by our interviewees was the familiar atmosphere of the schools, with individual attention paid to each child, and education customized to individual children. There is no way segregated schooling of Roma children could take place in these schools due to the low number of children, and none has taken place so far. Schools that accept more and more disadvantaged Roma and non-Roma children face the problem, though, that traditional methods of discipline and pedagogy simply do not work with children struggling with a whole list of social and cultural disadvantages, in addition to learning and behavioral problems, all arising from their roots in poverty. We can say that such schools are forced to establish innovative methods of teaching, entailing the acquisition and introduction of inclusive principles and methods.

Along with the small schools in the villages of Baranya County, which have a high proportion of Roma students, the case of the Forró primary school from the Encs micro-region also shows that having adequate teaching tools and an adequately prepared and committed staff can bring about success in segregated institutions frequented by a majority of Roma children. In contrast to the small schools of Baranya, almost all non-Roma parents in the village of Forró enroll their children at the Encs primary school instead of the local one. In the Forró School, Roma students are taught almost exclusively, and teachers have been doing all they can for decades to get their students to complete schooling successfully and carry on studying at a secondary school that can provide them with a general certificate/matriculation.

6 According to the calculations of Kertesi and Kézdi (2005), the proportion of Roma students among all primary school children is circa 15%.

In recent years, schools maintained by churches have been playing a stronger and stronger role in assisting segregation in education. The number of schools maintained by a church increased by almost a quarter in 2011–2012 from the previous year (Váradi n.d.). The reason behind the increasing activity of churches in maintaining institutions is partly out of financial necessity. Due to decreasing budgets, many municipalities can only maintain their schools through extraordinary efforts; at the same time, religious church maintenance is preferred by the state, as shown by the extra funds accorded to institutions run by churches (Váradi n.d.).[7] Most of the church-maintained schools openly offer education to the non-Roma middle class.

The Protestant Church has maintained schools in Törökszentmiklós and Nagyecsed since the 1990s. Until the recent change of principals, Roma children used to attend the Törökszentmiklós primary school; however, since the change in leadership only non-Roma have been accepted. Through entry examinations, selection is performed on the basis of the children's abilities, which in practice means that Roma children will not, with very few exceptions, be able to enroll. Our experience has been that most of the Roma children who have been accepted "do not look like Roma," plus their siblings may have attended the same school. A few years ago another primary school in the city was taken over by the Roman Catholic Church. With the development of church-maintained schools, the fate of the primary school in neighboring Tiszapüspöki was also sealed.

Over the past twenty years, more and more non-Roma parents enrolled their children at one of the church-maintained primary schools in Törökszentmiklós, and with 80% Roma, the primary school in Tiszapüspöki can already be regarded as a ghetto school. The National Roma Minority Self-Government assumed the duties of maintaining the school as of autumn 2012, and the fact that the Tiszapüspöki School was "officially" declared a Roma school made the handful of non-Roma parents flee.

The Protestant Church at first only operated a secondary school in Nagyecsed, but it opened an additional primary school with a system of gradual entry[8] in September 2012. The use of this church-maintained primary school by the Protestant Church can be explained as a means of segregation for the local middle class. The local primary school, maintained by the municipality, allowed segregation within its walls by establishing a "special music class" reserved for non-Roma children which resulted in, among other things, even the talented children from the families of nationally and internationally acclaimed Vlach Gypsy musician families being prevented from access. The mayor elected in 2002, along with the new principal, tried to challenge segregation and relax the "rules". Presently there are two or three talented Roma students in every "special music class". The founders of the local school maintained by the Protestant Church were probably scared of the possible "results" of the process of doing away with segregation—although it started slowly and gradually. One can see a similar strategy in the town of Encs, with the Roman Catholic Church as the protagonist in this case: the church-maintained school has become active in reproducing segregation, and everyone except Roma living in poverty and exclusion (the Church, the municipal government, the local middle class and the local elite, as well as the few

7 Churches that maintain schools also receive supplementary funds, in addition to the basic budgetary funding which is theoretically the equivalent of the municipal supplementary funds, thus churches have no need to rely upon their own resources to supplement the maintenance costs of schools. The amount of that side school subsidy grew by 21% in 2011 compared to the previous year, to HUF 230,000 per student (and remained the same in 2012), while the state budget also paid compensation to churches for unpaid funds they were thought to have qualified for earlier. http://www.hazaeshaladas.hu/ftp/hesh_kozoskassza_elemezes_kozoktatas_public.pdf

8 Hungarian: *felmenő rendszer* – a complex system of gradual integration, mostly starting in the first grade and the fifth grade.

upwardly mobile Roma families) has an interest in the maintenance and the full separation of segregated schools and side schools.

3.3 Opportunities for further studies

The majority of Roma students continue their studies in vocational schools. A few vocational classes exist in almost every micro-region, solely to serve the purpose of covering students with an administrative certification for having being enrolled somewhere. This results in "phantom" classes in such schools. These classes are based on the obligatory school age, and are supposed to accept every student rejected by other educational institutions. Trade and vocational schools (e.g. in Encs and Mátészalka) typically provide children with "traditional" trades for which there has long been no demand in the labor market of the micro-region. There is no way to learn basic professional practices, and businesses only rarely employ school students. Ninety percent of students in trade schools, with the most limited prospects, are Roma. Many arrive who are already older than the obligatory age and over half of the students drop out before the end of the first year.

We learned of one vocational school that offers marketable skills in Sásd; the school for waiters and cooks offers vocational secondary education for 79 students and a vocational school diploma for 108 students, with the latter including cooks, waiters and, more recently, pastry chefs. This school is trying to provide Roma and non-Roma children with professions that are (or at least appear to be) valuable on the job market. It attempts to provide skills to diligent, ambitious students and offer them some professional practice in Germany. According to the school's data, nearly 70% of its graduates were able to find jobs, with many trying their luck abroad; the school's teachers attempt to help them prepare for language tests with extra classes provided after regular school hours. Even in these schools, however, a high proportion of students never finish their studies. Drop-out rates are high in almost all vocational schools within the micro-regions: about one in five students, on average, will leave the institution, with a similarly high proportion of private students dropping out as well. The reasons for dropping out often include early pregnancy, the inability to finance the costs of commuting to school, or a notion that "the boy should already be working." Almost all vocational schools complain that it is next to impossible to find places for Roma youth to practice their trades. For example, no one would hire a Roma youth for practice as a shop assistant, because that would *"drive business away."* Altogether, we can draw the conclusion that trade schools are a dead-end street for Roma youth, and only a few isolated exceptions—solely to confirm the general rule—will end up in the primary labor market. It is not only those who fail to complete their studies that are destined to be unemployed, dependent on social transfers or occasional payments for illegal work, but it is the overwhelming majority of people who have acquired a trade or vocation who face this fate.

A dwindling number of Roma students arrive at secondary schools that offer diplomas/general certificates, but for those who do, completion is uncertain. It often happens that freshmen at the secondary school are reassigned to a vocational school due to learning disabilities and failures. Successful secondary studies show a great variance among the micro-regions. One primary reason is that there are no traditions to back up the schooling experiments of Roma youth pursuing further (secondary) studies in the micro-region of Mátészalka-Nagyecsed or Encs, or for the NGO initiatives behind them. From that point of view, the Sásd micro-region enjoys the most favorable situation; the Gandhi Secondary School of Pécs is primarily attractive to Roma youth because education there is free of charge. Many students apply for the Arany János Scholarship Program

for Talented Youth,[9] and thanks to the NGOs operating in the city of Pécs, as well as supportive networks, many actually manage to complete their studies. Many Roma youth from Törökszentmiklós and its micro-region choose the secondary school in the nearby city of Szolnok, which also offers this program. It is important for Roma youth to be certain that they will study in an atmosphere of acceptance and inclusion there.

Primary schools do not have tools at their disposal to follow the fates of their graduates, and secondary schools are not required to provide feedback; thus we have received no systematic information on the typical careers of Roma children that were enrolled in secondary schools. We heard of young people with degrees in the Sásd cluster who had difficulties finding jobs if they returned to their settlement, as well as talented youth who failed, dropped out of higher studies, and whose whereabouts are unknown. The principal of the Vásárosdombó School said she had many talented Roma students, but hardly any completed secondary school, and none could enter an institution of higher education.

In light of all this, one could ask what it is that an inclusive atmosphere at a primary school and the application of innovative methods can achieve. Perhaps a school principal would turn this question around and ask what results one could have without an inclusive school and without these methods? The answer is: nothing. School can arouse students' interest and can motivate them, the performance of students can improve, absenteeism and the repeating of grades can decrease—and integrated small schools certainly offers evidence of such changes. Schools cannot change the home environment of children or eliminate sources of exclusion: the unemployment of parents, poverty, and the inability to plan ahead for the future. A lack of financial security from their family, an uncertain future, a lack of a supportive environment, and a lack of help can break Roma children's school careers no matter how successfully they begin. As the principal of Vásárosdombó put it, *"You can only make certain that someone gets 'from a putri to a university degree'[10] with financial and professional help lasting from preschool to college"*.

This dilemma was also voiced in connection with EU developments. Important projects supported by the EU have been awarded through competitions between educational institutions in recent years, and have helped to improve educational infrastructure as well as the extension and improvement of public educational services, among them the application of inclusive teaching practices. All of these, in our experience, have had a direct influence upon Roma children, and by extension their families, with clear perceivable positive results (e.g. smoother transitions from preschool to primary school, a decrease in grade repetition, a reduction in school conflicts, and a general improvement of school grades). It is problematic, though, that at the completion of projects, certain services are suddenly discontinued (e.g. the school psychologist, mentors and extracurricular activities). Another problem is that services available throughout preschool and primary school are generally missing in secondary school. One cannot forecast the possible long-term effects of these projects later in the lives of these children. We can say, though, that in general, social inclusion, successful schooling, and the social mobility of Roma and non-Roma children living in poverty cannot be secured merely through projects; without mainstream policies to promote and sustain inclusion, such efforts fail to contribute to the prevention or alleviation of patterns of poverty and social exclusion.

9 The Arany János Program supports talented disadvantaged children who study in secondary schools that provide access to higher education.

10 The word *putri* in Hungarian is a shack, shanty or hut usually associated with Roma.

4. Roma employment—lack of opportunities

When we asked our Roma and non-Roma interviewees about the number of Roma of active age who officially have jobs in their neighborhood or settlement, they estimated it to be not higher than 5–10% anywhere. People were able to count by hand the number of Roma working in the settlement or commuting regularly to work from smaller settlements. This reflects the dramatic degree of Roma exclusion from the labor market.

With Hungary's shift towards a market economy, many branches of industry that used to offer jobs to large numbers of untrained Roma (e.g. agriculture, mining, heavy industry and construction) have either collapsed, or have continued to operate with only a fraction of their former employment capacities. Roma being pushed out of the primary job market is a process that has lasted over 20 years and has been reproduced over two generations; it has been the primary source of poverty and social exclusion, which at the same time has also been caused by other structural factors (Kertesi and Kézdi 2011). One of those factors is the lack of training of Roma youth, perpetuated by the school system, or training for roles without labor market value, which prevent Roma from entering the primary or legal job market. The peripheral location of the areas inhabited by Roma also makes it harder for both Roma and non-Roma in those locations to obtain jobs; getting to places with jobs is virtually impossible from the small village areas. There are hardly any employment opportunities in the villages or small settlements within the Encs and Sásd micro-regions; commuting, however, is impossible due to the extremely inconvenient public transportation schedules, which do not operate during typical working hours. Only automobile owners can commute from such villages—a "privilege" of the few. Most employers refuse to hire employees from distant settlements, while it is often not worth it for potential employees to accept jobs located far away due to the high costs of commuting and other associated costs (e.g. meals). From an employment perspective, Roma who live in settlements with better transportation links, or in central or larger locations, theoretically have better opportunities. We can say that official statistics generally show a lower rate of unemployment in these places, together with a higher rate of educational attainment, while in contrast, the smaller the settlement is, the higher the rate of unemployment and the higher the ratio of people with a low level of education. However, our experience suggests that there are no practical differences between the employment opportunities of Roma living in large settlements and those living in small villages. Narrow capacities of employment, or low demand and a (potentially) high supply of labor, as well as the large number of people seeking jobs, allows employers to select from Roma and non-Roma applicants. Employers normally choose non-Roma, even if the candidates have identical qualifications, professional knowledge, and experience.

The extraordinarily low Roma employment rate in the settlements means that only a few Roma families have members (typically male) with official jobs in the primary job market. The main sources of disposable income for the majority of Roma families in the four clusters—apart from welfare benefits—are public works and, primarily, insecure irregular employment through personal networks.

We must establish a difference between local small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and multinationals regarding legal Roma employment. The latter are characterized by "color-blind" hiring policies; companies typically employing trained workers hire Roma and non-Roma alike, as long as they satisfy the selection criteria. Throughout our research in Mátészalka and Encs, we heard about a significant number of Roma workers employed at multinational companies

outside of our research area. Unfortunately, one multinational company, widely regarded as the largest employer in Baranya County, shut down, which had a grave effect on Roma living in the Sásd micro-region; the company used to transport Roma and non-Roma workers from several villages to its Pécs plant to work in three shifts. Some enterprises with local roots and Hungarian owners do employ Roma, though generally in low numbers, with the significant exception being the Sásd agricultural enterprise, the successor to the former agricultural co-operative. We were told one quarter of their workforce is Roma. Another typical fact about Roma workers in such jobs is that those employed have been working there for a long time; the basis for enduring employment is the satisfactory execution of work duties and trust. Since the hiring of new workers typically happens through social relationships and networks of trust—e.g. people who already work at the company recommend someone to be hired—the fact that only a relatively low number of Roma are represented among the employees undermines the prospects for additional Roma hiring.

It is our experience that the lowest rates of Roma employment are found in the service industry and in public institutions. The cause of the former may not be only due to the lack of professional training. We heard of cases where students at secondary schools, or those unemployed who were retrained with the help of the Employment Center, were not hired for professional practice at local shops, for example. Employers typically avoid employing Roma for jobs where they would be in direct contact with non-Roma colleagues. Public institutions will typically employ Roma as public workers, e.g. cleaners, kitchen help, or doormen. Roma have participated in the implementation of certain development projects, as members of management teams or as employees in the field locations of Sásd and Mátészalka. That is rarer than being hired as public employees though, and we have only heard of a few isolated cases of Roma preschool or schoolteachers (in the research area around Sásd), or for other teaching roles (at Tiszabő in the cluster of Törökszentmiklós).

The most important factor for or against the employment of Roma employees is the attitude of the employer/entrepreneur towards Roma. With one exception, we did not encounter any directly exclusionary racist discourse about why potential employers would avoid hiring Roma people. The only exception was in Tiszabő, where employers openly stated that they would not hire Roma from the stigmatized ghetto village. Potential employers frequently say that the reason why they would not hire Roma employees is because Roma do not have the professional qualifications and know-how required at the given company. In contrast to such practices of indirect exclusion, the practices of direct exclusion are largely based on the public discourse about Roma, amplified by personal experiences living in local communities. In the majority of such cases, the arguments of the interviewees were based on generalizations from personal experience with individual Roma people, applied broadly to the entire Roma community.

The most typical form of Roma irregular employment is seasonal labor. This has traditionally meant practices at some smaller settlements along the lines of client-patron relationships (which have been fading away in both significance and frequency); we have heard of cases, mainly in the field locations around Sásd, of non-Roma families sometimes having a Roma "caretaker" who performs all minor jobs around the house and takes care of the gardening. Some employment opportunities as seasonal laborers at large fruit orchards or vegetable gardens are also offered to Roma in the villages of the Mátészalka-Nagyecsed micro-region. However, due to the economic crisis, indebtedness and poverty, non-Roma have also appeared in the day laborers' job market. The clearly observable gradual exclusion of Roma from seasonal and accessory work can be partly attributed to the appearance of non-Roma in those fields, as well as to the technological

developments of formerly labor-intensive industries realized in recent years. There are examples of seasonal Roma commuting in Törökszentmiklós and Mátészalka in agriculture and for jobs in the food processing industry.

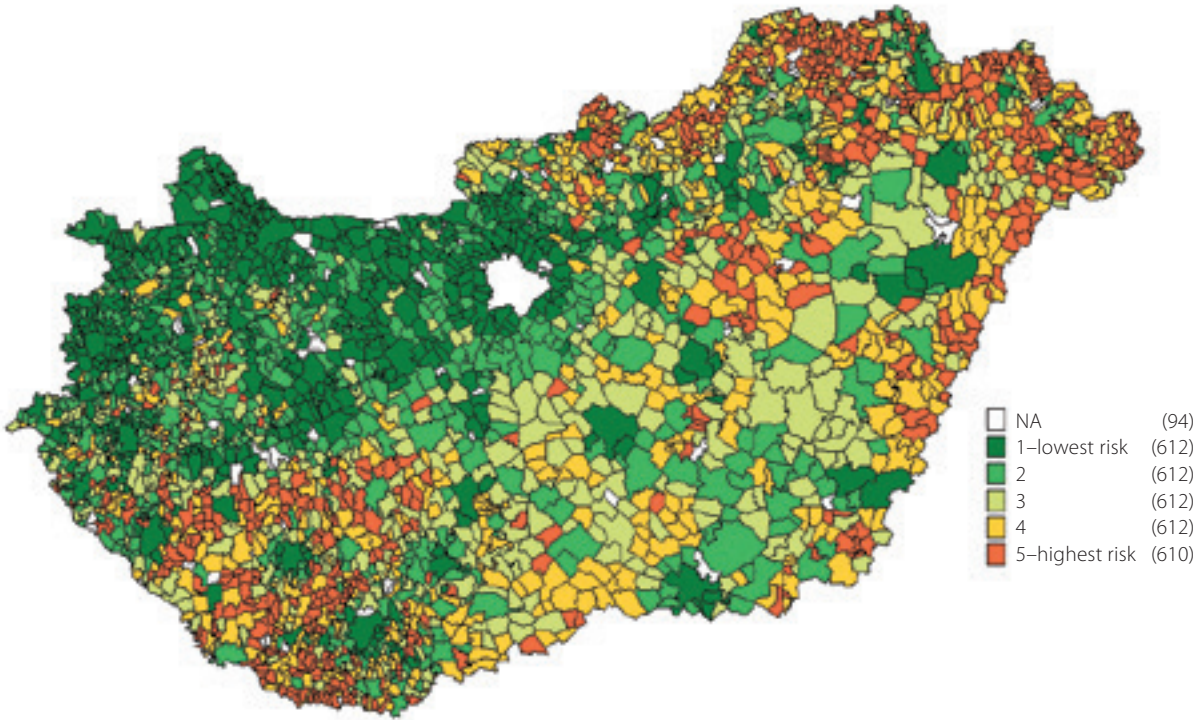
For decades, the construction industry used to be a secure livelihood, involving long-distance commuting for Roma men from the Mátészalka–Nagyecsed region. That sector can still be deemed significant, and that is where we can see Roma entrepreneurs as well. Since Roma entrepreneurs employing Roma employees are generally the last choice for implementation of construction projects and large infrastructural investments, and even then usually not as main contractors but as subcontractors, they are the most vulnerable. With the crisis also reaching the construction industry, the decreasing number of assignments has caused perceptible losses to such enterprises, which usually work with only a fraction of their former workforce. Today, construction work typically demands commuting as well, since all significant development projects are realized in more developed regions of Hungary. Forestry, which has traditionally offered some jobs and livelihood to Roma men in the micro-region of Sásd, is typically limited today to jobs performed in local or neighboring forests. Due to a lack of capital, Roma are usually unable to start their own forestry enterprise or sawmill, thus in the best case they work for an entrepreneur (sometimes on the black market), and in the worst cases, on forestry-related public works programs.

Public works offer a livelihood to the majority of Roma contending with short- and long-term unemployment; it has turned into a universal tool to handle poverty and permanent unemployment in recent years, as intended by the government (Csoba and Nagy 2012; Bass 2010). Participation of Roma in public works is influenced by several factors: the financial conditions allocated by the central budgetary organs, the number and ethnic composition of those in need in a given locality, the practices of the municipal government towards social and public works and, naturally, by the mayor's attitude towards Roma. We have heard of only a single case where the mayor did not involve Roma living in a segregated neighborhood in public works. The majority of those involved in ghetto villages—as well as those undergoing a process of ghettoization—are Roma in any case; therefore the selection of public workers does not happen according to an ethnic point of view. We have identified two typical hiring strategies by the municipal governments. One is when they try to rotate as many qualified people into public works as they can, which means short-term jobs or working hours that last only four to six hours per day. Another typical way is that—using their privileges of selection—they provide those unemployed with 8–12 months of public works of eight hours per day for those who "can be made to work" or "are able to work". In other words, those who deserve it are typically hired within the so called Start agricultural program,[11] while others are offered brief jobs or less valuable work. Due to its selective nature, one characteristic of the public works system is "skimming," which will—no matter which strategy is followed—result in many long-term unemployed Roma and non-Roma being invited only for 30 days of "voluntary" labor. Without those 30 days the workers would lose their qualification to access welfare ("employment substitute allowance"). It goes without saying that 30 days of "regular work" per year are not nearly enough to maintain basic work skills. Public works briefly provide the people and families involved with income somewhat higher than the employment substitute allowance, but it is still lower than the minimum wage, and typically will not transition people into the primary job market. The benevolence of the mayor and the work manager is

11 Through the Start agricultural program, public workers cultivate different vegetables on the land of local communities which are sold to the public kitchen, local poor or, in rare instances, on the free market. They work ten months per year, which means they have "permanent work".

most important in apportioning public work opportunities and time off in such a way that Roma are able to seek alternative ways of generating income. Public work has become an alternative in many locations to seasonal and informal work; there are people who would prefer to perform public work than to seek day labor. That, however, increases the distance between unemployed Roma and non-Roma from the world of work organized on a market basis. Public works is a tool to temporarily alleviate Roma—and non-Roma—from poverty, but at the same time, it holds the people involved trapped in poverty and exclusion from where there are few paths leading out.

Map 3. Risk of deprivation by settlements, 2011



By Bálint Koós 2011.

5. Roma voices: Roma representation and social-political participation in public life and local development

While opportunities for Roma to participate in public life and politics are regulated by the framework provided by laws and resources, activities of Roma in public life are strongly defined by the exclusion of the majority of Roma and their communities from the labor market, society, and economic life.

Advocacy promoting the interests of Roma is usually left to the minority self-governments in Hungary, due to a lack of organization and weakness of the non-governmental sector, especially Roma NGOs. We have only come across a few active Roma organizations; according to our experiences, the activities of Roma NGOs have been severely compromised by the general dwindling of Hungarian funds from which NGOs can apply or compete. Only a few Roma organizations

have managed to stay afloat, by participating in several tenders and programs over the past few years, generally with the help of larger organizations (e.g. the Red Cross, the Open Society Foundations, and Autonomy Foundation).

The duties and opportunities of minority self-governments are regulated by the Act on Minorities (Act LXXVII 1993). The first minority self-governments were formed in 1994, and this new form of institution brought forth new opportunities for Hungarian minorities, including Roma, to assume political roles and articulate and represent minority interests. At the same time, the system it created could not fit into the almost 30 years of history of the Roma political sphere; rather its establishment was the result of meeting the requirements of EU institutions as well as the political ambitions championing the interests of Hungarians outside the borders of Hungary. As a result, the local Roma Minority Self-Governments (RMSGs) have fitted their activities to the expectations of their communities instead of trying to realize cultural autonomy, and have mainly undertaken welfare tasks. They are not institutions of identity politics, but rather function as local welfare lobbies, and as a result social questions often gain an ethnic flavor (Molnár 2004).

At the settlements we researched, most minority self-governments were unable to make sufficient use of the framework of the Act on Minorities and Nationalities. The law itself does not help these self-governments decide how to interpret the establishment of "cultural autonomy" for Roma people living in abject poverty, or the enforcement of equal opportunities, etc., and it does not extend the full rights of jointly made decisions to the hands of minority self-governments.

RMSGs do not have the legal competence or the financial assets to adequately address poverty in Roma communities. Due partly to limited legal possibilities, and partly to the poverty and exclusion afflicting most Roma communities, cooperation between municipal governments and RMSGs—if it exists at all—is typically limited to welfare issues; the President of the RMSG or its members participate in making decisions on extending extraordinary welfare assistance and/or assigning public works. That, however, creates a trap for RMSGs. For example, the task is left to the RMSG to assign who should carry out public works. They put it as follows: *"We have to already segregate ourselves,"* separating those who want work from those who do not. Since only a few people are employed, everyone accuses the RMSG of providing work only to their own relatives. At the same time, that means they have to take responsibility away from the municipal government in declaring who among the needy is deemed worthy and who is not, while adopting the practice of considering public works as one of the tools of regulating poor people. Participation in the division of dwindling and inadequate resources, from assistance, grants, and opportunities to organizing public works, will inevitably lead to conflict and tension in the poor Roma communities, which is why we found that some RMSGs refuse to participate in such decision making. That, though, is also a trap, because it reduces its legitimacy in the eyes of the Roma community, as well as in the perception of the majority society and the local municipal government.

Poverty, unemployment, and the lack of training also paralyze the operation of RMSGs, including the articulation and representation of Roma interests. Typically, most leaders and members of RMSGs themselves also struggle with existential problems. Some are unable to spend time on public affairs because the necessities of making a living force them to commute long distances, or even abroad. Others themselves are unemployed, poor, and in need of assistance or public work, and, as permanent clients of the local social assistance systems, are financially dependent on the municipal government and the mayor. Our research supports the conclusion that without having a minimal financial safety net, no significant activities can be expected in the field of public life, nor can autonomous activities of NGOs or minority organizations be shaped. Some RMSG

leaders therefore question the wisdom of the entire system: *"I think the whole thing with the Roma Self Government is irrelevant. We cannot protect our rights; I cannot even protect my own rights, not to mention those of others."*

Only closer, deeper research can answer the question of what factors contribute to the stability of RMSG leaders and representatives in individual settlements, e.g. satisfaction, passivity, neutrality, and/or divisions within the Roma community. The RMSG positions have been held by members of the same family for several electoral cycles in a few locations—since 1994 in some cases—and in some the RMSG operates with minimal or no activity compared to earlier times. We have also seen settlements where a new, younger generation, dissatisfied with the minority leadership of earlier times, has managed to take over the seats of RMSG. In one of these villages, while the municipal body of representatives did invite the newly recomposed Roma Minority Self-Government to its sessions, in compliance with the law, the RMSG representatives were seated in the last row at the far end of the hall—one way to make them feel their inferior status. One Roma representative who had long been successful in advocacy work, stopped participating in the sessions of the local body of representatives due to personal conflicts with the mayor, and because it seemed to him that it was increasingly harder to realize anything in the interest of the Roma community. The municipal government is trying to cooperate with the former RMSG president on issues involving Roma since the mayor has a solid relationship with him based on the loyalty of the former president.

This case shows that municipal governments play a crucial role in the operation of minority self-governments since they are not obliged by law to accept minority self-governments as autonomous political players. Municipal governments can arbitrarily select those techniques which help or hinder the advocacy of minority interests. However, we have heard of a few obvious and sharp conflicts similar to this case in our research. The leaders of most municipalities and minority self-governments emphasize that the relationships and cooperation between them are good. At the same time, municipal governments see minority self-governments as weightless—which to some extent is justified—since the law does not enable them to have a meaningful say in local decisions. Frequently, mayors argue that there are no separate Roma and non-Roma interests in the settlement, and that since there are no conflicts, it makes no sense to conduct separate Roma politics. The only practice common among the various municipalities is that they do not regard Roma representatives as equal political partners; local leaders relate to them, both officially and in person, in a paternalistic manner at best, and with an element of social exclusion at worst. The relationship between the municipal and minority self-governments is well exemplified by the everyday reference to the vernacular names given to the two bodies, which suggests both sub- and super-ordination: there is the "big" local government and the "small" local government.

It is our experience that the most successful minority self-governments are those whose representatives are, at the same time, also members of the local body of representatives. Villages with a majority Roma population belong to this group, where the mayor and some of the representatives of the settlement are Roma. Of course the mere fact that the leaders of a settlement are Roma does not say much about the quality and the efficiency of local politics, which can only be understood as a result of the economic, social, and spatial exclusion of the local Roma society. While in the one case the Roma community was able to produce an elite that provides an example for others and "keeps the village in order," relying upon a paternalistic style of leadership, in the other village that has sunk into a permanent ghetto existence, puts the inhabitants at the mercy of Roma leaders who monopolize the extremely limited local resources.

In other cases, Roma were elected to a body of representatives with a non-Roma majority. One of the most successful of the RMSGs in the Encs micro-region is that of Forró, and the reason interviewees gave was that they have had Roma representatives in the municipal government since 1994. The list of members of the RMSG is almost identical to that of the village representatives, which in practice means the municipal government cooperates on a daily basis with the RMSG, and a sort of division of labor has been formed between the two bodies. Such strong cooperation and paralleling of interests is not only exceptional in the micro-region, it is rare in any settlement in Hungary. There are still limits to representing the interests of Roma, even in this well-functioning model. With non-Roma children being taken to school in neighboring Encs for the past 20 years, a segregated school has gradually been formed, which—in the view of the Roma representatives—infringes upon the interests of Roma children going there; at the same time they understand there is nothing they can do to stop that from happening.

It is rare when members of the RMSG are endowed with decision-making rights. The different legal statuses of the municipal governments from those of RMSGs, and the extremely limited scope of decisions RMSGs can participate in, means efficient Roma representation can only be assured if Roma can participate (if possible, in proportion to their numbers) in the body of municipal representatives. Many villages did not elect Roma running for seats of representatives, and Roma failed to get elected in 2010 in some settlements where they had been working for several electoral cycles. The latter could partly be the result of the modification of the electoral laws, which sharply decreased both the number of electable municipal representatives and that of minority self-government representatives. Finding the causes of this phenomenon would require a deeper local investigation. Both Roma and non-Roma interviewees mentioned the lack of adequate and well-prepared Roma candidates who enjoyed the trust of both Roma and non-Roma voters. Some of the mayors thought it was important to emphasize that Roma themselves failed to vote for these unelected Roma candidates. Few people from Roma communities situated in economic, social, and spatial exclusion areas, which are often deeply divided with conflicts, are able to gather enough capital in terms of finance, culture, and above all, trust, to enable them to participate effectively in local public affairs.

Our experience shows that the participation of Roma is also limited with regards to decision-making related to local development. In recent years, three micro-regions (Encs, Sásd and Mátészalka-Nagyecsed) from our clusters were classified among those "most disadvantaged", which means that significant development resources are targeting the alleviation of Roma and non-Roma poverty (e.g. for disadvantaged micro-regions, "Combat Child Poverty", the Social Rejuvenation Operative Program, etc.). As a result of local planning and allocation of resources, the villages which had already been centers, along with the more active settlements having better lobbying capacities, were strengthened, which increased existing differences within the micro-regions. Other factors also contributed; for example, only small amounts of developmental resources were allocated to ghetto settlements with the deepest poverty in the Encs micro-region—they were all sidelined in the competition for resources, partly because they had no institutions or organizations to compete or participate for program resources. However, many projects were implemented in the micro-region of Sásd, and some in the two poorest villages, due to their earlier experience with projects and with the help of external organizations (Autonomy Foundation) that offered assistance. Within the micro-region of Nagyecsed and Mátészalka, project implementation concentrated on the small town of Nagyecsed, a sub-center of the official micro-region. On the one hand, the involvement included poor people from several settlements of their micro-region in projects, which was exemplary, and on the other hand, the

leadership of the settlement cooperated with the local Roma community leaders when planning and implementing projects.

The example of Nagyecsed is an exception to the general rule. Here the local Vlach Roma community is not only characterized by a better quality of life than Hungarian Roma living in the same settlement, but they also provide the settlement with many qualified young people (typically women) who work in the planning, implementation, and even in the management of projects to alleviate poverty. In other settlements, by contrast, Roma mainly appear as the target group of projects for the alleviation of poverty and, they generally do not participate in local planning (or only to a limited extent when the project planners interview and involve the leaders of the RMSG), and they have limited opportunities to represent Roma interests and needs. They rarely participate in the project implementation. This can be due to the job requirements for the management team and for people who can work in implementation (a certificate of higher education or secondary education, plus professional experience). Typically few people from the local Roma communities have such qualifications. Those who participate in the implementation of the aforementioned projects are mostly non-Roma people who are unemployed (teachers, social workers or development professionals). These projects have a significant employment capacity and can provide a livelihood for a few years to non-Roma inhabitants of some of the most disadvantaged areas who are threatened with unemployment and are sinking into poverty. Thus, projects have the ability to ease the tensions between Roma and non-Roma within the micro-regions. There are many examples where Roma employees were involved in the implementation of EU projects for the alleviation of poverty as assistants or mentors, which required and involved an informal mediating role between the professional management of the project and the local Roma. Although obtaining such a position may be helpful from a financial point of view, as well as a means of obtaining professional experience and building relationship capital, its fulfillment is not risk-free—it can end in failure if the expectations of management cannot be balanced with those of the various Roma groups. We have seen one such example case in the village of Kisvaszar, in the micro-region of Sásd.

In Kisvaszar, the head of the RMSG answered the invitation of the Autonomy Foundation (AF) and, within the Project Generation Facility supported by the Open Society Foundations and with help from the AF staff, succeeded to launch a project that was subsequently integrated into the Chance for Children Program within the micro-region. This is the only project in the framework of the Chance for Children Program that could rightly be called a "Roma project", with the representatives of the local Roma community actively participating in its design and outcome. The head of the RMSG proposed that his wife become the assistant managing the Kisvaszar Community House. Her contract, however, was not renewed by the management when it expired, the reason being that she had been "unable to perform her work objectively enough and had been unable to separate the family backgrounds of the children involved in the program, and the existing conflicts and alliances among families". A non-Roma woman who had moved to Kisvaszar two years prior succeeded her. This woman was selected out of all the applicants chiefly because she was not personally related to anyone in the village, and thus had no obligations towards anyone. The story of Kisvaszar exemplifies the reality that the professionals who implement projects—in this case, including one Roma social worker—do not have the tools to remedy the fault lines and conflicts of a local society on the road towards ghettoization.

6. Summary

Of those Hungarians suffering from persistent exclusion from the labor market, spatial segregation and deep poverty, Roma people are overrepresented: more than half of Roma households live in economic, social and spatial exclusion. Spatial and social exclusion of Roma communities is a result of complex processes: a lack of access to employment, low levels of education, residing in disadvantageous rural areas, and living in derelict housing conditions. All of these challenges reinforce and intersect each other.

This part of our research presents the various forms and causes of the marginalization of Roma, chiefly based upon our interviews with institutions and our observations during our fieldwork. We have focused on the linkage between the various forms and extent of institutional exclusion which appear in different parts of society (e.g. education, employment, political representation), including the segregated spatial arrangements that reflect boundaries between Roma and non-Roma. The selected clusters represent Hungary's typical rural areas with significant residential segregation: two variations of hilly areas with small villages and two configurations of North Great Plain settlement patterns with larger towns and villages. All of them are in peripheral and disadvantaged regions both in spatial, economic and social terms.

The economic crisis following the regime change resulted in serious social and territorial polarization in Hungary. Owing to the new conditions brought about by the change of regime, Hungary's economy almost completely collapsed. The economic boom, which commenced in the middle of the 1990s, took place with significant regional differences: in the north-eastern and eastern parts of the country few new investments were carried out, therefore few new job opportunities emerged. Indeed, job opportunities almost entirely disappeared from those parts of the country where formerly, in the Socialist era, centers of heavy industry and agriculture provided work for many people. Accordingly all of the selected micro-regions situated in these disadvantaged regions are similar in one respect: Roma families have been almost completely squeezed out from the primary job market.

Those who we spoke to were able to list all Roma with regular jobs in every settlement. That can partly be explained by the economic structure of the micro-regions; those forms of work that traditionally used to absorb Roma and non-Roma unskilled employees before the system change (large agricultural companies and factories) are hardly present, if at all, in the micro-regions. Almost every aspect of the economy is dominated by small companies with non-Roma ownership. Most of these companies do not employ Roma, with many citing the general lack of training and professional experience of Roma, while also voicing prejudiced opinions reflecting the prevalent discourse about Roma.

Foreign companies with "color-blind" employment policies typically do not operate in such micro-regions, and when such firms are found within a reasonable distance, their needs for trained workers indirectly result in further exclusion of Roma. The same can be observed in relation to the jobs offered in public services and the service sector. Roma are typically employed only for seasonal jobs, traditionally in agriculture and the construction industry, but the opportunities in those industries have also declined in recent years. With the disappearance of occasional work, the roles played by public works became more prominent, usually increasing the paternalistic relationship of dependence on the local authority.

The forms of social and spatial exclusion are determined by the social histories and patterns of ethnic co-existence established locally in the settlements/micro-regions, the positions of these micro-regions, and the characteristics of their settlement structures. There are significant differences in social history: while in the Sásd and Nagyecsed micro-regions several ethnic communities (Hungarians, Germans, Beash Roma, Vlach Roma and Hungarian Roma) have cohabited for a long time, ethnic mixing is limited to Roma living alongside Hungarians in the two other micro regions. Various patterns of coexistence and cooperation have only been formed between Roma and non-Roma in Sásd; in other words, among the micro-regions where we have carried out fieldwork, it is in Sásd where local society has the highest degree of tolerance and acceptance of differences. Here the economic and possible spatial exclusion of Roma has not resulted in a deterioration of relations between Roma and non-Roma, and neither can one record the formation of ethnically segmented institutions. The elementary school features an inclusive pedagogical program.

The geographical distribution of Roma families as well as their position within the settlement and their relationships with the majority society correlate with the size of the settlement and the number and ratio of Roma among the population. Although the communities targeted by our fieldwork had a considerable number of Roma families, this having been a criteria for sample selection, in the larger settlements of the Great Plain region, and in small cities functioning as centers of a region or a small village, there tended to be *more* Roma in absolute figures. However, they amounted to a lower ratio among the entire population. In settlements and small cities of larger populations Roma groups of several hundred were hardly visible or noticeable throughout the daily life of the settlement given that the increasingly segregated use of space and institutions reduced chance encounters, and undermined the relationships between Roma and non-Roma. However, in small communities daily encounters with Roma are inevitable in public areas and institutions. That means that in small communities Roma and non-Roma families end up acquiring the daily practices of coexistence and cooperation that, in larger communities, are possible to avoid.

One may even say that where the local majority society is still stable enough, and has the appropriate resources to maintain the spatial, social, and institutional segregation of Roma families, they will do so in most cases even specifying where, within the settlement, the Roma families may live. Whether Roma families live in one location or in several parts of the settlement reflects the status of segregation, separation, physical, mental, and symbolic boundaries of Roma and non-Roma, and different groups of Roma.

The challenges facing Roma families are determined by locality, and have been largely contingent upon the relationship with the local elite. All of this is reflected in the spatial arrangements of Roma habitation within the settlements. At the same time, segregated neighborhoods display a great degree of variation from settlement to settlement, and sometimes even within the same settlement.

Social distance between Roma and non-Roma is projected by either sharp or somewhat blurred physical or mental boundaries dividing Roma streets from the rest of settlement, which also determine the opportunities for social contacts and relations. Another factor that usually reflects the various assimilation attempts of the 1970s and 1980s, and today's levels of differentiation within local Roma society, along with its layered forms, is how many Roma families live in segregated neighborhoods versus how many live scattered throughout a given settlement. One

result of the territorial rearrangement processes of the 1970s and 1980s has been the process of ghettoization in villages, a special pattern of segregation. At the same time, we must differentiate between two kinds of Roma-only localities, although both share similar statistical characteristics: one type of ghetto village—generally a criminalized settlement—is where people live in extreme poverty, struggle with a total lack of social organization and a lack of connection to the institutions of the majority society; the other is a socially and ethnically homogenous village where everyday life is orderly and people have connections to the institutions of the majority society and the informal labor market.

Decentralized municipal governments do not always imply genuine local democracy: localities are frequently ruled by a small number of elites who divide the resources while holding all the keys to economic opportunity. The rest of the local society is more or less at their mercy. During our fieldwork we could not find any Roma NGOs that would have been able to independently enter and win a competition for grants; none could function independently from local relationships. Most local Roma representatives do not have livelihoods independent from the local elite, and they are sometimes themselves clients of local social assistance policies. As a result, Roma representatives will necessarily support the ideas of local elites in the hope of accessing additional resources. At the same time support means a commitment and a bargain, the basis of which is that they are supposed to accept the compromises offered by the local elite.

Local Roma Minority Self-Governments are not institutions of identity politics; rather they fulfill the functions of local social "lobbies"; cooperation between municipal and minority governments, and participation in local decision-making, are mostly limited to allocating social assistance funds and organizing public works. This frequently results in minority representatives being lured into a trap-like situation. Meager resources can almost never be divided without conflict. People in almost all the settlements unequivocally voiced the opinion that the only way to really represent Roma interests is if a Roma person is elected as a representative of the municipal government. We have found such positions in many of the settlements, and the only way for local Roma representatives to adequately fulfill their functions is to find allies among the body of representatives. At the same time, Roma society itself also has its own layers in every settlement. Being a municipal or a minority representative by itself is a rank, as a result of which such positions—as with those in the local non-Roma society—have been preserved by certain families.

We can highlight two areas where government measures have tried to influence the situation of Roma within the settlements over the past decade, and where there have been some attempts to alleviate the above-described strong local determinism. One of the most important development policies is a package of complex programs targeting the most disadvantaged territorial units. Among our micro-regions, the fact that three have been designated "most disadvantaged" (Encs, Sásd and Mátészalka-Nagyecsed) resulted in significant differences in their favor in contrast to Törökszentmiklós—which has no such status—due to its more favorable economic and social situation. A significant amount of resources have been at the disposal of communities in the most disadvantaged (LHH) micro-regions—although they have been altogether insufficient and sometimes spent unwisely. As a result, institutions in these micro-regions enjoy a far better position than before, while the development programs themselves offer some employment opportunities—primarily to the unemployed non-Roma—thus alleviating tension between Roma and non-Roma within the micro-region.

State education policies committed to significant measures of desegregation and targeted equal opportunities between 2002 and 2008. At the same time, in the primary schools of the

settlements, the proportion of Roma children was not simply higher than the national average, it was also higher than the proportion of Roma compared to the total population: the estimated rate of Roma students at more than half of the schools exceeded 60%, especially in the villages. We could observe that, almost exclusively, Roma and/or poor children study at village schools and lack the resources to commute to city schools, while the schools of cities or local centers are trying—even at the cost of losing possible development funds—to retain segregation.

The local elite and middle class always find ways to keep their children away from Roma and/or poor children, and one of the most widespread methods to achieve this is the establishment of schools maintained by churches. All of these processes were amplified by the central government's endeavor following 2010 to discontinue the desegregation and integration-oriented education policy which, in numerous instances, superseded even local integration efforts. In sum, we can draw the conclusion that government interventions have only been partially successful, due precisely to the local networks of interests they come up against. Local governments have fashioned most macro-level measures established by the government—sometimes targeting integration, but more recently exclusion—to suit the interests and the attitudes of the non-Roma local elite.

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