

The Influence of Roma Programs on Identity and Social Integration: Research and Comparison of Two School

Experiments

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Introduction

The following work will consistently dismiss the use of the term Gypsy and will distinguish the term Roma from Tsigan. My experience is that the equivalent use of these ethnonames usually refers to the ignorance of the principle that group membership is based on group identity or consciousness, that is, on the self-definition of people where they belong, influenced by the interaction with other members of the group. Unfortunately, observers frequently do not take into account that cultural similarities do not definitely result in identification with others and in turn, identification can exist in spite of great differences between the given people. However, the arbitrary definition of groups can cause, by the strength of their social power, intellectuals to contribute actively to the formation of new group identities either intentionally or unconsciously. The real task of social scientists is to understand and not arbitrarily form the contents that characterize affiliations in order to avoid the role of being an ideologist and to stay in the position of a researcher. In fact, the same ethnoname can have basically different social references, and the context and purpose of its usage can also deviate in different cases. This paper will emphasize the difference between the local meaning of Tsigan, implying a huge population in Hungary affiliated with different local Tsigan communities, and a content (that is membership and group characteristics) that is determined by the local context. This identity is called Tsigan (ItCigany") because this is the term which is used in the local context to name someone's affiliation. At the same time, there is another kind of identity that greatly differs from this one. This is connected to political aspiration and a newly forming institutional system handling the problems of Tsigans as a conflict between the "It Roma" people-which might be called a nation-and the nation of the given country. This movement, led by the "Roma elite," in gaining more and more social ground, and in preferring to use the term "Roma" instead of "Tsigan," expresses common Tsigan interests over local ones and attempts to construct a Roma group ideology and institutional system upon which the

The Influence of Roma Programs

common Tsigan identity can be built. Hereby this work intends to use these two ethnic names in accordance with these different connotations.

This paper will attempt to compare and analyze the social influence of two school experiments. The similarities between the two were that these were programs for developing multiply disadvantaged Tsigan children and that the children lived in a segregated community of a village. The multiply disadvantaged situation refers to the poor material conditions of families and to the lack of cultural capital¹ for the enforcement of interests. All of this is aggravated by significant discrimination.

The comparison is relevant in the sense that we are able to observe the influences of the school programs that have different attitudes toward children and the communities that struggle with more or less similar problems. The following questions arise in the observation of the school experiments. To what degree is school, as the main socializing institution of the state institutional system, a suitable tool of social integration? At the same time, to what extent can the school be the tool of the reinforcement of other group identities (ethnic, religious, other...)? Does the reinforcement of group identity rather make the chance of realization of social integration more difficult? On the other hand, is it necessary to change the specific group identity of the student in order to change the social situation? Within this framework of questions the following problem will be discussed: What is the role of the school in the process whereby a group begins to associate with ideologies that encourage cultural isolation? Moreover, can school become a tool for weakening such aspirations for isolation?

In general, I intend to observe how group identity and segregation influence each other. The school, as a primary socializing institution that reproduces the social structure,² is a very appropriate field to observe this process. Accordingly, I call attention to the following social problem: the segregation of Tsigans can increase if a conscious internal aspiration of isolation develops in Tsigan communities (which is a new type of problem). The voluntary isolation of communities can be a higher barrier for the state to carry out its task of integrating society, in a certain sense, than even an extreme form of being an outcast of the society. At the same time, this can be realized in the case that an autonomous institutional system is created, built upon a common Roma group ideology. The recent "Roma" policy makes this issue very timely. Both on the part of the state and on the part of the representatives of the Roma, an aspiration is enforced that would solve the

¹ Bourdieu, Pierre and Jean Claude Passeron. 1994. "Cultural Capital and Pedagogic Communication. The Ideological Function of the Education System." In *Reproduction in Education, Society, and Culture*. London: Sage Publications, pp. 194-219.

² Bourdieu 1994

problem of Tsigan's segregation by setting up Roma institutions, i.e. these would save and make the "Roma culture" suitable to become the basis of a modern way of life through its institutionalization. Notwithstanding this process, a number of problems arise. The recent institutionalization is not yet a closed question. There have been both positive and negative effects of this process.

The Tools of Observation

The question arises as to why in-depth analyses are not conducted concerning the influence of those pedagogic programs which are supported by extra provisions.³ My opinion is that examination should be expected in the case of a private foundation, but this behavior is hardly understandable in the case of the state and local governments that directly, or through foundations, ensure the maintenance of these programs. Nevertheless, the purpose of examination would be not to judge whether a program works well, hence it should be supported, or it works badly, hence it should be ceased, but to channel the intellectual capital produced by experiments back into the school system.⁴ The support of a new educational method is worthwhile if it has relevance with respect to the whole educational system. A program, which at its starting point is built upon such resources that obviously cannot be systematically provided (i.e. it can be provided only for an experiment) is irrelevant for the educational system and for the state (i.e. indirectly for the society). Although the significance of this formulation of ideas in practice can hardly be recognized on first reading, this can be immediately understood when a program that is extraordinarily supported both materially and spiritually is compared to a normal local school. The fact that an experiment receives extra support is not disputable in itself. At the same time it must be demonstrated why it is so. The disadvantaged social situation should be compensated for and/or the necessary extra work should be supported and/or the new methodology that requires such new tools should be provided. During my observation, I realized that the interpretation of success and performance is a key issue in school work. It is necessarily a direct feedback for the functioning of the educational system. This obviously does not mean that researchers should accept the instruments of institutions. According to my experiences, it is easy to create good marks. The institution, i.e. teachers, have an interest in the distribution of marks because their performance is partially evaluated according to these marks. The main question for the researcher is that if he does not use the instrument of the school, then what standard should be used for measurement? Should the general requirements prescribed by the

³ Apart from our observation, only G6za Takacs conducted a similar efficiency examination at the Alternative High-School of Economics (Takacs G6za 1997. *Egy szabad iskola probléméi*. *Iskolakultura*, 11. sz.).

⁴ Before the Second World War, large furniture and devices were used at kindergartens. These were changed due to the influence of the child-sized furniture of the Montessori kindergarten. Consequently, today every kindergarten uses small-size furniture.

ministry be used? It is well-known that schools set up very different requirements in their practice. Should the performance of the surrounding schools be used as a criterion? If the intra- and interschool segregation results in the fact that disadvantaged children are taught by weaker teachers, the comparison can hardly be done.⁵ And this is not the greatest problem. The real question is whether the indicator of the school's achievement is the extent of the school material acquired by children. According to our point, the achievement of a school experiment can be interpreted by a complex approach. The real achievement is the influence of socialization, the consequence of which is that children associate with those cultural patterns that make them suitable to find their position in the world according to their abilities. Moreover, school should be successful in a particular social environment. The overcoming of social disadvantage cannot entail the rejection of social background. This might result in a number of negative consequences.⁶ If the social environment does not accept the experiment, it cannot be regarded as successful. On the other hand, if school experiments cannot resist the pressure of the social environment (i.e., if they reproduce the social structure) then they cannot be evaluated as successful either.⁷ If we accept these notions, then we definitely lose the possibility of direct measurement in the sense that success means that the children find their position in the world, and the measurement instrument must determine what caused it. Although school is a very significant institution, with respect to the overall life of a person it can only be counted as one significant factor among many others. Irrespective of being researchers who are independent from the institutional system, we set up a system of instruments which measured the knowledge of school materials and different abilities. Namely we investigated those abilities which would play a significant role in the enforcement of social interest. In the evaluation of achievements, these instruments played a role as only one dimension in the context of other dimensions--of a complex observation. To summarize, we evaluated the school's performance according to such dimensions that supposedly are decisively influential on children's development in the long run. At the same time, the influence of these factors is slightly significant for the short term; hence the success of just those aspects that we consider important, can hardly be proved. Therefore our main effort was not to observe directly the performance of children but rather the work of experiment leaders, teachers, and the school in general.

The Roma Education Program in Hungary

The State and the Educational System

.. It is an acceptable principle that the state is obliged to provide the conditions of compulsory education (and this task cannot be transferred to local communities because it is not a local task); otherwise it must provide the conditions for a school to compensate for the inequality among children. Accordingly, its obligation is to provide the possibility of social integration. Every further requirement should be represented and financed by those groups that belong to the constituency of the given school. In this respect the state's only responsibility and interest are not to deprive different

⁵ Ladany, Janos and Gabor Csamidi 1983. *Szelekci6 az általános iskolában*. Budapest: Magvető.

⁶ See the analysis of the school experiment in Nyírtelek.

⁷ If the concept of "alternative" is used in the sense that alternative education is an attempt to change the social structure, then the "alternative school" is a continuous failure. Nevertheless, its results can penetrate into the educational system. Accordingly, the success of an alternative school can be measured according to how it changes the educational system.

social groups of capital, i.e. allow them the capability to satisfy their group requirements. In contrast, the policy of Hungary toward national minorities and that of churches show opposite tendencies. The state finances such aims that have uncontrollable social relevance.⁸ Cultural affiliation is relative and situated,⁹ hence, central supporting systems cannot be built upon this, or numerous misuses may arise. (This is especially true in today's multicultural world.) It is not the aim of this paper to provide a general analysis of the minority policy of the Hungarian state, but some factors influencing the state policy must be mentioned. The Hungarian minority policy is determined by the relationship between the state and the Hungarians in neighboring countries, being a sort of instrument to press these countries to affirm the minority rights of Hungarians. Consequently, the minority rights in Hungary are partially constructed in order to exhibit what rights Hungarians in neighboring countries should enjoy. So in this sense this "tolerant" minority policy, that is, a contribution to the internal minorities, was the result of some typically national(ist) demands, such as the protection of co-ethnics, i.e. the expansion of the authority of the state over non-citizens, based on cultural similarities. However, the contribution to internal minorities by the state meets a social need that requires state support. It is a logical consequence that scarce resources can be distributed among few people; accordingly, the needs of civic society can be satisfied many times only at the central, political level of the state. This results in the process that particular local problems fall under the competence of the central institutions. Hereby, the process of resolution of problems also becomes independent from local needs. Additionally, dominance has to be achieved on the national level in order to satisfy the local needs. Nevertheless, enormously different needs are reflected and mixed up in the minority law and policy of Hungary, from the needs of Hungarians abroad, through those of different minorities in Hungary, to those of the Tsigan population, which is sufficiently diverse in itself. Thus it is questionable what and whose needs are aimed to be fulfilled. What is for

⁸ Jelentes a magyar kozoktatasr6l 1997. 1998. MKM Osszejogla16 hatteranyagok 1998. Magyar Koziony A Kormany 262U997.(XII.21.) korm. rendelete. 1997.

⁹ The affiliation of an individual can only be interpreted in relation to other group identities; moreover, the characteristic of an affiliation is always dependent on the given situation.

certain is that the operators of the recently established minority institutions are interested in their maintenance, moreover the institutional services sooner or later will result in the appearance of social needs even if they have not or only slightly existed before. At the same time the very problem that a "minority" policy should really resolve, that is, the social integration of those who are in a disadvantaged situation because of their particular cultural otherness, is pushed into the background. If the educational system is defined as a main tool of the state to integrate society, in my opinion the following system of standpoints should be established:

(1) The school must not evaluate (as positive or negative) a performance that demonstrates that someone belongs to a particular social community or category.

(2)

It is not the school's task to create a social group and to evaluate educational performance according to the affiliation of this group.

(3)

It is not the (state-related) task of a school to represent communities, save cultures, and hold communities together, because these are not the tasks of the state.

(4)

At the same time, it is the task of the school to take into account social, cultural and intellectual differences as far as which development programs should be worked out in different cases. Additionally, the state is obliged to support schools by providing compensations. However, differentiation should not concern only certain children but all children. Moreover, programs should differentiate only with respect to school knowledge, i.e. with respect to the abilities that are necessary to be acquired at school, and not with respect to the cultural affiliation of the children.

In contrast, the present school system:

(1)

charges local governments and other occasional resources to play a significant role in the maintenance of schools.¹⁰

(2)

has no unified conception and assistance system for helping schools, and working with different social backgrounds, to realize a sufficiently differentiating and compensating program. Accordingly, inter- and intra-school segregation increases, following the pattern of the strongly segregating society. The disadvantaged position and the elite position tend to be in conjunction with one another.¹¹

(3)

within this process, allows the appointment of the uncertainly situated school and the uncertainly situated social group to take place in the school market.

¹⁰ Currently the basic tasks of the school are financed 50 percent by the state as normative support and 50 percent by the the local government (maintainer). Those requirements that are above the basic tasks should be covered from other source (e.g.: school fees, introduction of services for fees) or by the extra support of the maintainer. (Right of Education, 118. par., 1996.)

¹¹ Jelentes a magyar közoktatásról 1997. 1998. pp. 56-132. Radó Péter 1997 Jelentes a magyarországi cigány tanulókatoktatásról. Budapest.

The school seeks such social groups that help them to mobilize resources from the state and/or from the group. The group looks to schools to strengthen its weak institutional system partially with the help of the state. This is possible because the state carries out a particular policy of compensation. It supports those churches and ethnic communities that efficiently enforce their interests.¹²

First of all, it is easier to portray group interests as national interests than to ensure the integration of disintegrating strata in the frame of a general social policy. On the other hand, the system of state-supported minority institutions (which always entails not only the support of the state but also its control) can also be the way of homogenizing the society, by replacing the different small minority groups with a large one, which is much more easily controllable than several small ones.

The particular concern of group and school:

(1) does not help the school to adapt its program for the given parental community because its particular image is not really developed by the interaction between the school and the local community, but rather on the stage of the central politics where the group struggles for resources. In this process, state policy legitimizes the particular image and the group is responsible for the construction of the self-same image. The situation is slightly modified in the case where the group exclusively ensures the required extra support to establish and maintain the school. In this case, the socialization function of school is definitely subordinated to certain group interests.

Summing up, if the school is not independent from the group (or any other local institution), then it cannot fulfill its main function, namely national integration. If the group is not independent from the state or other external institution, then the direct interaction between school and parental community cannot be realized, which would help the school to adapt to the particular local requirements of the group.

Roma Educational Programs

In the period of the political transition, the segregation of Tsigans became so grave that it had to be managed somehow by the new political forces. In contrast, the state did not have enough resources to resolve the "Tsigan-problem" in the framework of a general social policy. At the same time, in putting the problem into a different dimension, a much more spectacular-and, from certain aspects, popular-decision could be made at the price of a much smaller investment.

The cultural policy, which was realized by the government, is only directed to disarm those groups that can efficiently enforce their interests. Therefore, the satisfaction of visible groups resulted in the resolution of visible conflicts. And at this time, the Tsigans were already represented by a very visible, intellectual, political lobby that required the Tsigans to develop

¹² Jelentes a magyar kozoktatásról 1997. 1998. MKM Összejoglat 6 hatteranyagok 1998. Magyar Közlöny A Kormány 262/1997.(XII.21.) korm. rendeleete. 1997.

through Roma institutions. Secondly, the groups do not discriminate, but help the Roma maintain its identity.¹³ The notion was absolutely relevant in the sense that it was ObVIOUS that the Tsigans, as a segment of the disadvantaged group, could not be represented. In this case, they would remain invisible and would not cause direct political problems; consequently, they would not get special support. Additionally, the notion was relevant because a significant number of Tsigans suddenly came to be almost absolutely excluded from Hungarian society.¹⁴ So it seems that every condition is present that is needed to develop and to accept a Roma national ideology and institutional system contrary to the life strategy that aims to be integrated or assimilated in the Hungarian nation, i.e. in the larger society. Nevertheless, it is questionable what this resolves and how it influences the extremely segregated Tsigan groups.

The government recognized that the real problems could be concealed by the legitimization and support of a narrow intellectual circle. For example, the impotence of the educational system managing differences is partially justified by proving that the schools are not impotent, but neither should Tsigans be placed there. Accordingly, the successful Roma program rejustifies the poor functioning of schools, which was the reason for the weak school performance of Tsigan children. In this sense, the state policy strengthens the *raison d'être* of the disfunctioning institutional system.

The first part of the referred decree of the ministry, 2/]. point of "d) Tsigan remedial program" from the section on "forms of minority education" contains the following: "The Tsigan remedial education provides for Tsigan students the learning of Tsigan cultural values with respect to history, literature, fine arts, music and dance, additionally it provides for education about their traditionsIt provides for education about their situation, rights, organizations and institutions of the Tsigans people. It should help the integration of Tsigans with the tools of pedagogy and without the consequence of their assimilation." However, this apparently positive legal solution in many cases contributes to the school segregation of Tsigan pupils.

¹³ "The goals that politically active Tsigans set themselves—drastic reduction in unemployment, financial security, billions of forints of assistance to students at least to the end of secondary school, Tsigan institutions, amended minority laws, changes in the general attitude toward Tsigans, budgeted state assistance for the preservation of Tsigan culture, art and traditions, an end to harassment by the police and to unprovoked attacks by skinheads—can be reached only if Tsigan politics operates on several fronts, all of them reinforcing one another ... The mentality the Roma Parliament endorses is to have a healthy Tsigan self-image, to see no difference between one Tsigan and another, to like being Tsigan, and like being Hungarian as well." (Ieno Zsig6 Level aRoma Parlament kongresszusa eLe. A Letter to the Plenary Session of the Roma Parliament. 1995.)

¹⁴ Kertesi 1997.

Until the, school every Tsigani child (who is regarded as Tsigani by his environment) is placed into the remedial class meanwhile the non-Gypsy children are placed into the normal classes. This restricts both the rights of parents and the rights of children: (children must receive the education which is in accordance with their abilities, interests and natural endowments' (Right of Education par. 10). The talented Tsigani children do not get the appropriate development, cannot participate in the school program of (complex education of arts. ' Simultaneously the non-Tsigani children who have learning problems and sometimes are mentally retarded, also do not get the development because they are excluded from the main, remedial class. It seems (according to our experiences) that teachers let some non-Tsigani, slightly retarded children pass the school terms year by year. Finally, they get the certificate and go to a vocational school which provides them with a certificate of profession. ¹⁵

The main elements of the program of the Ministry of Education in the year of 1992 were the following:¹⁶ ". Establishment of the network of regional institutions of elementary and secondary remedial program and dormitory possibilities for gifted pupils.

- Development of the system of vocational training and further training of Tsigani young people.
- Infiltration of basic knowledge of Tsiganiology into the teacher training.
- Establishment of the department of Tsiganiology in every level of the Higher Education
- Use of complementary normative support for declared purposes based on differentiation
- Provision of the conditions of publishing textbooks in Tsigani language"

The aforementioned points reveal that independent Roma institutions appear on almost every level of the educational system. This is in accordance with the fact that a particularly autonomous political institutional system is simultaneously set up mostly relying on Roma minority self-governments.

The conception confronted the following problems:

¹⁵ Veg, Katalin. Szakertoi velemeny a Nyfirtelken folyo iskolakiserletrol. 1998. This report on the school experiment in Nyfirtelek is approved by the research conducted by Janos Setenyi on remedial classes. (Felzarkoztato programok az alapfoku oktatasan. 1996.) He found that half of the school programs applying for state support for Tsigani minority education covered only mathematics and Hungarian language and literature remedial programs.

¹⁶ Rad6, Peter 1997.

1.

The development of Tsigan children requires such teachers who do not discriminate but who are able to work with children in different ways, who are well-paid experts who conduct their work in a well thought-out system. If these conditions are fulfilled with respect to school segregation, it is irrelevant whether Roma culture is taught in whatever form at the school. Children will be appreciated because they achieve a good performance and not because they are Romas. If the conditions are not fulfilled, then it is irrelevant whether children learn the Tsigan language or whether they are among Romas that will not perform well and can be proud only of their Romaness. Additionally, acceptance of children is not correlated with whether or not the school is Roma, i.e. employing Roma or non-Roma teachers. The acceptance and appreciation of children certainly does not result from the fact that the teacher derives from the same ethnic group. It is possible that someone is intolerant and meanwhile he does not discriminate. For example, some teachers very forcefully intend to transform the thinking and behavior of pupils in order to help them and hence they become intolerant toward the pupils' otherness.

2.

With regard to the extent of the population that is under the authority of the potentially new institutional system, it is not likely that the state has the capacity to provide the material and human resources for the establishment of this huge institutional system.

3.

It seems an impossible task to subordinate the extremely diverse Tsigan population under unified institutions.

The aforementioned program could not give an unambiguous answer to the basic problem, that is, to whom it concerns. Recently, it is not unambiguously defined who is regarded as Roma by the program, i.e. who can have a share in extra support. Notwithstanding of this, the principle of self-definition is mostly enforced.¹⁷ It is needless to say how many contradictions result from this. I do not think that the main problem is that people present themselves as Roma only in order to get support (although I learned that this sometimes happens). The real problem is that in a number of cases it is unclear whether the help is distributed based on a disadvantaged situation or ethnic affiliation, which in itself can generate conflicts between the Tsigan and the non-Tsigan groups and can in general prevent the application of the appropriate social policy.

The other consequence of the ambiguous definition of Romaness is that the difference between the linguistic and cultural otherness is not clarified.¹⁸ Who needs to learn the Tsigan language? The native

¹⁷ The minority program of the Ministry of Education relies on minority rights. Nevertheless, these are contradictory. Ethnic affiliation is an exclusive and inalienable right of the individual. At the same time, the state sets up certain categories that determine which minorities can be registered and supported by the state. Nevertheless, this contradicts the point that the individual is competent in the question as to which minority he wishes to belong, and nobody can be compelled to declare his affiliation (Kisebbségi kódex 1995).

¹⁸ In Hungary, three different linguistic groups exist among the Tsigan population: 70% Hungarian-speaking, called "Magyar Tsigan" or "Romungro," 20% Lovari-

Hungarian Tsigan child? Why should the state support its citizens to learn such a minority language which is not their mother tongue? ' Nobody challenges the *raison d'être* of schools with bilingual instruction. These schools must basically fulfill two conditions: to ensure the existence of a teaching staff suitable to instruct in a foreign (non-Hungarian) language, in addition to one that fits the national curriculum (which contains the requirements concerning the Hungarian language-as linguistic knowledge ,necessary for social integration) into the curriculum of the school.¹⁹ The linguistic difference between children (the majority of which speaks Hungarian well) having the Olah and Beash Tsigan mother tongue is not a problem of discrimination (they are not discriminated against because they speak the "Tsigan" language at home), is not the problem of the majority of the Tsigan population, and is not related to the social situation of Tsigans, but is a teaching methodology problem; thus, the issue of how to overcome the disadvantage of linguistic otherness can be realized at school or kindergarten . . It must be asserted that language in itself does not determine the method and content of the teaching at school. The learning problems of Hungarian-speaking Tsigan children are not resolved by the fact that they are taught in their mother tongue The problem of linguistic difference, however, can be much more easily treated by the school than other issues, such as a fcoor social situation, and significantly different values, norms and knowledge.²⁰ I believe that the establishment of schools with Olah or Beash language instruction, since it is related to specific group interests, is not the task of the state but of a parental community. The state can only be obliged to provide those conditions that the public schools receive.

The Roma vocational educational program does not explain why it considered to be Roma-whether it is because students learn specific Roma professions or because non-Tsigans are not allowed to attend. Another possibility is that certain professions are taught that non-Tsigans would not be willing to study.

It is questionable to what degree the reading of textbooks about the "Roma nation" helps teachers to get acquainted with and accept the otherness of the given Tsigan student (who has a particular social and family background). In this sense, in my opinion, the department of Tsiganology is not directly correlated with the integration of Tsigans. It is only a scientific workshop that conducts social research among Tsigans. It can explore problems but it cannot provide an anti-discrimination text book.

At the arne time it is obvious that the text is only a tool. Accordingly, without tolerant teachers it is futile to introduce textbooks engendering tolerance. The education of tolerant teacher , however, is a more general task. It i' also questionable why the state has to support the creation and propagation of Roma national culture. It is certainly important that children should be acquainted with different cultures in the framework of being educated for openness

speaking, called "Olah Tsigan" or "Roma" (their language being close to the Jndi.an languages, is regarded as the "authentic" Roma language), and. 10% Beash-spea~n, called "Beash Tsigan" (their language is an unrefonned verSIOn of the Romaman language).

¹⁹ A kozoktatasi tOrveny. 1996.

²⁰ Tibor Derdak's research on the school performance of TSlgan children havmg different native languages demonstrates this. Derdak, Tibor and Aranka Varga. 1996. Az iskola nyelvezete -idegen nye/v. *Kultura es k6z6sseg* pp. 105-131.

and tolerance. But if school is the tool of an ideological mission, then it cannot achieve only these goals; i.e. the function of school as one of social integration, is pushed into the background.

Tolerance can be most efficiently taught if tolerance is realized among children. This cannot be imagined without the interaction between children with different cultural backgrounds. In vain, the teacher is considered to be tolerant, in vain the children are considered to be understanding if they have never talked to such a Tsigan child who speaks, dresses, and even probably smells differently. If they do not confront these facts, tolerance will be maintained only until a recitation in the class session on tolerance.

In 1995, as a part of-and parallel with-the Minority Educational Development Program, the Tsigan Educational Development program started suggesting additional potential aid programs for Tsigan children.²¹

"The main elements of the program were the following:

- Support of pedagogic, linguistic, ethnographic, historical, and other research in order to realize an essential reform of the education of the Tsigans.
- Development of curricula, textbooks, and school equipment for different Tsigan educational programs and institutions.
- Development and support of kindergarten and school preparatory programs in order to improve the maturity of children.
- Development and support of remedial class programs.
- Establishment of a country-wide training and boarding school system for talented Tsigan children.
- Extension of the system of High and Higher Educational scholarships.
- Support of teacher training and other Higher Educational programs.
- Organization and support of the further training of pedagogists, social workers, and educational consultants.
- Support of Tsigan minority educational institutions.
- Development and support of intercultural educational programs.
- Development of pedagogic-professional services."

²¹ Rado 1997.

Besides the fact that this program covers almost every institution and function of education, two points must be raised.

1. It is a real problem that a vast number of Tsigian children cannot attend kindergarten. One of the reasons for this is that parents cannot pay the extra charges required by the kindergarten. The other important reason is the kindergarten is not obliged to admit the children of those parents who stay at home, e.g. the children of unemployed parents. This fact causes special disadvantages for Tsigian children. Accordingly, a large number of them can attend kindergarten only in the one-year school preparatory program. At the same time, this group represents those children who would need a longer kindergarten education in order to be, properly prepared for school. It is obvious that kindergarten plays or can play a significant role in this process. At present the majority of Tsigian children have missed this.²² It is also a problem that kindergarten pedagogists are prejudiced~ moreover, usually there is no conceptualized program in kindergarten to decrease the prejudice in children that already exists even at this age. (This is the stage when children are extremely susceptible to everything.) Kindergarten, in a similar manner to school, does not compensate for disadvantages that exist between children, even though one of its main functions should be that of compensation. A well-taught kindergarten program might provide the possibility for equalizing chances in school. Nevertheless, kindergarten as the pre-institution of school actively contributes to the reproduction of inequalities.²³

Although an independent Roma kindergarten system would resolve the aforementioned problems in the short run, it is still a question as to what price should be paid for it (over the fact that it would require a huge support). What is the price paid by the fact that children are separated in their kindergarten year according to the fact that they are Tsigian or non-Tsigian? What self-concept problems and adaptation difficulties can this entail? Nevertheless, the main question is: what happens after kindergarten? If these students are admitted into a conventional school, all previous results will be futile. If they are admitted to a school that differentiates and compensates well, the invested work will be not wasted but in this case the question is whether it was necessary. The third possibility is that a Roma educational institution develops from the third year until the last year of higher education.

At present, this is not realizable~ i.e. it would be realizable only for a narrow elite stratum. This notwithstanding, it is questionable how it would help the function of school, namely social integration.

Similarly to the previously outlined program of the ministry, this conception also connects the programs for gifted pupils with the boarding school system. This sheds light upon the basic problem of Roma programs. Tsiganness means something different for the children than what the programs attempt to inspire. The Roma mission implies a different Roma image than the image that the children have. The children cannot decide who they really are, what the mission states about them, what they experience at home, or probably what the hostile environment states about them. It is complicated

further by the fact that many times the Roma mission is intolerant of family values and is the discriminating, hostile environment. One of the manifestations of this is the intention to develop a boarding school system in the framework of the Roma program. Boarding school, even if it is an efficient tool, would be too expensive a solution, and cannot be systematically realized due not only to the lack of material but also to the lack of personal conditions. Boarding schools are much more complex systems than normal schools; thereby a unified educational methodology requires much more energy in the case of the boarding school. In my opinion, it is easier to develop a good relationship between the school and the parents, to say nothing of the fact that children will not have a guilty conscience toward

²² Ibid.

²³ Kertesi Gabor -Kezdi Gabor 1996. Cigany tanulók az általános iskolában. In Ciganyok és Iskola. Educatio Kiadó.

their parents. Since pupils live differently in the boarding school than they do at home, they may reject their parent ' norm , and feel guilty about this. Parents may al 0 feel guilty toward their children that they cannot live as "nicely" as the children do in the boarding school. Boarding schools seem to be an exceptional solution. The que tion i : what do they solve?

It would be even more acceptable if dormitory space were offered to those children who e parents cannot maintain them (according to their individual need) and/or those who cannot resolve the problem of everyday school attendance. Nevertheless, good school performance determine the admission motivated by the conception of the so-called gifted-child programs.²⁴ In reality, admission i not related to talent but to the family background on the one hand and to the adaptability of children on the other. Accordingly, those children who are admitted into the school are those who would be likely to have high achievements in any case, i.e. those who are "the least Tsigan."

It seems that the Roma national elite regards the boarding system as a way to strengthen itself. The national elite must posses a decisively positive Roma identity because it is the Tsigan intellectual who can most easily become assimilated, i.e. who can most easily lose their Tsigan identity. To the intellectuals, the association with T iganness means an association with their home, which often is in contrast with their achieved social status.

The way of life in their proper environment, many times cannot be reconciled with their intellectual position and being.²⁵ Another dimen ion of this phenomenon is that the process of becoming intellectual tears them away from the Tsigan environment. In the intellectual environment, the proportion of Tsigans is minimal; thereby the possibility of complete assimilation is very high. And if Tsigan-bom intellectuals do not invoke their Tsiganness, who will represent the Tsigans-that is, the Roma people (i.e. who will lead the national institutions)?

²⁴ Gandhi Kozalapftvany oktatasi strategija (A Gandhi Kozalapftvany altal kovetendo celok). 1996. Csalog Zsolt interjt1ja Bogdan Janossal 1992. Cigany 1;tel,;iseget ~eremteni. N~pszabadsag, 11127.

²⁵ Vcg, Katalm 1997. A klseg[total az egyetemig. Iskolakultt1ra, 1. sz.

The boarding school education of Tsigan talents first of all serves the development of the Roma national elite. This is complemented by the conception of high- and higher education scholarships.

The state supports this nation-building conception because 1. this requires a minimal investment, and 2. at the same time the needs of those minorities, which make conflicts visible, can be satisfied.

Nevertheless, this does not resolve the problems of integration of locally-situated Tsigan children, even if the national intelligentsia presents itself as their representatives. At the same time, this process has a particular influence on the Tsigan identity.

Comparison of the Two School Experiments

The support of the numerous Roma educational programs indicates, over the aforementioned points, that the state perceives the problem, it is open

to some solutions, and it is tolerant to a certain degree. At the same time, it is questionable what is the limit of this tolerance and toward which solutions the state is open.

In this respect, it is interesting to compare the two school experiments observed, especially considering the fact that the ministry unambiguously regards the spirit of Nyirtelek school as a model.

The following differences and similarities are to be found in the comparison of the two schools: . The first village, Tiszab6, is mostly inhabited by Tsigans²⁶ and it is an extremely segregated village, the other one, Nyirtelek²⁷ struggles with relatively average problems and has a positive perspective. At the same time, however, Tsigans live in segregated sub-settlements similar to those in Tiszab6 without positive perspectives. . Accordingly, the school is in a much better situation in Nyirtelek than in Tiszab6. \. The experiment of Tiszab6 rapidly became an individual mission, while in Nyirtelek the initiative has been built into the system of the school.

Accordingly, Nyirtelek has been much more institutionalized than the experiment of Tiszab6.

r.

The percentage of Tsigan children is 150/0 at the school of Nyirtelek. If the children were integrated, every class would contain no more than 4-5 students. Meanwhile, in Tiszab6, this percentage is 800/0, which results in an entirely Tsigan and a half Tsigan class in every year. (Additionally, the better students do not attend the school of Tiszab6.) ;. The school experiment of Tiszab6 received a minimal support compared with the experiment of Nyirtelek. It was essentially restricted to some school equipment and one to two trips per year. Therefore, the extra budget was 00,000 Forints per year (plus one copy machine, which cost 500,000

²⁶ In Tiszab6 recently the percentage of that population that is Tsigans hovers around 0% of 2000 persons.

²⁷ The number of Tsigans is very low in Nyirtelek in comparison with the total population (only 4% of 7000 persons).

Forints). In contrast, the experiment of Nyfrtelek has already bought two

dormitory buildings which were partially renewed and many teachers earned out the program. The standard yearly budget of the dormitory is more than one million Forint. Accordingly, the investment has certainly exceeded ten million Forint. It was covered by the Ministry, and by Hungarian and foreign foundations.

6.

At the same time, the two programs involved approximately the same number of children, about twenty.²⁸

7.

The Tiszab5 experiment involved children from the fourth school year (officially from the age of ten) until the eighth school year (officially until the age of fourteen). The Nyfrtelek experiment, however, at the time when we were conducting research there, mostly involved children from the first years

of the school. Contrary to the fact that the comparison basically concerns the characteristics of the program, we must take into account that the experiment of Nyfrtelek required such a huge investment that it made it impossible to apply the innovation systematically. If this statement is correct, the main question is the following: why is it in the interest of the system to support an experiment, the result of which is obviously irrelevant for the system from its outset since the system cannot systematically provide the conditions for success? On the other hand, it is a question of what degree the performance of the children can be ascribed to the particular methodology, to the circumstances provided by the program, or to the fact that children were much more intensively treated, in addition to the fact that children did not confront discrimination during their time of study. Results can hardly be reported because the program of Nyfrtelek has worked only for a few years. It is notwithstanding often mentioned as a model all over the country. In order to understand this fact we must compare the spirit of the two programs. First of all, I would call attention to the fact that in the model school of Nyfrtelek there was no program of education of Tsigan culture, even though the experiment was defined as a "Tsigan" program and leaders applied for support according to this term. The program was Tsigan only in the respect that its leader and deputy leader was Tsigan by descent—moreover, Tsigan children were admitted into the program. In contrast, Roma (national) culture played a crucial role in the program of Tiszab5. Contrary to the fact that the teacher taught children (who were Hungarian-speaking Tsigans) alien cultural products (originated not in their own but in another Tsigan community) they could entirely associate with it.²⁹

Thus, in this case a non-Tsigan person, the teacher, mediated the Roma

²⁸ In the case of Nyfrtelek, I only counted those who participated in the dormitory program. The majority of benefits were provided only for them. Specific development of the school equipment for the Tsigan class has not occurred.

²⁹ The teacher thought that the development of Roma national identity could be a tool for Tsigans to enforce their interests. The picture of the proud Roma, however, is problematic. The existing cultures, which are carried by the Tsigan communities, usually prevent rather than help people to enforce their interests in modern society. So

national ideology to the Tsigan children. By his inspiration, a music band was created by some members of the class, which played Olah Tsigan music (defined as the authentic Roma music) and it became well-known all over the country. Over and above this fact, due to the particular methodology, the children created exceptional cultural productions.³⁰

Additionally, in Tiszab6, the teacher did not select children but only took over a class, the majority of which was over-age and regarded as unmanageable children. Later on, however, the class was attended by a non-Tsigan but similarly disadvantaged girl who could absolutely fit into the class community and who could associate with the Roma cultural program.

The teacher could keep children at the school without any special institutional tool relying only on the influence of his personality and the program. Nevertheless, it was very difficult. He had to struggle with a number of problems, especially with those children who were at the beginning of their adolescence.

The fact, which may seem to be insignificant, that children could be socialized into the obligation of school attendance only by a particular teaching attitude, casts doubt on the conception of the necessity of separating children from their family. The experiment of Tiszab6 proved that school can compete with the family socialization by an appropriate teaching attitude (and by slightly more work, which in this case weighed upon only one person).

Additionally, school does not need to undermine the family to gain victory in this competition. Both children and parents recognize those values that are necessary in order to be successful in life. The only question is whether the school can make these available to them. (For example, if the school forces children to choose between the school and the home, the price of the admission of new values significantly increases.)

the new Roma identity should be distinguished from the existing ones. On the other hand, it is very difficult to create a common picture. Many people think that Olah Tsigans represent the authentic Roma culture. Although their number is much lower than the number of Hungarian Tsigans, their well-distinguished cultural productions (especially their language) are much more suitable to serve an independent national ideology. (Szuhay Peter 1995. *Cigany kultura*. Budapest, Buksz, 6sz pp. 329-34].)

I taught the children an alien (even a rival) culture as Tsigan culture. This unconsciously meant that the proper culture of the children was not so valid, i.e. they had a culture which was not their own. Their ancestors had abandoned the original Roma culture, and the teacher thought that the children should relearn it. He taught children Olah Tsigan music despite the fact that a number of musicians were living in the village who were masters in playing the well-known Hungarian "nota" ~so called "Hungarian Tsigan" music). This, however, was not regarded as authentic by the teacher because this music was rooted in the "Hungarian folklore" with which the teacher associated himself as well.

³⁰ An edited version of the newsletter written by them, called *Palacsinta*, is going to be published in 1999.

In Nyirtelek, the Tsigan pupils were placed into a remedial class³¹ and a dormitory was established in order to educate and foster some of the Tsigan children (10-15 children) separate from their family within "good

, circumstance.' The leaders explained the necessity of this project by reference to the poor circumstances in children's homes and the difficult transport. In reality, the separation of six-to ten-year-old children from their families served to weaken the influence of family socialization, i.e. to make the reeducation more efficient. Neither the teaching of local nor other Tsigan culture was introduced into the program of the remedial class and the dormitory. In this respect, it did not have any relation to local Tsigan or "national" Roma identity~ moreover, the program resulted in forced assimilation. Those children were selected for the dormitory who could more easily fit into the social environment, i.e., those who were the most suitable children for assimilation. A particular pedagogic program had not yet been realized, but a latent Tsigan state home³² and school was established, assuming that parents were not able to raise their children. Overall, the most significant difference is to be found in the attitude of the program leaders toward Tsigans. L.P.³³ slightly tolerated the peculiar way of life of the local Tsigan community. The program that was represented by him was designed in order to overcome just this way of life. L.P.'s attitude was influenced by a kind of self-hateful identity³⁴ and by an ambition which is, according to my experience, typical among Tsigan intellectuals and leaders. L.P. wished to bring up clean, well-behaved, good students, to prove that Tsigan children can be as "clever and good" as non-Tsigans. The price of this was that the retraining involved very strict discipline which--it seems--did not result in interiorization. Children had to meet the expectations of L.P. if they wanted to stay in the "beautiful" facilities of the dormitory and participate in travel abroad. Nevertheless, when they went home they did the opposite of what they learned. This made them feel guilty.³⁵ In these circumstances, it is not surprising that we could not find any cultural production that expressed the frank manifestation of the children. In contrast, I. I.³⁶ looked upon children with an exceptionally tolerant attitude. Consequently, children did not learn "to behave correctly." They attended the school with the appearance that they had: tom and dirty-clothed.

³¹ The Tsigan class was placed in a detached building.

³² The reason I use this term is that the experiment intends to transform the children in confrontation with parents. Boarding schools notwithstanding, in most cases teachers only substitute as parents and they rather strengthen the expectation of parents than weaken it.

³³ The leading teacher of the Nyirtelek experiment.

³⁴ Csepeli, Gyorgy. 1997. Negativ identitas in: Szocialpszichologia pp. 523-524.

³⁵ L.P. even strengthened this guilty conscience to inspire children to get rid of their family habits more easily. He regularly warned them in different ways that if they do not fulfil his expectations then they will have to go back into the miserable circumstances in which their parents live.

³⁶ The teacher who pursued the Tiszabo experiment.

Sometimes they used foul language, sometimes they were loud and very impudent. They felt released behaving at the school as at home, as it was natural for them. At the same time, this caused the expectations of the teacher to be internalized. The children themselves required writing and reading, to continue their studies and learning more generally. I would cite again the example of the music band. After the teacher had placed the instruments in their hands and had taught them the songs, they independently and almost maniacally started to deal with music. We experienced an extraordinarily successful case of mission.

As it appears, my approach supports the experiment of Tiszab5. The teacher achieved significant performances with a minimal investment. Even if the other program is more efficient with respect to the transmission of school knowledge, the fact cannot be neglected that a whole school was built upon the Nyirtelek experiment. In many cases children were prepared through one-on-one tutoring, which cannot be criticized in itself but neither can it be compared with the efficiency of the teaching of a class of fifteen students, to say nothing of the high cost of the tutoring. At the same time in Nyirtelek, we did not experience any alternative educational method which might bring about some potential results in the future. An absolutely conventional educational program was implemented. We did not meet exceptional teachers—we did not even experience the loving atmosphere that I.!. provided for children. The program did not give an answer as to why non-Gypsy disadvantaged children attended normal classes and why gifted Gypsy children attended class C.; moreover, the program did not explain why those children could achieve highly who did not attend class C. at the request of their parents, who objected to a separate Tsigan class. In SUfi, children were not separated into a warm environment which is sometimes, like in case of Tiszab5, an acceptable solution against a "cold" integration, i.e. against the situation when children study in the same classroom together with non-Tsigans but they are harshly segregated mentally.³⁷

The question is why the experiment of 1.1. could not become a model and how it could happen that even 1.1.'s supporters partially turned against him. On the other hand, why could such a program become a model if it did not show any significant result, and was too cost-prohibitive for the experiment to be a model from the outset? In order to understand this situation, we must know who considers it to be a model.

The judgment of the Tsigan community on the dormitory was really ambiguous. 1. The program called into question the value of the Tsigan way of life, and endangered the family, that is, child-parent ties; and 2. at the same time, the community's situation constrained it from accepting the help. The non-Tsigan inhabitants of the village also did not uniformly support the experiment. The non-Tsigans obviously did not mind that Tsigan children

³⁷ On the other hand, the negative consequence of this warm separation is, as I've already mentioned, that it can rejustify the incompetence of schools and can stabilize the segregation in the school system by claiming that the special needs of these children can be fulfilled only by the proper schools.

were educated separately. Rather, they stated that it was injurious that poor non-Tsigan children did not get similar support.

Nevertheless, the program of Nyfrtelek did not really require the consent of the local communities (because they did not finance the specific school program) but rather needed it from those who determined the Tsigan-social policy and the related financial system:

1. the ministry

2. the elite, addressing itself, being the representatives of The Roma.

1. The Ministry The ministry is interested in supporting those programs which are regarded important by the defenders of the Roma issue. The ministry does not have enough resources to realize a general school program for disadvantaged children. The support of these programs is only a gesture. The state can make reference to these programs if someone complains about why nothing happens in the matter of school segregation of Tsigan children.

The simplest solution is to support many experiments. This costs proportionally much less than the systematic realization of a single experiment in the educational system. It is even possible to support this proposal through reference to the liberal education policy: the ministry does not force any program on schools; each school can work out its own image.³⁸

Taking this into account, the argument that the experiment of Nyfrtelek is irrelevant for the system, is not correct. The function of the experiment of Nyfrtelek is not to be built into the existing educational system but to legitimize the current system. The experiment reinforces the conviction that the problem of Tsigan children cannot be treated within the framework of "normal education." If it works, its cost is absolutely not an issue, it will not be realized.

At the same time, the program must obviously show results in order to legitimize the system. Nevertheless, if we regard the upward social mobility of Tsigans as a requirement, we are again on the "wrong" track. The program can legitimize itself if it corresponds to the requirements of the educational system. If children have good marks and they are well-behaved at school, it makes no difference for the system what real knowledge is behind the marks and even what significance the knowledge acquired at school has with respect to social integration. Consequently, it is irrelevant how children behave outside of the school. And the children who participate in the boarding school receive good marks and they behave nicely. If somebody does not do so, he is kicked out. (The program leader is even compelled to do this in order to keep the "good image of the program" in the interest of children.)³⁹ Therefore, the aforementioned attitude of the state explains the fact why in the last three years no serious efficiency study has been conducted, although the program has been supported considerably.

In contrast, the program of Tiszab6 was-to use a simplified term-"too Tsigan." It exceeded the degree of "Tsigan kind of characteristics" that

³⁸ A kozoktatdsi torveny 1996, pp. 1-4. (alapelvek). Until now, four children have been dismissed.

³⁹ Until now, four children have been dismissed.

were acceptable for the system. Everybody liked the fact that children played \lce folklore mUSIC and performed nice folk dances, but their "folk-behavior" was ~.uch less ap~re~iated. (The tradition,al appearanc~ was permitted but the ..,t.radltl,;>nal be.havlor',was not.) ,More plainly, the pupils who took part in the Iszabo experiment did not fulfill the expectations of the educational system or which, therefore, it could not become a model.

2. The Elite (terming itself as the representatives of the Roma)

The experiment proved the following to the Elite:

.. Roma teachers can implement a successful program; and 2. the development of Tsigan children can be mostly realized only in this kind of separate institutional system (which should be directed by the Roma national 'Intelligentsia). The fact that only a narrow intellectual elite can be educated in this way, is indifferent to the respect that this sort of institution legitimizes the positions of the Roma national intelligentsia, i.e., this strengthens the national Intelligentsia through specific educational institutions. In my opinion, the Roma national intelligentsia is mostly interested in developing a separate institutional system and to raise a national elite. Hence, the idea of Tsigan boarding schools well matches these expectations. On the other hand, some boarding schools will not help the masses of disadvantaged Tsigans.

Although the Roma cultural curriculum is not introduced into the program at all, it is, however, more important that the experiment aspired to develop such a Roma image that was in accordance with the national Ideology.

Here I must repeat that the class of 1.I. was "too Tsigan." 1.I. did not

ate anybody, especially not himself. He did not stipulate that children could participate in the program only in the event that they did not misbehave as they did at home and that they did not speak their parents. Nevertheless, the Roma national intelligentsia strives to distinguish itself precisely from the way of life that 1.I. tolerated so much.

Roma National Program and Ghettoization

In my approach, it is a crucial point in the sociological examination to differentiate the process of ghettoization from segregation. The fact that a group is not integrated into the society does not automatically mean that it does not intend to be integrated. The use of the concept of ghetto provides a possibility to define the situation when a group consciously aspires to isolate itself from the larger society.⁴⁰ Accordingly, in this case ghettoization is a concept primarily referring to a peculiar group program and not a particular social situation. These programs mainly require the establishment of an

⁴⁰ The segregation of the Jews into separate local areas in the medieval cities did not originate with any formal edict of church or state....Long before it was made compulsory, the Jews lived in separate parts of the cities in the Western lands, of their own accord," (Wirth, Louis. 1956. *The Ghetto*. Chicago, The University of Chicago Press, p. 18.)

independent institutional system, which makes isolation possible and which maintains it. This requirement is one of the main conditions of ghettoization.⁴¹

The question that remains for the future is what the influence of Roma institutions will be in the event that the institutions cannot integrate the Tsigans into the society, but can realize a successful ideological mission.

It seems that the process of the integration of Tsigans cannot progress because of general tendencies.⁴² At the same time, the Roma national ideology is in rapid creation exactly in this social situation. The Roma national consciousness tends to become more and more accepted. Recently, every condition has been produced to make the process successful: the claims of excluded people to receive an explanation for their discrimination and social separation, and a group of intelligentsia that forms and represents the new ideology through institutions (which are provided for them by the state).

The new institutional system can make the Tsigans interested in accepting the new ideology. An autonomous institutional system can make the realization of Roma solidarity possible. It can provide such privileges that the central institutions seemingly cannot provide for them.

The main question with respect to the development of the new institutional system is: what tools will it have to enforce its authority? Recently, the role of the new institutions among Tsigans and the relationship between the institutions and the state has not been stabilized. The question is: if somebody wishes to associate himself with the Roma, to what degree should he subordinate himself to the national institutions?

In the examined communities, the Tsigan identity has recently been related to a peculiar local context of groups. At the same time, these groups' unsuccessful social integration and the discrimination against them 1. makes their existence uncertain, and 2. makes the groups uncertain as to whether the social integration can be possible at all. All of these issues make the groups susceptible to accept the authority of the new Roma institutions that support them, i.e. which offer easy ways to obtain support.

If the segregation continues to progress and a Roma national self-consciousness and institution network simultaneously develops, these can become the basis for a rise of Roma national solidarity and an extreme conscious separation. Such a situation foreshadows the establishment of ghettos. If there is no possibility of integration, but staying within the group entails advantages, the wall of the ghetto can be built. The wall can protect people against the external environment, and can simultaneously prevent them from exiting the group as well.

⁴¹ "The history of the ghetto from our point of view is the history of an institution ... The history of the ghetto may show the various processes that enter into the origin and the growth of community life in general and the ways in which the community fashions the personality types and the cultural institutions that it harbours." (Wirth 1956, p. 9)

⁴² Kertesi 1997.
Ladanyi and Szelenyi 1997.

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Power and Powers

