



Institutional challenges and school resilience in Hungarian Roma-majority schools

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Outline

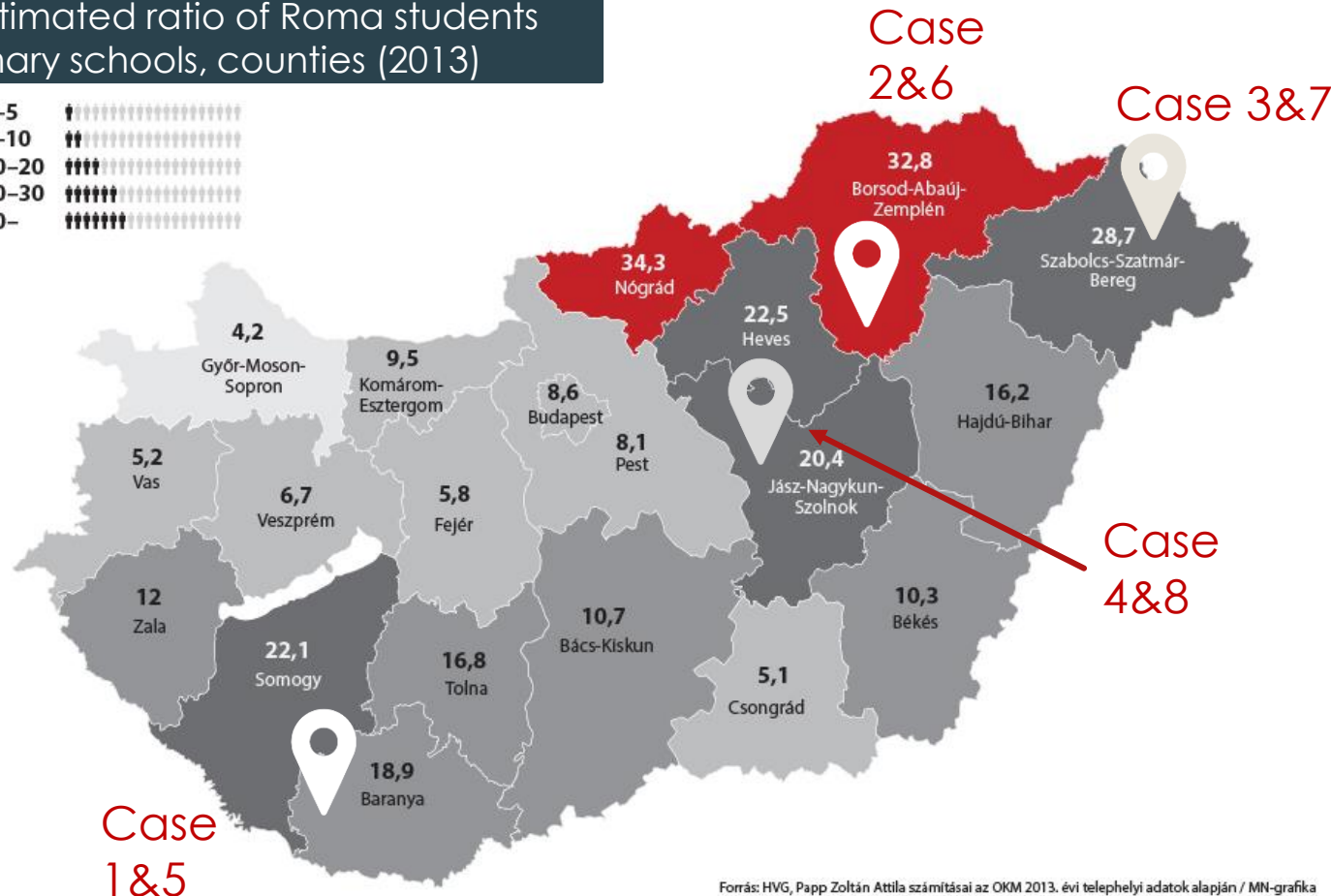
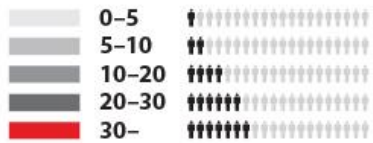


Teacher focus group, case 6: We asked teachers to present their school in a poster

- ▶ The research project
- ▶ Is the school an island?
Constraints and opportunities of the local embeddedness of schools
- ▶ Student identities and the (mis)recognition of Roma identity in education contexts
- ▶ Problematizing and expanding the notion of resilience

The school is not an island research project (2016-2020)

The estimated ratio of Roma students in primary schools, counties (2013)



Forrás: HVG, Papp Zoltán Attila számításai az OKM 2013. évi telephelyi adatok alapján / MN-grafika

	Resilient schools	Ordinary/irresilient schools
Resilient communities	Case 1.	Case 5.
	Case 2.	Case 6.
Conflict-ridden communities	Case 3.	Case 7.
	Case 4	Case 8.

4 resilient and 4 control schools, 8 primary school and community case studies in four localities (villages and small towns);

Ghetto schools (50%+) = 14% of primary schools;
Ghettoising/mixed schools (30-50%) = 10% of primary schools by 2018.

Structure and agency I: Constraints and opportunities of local embeddedness

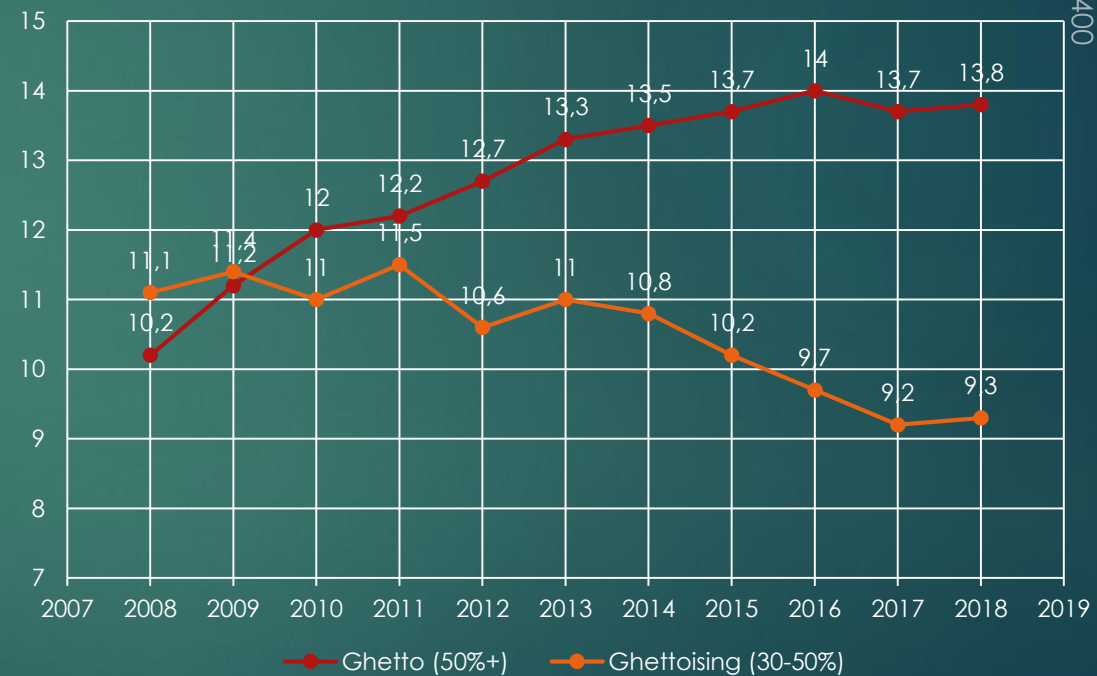
- ▶ How do schools contribute to community and individual mobility in multi-ethnic localities?
- ▶ How do schools navigate within the local struggles for symbolic resources? Can schools challenge and subvert local social hierarchies and thus shape interethnic relations?
- ▶ What are the successful school strategies to mitigate ethnic conflicts and enhance social mobility?
- ▶ What are the resources for resilience in disadvantaged, rural educational contexts?

Structure and agency II.

The structural context of rural peripheries

- ▶ Macrostructural changes: demographic decline and depopulation, out-migration of working parents and educated people, ghettoization of rural regions
- ▶ Systemic challenges: teacher shortage, aging teaching staff, threat of burnout
- ▶ Regional inequalities: White flight, the expansion of the denominational school systems
- ▶ School centralization and isolation from the local context and the local elites

Ethnic polarization in the Hungarian primary schools (2008-2018)



Source: Ercse 2018, Papp Z. 2021

Schools in transition, narratives of decline and nostalgia

Structure and agency III. Reproducing local social hierarchies by streaming

- ▶ Seeking the preferences of majority parents by streaming – ethnic polarization (and disaffection, anti-school subcultures), nostalgia for remedial education tracks.
- ▶ Case 2: Subtle selection at school enrolment by offering choice between full-day and half-day classes (latter with three free meals a day and free study equipment) & wide range of fee-paying after school activities on offer.
- ▶ With the transitory forces, streaming practices have become less sustainable.
- ▶ **Correlation between teacher narratives on student resilience and school structures:**
 - ▶ Streaming practice: resilient Roma educational trajectories viewed as singularities and exceptions, „yes, but...” narratives
 - ▶ Non-streaming schools: resilience in the framework of talent-education and institutional support for parents in secondary school choice and studentship applications.

School identity as a resource for institutional resilience

- ▶ Case 5. The innovative „change-orientated” school
 - ▶ narrative of professionalism
 - ▶ Managerial-type leadership, adaptivity to social change as a driver of innovation
 - ▶ Project-logic of development, continuous performance and excessive workload on teachers
 - ▶ Positioning the school within a national space of institutional development: nationwide networking, centre for knowledge dissemination
- ▶ Case 1. „Village teachers”
 - ▶ The positive aspects of local embeddedness
 - ▶ the mission of teaching based on a sense of local solidarity, choosing teaching as a career to teach disadvantaged children

I feel at home here, at the environment where I come from. I wouldn't have felt comfortable in a more elite school.

The (mis)recognition of Roma identity

- ▶ Dominance of assimilationist expectations, Roma identity and Hungarian citizenship narrated as opposing forces
- ▶ Case 6. Roma and „multicultural” programmes as after school activities on the demand of the white majority
 - ▶ Romani language not perceived as an asset or even a „proper” language. Bilingualism is a tolerated practice which is not considered as foundations for pedagogical practice, but rather as a disadvantage (low level linguistic competence) to be compensated.
- ▶ Elsewhere, where the Roma community does not speak Romani, it is considered as a low-status, truncated identity, and a subject of shame
- ▶ Case 1 and 5: „Roma lesson” focusing on authentic Roma culture (tales, myths, celebrations, dance, classical professions, food) inherited from the past
- ▶ Schools do not address the challenges of interethnic education, the everyday realities and tensions of being Roma and do not consider student diversity as a resource

We try to emphasise that we are also Hungarians.

They don't speak real Romani language, but some kind of mishmash. It is Hunglicized.

Student identities

Fixed, stable ideas about inherent abilities and essentialist arguments on family determinations vs. „pedagogies of becoming”

- ▶ Case 5.
 - ▶ Education integration defined as SEND inclusion and inclusive environment (flexible lesson time, differentiated worksheets in lower school, double-teacher model) and cooperative education
 - ▶ Boyash language and culture within the framework of multicultural education – resources based on research with and about local families (cultural authenticity framing).
 - ▶ Focus on SEND inclusion, multicultural pedagogy and cooperative methods within the wider taken for granted context of Roma inclusion

The school is not
by NKFIH 120400



Conclusions: the school is not an island

- ▶ Resilient schools not only need to tackle educational inequalities, but they navigate in a wider social and institutional context that generates profound social tensions
- ▶ Expanding the notion of resilience – the *institutional, cultural and social sources of resilience* (Hall – Lamont 2013: 2-3), the local configurations of resilience in school-community relations
- ▶ Secondary school pathways as an important indicator of resilience
- ▶ Institutional sources and the agency of schools:
 - ▶ Finding agency, breaking away from the „quality” framework of teaching, finding value in the professional work with disadvantaged and Roma learners
 - ▶ Affectivities, school climate and school identity
- ▶ Student resilience
 - ▶ „Against the odds” success stories vs. strategic, institutionalized support (secondary school preparation activities, after school programmes, scholarships),
 - ▶ Constructing a space and language for addressing the lived experience of integrated education, the challenges of majority-minority relations, and the social and emotional weight of mobility for Roma learners
- ▶ Crisis, adaptation and change

Thank you for your attention!

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