



## **EDUMIGROM**

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

A COMPARATIVE INVESTIGATION IN ETHNICALLY DIVERSE COMMUNITIES WITH SECOND-GENERATION MIGRANTS AND ROMA

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#### **DELIVERABLE 21: COMPARATIVE COMMUNITY STUDY REPORT**

### **BEING ‘VISIBLY DIFFERENT’: EXPERIENCES OF SECOND-GENERATION MIGRANT AND ROMA YOUTHS AT SCHOOL**

A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF COMMUNITIES IN NINE MEMBER STATES OF THE EUROPEAN UNION

(WP 8: COMMUNITY COMPARATIVE STUDY, COMP-COMMUN)

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# **FOREWORD**

**Júlia Szalai**

The essays presented here under the overarching title of “*Being ‘Visibly Different’: Experiences of Second-generation Migrant and Roma Youths at School*” summarise in a comparative perspective the major findings of the country-based qualitative studies that targeted schools and their immediate environments in selected multi-ethnic communities in the nine participating countries of the EDUMIGROM research project. Our comparative endeavour aims to open a new window of cross-country comparisons for analysing and re-assessing the rich materials that have been brought forth throughout the encompassing fieldwork that the Country Teams were engaged in during the 13 months between April 2009 and May 2010. The discussions that follow take departure from the nine Community Study Reports that were drafted in June 2010, but the analytical work capitalises also on the plentiful data that had been recorded on the comparatively constructed data-sheets for summing up the interviews with students, their parents and teachers; further, extensive use will be made also from the annotations that the fieldworkers produced while making class-room observations and watching students’ and teachers’ encounters on the corridors, in the canteen or on the schoolyard, and also from the copious notes that were born in relation to the focus-group discussions with the different agents of schooling.

In line with the construction of the fieldwork (that approached everyday life and relations of students, like “layers of onion-skin”, by moving from the closest actors toward those having only some mediated role in shaping schooling) and also in accordance with the structure of the country-based Community Study Reports, each of the key topics of the current study is discussed from several angles: experiences as narrated by students and parents are mirrored by the views of the teachers and different representatives of other institutions in the community; musings on inter-ethnic relations as expressed by the individual students are brought into reflective associations with the observations on the very same relations within and outside the school; etc.

However, following the logic that the primary focus on cross-country comparisons requires, the aforementioned reflective associations are presented in clusters as aroused by the nature of the issue under consideration: at times they are looked at through the lens of differences shaped by the departing long-term histories of majority/minority relations, at other times, they are analysed according to comparable socioeconomic characteristics across borders, yet on other occasions they are brought into the framework of variations in the institutional structures of education; etc.

Of course, the choice of the prisms that guide the analysis is never a matter of arbitrary decisions. As the “sibling” of this study, the Comparative Survey Report has revealed, it is mainly the inter-personal aspects of minority ethnic students’ daily life in and outside the school and the accessible strategies for identity development that are deeply affected by inter-ethnic relations in the given society at large. At the same time, school performance and aspirations for advancement are shaped in an immediate way by the families’ socioeconomic standing and by parents’ own history of social mobility prior to and after immigration. If these phenomena are looked at through the opportunities provided for minority ethnic and/or socially disadvantaged students, or if teachers’ roles in shaping minority adolescents’ future are investigated, it is the given structure of schooling, its meritocratic hierarchies, competitiveness or striving for (good) education for all that come to the forefront as decisive aspects of the analysis and also of the comparative assessments. (Szalai, Messing, and Neményi 2010)

Our qualitative investigations on the field have reinforced the variations in the strength of the associations that are to be considered to shape certain phenomena and processes. Nevertheless, it has become clear through our more than 500 interviews incorporating personal histories and revealing values, attitudes and aspirations in an intergenerational perspective that, in the last resort, it is the long *duréé* of history that leaves its marks all around: if one looks at factors and structures that inform the given build-up of the school system or that determine the scope of

choices whereby strives for mobility and integration are formulated, the peculiar history of the society under investigation enters the stage as the ultimate source for explanation.

Three distinct clusters of historical arrangements with diverse implications for the social positions and embeddedness of minority ethnic people were identified by the analysis. The distinguished regimes differ in the driving forces that shape the patterns of inter-ethnic relations and depart from each other also in the prevalent patterns of inter-ethnic encounters and their institutionalisation.

In countries of post-colonial migration both majorities and the various minority ethnic groups have internalised the prevailing ethno-social hierarchies through a century-long history of inter-ethnic cohabitation and have constructed their worlds in response to and in defence of it. In a way, gradual changes in the social structures and the educational systems, respectively, have been built on the evolving forms and patterns of representation and protection that all actors have related to by giving responses that have become the customary ways of inter-ethnic relating and thus gained the status of the “norm”. In these societies (that are represented by France and the UK in our country selection), recognition of ethnic distinctions can often give the impetus to extensive attempts at integration and full-fledged social and political participation on the part of the minorities. At the same time, aspirations to break through the “ethnic ceilings” fail for the most part and are considered as deviant attempts at rebelling and thus harmful for the peaceful coexistence and cooperation of the involved groups and communities.

The case is different in countries where inter-ethnic relations and the patterns of their institutionalisation are shaped by the rather novel experiences of massive economic migration. These societies – that are represented by Germany, Denmark, and Sweden in our sample – still seem to experiment with the “proper” ways of responding to the new social reality. Unlike in their post-colonial counterparts, majorities here often hope for regaining their country’s ethnic homogeneity (“migrants will hopefully go back to their country of origin”), and if frustrated in their expectations, turn toward people from “immigrant background” either with the will to “Europeanise” them, or with attempts at designating distinct physical, organisational and social spaces for them through ethnic segregation, or by establishing new relations of patronising as if being from immigrant background was a “handicap” or a “disease”. In reacting to these forms of ‘othering’, minority ethnic groups – especially the Muslim communities – often develop arrangements of voluntary separation and strive at full-fledged recognition by emphasising social, economic, cultural and political inclusion on multicultural grounds.

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

The patterns have changed, however, during the decades of forced industrialisation under state-socialism. The traditional divisions of labour quickly became outdated, and Roma found themselves compelled to take up the peripheral jobs in the all-embracing system of compulsory employment. The process was accompanied by an intense move toward the urban areas, though large groups of Roma remained confined to stay in the rural settings and commute for work. The large-scale processes of industrialisation and (partial) urbanisation have not concluded, however, in Roma inclusion. Just to the contrary, the unfinished projects of occupational and social mobility and the accompanying developments toward gradual integration suddenly became suspended: after the collapse of state-socialist industry, it has been Roma in the first place who

were qualified as “unwanted” and “superfluous”. Massive and lasting unemployment is just one – though crucial – aspect of the problem: in addition, Roma have become the victims of a number of concurrent processes from reshuffling the provision of welfare to restructuring the system of schooling and to rebuilding the urban spaces that all have concluded in their sharp impoverishment and utter marginalisation. Under these new conditions, Roma-ness has turned to an all-encompassing socio-political symbol of all social evils, and in everyday relations, Roma have been singled out as the “due” targets of forceful separation and exclusion.

While our empirical investigations brought up a range of important implications of these three departing inter-ethnic regimes that will be introduced below, it was partly our research design, partly the limitations of the resources and capacities at our disposal that urged us to clearly circumscribe the scope of the phenomena and relations of inter-ethnic cohabitation that are to be addressed in this Study. In accordance with the primary focus of the EDUMIGROM project, we concentrated the work on exploring the experiences, views and attitudes of certain designated minority ethnic groups in each of the participating countries. Country by country, the selected groups were those that were known to rank-and-file people as the ones embodying ethnic ‘otherness’ simply by their “visible” traits. In other words, the selected groups, more than other people from “immigrant background”, are usually exposed to ethnic distinctions and the accompanying practices of ‘othering’. However, by putting them into the focus of the inquiries, our research constructed a particular magnifying lens: a glimpse through it might show majorities’ inclinations to set apart those who are not ‘us’ more pronounced and more determined than they were provided that all the nuances of inter-ethnic relating were taken into consideration. Therefore, one has to be cautious in generalising the experienced tensions and conflicts: it may well be the case that ethnic distinctions are played out in a gradual way and that people from the majority are more open to integrate certain groups than others. Such assumptions are all the more justified because the observed inter-ethnic relations often incorporate a vast array of social disadvantages as well, and thus it is difficult to establish whether refusals and subordinations are driven by antagonisms along the line of social class (where ethnicity is just a cover for inequalities in social standing and power), or are informed by ethnic/racial contents per se.

Another limitation of our study follows from the one-sided exploration of relations that have two ends. Apart from a few focus-group set-ups where the researchers succeeded to invite students and/or parents from the majority and the minority ethnic groups alike, our study presents the views, perceptions and reasoning about the state of inter-ethnic relations exclusively through the lens of the minorities. While it was a primary aim of the research to bring up the experiences about discrimination, ‘othering’ and also the frequent attempts at ‘minoritisation’ of the latter communities, it is important to face the fact that the other side of these stories remains in the dark within the applied framework. Thus, we have very limited information about how majority youths are socialised in perceiving and practicing inter-ethnic relations, how they experience diversity around, how they reflect on day-to-day cultural (often: religious) differences, and how they conceptualise the ethnic ‘others’. Furthermore, we do not learn whether students from majority backgrounds cause harm to their minority ethnic peers because of deep-rooted hatred and fear that are conditioned by their own life-histories and that are canalised in ways of stereotyping and stigmatising the ‘Other’, or whether they engage in discriminatory acts mainly through unconsciously or half-consciously developed routines that had been acquired as parts of the normative behavioural patterns and customary ways of adult communication around. While the differences in the motivations do not count in qualifying all the involved acts as “discriminatory”, knowing their origins and constructs still would be rather important to design appropriate policies and actions for combating ‘othering’ and also for reconsidering the role of the school and its pedagogical practices in tackling the derogatory practices and manifestations of ethnic distinctions.

In sum, the choices that have been made at the outset as parts of our research design largely determine the questions that the comparative qualitative inquiries have put into their focus. Using the lens of the selected minority ethnic groups, the discussions in the subsequent chapters will address the following major issues:

- How do the prevailing school systems impact on the position and future perspectives of minority ethnic adolescents? What is the role of the widespread selective procedures (ranging from early tracking to segregation and within-school separation) in shaping performance and advancement of minority ethnic students, and how do these processes forge their longer-term educational aspirations?
- How do social, gender, and ethno-cultural factors and their interplay inform performance, attendance and the general position of minority ethnic adolescents in school? How do these factors intervene in forming educational strategies and how are they reflected in longer-term career options?
- How do minority ethnic students and their families relate to actual school experiences and to schooling in general? How do they interpret success, failure and variations in advancement? What are their views on issues of justice, discrimination, and equality in the context of schooling?
- What are the typical strategies of identity formation of minority ethnic youth, and what roles do schools, families, peer relations and the broader inter-ethnic environment play in the process? How do experiences of ‘othering’ inform the shaping of “minority ethnic” identity and how do they affect visions on and aspirations for adulthood?
- What are the responsible agents (institutions, persons) for promoting equal opportunities in education of “minority ethnic” youth, and for diminishing the gap between majority and minority students? Who are to be considered partners in achieving these goals? What are the sources of hindrance?

From a methodological point of view, the construction of the Study takes into account that the above five clusters of questions were not investigated with the same weight from all angles. Hence, while heavily capitalising on the Country Community Studies, certain parts of the discussion will focus on information gained mainly through individual interviews with students and parents, while others will primarily rely on the processed information gained from observations on various sites and in various locations, yet others will report the structuring of views as reflected in the focus-group discussions and the sections on views, attitudes and opinions in the individual interviews, etc. Further, the subsequent elaborations will strongly build on the case-studies and processed sheets that have been born earlier as meta-analytical pieces of the research.

The analytical account is structured in a format somewhat different from earlier EDUMIGROM-studies. Its main body consist of three independent, though conceptually and methodologically tightly laced essays. The essays were drafted by three independent working groups, each made up by 3-4 members representing the Country Teams of the project. The three working groups were led by three experienced Country Team leaders: Claire Schiff (France), Ian Law (UK), and Radim Marada (Czech Republic), respectively. Each self-contained essay starts with an introduction to set its own stage and closes by drawing the main conclusions of the presented discussion.

The first essay addresses the educational experiences and longer-term aspirations of minority ethnic students by focusing on the schools as the decisive locations of everyday life of 14-17 year old adolescents. It looks at those larger-scale social, political, and cultural factors that shape the school-systems and that drive the varying forms of selection, and arrives at a categorisation that allows the reader to see the above-indicated historical imprints in the actual constellations of

early schooling, together with the implications that the various categories carry for the scope of minority ethnic students' advancement in education and beyond. The discussion reveals also the typical ways of parents' relating to education and points to those mutual determinations between the socioeconomic positions of the families and the schools' willingness for providing support in children's progression that importantly contribute to the fulfilment of the reproductive functions of schooling in their daily reality. The chapter also shows that, amidst the manifold limitations that schools as the locations of the mundane relations of adolescents face, there is still a substantial degree of autonomy at their disposal to play out certain chosen values and to set the rules of operation accordingly. If the school personnel – teachers in the first place – are qualified and determined enough, they can significantly improve the conditions and the contents of their students' schooling and thereby exert substantial impact on the opportunities of minority ethnic adolescents for advancement toward the next stage in education and also in the longer-term future. However, such innovative attempts are rather scarce: as a rule, teachers are inclined to participate in the general processes of 'othering'. As a closer look at inter-ethnic peer relations shows, they hardly ever intervene into the sometimes aggressive power-games among their students, and accept without reservation the customary teenager routines of teasing, mocking and bullying. With such tacit toleration of inter-ethnic conflicts and physical and verbal degradation, teachers often become integral parts of the world of daily discrimination that minority ethnic youths experience in and outside the school alike.

The second essay puts experiences of 'othering' into its centre. Although 'othering' can affect different groupings of people for different reasons, obviously, it is minority ethnic youth in the first place whose gradually evolving notions of being 'different' from most of the people around are scrutinised from different angles. By picking up the threads of the first essay, first the structural conditions of being 'othered' are explored. Segregated living in dilapidated urban segments and the adjunct schools dominated by minority ethnic students set the stage with hard contours. Being born into such conditions deeply ingrains personal development and the perception of 'difference' in comparison to the dominant groups of children and families in the given society. As a consequence, experiences of 'otherness' grow in an incremental way to inextricable traits of the personality that help minority ethnic youth to accept it as a "natural" given that their opportunities are distinctly 'different' from their 'non-othered' majority peers.

Though being 'othered' carries negative implications for the most part, minority ethnic youth, their families and immediate communities develop a broad array of self-protective responses to the prevailing state of affairs, and often succeed in filling the conditions of being 'distinguished' with strong bondages and contents of solidarity and support. At the same time, the strength of such relations is highly dependent on the forces and processes that are characterising the given society at large. If 'othering' takes the form of collective social exclusion and builds the symbolic and actual walls of a closed ghetto that hardly allows for escaping life-long captivation, then minority ethnic communities also tend to be endangered by internal break-up and the loosening of supportive ties. In reflection to the varied structural conditions that forge the ways and patterns of 'othering' and that determine the abrasiveness and implied harmfulness of such social practices, the essay introduces how the earlier mentioned historical divergences among the represented European societies are played out in the informal and institutionalised patterns of maintaining and reproducing ethnic distinctions. It shows that 'othering' might remain within the realm of social distinctions with mild implications on personal development and later opportunities of the affected minority groups, provided that society thoroughly observes citizens' rights and allows for the efficient working of institutions of participatory democracy. At the same time, the discussion also reveals that weak institutions of self-protection and the representation of minority interests easily become puppets in the hands of the ruling majority that tends to govern them in smoothing the all-round processes of exclusion. Under such conditions, the widely used practices of 'othering' serve to limit the scope of choice and



mobility, and thus become efficient legitimising factors in maintaining and reproducing socio-ethnic inequalities that are grounded, in turn, in widely accepted notions of differential citizenship.

The third essay looks at the implications of the aforementioned factors and experiences on the formation of minority ethnic identities and the strategies of mobilising these identities in aspiring for different positions in society at large. The discussion takes due consideration of the fact that, given the psycho-social conditions of a transient nature of adolescent personality, the observed trends in identity formation are usually early indications of the developmental traits of the individual that still might take “unexpected” turns or follow paths that are yet hardly traceable at the age of concluding primary education. Despite the wise warnings, the analysis reveals clusters of clear patterns that get crystallised, yet again, around the structural conditions of stronger or weaker embeddedness in society and along the lines of inter-generational transmission of historically moulded perceptions of ‘otherness’, respectively. The chapter scrutinises the varied patterns of adolescent identity formation against the givens of the prevailing structures of inter-ethnic cohabitation and looks deeply into the role of the immediate agents in the community (schools, neighbourhoods, local civil organisations, et.) in preparing young people for the roles that they are expected to fulfil in adulthood. The roles in question are, however, far from being uniform. Depending on the generational history of the family, and especially, parents’ migration experiences and their desires to improve social status through ingraining aspirations for advancement into their children, the patterns of adolescent identity vary from the tacit acceptance of low status to high-flying aspirations for full-fledged integration. Such familial patterns become deeply influenced by the standing of the minority ethnic community as such. If collective experience of the community implies exclusion that is reinforced by residential segregation and harsh separation in schooling, then the new generation of minority ethnic adolescents is inclined to internalise the collective fate of ‘outcasts’ and refrain from developing aspirations and behaviours for a break-through. Contrarily, if being ‘othered’ does not involve the blocking of social mobility and the closure of opportunities for advancing toward acknowledged paths, occupations and forms of living in society, then ‘ethnic otherness’ remains just one of the individual traits and the conditions give rise to identities aspiring for integration on equal grounds. Thus, the importance of historicity becomes demonstrated from yet another angle. It turns out that even the apparently most private aspects of young people’s lives are seriously conditioned by the large-scale processes and structures in the given society that act as most powerful factors in setting the framework for the choices and opportunities of meeting individual drives and aspirations.

Taken together, the three essays render important implications for the potentials and limitations of schooling in countervailing the seemingly strong impact of the social relations at large in creating, maintaining and reproducing ethnic distinctions as the legitimised foundations of designating departing prospects for youth in contemporary Europe. Some of the implications will be pointed out in the closing section of this volume that intends to set the stage for a range of policy recommendations that are to be developed in the final phase of the EDUMIGROM project.

## **LIFE AT SCHOOL**

**Claire Schiff, Vera Messing, Bolette Moldenhawer, and  
David Kostlán**

## **INTRODUCTION**

This first chapter examines the ways in which partly formal and partly institutionally framed ethnic distinctions shape personal relations that make up everyday school experience of majority and minority students. As mentioned in the Foreword, the EDUMIGROM team applied both sociological and ethnographical methods to conduct the qualitative phase of the research, such as: personal in-depth interviews, focus group discussions with the most important actors of the educational process (students, their parents and the teachers) as well as participant observations within and outside the school.

Taking into account the wide array of national and local contexts in which the community studies were carried out, this essay seeks to review and then compare to what extent the antagonistic or harmonious nature of relations between minority students and other school agents are influenced by factors that are independent of or, on the contrary, dependent upon particular school settings and actions of various actors. The intrinsic and extrinsic factors which shape life at school shall be observed by adopting a variety of perspectives as well as by posing a series of questions.

Firstly, we shall describe how the schools, as more or less independent institutional organisations, manage and treat the presence of a substantial number of students belonging to the most stigmatized minority groups. To what extent can various degrees and forms of school segregation be derived from forces over which the schools have no power, or are schools in and of themselves major agents of segregation?

Then as the observed schools approach the schooling of minority students, we shall reverse the question by asking how minority students view schooling. What kind of role does the school play in their lives and in their future plans, and to what extent is this role determined by the type of treatment they receive in school, as well as by independent factors such as family background and job opportunities?

The third part will analyse the way in which teachers relate to their minority students. After briefly describing the various teaching styles, class atmospheres and major pedagogical problems, we shall explore how teachers' opinions on their minority students are shaped, firstly, by factors that may be country-specific reflections on a particular national tradition or ideology; secondly, by one's own ethnic origin, particular personal sensibilities and training; and thirdly, by particular school arrangements. Taking into consideration that schools are places for both peer socialisation and academic learning, the fourth and last part of this essay will examine how students interact with each other and relate to their peers. Here again the discussion will seek to determine the extent to which factors remain independent from the schools' actions, such as residential patterns, neighbourhood identities, the families' and the given community's influence on youth leisure activities.

## **THE SITES OF THE QUALITATIVE RESEARCH: THE SCHOOLS**

In this section the purpose is to provide a cross-country comparative overview of schools included in the community study by looking at the setup how schools are organised, their ethnic and social compositions, their approaches towards ethnic diversity, and finally the consequences of the above constellations in everyday life at school. In all the participating countries, the selection of schools was driven by two equally important factors: ethnic composition and recruitment as well as integration policy. As a consequence of this research design the selection of the sample for the community studies resulted in a wide range of schools with regard to

factors such as their setup, ethnic and social composition, approach towards diversity and their position in the local educational market.

Regarding the focal questions of our study, it is of key importance to see the ways in which educational systems are constructed and manifest in various school setups. Focusing on the target group of the EDUMIGROM research project, the following *school setups* were included: primary schools (in the samples of the Central European countries), comprehensive schools integrating elementary, lower and upper secondary stages (in the samples of Denmark, Sweden and one school in Germany) or secondary schools (samples of the UK, France and Germany). (Szalai, Messing, and Neményi 2010)

Thus, the timing of making students decide where to study next, all the more, channelling students into various tracks of secondary education on the basis of their prior school performance and/or interest, motivation and aspiration differs country by country. For instance, by looking at our sample, tracking happens at an outstandingly early stage in Germany, and it takes place also at a rather young age in the UK or France. As it turns out, this characteristic of the sample has important implications on our issue under investigation: life at school in diverse communities. Students who study in secondary schools generally experience more freedom and independence which materialises in less control during the breaks, more individual autonomy as well as demand for individual responsibility than those of their peers of the same age who are just about to conclude the primary school. Most typically the former are free to move during the breaks and enjoy themselves in their own way, with as little control as possible: *“From the student haunt it is also possible to walk out on the balcony, which overlooks the schoolyard.... During one break a ‘pillow fight’ is observed. .. Only one teacher was seen during observations outside the classroom.* “(school observation, Denmark)

However, students in primary schools (8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> graders in our sample) are most typically controlled throughout the time when at school, and both their activities and behaviour are thoroughly supervised by their teachers in and outside the classroom. In several instances, students are confined to stay in a designated and rigorously controlled area during breaks: *“The students [...] are sent out from their rooms, and the door of their room is closed by key by the teacher.”* (classroom observation, Romania) Or another example: *“There is a lot of noise during the breaks although there is a big control from the side of teachers during the breaks.”* (classroom observation, Czech Republic)

Teachers typically fulfil a double role in primary schools which is on the one hand teaching, on the other, guarding students as well as supporting them in their way of socialisation. However, in comparison to the primary school teachers, the task of secondary school teachers is more focused on teaching as their primary (often sole) role. Consequently, being a primary school student, or in other words, having more time and space for being a child implies that students' career aspirations could still be utterly undecided in contrast to their age peers, who have already been tracked into vocational schools, and hence, whose future career opportunities have been limited to a large extent. That is to say that, comprehensive schools serve more as a transition: although students are kept together in the same institution during the period of compulsory education, still, at a certain grade they are allowed or even compelled to choose specialisations and vocations in order to try out themselves in various roles without being incarcerated in a certain institutional track.

Our samples varied not only in terms of school setups, but also the *neighbourhoods* they encompassed. The vast majority of the schools in the sample were situated on the edge or inside an urban housing district characterised by high proportions of ethnic minority families. The communities in which the schools are embedded are characterised by lesser or greater degrees of ethnic-social segregation. The site of study is in some cases overly-populated minority ethnic communities, or with a high degree of inter-ethnic cohabitation. It is mainly the residential and

demographic situation in the selected communities that has forged the schools' socioeconomic and ethnic compositions. The scale of residential separation though varied across the participating countries: in some schools (most typically in Sweden and the UK, but also in Denmark), the schools were situated in a neighbourhood dominantly or exclusively inhabited by migrant groups. Some of the schools (most typically in the Central European countries but also in the UK and Denmark) were located on the edge of a segregated minority community. Further, there were schools in the sample (again, most typically in the Central European countries) which were situated in an ethnically mixed part of the town. Only a few schools (in the Central European countries, and one in France) were situated in the centre of the settlement, in an ethnic majority dominated district.

The neighbourhood of the school has a major impact on everyday life at school: it was shown already by the survey that the neighbourhood where they come from was a major factor, together with their gender, in shaping students' self-identification, and it had an equally significant role in moulding groupings and friendship circles as well as making a cause for conflict among students. This was especially the case in countries with post-colonial history, but neighbourhood belonging carried similar significance also in some of the sites in Central Europe: "*Our initial observations have tended to confirm that for young people local neighbourhood identities and solidarities tend to take precedence over ethnic or racial identities.*" (Felouzis, Fouquet, and Schiff 2009)

Even though a general finding across European countries is that school segregation is strongly linked to forms of residential segregation, it may also be the results of other factors and processes. Ways of selection, discussed below, operate in and among schools on the basis of how they are positioned in ethnically mixed localities. In France, for example, it is rather exceptional to leave the given school district, while in other countries families exert a high degree of freedom in searching for the school that they consider the most appropriate for their child. As a matter of fact, in Central Europe the schools' ethnic composition is shaped by intense fleeing. As a consequence, the schools of the EDUMIGROM community sample differed significantly also in terms of their ethnic and social composition: there were schools in which the dominant majority of students came from minority ethnic families and there were others, which had an ethnically and socially diverse student population. As it was expected, the above constellations concluded in a wide range of differences in terms of everyday life in school, framework of socialisation and future opportunities.

### ***The sample: composition and positioning of minority ethnic students***

In the sample of our qualitative inquiries among minority ethnic youth students are from similar socioeconomic backgrounds. Though educational inequalities are shaped along factors alike in all the studied countries implying that homologous relationships prevail between the potential educational carrier of students and their families' socioeconomic position, the empirical scope of status is diverging. The neighbourhoods are also characterised by a relatively diverse pallet of occupational positions, e.g. farmers, petty traders, manufacturers, industrial workers, unemployed, day labourers, service employees and small entrepreneurs. These labour positions do not simply denote differences in community traditions but most importantly indicate niches of survival strategies.

The selected Central European communities can be divided into two or three categories on the basis of social status that is composed of three components: the quality of living condition, labour market status and parents' level of education. Concerning the investigated minority ethnic group in these countries – Roma –, it can be established that it is only the first group of families of the highest status who have a more or less regular employment and reasonable living as well as housing conditions among them. The other two categories (including the vast majority of the

sample) live in underprivileged conditions in crowded and dilapidated homes; have no regular jobs and most of them have poor education. Considering the samples of the Central European countries at large, a significant number of students live in extreme deprivation and suffer from social exclusion.

The sample includes several schools whose feeding areas are social and ethnic slums (a few schools in the Hungarian sample, most of the schools in the Slovakian and the Romanian sample, and all of schools in the Czech sample). These families live in spatial segregation, sometimes among desolate housing conditions unsuitable for human life, and the least meant for children. In certain areas, especially in the Roma ‘colonies’ and slums of Central Europe, housing conditions are vastly overcrowded (6-10 people live in a one- or two-room ‘apartment’), lack several or all of the basic utilities (sewage, gas, water, heating) essential for human residence in an urban environment. It is easy to imagine how far the worlds and realities of home and school are, which materialises in constantly conflicting values and expectations of the two spheres of life of minority adolescents living in such environment. One extreme example is that in Romania, where one of the schools receives students from the ill-famed Roma colony situated on the city’s garbage heap, where 1800 Roma people – among them 800 children – live in hovels among desperate circumstances. Only half of these children go to school, some of whom attend the school in our sample. These people live in favella like hovels, and ‘make’ their living by collecting useable parts from the garbage and sell them to ‘retailers’. Their situation does not essentially differ from the situation of destitute poverty in the ‘Third World’. More typically, families of the Roma and migrant interviewees live in spatially (and mentally) separated parts of the city, which are composed of dilapidated urban social rentals, or blocks of prefabricated houses. Many of the Roma families live in inner-city or suburban housing estates, which are neglected, and where apartments are vastly overcrowded. It is unusual for families of ethnic minority interviewees to live integrated in middle-class majority environment.

Family and housing conditions have obviously a major impact on everyday life of students also in the school. Problems which stem from unsuitable living conditions are widespread and intense. These include truancy, irregular school attendance (most typically the first or last classes are skipped because of an often troublesome start of the day, and/or because of the need for contributing to parents’ work during the afternoon), social pathological phenomena such as drugs, alcohol; lack of preparedness concerning the school work and equipment; lack of food or suitable clothing, behavioural problems, etc. As teachers put it:

*“They do not have any habits, connected to school. The parent hammers away all day, comes home, there are seven children. Parents do not have energy to take care. I work here one month and I see that none of the children study at home. They close the book here and open it also next day in school ...at home nothing.”* (focus group with teachers, Czech Republic)

*“The problem is that [...] the children don’t see an example to be followed. They don’t see that the parents go to work every morning and are paid regularly for that work.”* (teacher, Hungary)

Many of the schools consider issues which stem from both destitute housing conditions and family background as out of their authority and intend to identify the parents as the only responsible for upbringing. Several schools are unwilling and also unable to deal with these problems, and concentrate their activity exclusively on tuition. As put by a teacher in Romania: *“Everything comes from the family, from their home environment; the interest of parents is very low. The school is not able to change the inequalities among families existing outside the school”*.

However, some of the schools, especially primary schools with a high degree of sensitivity towards difficult living conditions, recognise that if they do not attempt to handle such problems they are going to be unsuccessful in fulfilling their major task, that of teaching.

The socioeconomic composition of students in the Danish, Swedish and German community study samples is somewhat more favourable but they still comprise the lowest strata of the respective society: a significant proportion of students in the selected schools in these countries are regarded as socially disadvantaged. The majority of the parents is unemployed or earns minimum wage, however others are self-employed. There is a high proportion of students from families where neither of the parents continued education beyond the primary level. There are families that manage to apply strategies to achieve territorial/social mobility and move out from the socially disadvantaged district. Additionally, since education is considered as the most important medium for social mobility, the more enhanced one's socioeconomic situation the stronger the motivation is to move out from the suburbs that are segregated and densely populated, which is the case in some countries such as Denmark or Sweden, and also among several Roma families in Central Europe. In Germany, the socioeconomic status of the 50 per cent of the selected immigrant families with Turkish or Lebanese background is heavily influenced by either unemployment (8 out of 28) or such an employment situation that does not provide the necessary minimum income for a decent living (4 out of 28). At least 13 families live on financial welfare aid.

The selected minorities of post-colonial background in France and in the UK are generally more settled in terms of residence and labour market position. In France, the sample includes mostly minorities of Maghrebian and Afro-Caribbean background, and in the UK, it rather embraces minorities of Black-Caribbean and Pakistani backgrounds. The Pakistanis in the UK are recruited from different social strata which reflect the unequal distribution of power in the British society. The majority of the pupils live in socially deprived areas and the sample of parents ranged from workless, blue-collar workers, e.g. taxi drivers, to professionals. Pakistani *castes* bear a major significance in terms of social standing within their community. Further, in the French sample, if we consider professions and employment statuses of the students' families, the great majority of interviewees come from the lower social strata of the society. At least two-third of the fathers occupy blue-collar jobs, as manual labourers or employees on lower positions, while the same proportion of mothers are housewives and/or have unqualified, part-time jobs, e.g. in the cleaning or house keeping sectors. Only a few parents are regarded as qualified professionals, such as nurses, engineers, or policemen. Furthermore, we shall add that many of those parents, who have worked as qualified professionals in their home country, did not succeed in finding jobs on the similar level in France. An important finding is that the range of educational levels is much wider among immigrant parents than among non-immigrant parents in the French sample, and also much wider than their outlined labour market and socioeconomic positions. The apparent homogeneity of the sample's socioeconomic status tends therefore to mask a wide variety of situations as long as we simply define profiles by the position occupied in France. A few parents, for instance those who have less education, may have experienced significant upward social mobility through emigration, while some others, particularly among the highly educated, may have on contrary experienced significant downward social mobility. Thus a consideration exclusively limited to the positioning of parents in immigrant countries is obviously too narrow, since educational, social and family status in emigrant countries are also factors of importance that have to be taken into account when explaining educational success or failure among their children.

### *Ways of selection and some implications of diversity or the lack of it*

For the most part, the selected schools are either ethnically heterogeneous or are dominated by minority ethnic youth. The picture is somewhat different, however, in Central Europe. Here Roma students show up according to a scattered pattern: depending on the varying school policies and arrangements, the overall proportion of Roma students ranges between 10 and 90 percent. The latter configuration, that is institutionalised racial segregation, provides the ideological foundation for “special schools” in the Czech Republic (however, it is worth noting that, despite recent governmental efforts for desegregation, there is one school also in the Hungarian sample which is guided by the same principle). More typically, the proportion of Roma in the selected schools ranges from 20 to 40 per cent, but as it will be demonstrated later in this section, these ratios do not imply that Roma children study together with their majority peers.

Concentration of minority ethnic youth is much stronger in our school samples in the Western European communities: here it is 30 to 90 per cent of the students who belong to minority ethnic groups, with compositions typically bending towards the upper end of the scale. These high proportions follow from two independent factors: firstly, many of the schools selected into the sample are characterised by a setup (upper secondary schools) where streaming of students into tracks has already been completed (Germany, UK, and France); secondly, residential segregation is powerful in urban areas that have been selected for the study.

The discussion below will attempt to give an overview of both of the indicated processes and will introduce some of the implications on everyday life at school. The discussion will apply a framework that utilises two significant dimensions with regard to the construction of various constellations of ethnic and social differentiation within school and one’s closer class environment. The first is the *school’s attitude towards diversity*, while the second is *ethnic composition of the institution*. As it will be shown, these two components seem to make up a sophisticated framework for exploring the effects of given school arrangements on both a personal and a community level and also for pointing out the power of school in challenging the prevailing social and ethnic differences.

The research revealed three major clusters of attitudes towards school diversity: (1) diversity-conscious schools; (2) schools that are diversity-blind; and (3) schools which deliberately separate minority ethnic students from their majority peers. Although the range of schools according to their ethnic composition is broad in our sample, for the purposes of the analysis that follows, we will cluster them with some simplification into two groupings, and make distinctions between schools with an ethnically mixed student body, on the one hand, and schools dominated by minority ethnic youth, on the other.

#### **Ethnically mixed schools applying internal separation**

Some schools, especially those in the Central European countries, try to counterbalance the process of ‘white flight’ and its consequences by introducing or strengthening internal separation. Such separation may have diverse motives and justifications, still the outcome is the same: minority ethnic and socially disadvantaged children are placed into parallel classes and programmes. A justification which is frequently stressed is that internal separation is a necessary evil in order to prevent the school from an even worse outcome of becoming a segregated school for Roma. *“The most important aim was to artificially maintain the “pre-merger state” and act as if nothing had happened. That is to say that Roma children were separated from the ethnic majority, and the parents of the latter were convinced that ‘everything was the same as usual’ ”* – a school principal tells about the motives behind the decisions made after the school was merged with a ‘Roma-only’ school. (teacher interview, Hungary)



Another frequent justification for internal separation is given by applying meritocratic principles in organising various streams by specialisation. Even if there is an agreement across political divides on supporting integrated education, most primary schools in Central Europe group students into different classes according to their first language or school performance. In schools which have parallel classes, the social and ethnic composition of the class determines its requirements and prestige: the more are Roma students in it, the class has is less and less demanding. With two exceptions (one in Hungary, and one in Romania) children from minority ethnic background barely make it to more prestigious classes. The “flipside” of the above-described practice is the following: *“We created a sort of classy class you know, [...] All the time many teachers, including me, noticed that we created not a good atmosphere. We gathered the best students into the one class and teachers do not want to teach in B, C, D classes, because it is a rubbish”*.(School principal, Hungary)

The same process is at work toward the other direction: minority students with a disadvantaged social background are concentrated in low-prestige classes. Concentration of students with low motivation suggests that both minority ethnic students and their non-Roma classmates have similarly poor results and low school performance in these arrangements. As a consequence, the chance to pull these children towards more intensive study is diminished. Since by the course of time it gets more and more challenging to motivate them, practices of segregation leads to damaging outcomes: low school performance, miserable indicators of educational advancement, high truancy and drop-out rates, and a stigmatised, and thereby interiorised, sense of ‘otherness’. Furthermore, occurrences of open conflicts, such as bullying, hostility and fights between students of parallel classes are also frequent accompaniments of the skewed ethnic and social composition of such classes. That is to say conflicts are more frequent in segregated communities than in ones characterised by a balanced socio-ethnic composition.

Additionally, teachers frequently lose control in such classes and often consider teaching as a punishment: they are unable to maintain discipline, or to motivate students to fulfil the minimum requirements. Even though teachers’ attitudes (rudeness or ignorance) may also be in the centre-point of criticism in the public discourse, according to our experience, none of the interviewees blamed the teachers for poor results. Parents rather pointed out the tendency that teachers pay more attention to successful students than to those with bad results, and also remarked that they very often made distinction between good and bad Roma student depending on the families’ inclination to cooperate with the school. In cases where parents cooperate, the school is more prepared to support weaker students, to forget their problems and to promote regular continuation of their study. Success and failure are then deliberately preconditioned by parents’ attitudes and behaviour.

In some schools segregated Roma classes are also physically removed and located in distant parts of the school building. Such a decision is most of the time triggered by the intention of stopping ‘white flight’. A telling example is one of the schools in the Czech sample where the merger of a school, characterised by a middle class majority student body, with a ‘Roma’ school resulted in a massive flight of 140 non-Roma students despite the fact that the merge was solely administrative, as students of the two pre-merger schools were kept separately in distinct classes in separate buildings. There are schools in the Czech, Slovak and Hungarian samples each which practice physical separation of minority ethnic students. *“Those classes are located in a different wing of the school and they almost never meet students from the special classes. They only observe them from the window as they very often do some gardening outside. “Standard” students use to shout at them and they shout back.”* (Kusa, 2009)

Although such separation might have prevented the school from becoming an ill-famed ‘Roma-only’ school, their students suffer disproportionately: the Comparative Survey Report (Szalai, Messing and Neményi 2010) and the respective Community Study Reports of Slovakia,

Romania and Hungary (Kusa et al 2010, Vincze 2010, Neményi et. al. 2010) have demonstrated that internal segmentation/segregation deprive students not only from quality education and meaningful inter-ethnic personal relations, but also from their dignity and self-esteem. Furthermore, decisions on keeping Roma students apart seem to cause most of the inter-ethnic conflicts on the long run. Below are the words of a student who was threatened to be sent to an ethnically segregated class. These words are to illustrate the psychological load attached to segregation: *“It is a humiliation to get into this class.”*

In countries of economic migration, many of the selected schools receive newcomer students of migrant background. Although several of these schools manage to separate newcomers (Denmark, Sweden), still such divisions are supposed to be only temporary and there are efforts made to enhance language skills and to provide accommodation for new circumstances. Most typically these schools run one or several transitory classes specifically designed for newcomers to let them learn the language and habituate to the culture of the receiving country as well as acquire basic skills necessary for later integration into regular classes. An important trait of this system is that students attending such transitory classes receive extensive pedagogical support and individual counselling in order to speed up their adjustment to new circumstances. After some time (1-2 years) students are integrated into regular classes, consequently such separation does not lead to outcomes comparable to the case of ethnic segregation of Roma in the Central European countries.

### **Segregated schools**

Due to processes of selection among educational institutions which leads to the creation of an invisible hierarchy of schools on the education market, there are schools whose student population comes predominantly from minority ethnic backgrounds. These schools are primarily located in Central Europe. Although legal regulations as well as policy measures intend to limit ethnic segregation in education as a form of discrimination, it has still been an existent and sometimes extensive phenomenon. The phenomenon is most prevalent in the Czech Republic where the concentration of Roma children in certain school setups, such as Basic Practical Schools, is extremely high.<sup>1</sup> The practice of stigmatising Roma children as mentally deprived and then directing them into schools is similarly extensive in Slovakia: 60 per cent of Roma children study in such institutions (Amnesty International 2010). Ethnically segregated schools exist also in Romania and Hungary but to a smaller, though still significant, extent. With few exceptions, transition from special schools into regular schools hardly ever occurs. This is even more painful, since, due to lower expectations and reduced curriculum, these schools serve as dead end to the educational carrier of their students. The paradox about this issue is that all parties involved in the educational process are interested in maintaining this harsh form of segregation: stakeholders of the local educational market can satisfy segregation demands of their local middle class electorate; teachers of regular schools are happy that they do not have to bother with problematic children; teachers in schools providing special education are satisfied being employed and making use of their special qualifications. Roma parents appear to often choose to enrol their children in such schools which they consider as “safe”, and further, where their children are faced with lower expectations and a less demanding curriculum but also with a relaxed environment. Still these students are doomed to failure and poverty for the rest of their life since none of these institutions promote or ease the social integration of Roma.

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<sup>1</sup> To give an example, it was challenging enough for the research team to find the required number of Roma children in regular primary schools. Finally the team included some Basic Practical Schools in its sample.

### **Ethnically mixed schools with colour-blind approach**

Primarily schools of Central Europe and France fall under this category. Given the principle of non-differentiation of citizens on the basis of their ethnic origin, which is the heart of the French Republican model of integration, schools avoid to make a distinction between worthy and unworthy students neither do they consider the need for introducing differential services. (Schiff et al. 2008) Secondary schools in the French sample are comprehensive in terms of both the number of years and the qualification they provide. However, tracking enters early into the system and channels students with various social and ethnic backgrounds into diverging paths of further education: students of lower social status and migrant families enter lower-prestige vocational schools, while students of middle-class French or Maghrebian background continue their studies in high-prestige schools. These divisions do not appear, however, to be translated into racial or ethnic preferences, neither are they the source of tensions.

Similar is the case in Central Europe where the operation of ethnically mixed schools is the result of the commitment and devotion of local leaders (including school principals) who perceive diversity as valuable. In other words, the concept of diversity is always indirectly on the agenda and manifests itself in measures that aspire to remediate existing disparities between school performance and future opportunities with regard to children of disadvantaged socioeconomic background.

Principals of ethnically mixed schools believe that recognition of ethnic differences leads to their reinforcement. Hence, ethnically mixed classes are the norm and all students are expected to adapt to the same values and accept the same rules: no ethnic group is discriminated either in a positive or in a negative way and no classes or curricula involve cultural, traditional or language differences. Students accept easily such an approach in most of the cases and do not make distinctions based on ethnicity. In the French case, students were not willing to speak about their ethnic background and identity. In the same manner, Roma students in such schools preferred to use other categories in order to talk about their families and self-identity. Still, ethnicity does not vanish from their everyday life. Even in such schools, students tend to group together with youths of the same ethnicity; they are aware of the negative consequences of their belonging and have experienced discrimination and prejudice outside of the school. As one of the consequences, even in the case of students in ethnically mixed schools, future aspirations are strongly shaped by students' ethnic origin.

### **'Minority' schools with colour-blind approach**

These schools suffer most frequently from consequences of residential segregation and 'white flight'. Many of the schools in Central Europe, one school in the Danish sample, two schools in the French and all schools in the German sample fall into this cluster. Despite parents' unrestricted right for choosing the school for their child regardless of the catchment area where they belong to, border-crossing serves mainly the upward aspiring middle-ranked social groups among the ethnic majority who attempt to achieve better position for their children. In fact, recognition of the right for free choice – under the circumstances of socioeconomic inequalities – leads to the departure of the better-off students from these areas and ghettoise minority ethnic communities. As a matter of fact, choice of the school becomes an imprint of one's socioeconomic and ethnic background as well as expresses one's future aspirations. This illustrates how socioeconomic position and cultural conceptions are reinforcing each other while excluding disadvantaged people from the chance of competing for positions with their financially more established peers.

Selection in and among schools is massively affected by processes of 'white flight'. The phenomenon exists in all the countries, however, its weight differs by the nature of the

catchment areas in question, the quality of inter-ethnic relations and the extent of prejudice and inter-ethnic tensions. Middle-class parents of the ethnic majority seem to be extremely sensitive to the presence of Roma students in schools in Central Europe. As a consequence of both institutional reorganisation of schools and changes in the proportion of minority ethnic or socially disadvantaged students, 'white flight' took place immediately and in very intense forms, even in those cases where the school made significant efforts to reverse the process (i.e. introduced internal separation or streaming). One can witness it in the cases of a Hungarian, a Czech and three Slovakian institutions: the birth of 'Roma-only' schools due to the unstoppable flight of majority students.

In one of the Danish schools, where the proportion of minority ethnic students increased from 30 per cent to 40 per cent as a result of the closure of a 'migrant' school and the collision of the two schools' catchment areas, a similar situation motivated the fleeing of ethnic majority students.

Secondary schools in the French and German samples belong to this category as well as a further Danish school. In France it is not 'white flight' but tracking and internal selection that has resulted in the construction of 'minority' schools. Students belonging to the selected minority groups, particularly those who have been placed into vocational programmes, often begin their upper-secondary school career with a feeling of having been negatively selected and unjustly constrained in their educational options.

Minority ethnic students are more likely to feel frustrated by the fact that their choices are limited in terms of further education. This frustration can be experienced in the German and Danish cases where residential segregation goes along with migrant families' school preferences for a minority dominant student population. Following the above, students never expressed their dissatisfaction with attending a 'minority-only' school: *"they appreciated to visit a school that is attended mostly by students of minority background. Their majority situation seems to give them the comfortable feeling to be in a relatively strong position and makes them less vulnerable to discrimination"* (Skrasburger, Ucan 2009).

None of the French, Danish and German schools applied a multicultural curriculum or seemed to be committed to ethnic diversity, but provided extra classes for mastering the majority's language. (All schools in the German and one school in the Danish sample had a special focus on teaching German/Danish as a second language.)

The comparison of these cases leads to the conclusion that besides the actual class-composition or teaching methods the way in which students are selected into a minority school is an important factor that allows students to identify themselves with the school. If students perceive that they were selected into a less prestigious institution and then they internalise this sense of dissatisfaction, they develop aversion towards the school and lose their ambitions. In contrast to the above, if students feel that the school was their choice – even if the school is positioned in the lower echelons of the local educational market –, students express a more positive attitude toward the school, and all the more, teaching appears to be easier despite its diversity. Still the educational outcome in both cases is rather disappointing: students studying in 'minority-only' schools perform significantly worse than their peers in ethnically mixed schools. (Szalai, Messing, and Neményi 2010)

### **Ethnically mixed schools with diversity-conscious approach**

The majority of the schools in the UK and Danish samples as well as one Hungarian and one Romanian school fall under this category. These schools try to enhance both equal opportunities and peaceful relations among students by developing and designing a multicultural curriculum and boosting positive self-identification of groups which are usually underprivileged in the wider society. Such schools carefully and truly integrate students of various ethnic and social

backgrounds and make sure that the division of students into parallel classes does not result in concentration of ethnic or social groups.

All schools in the UK are ethnically mixed secondary or comprehensive schools with a considerable proportion of students of minority ethnic background. Despite the fact that these schools occupy various positions in the educational market and model great variations in interethnic relations (one is an elite school, with a huge inflow of low status ethnic minority students coming from a different catchment area, another school is a truly multiethnic school, while the catchment area of the third school maps strong interethnic division) all the schools are successful in handling ethnic and social diversity. Even in the school where parents of the ethnic majority felt rather negative about minority ethnic students' presence, "*diversity was appreciated and positively valued*" and its aim was "*to help students [...] to comprehend and celebrate multi-cultural nature of the city's society*". (Swann, 2010)

These words were not superficial manifestation of the recognition of diversity, but ones which express an everyday experience of students and staff. Diversity-consciousness was reflected in all spheres of school life: in the curriculum, in extracurricular activities, in school celebrations, classroom activities and also in interethnic relations at school.

The teaching staffs of diversity-conscious schools tend to show a real commitment towards multiculturalism: most of these schools employ ethnic minority teachers and staff whose task is primarily to deal with issues and problems stemming from ethnic and social diversity. One of the Danish schools has an ethnic counsellor position whose duty is to mediate and deal with issues of an ethnic character as well as to provide a forum in which ethnic minority parents gain an easier access to school-matters.

Along the line of ethnic diversity one shall pay attention to other types of heterogeneity as well: the above-mentioned Danish comprehensive school has students from the age of 7 to the age of 17, and therefore prioritises the collaboration of students from different age groups: "*As an example, in every class 9<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade students are educated to become student mediators guiding and taking care of the younger students*". (School Case Study, Denmark) Consequently, cooperation among various groups of students as well as links between teachers and students facilitate good inter-ethnic relations and create a rather relaxed atmosphere at school.

The case of the few diversity-conscious schools in Central Europe is somewhat different. A good example is a school in Hungary which provides education for children living in a poverty-stricken urban slum area and introduced a highly prestigious German multilingual track, which attracts also middle-class white families. Quite uniquely in the region, the school principal is dedicated to the reduction of inequalities stemming from social differences of students' family background and translates her dedication into a diversity-conscious approach. The pattern works pretty well: students of various social and ethnic backgrounds are distributed into parallel classes with ethnically mixed compositions. Multiculturalism is practiced during the classes (multicultural curriculum, innovative pedagogical approaches to teaching a socially and ethnically diverse student population) as well as during extracurricular activities (Roma dance club, excursions). Further, the school aims at establishing a friendly and cooperative relationship with Roma families and the composition of the staff also reflects a diversity-conscious approach: earlier the school had a Roma teacher and now there are several teachers in employment who studied Roma language and culture at the university. In a regional comparison this school is doing well in reducing ethnic divisions, offering a comfortable, friendly environment, and providing equal opportunities. However, comparing it with schools in Western Europe the results are weak: friendships are primarily formed along ethnic lines and future prospects are strongly shaped by the family background of students. Still this school is the one in which disadvantaged Roma students have the greatest chance for educational and social mobility in the town.

Interestingly, irrespective of the country, diversity-conscious schools are the ones in which ethnicity as such plays a minor role in everyday life of students due to the fact that by expressing and promoting diversity, ethnic background does not become an important factor forming differences between students.

### **‘Minority’ schools with diversity-conscious approach**

As a matter of fact Muslims in Denmark and Germany, and Roma in the Ghandi Secondary School, that is a community-established Roma grammar school in Hungary, would belong to this cluster. Such schools represent cases of voluntary separation, by being established with the intention to serve a certain ethnic or religious community. Unfortunately for various reasons, none of these schools have been included in our community study samples. Among regular public schools, only one school in Sweden can be perceived as belonging to this category due to both its student composition and the emphasis on issues of ethnic background. This school has become a ‘minority school’ as a result of the powerful residential segregation typical for the urban district where it is located. Its staff is multicultural and a significant number of minority ethnic teachers work with students: the school employs teachers having 18 different mother tongues.

The presence of minority ethnic teachers might be an important factor for students: teachers who themselves experienced how it feels being a migrant are more likely to understand and treat empathically such instances. One such teacher told in the interview that he used his own stories and experiences in both his teaching and informal chats, which on the one hand comforted the situation of the students and on the other, eased his relationship with them. Ethnic composition of the student community is very heterogeneous in terms of their country of origin: encompassing students from Iraq, Somalia, Turkey, Albania, North Africa, South America and Europe. Students’ ethnic identity and their thoughts about ethnicity appeared to be significant and have been taken seriously by all those who were involved in the educational process. As a result, the school applied a multicultural curriculum, organised various extra-curricular activities, and stressed good relations with migrant families. However, several students expressed their concerns during the interviews about the ethnic composition of classes which lack ethnic Swedish students and thus fail to provide the possibility of socialising with Swedes. They were especially concerned about being able to accommodate to new circumstances after graduation. As put by one of the teachers in Sweden: “*These young people fear of meeting Swedish society and the Swedes*”.

## **THE ROLE OF ETHNICITY IN SHAPING ATTENDANCE AND PERFORMANCE AT SCHOOL: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS**

In this section the purpose is to reveal in a cross-country analysis that ethnicity in its intersection with prevailing social divisions is a most powerful factor in affecting attendance and performance at school and further, moulding opportunities, aspirations, and prospects of adolescents. From EDUMIGROM comparative survey report we learned that the chosen communities of study “*are typical working class communities where blue-collar jobs provide a living to 55 per cent of the fathers and 43 per cent of the mothers, with the relatively high occurrence (above 10 per cent) of housewifery in the latter group.*” (Szalai, Messing, and Neményi 2010) Furthermore that “*the landscape of the schools shows deep fault-lines by socioeconomic and ethnic compositions*” (ibid. p. 27), and lastly that the communities where minority ethnic people make up a substantial group are characterised by a remarkable polarisation according to the level of education; while the dominance of low educational

attainment is more pronounced for the minority groups than for the local majority, the case is just the opposite with regard to the proportion of those with higher education where the lead is taken by the majorities. (ibid. p. 14)

The aim is to gain a deeper insight into tendencies, indicated already in the EDUMIGROM Comparative Survey Report, by the students' own frames of reference into the multi-layered experiences of schooling. The analysis will largely be based on the findings of the nine EDUMIGROM Community Study Reports. The point of departure is to ask how and why ethnicity comes so much into the forefront of social differentiation in and around education. Though we know that ethnicity is a powerful dimension of social, economic, and institutional structuring of inequality, the purpose here is to investigate how principles and structures of inequality among young people are produced and reproduced through school practices.

This section will be outlined through the concepts of field, capital and strategy taken from Pierre Bourdieu and his analysis of the present "educational malaise". According to Bourdieu, the "educational malaise" is rooted in the ill-adaptation of the school-systems to the conditions that have utterly changed by expanding mandatory school attendance in many European countries: schools suddenly faced a massive inflow of social categories that previously had been excluded either by their own will or by certain social practices of depriving them from engaging in the academic enterprise. (Bourdieu and Champagne, 1999, p. 421-426). One of the most paradoxical effects of this process of "democratisation" has been the discovery of the existence of disadvantaged and previously excluded students who are the victims of conservative functions of the supposedly liberating school system. By prolonging and consequently facilitating the process of integration and differentiation, the school system turns into a permanent home for potential outcasts, who bring to it the contradictions and conflicts associated with a type of education that is an end in itself. After an extended school career, which often entails considerable sacrifice, students of ethnic minority and from the lower strata of the social hierarchy will start with a disadvantage of being devalued. The exclusion seems to be even more violent since social identity tends to be defined by the school system, and second, socially diverse experiences can easily be turned into cultural "otherness" where the differences are taken as "habitual" ones. In earlier EDUMIGROM studies, we discussed this social dilemma between an ethos of "schooling for all", on one hand, and patterns of "exclusion from within" in relation to the differentiation procedures that take place at an ever-younger age, on the other hand, from a structural-institutional perspective. Here the social dilemma will be discussed from a student perspective and divided in two sections, firstly based on strategies of educational incorporation, and secondly by analysing the educational impacts on future plans. The questions of analysis in this part are the following: How does life at school influence students' future educational pathways? In comparison to their more fortunate and successful mates, what are the familial conditions and prevalent personal histories of those young people who face an outstandingly high risk of dropping out at an early stage, or who openly express opposition to the prevailing institutional arrangements and are determined to leave behind education prior to a next stage?

### ***Strategies of educational incorporation***

We have constructed three diverging strategies of educational incorporation among the selected ethnic minorities. We use the notion of strategy as an analytical device to understand the students' positioning, and how their actions are conditioned by an accumulation of certain orientations, capitals, and dispositions. The point drawing from this notion of strategy is that the students' actions are not solely supported by consciousness, but also based on practical knowledge of what is possible (and impossible) within the scope provided by the accumulation of personal and cultural history. The strategies work as a set of dimensions across a continuum

between relations of classification, strong or weak, that according to Bernstein marks the distinguishing features of a context. Classification “*orientates the speaker to what is expected and what is legitimate in that context.*” (Bernstein, 1996, p. 106). Some students will depend on the accumulation of capital (economic, cultural and social capital) and are more or less unaware or unsure of what is expected from them when they go to school. They either fail to recognize the distinguishing features which provide the school with its unique features or are excessively oriented toward profiting from the differences between the family context and the school context.

The strategies are referred to as *a strategy of commitment*, *a strategy of instrumentation*, and *a strategy of opposition*. To further develop varieties within each of those strategies, we draw on Bernstein’s concept of framing, originally defined in terms of the locus of control over the selection, sequencing, pacing and criteria of the discourse to be acquired. While the principle of classification attempts to establish, maintain and relay power relations on the basis of the recognition of rules, the principle of framing attempts to maintain and control relations on the basis of the realisation of rules through both the transmission of skills (instrumental order) and the transmission of conduct, character and manner (the expressive order). As framing referring to “*the controls of two embedded discourses: an instructional discourse transmitting specific skills and their relation to each other, and a regulative discourse transmitting the rules of social order*” (ibid., p. 104), we can divide the strategies along the line of being more or less predominated by the significance of either social relations (regulative discourse) or the skills to be acquired (instructional discourse). These may be considered as different structures of narratives about everyday life, schooling and educational career, and are intended to set up a framework across a continuum of relations of classification and framing.

### **Strategy of commitment**

Strategy of commitment is applied by students who strongly subordinate other interests to those of schooling in order to go beyond the school’s or their parents’ expectations. These students live a strictly disciplined life. It seems paradoxical that they make decisions based on options that, rationally speaking, are not available for them. However, students envision a future and believe that its attainment and realisation depends on one factor that is they themselves. They are motivated by the pragmatic view that their chances are greater than in reality and this view allows them to succeed in realizing their opportunities. If they fail, they do not hold teachers and schools responsible for their failure. By placing more or less complete priority on education they become best customers in the education system. Some students might break out of social obligations if those hamper their advancement, while other students keep close contact to their families since their own success is considered as the success of the family as a whole. They can expect some academic support from their parents depending on previous educational career path in the family and their contributions to the family’s social positioning, as well as they may receive emotional support and high level of encouragement from the family.

In the EDUMIGROM Community Study Reports it has been described how the so-called “Romanianised Roma” has developed an identity strategy with the concept of integration in its centre-point, and view schooling as an instrument for Roma emancipation. They consider schooling as a necessary means to social mobility and also as a guarantee to obtain a secure life. However many of them are doubted if education and not hard work makes a difference. In school Roma distinguish themselves from other Romanians since they are expected to look as ‘civilized’. Considering the Hungarian community, we learned that a minor part of the Roma students could follow the strategy of commitment. Among them, defined as the “integrated” type, we found relatively well-performing students attending classes with the ethnic majority and are able to adapt to the school environment. Being a Roma is not a constituent part of their



self-image and efforts towards social integration are the necessary outcome of outside factors that threaten their identity, such as discrimination. Similarly to the above, it is explored in the Slovakian sample that almost all the excellent students come from families of solid socioeconomic background. Although there are just a few students in the sample with excellent school results, findings highlight the fact that there is no waste of talents: all students of good grades plan to study further attend university and get an academic certificate. Many of them, especially women, receive moral support from their parents, however they also share with us their doubts and discouragements, *“that I am first of all a Roma and Roma woman has never achieved anything.”* (Case Study on Ethnic Minorities: Slovak Republic, 2010, p. 21). An 8<sup>th</sup> grader student in grammar school said once that his ambition was to continue studying at the Police Academy but at the same time he wished to live in the United Kingdom with his cousin: *“He has a wonderful life. They prosper indeed. They are cool about it. I would like to go there if there is possibility, so finish the study and either to continue my study there or to find a job there. And live there.”* (ibid, p. 21).

In countries of economic immigration, e.g. in Germany and Denmark, we also found students with a Muslim background devoted to the strategy of commitment. They generally feel rather comfortable about schooling and want to continue their studies at high school. They describe themselves as being focused and have a clear as well as explicit vision on both their school career and future opportunities. They describe school in positive terms and appreciate those teachers who set the standards high and make students able to achieve it. Their idea about success in school is closely linked to an idea of “doing well”, in other words: getting good grades, having a high average, being active in class and being academically gifted. They do also emphasise the importance of having “the right” friends as a dimension of being successful, but do not find ethnicity is of importance. One Muslim girl with a Turkish background says: *“If one takes care of oneself and does homework and participates in the classes then it doesn’t matter what country one comes from. It’s up to the person to show who he or she is and not talk so much about their background.”* (Community Study Report: Denmark, 2010, p. 25). Another example is provided by a Muslim boy with a Somalian background. His parents are both well-educated. His father is a veterinarian by degree and his mother studied Economics in Somalia. However none of them have been able succeeded in utilising their education in Denmark and have been employed as unskilled labour since they arrived. This student is considering his educational career as “a natural state of affairs”. He describes how his parents support him to have a university degree and since educational career is considered to be a factor in the family’s social positioning he feels compelled to go to higher education. Additionally, the above-described student is grateful for the fact that under the Danish circumstances he has the opportunity to study whereas the rest of his family in Somalia lacks any prospects of education. He likes the school and his class, and he describes his teachers as supportive, and claims that *“the teachers look at who you are not which country you are from”*. Furthermore, his knowledge about Islam in lessons of religious studies appears to be academically profitable. Finally, his positive identity is strongly linked to his school performance: *“One thing is to do well with your friends and another thing is to do well with high grades and to learn something. If I do badly, then I feel bad about myself.”* (ibid., p. 27).

In the German sample, the situation of Muslim students dedicated to the strategy of commitment, is strongly influenced by the school system of early tracking which means that they dare to contradict to the advice of their teachers and choose a school by themselves. One Muslim girl with a Turkish background told that since she was wearing a headscarf in primary school her teachers were against her decision to go to Gymnasium. The teachers said, she explains: *“You will never succeed there!”* (German Case Study on Ethnic Minorities, 2010, p. 16). However her parents supported her and she managed to enrol in a Gymnasium which was the school of her mother and aunt either. Similar to the above, a Muslim female student refused

to take her teachers' advice of to continue education in a Realschule. Supported by her elder brother and her father, she continued at gymnasium and is actually one of the most successful students in her class.

### **Strategies of instrumentation**

Strategy of instrumentation is typical among students who come from families with small educational capital but with a commitment to support and encourage their children. In this case they are less able to recognize the distinguishing features of the school than the students outlined within the strategy of commitment. Whereas the classification between the context of family and the context of school is getting weaker, the principle of the framing regulates the transmission of appropriate practice within the school context. Framing regulates the realization rules for producing contextually specific schooling practices according to the relations and distributions of skills (instructional discourse) and/or the significance of social relations (regulative discourse).

#### *Instrumentation strategy subjected to the significance of social relations*

The strategy of instrumentation among students predominated by the significance of social relations is primarily found in ethnically mixed or minority schools with a diversity-conscious attitude. Since those school contexts were seen as tolerant towards "difference" and diversity, minority students often expressed their feel of safety and appreciated the fact of not being positioned as "Other". Although students in this category are generally not questioning the value of schooling, they do however find the school boring and are as such paying more attention to the significance of peer relations. Attending school can also be a part of an alternative strategy toward establishing a career beyond the educational requirements. The direction among boys can be to enter into a local business of family members either in country of immigration or emigration. For instance, this has been the case for some students in the Swedish sample who are thinking of moving back to their countries of emigration in the future. They see this as a way out from a future scenario of segregated marginalization in Sweden. Some students clearly express that they want to move because they consider their opportunities in Sweden to be limited, especially students from Ethiopia and Eritrea. Others mention discriminatory structures in a general way and not in relation to their own lives. Instead they strive towards living close to their relatives. Life in Sweden is seen as a preliminary residence, and a way to reach a higher social position once they return to their home country. Generally, they consider education as a tool to achieve social mobility. Students of this category are generally more inclined to hold the schools and teachers responsible for their failure, and do therefore also emphasise the importance of being recognised by the teachers.

These students do not aspire to achieve academic success at school. Although they are equipped with all the required skills they are less sure about the upcoming decisions with regard to further education. That is to say, they seem to find it difficult to put all possible choices into one perspective. In the Romanian case, some Roma students, who live close contact with their families and have an extended network of relationships, express the importance of schooling and the relevance of getting on well with teachers as well as how they wish to continue their studies after eight grades. Schooling is seen as the only tool for equalising opportunities for the Roma. One parent, who finished only five classes, said: "*Romanians or Hungarians should not believe that they have more fingers than we have; they should not treat us as fools; that is why we need to go to school, and to prove that we are their equals. We are gentlemen Gypsies.*" (Community Study Report: Romania, 2010, p. 31-32). Another parent stresses that school attendance by Roma is a mean by which they might be included and accepted by the majorities. She says: "*We are civilized, went to school at least for a while, we are not like the other Gypsies who do not do*

*schooling at all because of their traditions, and Romanians appreciate this; this is why we never had problems of being accepted by our neighbours, or other Romanians, they did not even believe that I was a Roma.*" (ibid, p. 32). Nevertheless, their experiences on school were not always positive. On the one hand they are concerned about their life after school and are worried about losing friends and the familiar environment. On the other hand they seem to be tired of school and find it difficult to see the worth and potential of studying further: due to their low self-esteem they fail to recognise what they are capable of. They also seem to be less organized with their spare time, and are on the whole more interested in spending time with their peers.

The predominant view on education among families with the above-described strategy is that, on one hand, they regard education as important, and on the other hand, they lack enough incentives for their children. All the more, some families consider school as harmful to their children since it represents values of the ethnic majority that are rejected by the family. The same approach can be found among Roma families whose socioeconomic background and housing condition are fairly solid.

Findings highlight that in Slovakia having fun at school, the importance of peer-group relations and relaxed attitudes towards schooling are important part of Roma school culture. Regardless of the different "surviving" educational strategies, Roma students generally share their unwillingness to learn and study at home. They are generally more relaxed about their marks, admit that they prefer to group with other Roma in class that have similarly relaxed attitudes towards learning, and manage to maintain high level of self-esteem despite their poor school results. Roma students, on the other hand, value good relations with their teachers in spite of the fact that they do not have pronounced ambitions for upward mobility. When asking Roma students about the qualities of a good teacher, they respond: *"That she can chat with us naturally, does not make differences, is able to explain subject matter, and does not shout at us on every lesson right after she walks in. Not like our biology teacher, Mrs. P., she always comes in and she is like. "I feel like in Gypsy village", so what would you do? She says that on every lesson (...) because there is shambles in class. But it is not like only we do it, also our schoolmates. Even if class is ok, she says: "It stinks like in Gypsy village."* (Community Study Report: Slovakia, 2010, p. 37).

Those students rather wish to have a normal life: secure independent living, and to be able to provide money for their future family. Another important finding is that Roma students do not reject students who are working hard and manage to perform well at school. They rather underline the importance of being talked to and recognized by the teachers on equal terms with the students of ethnic majorities.

#### *Instrumentation strategy subjected to the skills to be acquired*

The selected minorities in the two post-colonial countries – France and UK – are in contrast to the countries of economic migrants – Denmark, Germany and Sweden – in terms of time of residence. As it was pointed out earlier, there are long-established communities of minorities from Maghrebian and Afro-Caribbean backgrounds in France, while in the UK, it is mostly the rather closed communities of Black-Caribbean and Pakistani families that provided the background to the research. In these communities, patterns of intra- and intergenerational mobility upon immigration have shown great variations with as many instances of upward move as of severe downward turns in status and in the standard of living.

It shall be understand why descendents of post-colonial migrants view schooling as the only chance for their children to make a difference. For those students who are heavily influenced by their parents' feelings of failure and disappointment the school manages to transmit enough hope and aspiration to counterbalance family traumas. Among the Pakistan immigrants in the UK,

those for whom the British education system is unfamiliar esteems the system higher than those who have experiences and feel that the system is weighing against them. In discussing whether a parent would like her children to proceed through further education, she says: *“Yes I would like them to have further education to become more practiced. Because it is a lot harder out there for people from different ethnic backgrounds because their colour, religion and race, everything comes to it, so they have to try a lot harder than what any other person would (...) I have achieved it yes, but it was hard, very hard. When you are at the University and you are the only brown face in the class, it is hard. If you have not got your mind over matter you can get pulled into things but it is your choice (...) you go the right way or the wrong way.”* (Community Study Report: United Kingdom, 2010, p. 44). Clearly, education is viewed by the majority of students in the community study sample of UK as an essential prerequisite for attaining a higher status in the society. It is also clear that students understand the value of working hard at school and progressing through further and higher education. In this sense they did not adopt an anti-school identity. However, while education is viewed worthwhile, many of the students have an average or below average school performance. This means that performance shall be viewed through the lenses of pragmatism and persistence which characteristics are essential in order to be successful.

This is also the case among immigrants living in Denmark and Sweden for whom education is a strategy to escape marginalisation, thus is a means to facilitate social mobility. The importance of education is viewed in the light of their parents’ experiences being excluded from the labour market. The atmosphere described in the minority-dominated classes is generally positive based on recognition and helpful teacher-student relationships. We find that students underline the importance of having good teachers together with whom they can feel secure, safe and comfortable. Not only practical help is considered to be important. The students additionally highlight the teachers’ supportive attitude and behaviour as a source for them to find strategies of successfully schooling. Several of the students, primarily among female students, feel supported by the teachers, both practically and mentally. In the Swedish case, a female student with a Somali background explains how her focus on education has changed during the last two years, which has been visible in her attitudes and ambitions towards schooling, and also visible in how the teachers have changed their previous ignorance towards her. She says that they gave her another chance: *“It is like they have seen that I have grown and that I am more mature now. They know that I want to strive for at good upper secondary school and they give me the chance to do so.”* (Case Study of Ethnic Minorities Sweden, 2010, p.13).

The same attitudes towards schooling can be found among female students with a Somali background in Denmark. For example, one describes the importance of working hard, and of being active during lessons and how she believes, in her own words, that she is *“probably one of the smart ones in her class.”* She explains the importance of doing homework and hand in assignments by saying: *“Because you need all that you’ve been taught to move on in your life, e.g. if you wanna go to high-school, then you need to be pretty good at all subjects.”* (Community Study Report: Denmark, 2010, p. 31). She states, among others in this category, that her parents want her to do well in school why she tries the best she can to succeed, also with help from her siblings, however, she says, *“but if one cannot, then one cannot”*.

Nevertheless, the students express that teachers occasionally have low expectations towards them and do not give them real opportunities to improve their skills. They do feel that they have qualities but they are also very conscious that their performance has to be twice as good as that of the majority students due to their origin. The importance of education can also be approached by asking how students express their gratefulness towards their parents that they have to chance to study or how they perceive the importance of higher education and whether they consider university degree as a sign of their gratitude towards their parents. The student interviews reveal that individuals have self-confidence, are aware of their own abilities and have the courage to

realise their dreams, e.g. to study and work hard in school. Even if the students talk about prejudices in general, they do not relate directly the existence of discrimination and prejudice to their own lives and to their own educational career. Students with an African background do nonetheless emphasise that they expect to meet barriers when they enter the labour market.

### **Strategies of opposition**

Strategies of opposition can be considered as typical for families living in disadvantaged, segregated neighbourhoods in a poverty-stricken urban or suburban environment. Students tend to perceive school as a hostile and foreign world. Many of them – primarily Roma in countries of Central Europe – are the victims of segregationist policies. The distribution of Roma students is more or less uneven among classes in terms of the type of the diploma being prepared. In Hungary there is a consensus on the implementation of desegregationist policies, school continue practicing previous forms of selection that are manifested, for instance, in redirecting certain children to special schools, labelling them as “private students” (a special arrangement by which the student has to present himself only occasionally to sit comprehensive exams), or simply distributing them into classes applying different curricula. By distinguishing classes with specialized curriculum from average classes, and by classifying students in groups of “Roma” and “normal” students, embedded in a racial discourse, the reproduction of ethnic and class situations is realized effectively, yet in a much more subtle and sometimes ambiguous way.

Even though none of EDUMIGROM community studies’ selected minorities can be described in Ogbu’s framework as “involuntary minorities” that includes those “*who were brought into their present society through slavery, conquest or colonisation*” (Gibson, 1997, p. 319), some of the most marginalised members of the selected minority ethnic groups perceive the social, political and economic barriers against them as part of their undeserved oppression. Certainly, this is the case for those minorities who chose another country for living. They believed that their move would lead to economic well-being, more opportunities in all fields of life and better life chances for their children. The more they experience treatment of discrimination and unequal treatment of education, the more they turn into an oppositional frame of reference. Students in troubled classes and due to a constant disagreement with the teachers might easily feel alienated to the school and develop an oppositional strategy of schooling.

This pattern is found in the French case where minority students’ bad school performance is considered as rather the result of an oppositional anti-school behaviour than of their limited potential. While majority students occur to be more thankful to the vocational schools for accepting them despite their low school performance and other limitations, minority students are more likely to hold schools and teachers responsible for sending them to vocational schools since beyond being stigmatised a vocational school offers only limited opportunities to their future career. This tendency has more to do with the school atmosphere, the streaming and classes in which minority students are enrolled, the length of residency, and the type of neighbourhood in which they are growing up rather than with social background. Another finding is that students from the least desirable classes and those who feel most constrained in their educational prospects tend to refer more to their ethnic, national or religious origins as a source of pride and to denigrate their peers using racial terminology than students in more prestigious programs. This does not mean that the higher performing students have a weaker ethnic or religious identity than those who have been negatively selected, but simply that they do not feel the need to assert such an identity as a means of compensating for their inferiority within the educational hierarchy, and that it remains relatively independent of their educational experience and of their view of themselves as students.

### *Oppositional strategy subjected to skills to be acquired*

Within the racism and racial discrimination in school tradition in England, it is described “*how specific ethnic or racial minority groups draw on their own cultural heritages and notions of social, class, gender, and sexuality to actively create a culture of resistance to school while remaining committed to the value of education itself and the importance of obtaining educational qualifications.*” (Stevens, 2007, p. 160). This pattern is also found in Mac an Ghaill’s study of a group of African Caribbean girls who valued obtaining educational success but at the same time could be perceived as generally anti-school in their oppositional behaviour such as coming late to lessons, completing homework late, refusing to participate in group discussions, and chatting together in patois. (Brah, Hickman and Mac an Ghaill 1999) Hence, being highly critical of racism and discrimination, these girls responded to such experiences ways in which they managed to show their commitment towards obtaining educational qualification. As the latter example for oppositional strategy distances but also critically connects students to school, the former outlines an approach which creates and maintains an oppositional culture against the system (against “acting white”-mates, teachers, the system).

In the EDUMIGROM Community Study Reports we found this pattern of oppositional strategy subjected to skills which are acquired by parents of Muslim background in Sweden and Denmark. While the students tend to underscore the rather positive aspects of attending school, some of the interviewed parents have a slightly more critical perspective. One of the parents argues with reference to the teaching methods at school that, “*In my mind, endless freedom for young children is not a good idea. Control is the most important thing. If there is no control, things can go wrong*” [Afghan, male]. Although this is not expressed in the student interviews we know from the focus group discussions conducted with teachers, that a rather large number of ethnic minority students have difficulties navigating within the methodology of problem-orientated teaching. The parents generally express a profound belief in the school and they have some objections concerning primarily the teacher, “*well, I think that some of the teachers have a big influence on the bilingual children (...) some of the teachers, it was racism, that’s what it was. It was always the bilingual children that got the blame*” [Turkish, female]. This criticism is primarily pointed at some of the teachers who are believed not to fulfil what they consider important “*If you [teachers] demand something of the students, they too are entitled to demand things of you*” (Danish, woman) (Community Study Report Denmark, 2010, p. 32).

The German case is characterised by an extreme form of segregation which is even higher in schools than in neighbourhoods. One possible explanation for this could be the phenomena of “white flight” hand in hand with the structurally discriminating effects of a selective school system. Not only has the white middle class population relatively little confidence in the school system’s capacity to deal with cultural diversity, but also teachers and school staff are described by minority students as being the most important actors of “othering” along ethnic lines. Thus, Muslim background is experienced as the source of discrimination. Furthermore, in reaction to the negative public discourse on Islam, many students show solidarity towards their parents and turn back to their origin. Hence, the strengthening of ‘we-feelings’ among Muslims develops further segregation.

In the case of Roma students in Romania, the strategy of opposition is developed mainly in the so-called “troubled classes”: due to experiences of discrimination and inequality students tend to distance themselves from school and aim at developing resistance to the school’s order. Teachers hold negative stereotypes and low expectations towards Roma children which as a self-fulfilling prophecy cuts their self-esteem and expectations, negatively influence their behaviour and educational outcomes. However, there are Roma students who see success in school and manage to find a role model of importance whose life strategies can be followed. One example

described by a Roma student is the Roma school mediator because “*he attended to school and became somebody.*” (Community Study Report: Romania, 2010, p. 34).

### ***Exclusion from within: educational impacts on future plans***

The questions of analysis in this part are how life at school influences future opportunities; who are those destined to drop out early and who are the ones daring to oppose to the current arrangements and express their will to leave prior to the – still compulsory – subsequent educational stage?

To get a sense of the more subtle relationships and hierarchical orderings that shape students’ position at these educational institutions, we identified, on the basis of the Romanian case that the source of frustration of teachers resulted from their marginal position in the broader teacher’s community. It is due to the fact that schools manage to position themselves among each other and as a consequence, institutions with a staff including a large number of minority ethnic teachers occupy the lower end of the hierarchy. From other researches we know that although there are teachers who express a strong desire to include minority ethnic students, it barely comes into practice due to in-built, covert mechanisms such as grading. (Gilliam 2006). The cultural framework within which the teaching is set, i.e. the approach towards minority ethnic students to be seen as culturally backward and lacking of proficiency, can lead to the bring to an end the participation of minority ethnic students in classes. This is partly the case of Roma students in schools dominated by the ethnic majority in post-socialist countries as well as in France.

We have learned from studies conducted in Western European countries that students of ethnic minority share a common “us” which is a combination of their marginalized socioeconomic situation and immigrant background. While a common “us” collects many different ethnic minorities primarily in Sweden, Denmark, France and England, in the case of Germany it only denotes immigrants of Turkish background. In contrast to groups of immigrants in other countries who mostly describe themselves with reference to multiple identities, immigrants in Germany do not consider themselves as German, but as Muslims, and they do not express any options of becoming integrated into the majority, though the student population have German passport and citizenship the most. Immigrant status is generally associated with problems and difficulties in more or less all-societal arenas, for instance labour market, housing, health and education, and in Germany also associated with a Muslim identity that is mostly regarded as incompatible with German identity. However in Sweden, student mobility is common within one school’s catchment area. The most vulnerable group among those who are not entitled to apply for upper secondary education are children who immigrated to Sweden after they started school. The older the students are by the time of arrival to the host country, the more severe difficulties they tend to face. It can be explained by their insufficient language skills and socioeconomic background.

Another pattern among students with the plan to leave behind education at an early stage is their aspiration towards upper secondary schools where the majority of students have an ethnic Swedish background. They also work on improving their skills in the Swedish “academic” language, and developing new social networks and friendships. The students often express that they are comfortable in their community where they feel “at home”. However, they appear to be rational and realise that it is better to go to an upper secondary school in an inner city school district in the long run. A boy whose parents migrated to Sweden from Africa wants to apply for an upper secondary education Natural Science Program, clearly express this situation by saying: “*To succeed you must make good choices all the way. If you choose a school in South Harbour you will fail, but if you choose a school in the inner city it will be easier to continue at University.*” (Community Study Report: Sweden, 2010, p. 24).

This striving to break out from the local, minority ethnic dominated compulsory school environment is also the case among students in the Danish community study sample. The difference is that the freedom of choice and segregation pattern of the education market is typical to Sweden with the result of serious competition among student.

The main point in the French case is to consider how cultural, racial or social distinctions are subsumed by both residential categories and the opposition between those who come from the *cité*, in other words: the ‘ghetto’, and those who do not. The inhabitants are to a large extent poorly educated, unemployed or have low-income jobs and are in a need of social welfare. Our findings highlight the fact that students of ethnic minority, particularly those who have been placed in vocational programs, often begin their upper-secondary school career with a feeling of having been negatively selected and unjustly constrained in their educational options. An interesting finding is that minority students are more likely to feel frustrated by the fact that they have not been permitted to try the non-vocational stream and regard this as unjust. This may also explain why the transition into vocational school seems generally to be better accepted by majority origin students than by their minority origin peers.

Forced by the negative sanctions of the school system to give up or change their initial academic and social aspirations and turn away from the direction that the system itself has encouraged, in short, to rely on themselves alone, they draw themselves listlessly through a school career they know has no future. According to Bourdieu and Champagne, without realising it, those students, who are trapped in the wrong educational direction, manifest one of the most fundamental contradictions of contemporary society, “*one which is particularly visible in the workings of a school system that has doubtless never played as important a role as it does today.*” (1999, p. 426).

An overall characteristic of our students is that they belong to families of a lower socioeconomic position. Though the structure of social inequality is the same in all the studied countries, which means that there exist a homologous relationship between a potential educational positioning among students and their families’ socioeconomic positioning, the empirical scope of status is diverging. Families, investigated in our EDUMIGROM sample, belong primarily to the lowest strata of the social hierarchy although there are families who have managed to ascertain a lower middle class position. Their positioning is reflected by the residential and housing conditions of families, the educational level of parents, and their employment histories. These families can be described as being exposed to a common social mobility strategy which can be found beyond our EDUMIGROM specific community study samples concerning the tendency to move out from the socially disadvantaged district and its coincidence with ethnic school segregation. Even though the socioeconomic situation among ‘visible’ minorities is relatively enhanced, for example Denmark and Sweden, the pattern is that they also aspire to move out from the segregated and immigrant dense suburbs given that education is considered the most important medium of social mobility.

To conclude this section, on the basis of EDUMIGROM Community Study Reports we shall claim the diverging notion of ethnic and social categories which in turn plays an important role in the participation, experience and motivation of minority ethnic students. This discussion has shown that there are several social factors *outside* of the school that can affect the future educational and working careers for students growing up and attending schools in socially disadvantaged environments. In addition, this section provided a picture of how students of ethnic minority are exposed to the requirements of school and try to find their ways alone in an increasingly complex social world.



## **A COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVE ON SCHOOL STAFF AND THEIR APPROACHES TO MINORITY ETHNIC STUDENTS**

This section aims to offer an overall comparative view of the contributions of teachers and other school personnel to the educational experiences of minority students in the various countries and sites observed throughout the community studies. After presenting a brief overview of the sample of teachers interviewed, we shall compare the situations regarding the presence and function of teachers and staff of minority ethnic origin, particularly in reference to the existence of specific programmes aimed at students belonging to the minority groups under study. Secondly, we shall present our analysis of the main factors that seem to influence teaching styles and the general atmosphere in the classes observed. With regard to these elements of student-teacher relations we shall consider whether there are any significant differences between the countries or whether other more locally specific factors seem to prevail. Thirdly, we shall attempt to characterise the way teachers in the various countries approach the “problems” of minority ethnic students and the arguments they put forth in order to explain the positions and attitudes of minority students regarding their schooling. Here we shall attempt to determine to what extent the perceptions of such students are influenced by the more general national frameworks of majority-minority relations which prevail in each country or rather by the more concrete aspects of the particular local school contexts, such as recent school mergers and reforms, or the extent of the school personnel’s contacts with parents.

### ***An overview of the sample of teachers and staff***

The number of teachers and other members of school personnel questioned in each of the countries ranges from a dozen to close to forty. In most countries, approximately twenty teachers and other school personnel were interviewed, and two to four focus group discussions were carried out with teachers. As a general rule, the individuals who participated in these exchanges were directly involved with the particular classes under study, and several had specific responsibilities relating to minority students, such as teaching bilingual classes, acting as mediators or family outreach workers. The presence of teachers belonging to the selected minority ethnic groups among those participating in the interviews and group discussions was very much dependent on the national context. In France and Sweden, where teachers of non-majority origin made up over one third of the staff in the schools with a majority of pupils of immigrant origin, they figured prominently among the sample of teachers interviewed. In countries such as Germany and those of Central Europe only one or two minority staff members were questioned. These consisted mainly of teaching assistants, mediators or family outreach workers, rather than regular teachers.

It is interesting to note that in the countries, such as France, Sweden and the UK, where minority teachers are an integral part of the school personnel, their role and position vis-à-vis minority students is very different.

In France, where the distribution of teachers across schools is entirely centralised, minority ethnic teachers do not perform any particular tasks or roles relating to their ethnic origins and are never recruited in this capacity. Although they tend to teach in the vocational disciplines and classes, and are overrepresented among personnel who do not have permanent positions, this is due to the fact that many have not passed the relatively selective national examination certificate required in order to obtain a permanent teaching position in France. In everyday situations and interactions references to their particular cultural, ethnic or racial characteristics are rarely spontaneously made by them or by any of their colleagues, and it would be quite unusual for

them to be heard speaking a language other than French with students or colleagues who share their mother tongue. When forced by our questions to reflect on the impact of their proximity with students from immigrant backgrounds, a few French teachers of minority origin conceded that their ethnicity might occasionally create a degree of complicity with certain students. However, as a general rule, they were careful to avoid showing any form of differential treatment of students and were quite reticent to make any direct reference to their origins. They tended to be at least as staunch as their colleagues about observing a form of republican neutrality, and often avoided getting involved in debates about issues relating to ethnic, religious or cultural diversity.

In Sweden, and to a certain extent in Denmark, the situation seemed very different from that observed in France in the sense that minority ethnic teachers spontaneously pointed to their capacity as cultural brokers, bilingual teachers and role models for students who were often first generation migrants facing language barriers. In these countries languages barriers appeared much more pronounced than in France and Great Britain, two countries in which immigrants and minorities are predominantly from former colonies. In Denmark, one of the respondents mentioned that: *“Sometimes the students have difficulties understanding what is going on in the class... That’s why we have bilingual teachers in this school... They are part of work both concerning teaching and cooperation with parents”*. The status of bilingual teacher or of second language teachers, who have usually undergone special training in teaching to students with an immigrant background, was much more common in schools receiving a high proportion of minority students than was the case in similar schools in France, Germany or Great-Britain.

In the British context, the minority teachers and staff members met by the researchers were involved in special measures for minority pupils through participation in target projects such as the Black Achievement Programme or the Pakistani Study Support. Here the focus was on enhancing self-esteem, in class behaviour and academic ambition among students referred to as “Black Minority Ethnics”. These students’ difficulties were not seen as stemming from their “foreignness” but more from possible inferiority complexes and lack of recognition from the wider society. In the schools in Great Britain other special events such as Refugee Week or Black History Month typically seek: *“To help students to understand the interdependence of individuals, groups, nations and the local environment, and to both comprehend and celebrate the multi-cultural nature of (...) society”*. This trend of cultural awareness building and promotion of minority self-esteem through a variety of ad-hoc projects contrasts with what was observed in the Scandinavian countries where special measures aimed at minority pupils, such as the language study group or the parents’ Ethnic Council, were concerned more with setting up effective ways of overcoming problems arising from poor mastery of the native language, or the lack of knowledge among immigrant parents about the workings of the national school system.

With the exception of Romania and Hungary, where one or more of the schools of the sample offered Romani language courses taught by teachers of Roma origin, the schools under investigation in the other countries as well as in Germany did not count any teachers belonging to the selected ethnic minority group. Many of the schools in the Central European countries employed Roma mediators and/or teaching assistants in order to help with specific issues such as low attendance or poor communication between Roma parents and schools. The general aim in these cases was to bring parents and children to conform and adapt to the minimal demands of the school system and to promote a process of ‘normalisation’ which was in most cases to be carried out through more or less voluntary integration of the Roma in non-Roma schools. It is interesting to note that although the role of the Roma mediators and assistants is strictly limited to working with Roma students and their families, this personnel often appears very different from the majority Roma population attending the school in terms of their social background, their educational credentials and their residency outside of the most disadvantaged, typically Roma, neighbourhoods.

In most of the countries involved in the studies one finds distinctions regarding the extent to which teachers have chosen to work in schools receiving a large number of minority students. In certain schools, notably in Sweden, France, Denmark, Romania, and Hungary, a more or less formal process of selection or self-selection of teachers has resulted in the creation of a generally positive and constructive attitude toward minority ethnic students. Teachers in such schools have often received some form of special training that entitles them to teach to minority students. The school administration often encourages innovative practices and collective work among teachers who, while they might be highly challenged by students' difficulties, do not feel degraded by having to teach to underprivileged minority students. In such schools one finds some teachers for whom teaching to disadvantaged minority students is a true vocation or a form of social activism and who are energised by the belief that their work is more useful than it would be if they were working with more middle-class students.

At the other end of the spectrum, one finds a few schools (one in Germany, one in France, two in Hungary, one in Romania, Slovakia, and the Czech Republic) in which high proportion of minority students is – as it was pointed out earlier – the consequence of changes such as mergers, integration programmes or transformations in the enrolment process of students, which have been imposed by the authorities without the teachers having been consulted or having received adequate training to adapt the new situation. In these cases minority ethnic students often become the most tangible symbols of the teachers' dissatisfaction and sense of powerlessness. These feelings can easily be rationalised through a discourse that places all the blame for students' low academic performance on the families and their cultural or moral inadequacies.

### *Teaching styles and class atmosphere*

In all of the sites under investigation at least two full days of observation were carried out with several of the classes involved, thus making it possible to compare the pedagogical style and teaching practices of a variety of teachers as well as the attitudes and behaviour of students from different classes.

Although there are obvious differences in the curricula and in pedagogical traditions and training among the various countries participating in the research, we were struck by the rather wide variety of teaching practices which could be observed in each of the countries and even within a given school. Whether the lessons resembled lectures or dialogues, whether student participation was passive or active, or whether work was performed individually or in small groups was dependent somewhat on the nature of the discipline (vocational/non-vocational, general or applied). Even in countries such as Hungary, where traditional frontal style teaching tends to predominate, several instances of more interactive group oriented work were observed. It seems that in all countries teachers have had to a certain extent to adapt their teaching methods to the particular challenges posed by a highly diverse student population. The presence of minority ethnic students who cannot depend on parental help with school work at home and who do not share some of the implicit cultural references of their majority peers makes it necessary for teachers to be more explicit and concrete in their presentation of the material and to favour more active hands-on learning procedures. In this sense, one could say that the presence of minority students “forces” teachers to be innovative in their pedagogical approaches. While certain schools receiving a high percentage of minority students among those observed in Romania, in Hungary, Sweden or France have become veritable laboratories of innovation, others appear to be entirely unprepared to handle the challenges they face. In such cases the school personnel tends to resort to traditional mechanism of defence such as the isolation of low performing minority students in special classes or sections and an overemphasis on discipline and punishment.

The issue of discipline figures quite prominently among the challenges faced by teachers in all of the countries involved in the EDUMIGROM study. In at least one class in one or more schools in each country the researchers witnessed situations in which the teacher appeared incapable of maintaining even a semblance of order during the lesson. The pattern is remarkably similar in all countries: a small group of boys, predominantly, but not necessarily exclusively, of minority origin appears to have taken control of the class dynamics and has succeeded in imposing a general attitude of defiance and disinterest by intimidating the other students into following their example, or at the least into passively resisting the teacher's efforts to engage them in the material. The teachers' attitudes towards students, their personality, natural authority or lack thereof, pedagogical style and general competence and experience certainly play a part in whether or not a potentially disruptive group manages to turn the session into a period of recreation for the students and a losing battle for the teacher. However it should be stressed that certain "structural" conditions are necessary for such a reversal of authority relations to become possible. It is almost always in the groups who have some reason to feel humiliated and inferior within the general hierarchy of the school, either because of their involuntary separation from the "normal" students and/or because of their lack of educational prospects that such a negative dynamic develops. While across all countries such situations tend to correspond to classes in which the concentration of minority students is high, this does not appear in and of itself as reason enough to explain the generalisation of an oppositional attitude. Indeed, some of the most successful class sessions were observed in groups in which minority students composed the majority of those present.

### ***Teachers' approach to and perceptions of minority ethnic students***

When comparing the interviews of the teachers encountered during the community research one is struck first and foremost by the very different ways that each of the nationalities have of naming those students which the project refers to as "the selected minority". Although this is a practical and neutral way of designating those who are the focus of our research project, it tends to mask labelling processes that reveal the very different status of such students in each of the national contexts. Although individual teachers in the various countries sometimes held views and opinions about their minority students which differed substantially from those of their colleagues, there is there a general framework of understanding concerning the status of minority students which is very much linked to the citizenship model in each country and to its particular history of immigrant and minority incorporation.

German teachers name students either through direct reference to their nationality or to their membership in a broader ethnic or religious category. They speak about Turks, Arabs, Muslims, "migrant students" or "students of migrant background". Even though most of the minority students of Turkish origin interviewed in Germany belong to the third generation, these ways of naming stress the cultural, national and religious divisions between the dominant norm represented by "German" students and teachers. Minority students are still perceived by teachers to be foreigners or outsiders who "should" be taught to adapt (not to say conform) to the dominant culture, even though many also admit to the difficulty or impossibility of the task. Some Turkish students' oppositional stance and lack of discipline, which is likely a result of their experience of relegation and of the limited opportunities for success through the school system, is often interpreted as an expression of cultural norms and habits which are foreign to those of the dominant culture. One teacher stated that: *"I am not able to change the culture. As a German teacher I can only hope that they respect me and accept the things I tell them. I mean in Turkey, teachers are not that highly respected. But I can't dictate the families. A Turkish colleague could do this, one who lived in Turkey before and is familiar with the rules. But me as a German teacher, I am not able to do so"*.

Most of the interviews with students and parents, particularly from the less prestigious comprehensive school, tended to reflect this portrayal of teacher-student conflict in terms of a cultural conflict. The mothers as well as the students of Turkish origin who attended this school expressed a feeling of being negatively pressured by teachers to conform to the dominant cultural norms, a process which they perceived as an attack on their dignity, and the authority of parent. The sense was that they needed to protect their private family life and their ethnic pride against the encroachments of the “German” teachers who were trying to “force” them to assimilate.

In Britain, the minority student population appears much more diverse than in Germany. Depending on the particular group under consideration teachers use a variety of terms when speaking about their students. However, the official term accepted by all is “Black Minority Ethnic” (BME). This designation stresses first and foremost the “racial” characteristics and the visibility of students belonging to groups that are in fact culturally and socially quite different from each other (Pakistani, Caribbean, Yemeni, etc.). The main differentiating factor thus appears to be colour and this is further stressed by the fact that teachers do not hesitate to use the term “white” when speaking of those who are not BMEs. In the interviews of British teachers working in the highly multi-ethnic and economically disadvantaged urban neighbourhoods serving several of the schools under investigation, it appeared that the most problematic students were not those of immigrant origin, or at least that these teachers seldom permitted themselves to voice such an opinion. *“In attributing causes for diverging pathways, teachers and education workers tended to focus on families. (...) This was not aimed at Caribbean or Pakistani families however, but a complaint solely aimed at the white community. There was a tendency for some teachers to have particular stereotypes and misconceptions about the communities they served, but it was always the lower class white community which was discussed”* (UK Community Study, p. 57).

The “politically correct” trend prevalent among British teachers which puts emphasis on the positive contributions of groups who are regarded both as an integral part of multi-ethnic British society, and as potential victims of racism, makes it almost impossible for teachers to be openly critical of such students and their families. One also has the impression that the salience of factors such as youthful styles, local neighbourhood identities, social class and multiple migration flows tend to crosscut and blur ethnic and racial boundaries to such an extent that it is no longer obvious to teachers who among their students actually represents the “Other”. This creates a context in which the distinction between a dominant majority group and an underprivileged ethnic minority has become largely artificial. In stark contrast to German teachers who often portrayed minority students’ difficulties in terms of cultural conflict between families and school and who perceived students’ oppositional attitude to be a form of resistance to acculturation, the difficulties mentioned by British teachers do not result from ethnic or cultural conflicts per se but rather from tensions between older minorities and recent arrivals, from gang violence, or simply from the profound socio-economic deprivation and dependency experiences by the poorest families in the area.

In France, the most remarkable feature of teachers talk about minority pupils is the very obvious difficulties they have to find names and labels which adequately refer to what they are trying to designate. The person in charge of transcribing teachers’ interviews remarked that almost every time French teachers were asked to answer a question which required them to designate students according to their ethnic origins, they tended to pause, fumble for words, to make use of audible quotation marks and to resort to a variety of euphemisms such as “youth of immigrant descent”, “of foreign origin”, “underprivileged youth”. Often they simply avoided naming those they were talking about in any direct manner, as if they assumed that there existed an implicit understanding with the interviewer about a category whose existence one should not however actually acknowledge out loud. French teachers rarely pointed to students’ cultural

characteristics in order to explain poor performance or lack of motivation. They more often stressed students' socio-economic background, the influence of anti-school peer culture, and their difficult home environment. It was obvious that French teachers had very limited contact with parents in general and with minority parents in particular, except in certain specific instances where there was a concerted effort among a small group of colleagues to combat school attrition and failure through more regular contacts with parents. In exchanges about the particular positions and behaviour of minority students it was more frequent to hear French teachers criticise what they perceived as students' tendency to over-emphasis and overplay their ethnic identities, than to hear them to interpret students behaviour as a consequence of ethnic or cultural differences.

In Denmark and in Sweden, the term most readily used by teachers when they spoke of the selected minority is that of "bilingual students". Here students are defined more by their language than by their culture, race or ethnicity. The fact that many students speak a foreign language at home is regarded both as an added value and as a potential source of academic difficulties. In contrast to German, and to a certain extent to French teachers' feelings that they must necessarily work "against" the families, in these countries the belief seems to be that academic success is dependent on the schools ability to work "with" the families. This makes it necessary to find proper means of communication. One Danish teacher framed this in the following terms: *"I think the challenge for teachers in regard to getting the attention of students is much bigger than they think. We have to be more affected by their reality. We have to bring their reality over here (at the school)"*. This explains the central role played by bilingual teachers, mediators and translators in these countries.

While in their relations with minority students German, British and French teachers feel obliged to act as "representatives" of their society by embodying its cultural norms and values (Germany), celebrating its diversity (UK) or acting as colour-blind agents of a presumably universal culture (France), Danish and Swedish teachers appear more pragmatic in their approach to minority students. They avoid formulating generalization about students based on ethnicity and point more readily to practical barriers to students' understanding of the material, insisting on the vast differences between students who come from a wide variety of countries and social backgrounds. It is interesting to note that while it is certainly in the Nordic countries that students experience the widest gap between the cultural norms, languages and educational styles of their parents and the norms of the host country, rarely do Danish and Swedish teachers mention cultural differences as the cause of these students' lower performances. Although issues linked to more traditional gender roles, to migrants parents' more authoritative educational style and to their reticence to engage on equal terms with teachers are often mentioned, most teachers do not view these as fundamental explanations for the diverging educational careers of minority and majority students. More importance is given to language barriers, socio-economic problems and the role of the oppositional urban youth anti-school attitude so typical of segregated neighbourhoods.

In the Central European countries, Roma students are often referred to in terms such as "special needs", "intellectually deficient", "problem students", all of which stress shortcomings that appear, rather paradoxically, as both individual limitations and as a results of collective cultural orientations. By opposition to these categories many teachers spontaneously refer to non-Roma students as "normal" or "ordinary". We did detect some differences between countries regarding the openness or the reserve with which teachers "admitted" to treating or regarding Roma students differently or to having "problems" with such students. While many teachers in Hungary, and to a lesser extent in the Czech Republic and Slovakia, spoke quite frankly about the problems they encountered with Roma students, some even voicing strong moral condemnation of Roma parents, the teachers encountered in the Romania schools appeared more cautious in their judgements and more intent on avoiding formulations that might be interpreted

as “racist” or anti-Roma.

The range of opinions was quite wide among teachers from the Central European countries as to what was the fundamental cause for Roma students’ low academic performances. It went from those who believe the Roma’s lack of motivation and interest in school success to be transmitted through their “blood”, to those who spoke more in terms of cultural determinism and educational “style” to those, relatively less numerous, who insisted rather on the students difficult home environments and economic deprivation. It is interesting to note that among all of the school personnel questioned in these four countries only one, a Roma teaching assistant in a Czech school, offered an explanation which pointed to the fact that Roma parents’ lack of investment in their children’s schooling was the result of what could be viewed as a rational adaptation to their very limited chances of eventually getting some tangible returns for their investment in the form of qualified and well paying jobs.

The attitudes and beliefs of teachers regarding the obstacle to Roma students’ success appeared to be a function of the institutional mode of integration or segregation. Whether teachers hold “anti” or “pro” Roma views depend to a certain extent on whether their school has succeeded in integrating these students in a manner that suited both the school personnel and the students themselves. It also appeared to be very much connected to the extent and the nature of the contacts teachers had with Roma families. Understandably, those teachers who never have any contact with parents, or only very occasionally in cases of particularly disruptive behaviour on the part of students, tended to portray Roma families as a homogeneous, defiant and unfathomable entity. The teachers who regularly met with parents, either because they were encouraged to do so by the school’s administration, or because they were personally motivated to do so, spoke more readily of the differences between families and of the need to be realistic and flexible in their teaching style and content. In one pedagogically innovative school in Hungary where contacts between teachers and Roma parents are encouraged and organized, there is a concerted effort to take into account specific Roma culture while maintaining high standards, with the development of real projects to integrate Roma children in a school that also has high prestige classes and middle-class students. Teachers in this school more often than in the others Hungarian schools considered Roma students’ difficulties to adapt to the requirements as a consequence of poverty and social deprivation, rather than as the expression of deviant cultural norms. In at least two other Hungarian schools the integration of Roma students has been experienced as an unwelcome imposition on the part of the “authorities” and has not been accompanied by the necessary pedagogical adaptations and teacher training. Thus teachers feel that any effort to enhance Roma pupils’ performance and attendance is doomed to fail, essentially because of what they perceive as culturally, occasionally even genetically, engrained behaviour and values that are contrary to dominant norms.

This link between teachers’ perception of minority students as “impossible” to manage and to educate and their own experience of having been relegated into a low prestige school and having to fulfil impossible requirements born of ill conceived or poorly implemented reforms was also quite obvious in the case of the German comprehensive school receiving a high proportion of students of Turkish origin. Many teachers had been transferred to this school against their will upon the closure of another school. Conversely, one might wonder whether the generally more positive views of immigrant parents expressed by Swedish and Danish teachers is to a large extent the result of the manner in which they are recruited and trained, and of the emphasis which is put on creating partnerships with parents.

It is very difficult to ascertain whether among the Central European countries the variation between schools in terms of teachers more or less fatalistic, moralistic and, admittedly, racist outlook on Roma students and their families is first and foremost a consequence of teacher self-selection and recruitment or rather of a socialising process among teachers in a context in which

Roma school integration has been unevenly planned out and implemented. The head of one school in Romania, which has a particularly successful outreach program aimed at the Roma community, stated that: *“If I think about it better, we have passed all phases regarding integration. It was not easy but we’ve overcome them, primarily through retirement of the colleagues who could not accept Roma children”*.

## **THE ROLE OF ETHNICITY IN PEER RELATIONS IN A COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVE**

The last part of this essay goes beyond the educational functions of the school and analyses how (un)successful schools are conditioning, mediating and facilitating communication and the shaping of relationships between students from different ethnic and social backgrounds. It is obvious that the school, together with the neighbourhood, are the two critical social places where young people spend most of their time and that these social settings play a crucial role in establishing everyday life and a symbolic world that are developed by the social interactions and interpersonal relations among students. In this context, we can pose a twofold question by asking, first, about the role of ethnicity in creating social groups and making friendships for young people, and secondly, by enquiring about the role of the school in the emerging formations<sup>2</sup>.

The discussion below is built on the data and knowledge that we acquired by making structured observations at schools and by asking students during individual interviews to reflect on the contexts and situations of interpersonal peer-relations that we witnessed at schools.

### ***Students with immigration background***

#### **Ethnic minority neighbourhood as a source of reflexive identity and solidarity**

Unlike most political debates and the public discourse in Europe, minority ethnic students welcome a certain degree of ethnic isolation in their everyday life. As already pointed out, because of how catchment areas are designated by the authorities, many schools are located in the middle or at the edge of neighbourhoods where ethnic minorities constitute the majority and where they can create the social world that is similar to the one their families used to live in the country of origin. An Iranian boy residing in an immigrants’ neighbourhood in Denmark describes the place as follows:

*Everything is special about Fraser. It is just like a small town ... everyone here is friends with each other. Everyone knows each other. It is like one has been here for so many years, that one knows all the stones here (...) the older guys of my brother’s age (21) all his friends are here. I went out with them when I was smaller, played football, all kinds of children’s games.”* What he, on the other hand, dislikes about the Fraser area is: *“its reputation (...) crime etc (...) some might be truth, but it’s not like other people think it is here. When one lives here oneself, then it’s a nice place.*

Such views were expressed also by minority students from other countries living in immigrant neighbourhoods. Families with immigrant background that are surrounded by fellow countrymen have closer relations and more developed social networks than those living in a Diaspora. As the author of the French Community Study has noticed, the fact that minority

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<sup>2</sup> As we have seen, for some minority students the school is the only public space where they (have a chance to) meet and interact with majority people.



students tend to have more friends of the same ethnic origin as compared with their majority fellows, is more often the consequence of the socio-ethnic composition of their neighbourhoods, schools and families' acquaintances than the result of their membership in a structured ethnic community, or of pressures they are subjected to making them remain with their "own kind". (Schiff 2010) Some students stressed that they did not have at all friends from the ethnic majority because the latter were not accessible for different reasons. However, one of the common factors is the social distance that exists between majority and minority students. Majority students are presented by their minority fellows as belonging to a higher social class, residing in wealthier districts, having different interests and thus spending leisure time in some other way than them.

Similar views were shared by students in other countries for whom mutual trust, solidarity, and reflexive identity are built on the fundamentals of commonly shared experiences of being 'other', i.e. non-majority, rather than having the same ethnic origin. For instance, in Sweden, interviews with students showed clearly that the experience of "not being Swedes" is an important foundation for closer relations in the community, regardless of the country of origin. Students, in this case, share the situation of "not being a part of the Swedish society". Their utterances indicate experiences of segregation and of living outside of the Swedish society. The neighbourhood provides protection against discrimination: they do not have to face negative prejudices linked to their ethnic background as long as they make up the vast majority there. None of the students in the sample said they had any "Swedes" in their circle of friends or acquaintances. In their home environment they do not often meet students who they consider Swedish, nor do they meet them at school or in their leisure time. The majority of the interviewed students have lived their whole life in the neighbourhood and have been together in the same class there since the preparatory school year. One of the student spoke about how good she felt about having relations with people sharing the same experiences as herself. According to this student, her friends are fundamental for her identity and sense of belonging. She doubts that a relationship with a student of Swedish ethnic background would give her this kind of feeling: *"It is not like we don't like each other, but people socialise with those they feel a connection with. We have an immigrant background and they are Swedes. It is clear. We belong to different groups, it is just like that."*

The social distance that exists between majority and minority people in European cities determines, and is determined by, the lack of trust and solidarity, and thus produces and reproduces negative stereotypes on both sides. Immigrants' neighbourhoods are conceived of as dangerous places by majority people who tend to avoid them physically as well as symbolically. Moreover, majority families living in these neighbourhoods show a strong tendency to enrol their children in other schools. For instance, the strategy of German majority parents is to choose private or church based schools, or to leave the neighbourhood.

In Germany, peers living in the immediate surrounding and same-ethnic classmates seem to form the majority. None of the interviewees mentioned a friend who did not live nearby. Thus there are no majority students in the symbolic place of the life world of ethnic Turks or Arabs, and students were even surprised when we asked them about whether making friendships with ethnic Germans. As one of them said: *"You don't find Germans here! In our neighbourhood you only find Turks and Arabs."*

In France, identification with the neighbourhood can both reinforce and transcend ethnic boundaries. In their peer group made up by urban youth, those of European origin are distinctly in the minority, especially in the Parisian suburbs. This encourages the association between the local peer group communities and ethnic, racial or religious dimensions of these teenagers' collective identities. When distinguishing amongst themselves, students refer readily to their neighbourhoods, the major distinction being between the *jeunes des cités* ("ghetto" youth) and

the others, which is often seen as a determinant of their style of clothing and of their behaviour in class. In fact, urban identities function as an implicit mode of social, ethnic, generational and even academic distinction.

Unexpected consequences of the social isolation of minority students living in ethnic urban “ghettos” were revealed in comparing the Parisian periphery with the more socially mixed urban setting in Bordeaux. The subjective self-image of students from the Parisian periphery was less affected by negative comparisons between social classes and ethnic groups than in case of students from Bordeaux, who were constantly reminded of their low social status by the very fact that they were much more frequently in contact with members of the middle class. Easy access to the centre of town, the fact that even in the least desirable schools and classes majority students are in a minority, and the generally rather ‘bourgeois’ identity of the city all combine to make social, ethnic and residential distinctions more salient both for majority and minority adolescents than in the segregated community of the Parisian site.

In the UK, the physical divide between neighbourhoods is proclaimed by students when wearing symbolic traits like coloured bandannas or spraying graffiti on the walls. Each neighbourhood has its colour or symbol. Young people from particular neighbourhoods form street gangs and go after anybody from other residential areas. Students’ involvement in post code gangs cut across disaffected and conformist identities within school. Schools are sensitive to the issues surrounding post code gangs and some have taken a clear stance of zero tolerance: *“One of my friends got in a fight with this other guy because he lived in S4 and he lived in Tannery Rise. So they just started to fight and the head teacher told them both ‘if anything like this happens again you are both going to get kicked out’. Because they both do really well in school and yet they still fight.”*

In general, different patterns of social group boundaries and ethnic divisions were observed in the UK compared with other countries. Such patterns are twofold. First, minority ethnic students pointed to the various identity strategies of whites. These identities were heavily interconnected with music and dress styles, and are associated with groups like the Emos, the Goths and the Chavs. Emos and chavs were universally disliked. Discussions of these groups featured across all three schools under study and often provoked strong reactions, *“We have Goths, Emos and Chavs and stuff like that. (...) I am just going to be truthful, I hate them”*. (Caribbean boy). This was a pattern which emerged through all schools. Although ethnicity was not used as a defining characteristic of these groupings in students’ talk, this was the case: Emos, Goths and Chavs were white.

Second, divisions between different minority groups were recognisable. Carribeans and Pakistani students represent ethnic communities with distinct social status, which produces social boundaries and related stereotypes. At school, certain antagonisms arise through puns and minor insults, followed by laughing among affected students, which serves as a symbolic tool to reduce tension and potential conflict. At schools with mixed social classes, strong emphasis is given to the neighbourhood and with that an implicit sense of social ranking. Pakistani students have very definite ideas about which areas are the best in the given locality. Similarly to Bordeaux students, understanding residential segregation in this way shows keen awareness of social class and ethnicity.

Not all ethnic minority students feel confident or express pride related to their residence in an ethnic neighbourhood. Our Danish colleagues identified a group of adolescents, mostly girls with rather mixed ethnic identity, who tried to distance themselves from troublesome immigrants. This kind of mixed identity is shared by the category of children forming a second generation of immigrants, because they are aware of how they are changing their identity compared with their parents since they are together with peers of many other ethnic backgrounds.

However, in general, a tendency for social groupings to follow ethnicity or majority as opposed to minority belonging is more than evident. We have noticed that, rather than open conflicts, situations at schools can be characterised by more or less visible boundaries between groups that are formed by shared experiences or life world constructed around them. Many times, students do not reflect on these boundaries and social distances but take them as a matter of fact. Let us quote an ethnic Danish student to show a good example:

*“...there is an invisible border between us (...) We are, kind of, in groups, maybe, aren't we? I don't know, I, I just thought... It is not because we have anything against each other, that's not what I'm saying (...) You are all looking at me as if I'm saying something wrong (...) It's not because I'm saying that I wouldn't go to them or the other way around (...) but I have more ethnic Danish friends than bilingual, that's all I mean. It's not because there is something wrong, but it's just like that, automatically.”*

### ***Structure of leisure time***

Inquiries into leisure time activities revealed important gender differences among minority ethnic students. The after-school activities of boys usually take place on the streets. The most common answer to questions regarding free time was that they just hang around and do nothing special. The other common activity is doing sports like playing football or basketball. Here it is important to notice that, besides unorganised sports activities on the streets, in some countries minority ethnic students attend organised sport clubs. However, joining clubs is much less common for minority students than for their majority peers because it is costly. Engaging in activities that do not require spending was outstandingly frequent for minority students, differentiating them from those from the majority. At the same time, contrary to doing sports on the streets in the neighbourhood, organised sports activities in regular sport clubs promote great opportunities for inter-ethnic friendships, as reported by students in Denmark.

For girls, their leisure time activities are linked to their families in the first place. This is primarily true for families with Muslim affiliation. German Muslim girls explained that they had different interests than ethnic German girls that stem from different behaviours and attitudes. For instance, going out to parties and discotheques as a frequent activity of ethnic German students is strongly linked to drinking alcohol that is prohibited for Muslim girls. By the way, drinking alcohol at that age of 15 or 16 is prohibited on the whole, thus not only specific cultural values but the legal aspect of breaking the law were also taken into account by our Muslim interviewees.

Moreover, activities mentioned above are undertaken in mixed groups and are strongly related to the intention to get in close contact with the other sex. In the eyes of our informants, it seems to be very important for German peers to dress sexy and to gain experience with sexual practices. Girls and boys who distance themselves from this kind of behaviour risk becoming treated as outsiders who do not have fun because of strict social control of their parents and their out-of-date moral attitudes. As a Muslim girl noticed: *“The German girls in my class party all the time, like to get drunk and seem to think that to have fun they need to have some boys around. I don't want to pretend I would like that. I prefer to be honest and draw my consequences. We don't think they are doing the right thing.”*

Our German colleagues summarised three main aspects of everyday practices that are structured differently or have different meanings for ethnic German peer groups and Muslim peer groups: 1. different time-frames of going out, 2. affinity to socialise in mixed groups versus inclination to separate by gender, and 3. alcohol as an instrument to socialise and meet friends versus prohibition of drinking alcohol.

Although hanging out on the street was frequently mentioned especially by boys from ethnic neighbourhoods in almost all countries, in fact, it is not like all the minority boys are part of some street gangs. It is true that girls and students who are enrolled in some prestigious programmes as well as recently arrived migrants tend to spend their free time at home, whilst boys, often of North African or Afro-Caribbean origin, living in public housing units, tend to hang out on the streets. On the other hand, the French case shows that sometimes being a member of a street gang is more an image created at school than a reality in the neighbourhoods. French school functions as an entity which exacerbates students' urban youth identity and pushes them to act out this trait. It is a space in which the social norms of the "ghetto" become references even for those who do not actually live there. Indeed, we often had the impression that boys in these schools felt that, in order to be respected by their peers, they had to adopt a certain posture associated with the stereotype of the urban ghetto youth, when in fact their life outside the school was closer to that of the ordinary lower middle-class provincial youngsters.

### *Shared language as a source of social groupings - dialect, slang, jokes and language barriers*

Language issues seem to be another crucial aspect of social belonging that is interlinked with ethnicity. Many minority students reported that they were bilingual and even majority students called minority students "bilingual". Thus bilingual became the label of being 'other', being non-majority. If skin colour refers to the concept of "visibly other", than language refers to the concept of "audibly other". If students live in a social environment where the use of the mother tongue is preferred, than language barriers at school can be difficult to overcome. A boy of second generation immigrant background from Ethiopia, residing in Sweden, explained that most of his friends were from his school and that they did not come from the same country. However, during his leisure time he meets some boys from Ethiopia doing sport activities. He said that even if he meets his Ethiopian friends less often, he feels closer to them because they share a common language and a somehow common history. The student recalled that he had found friends among the Swedes in his previous school. However, he experienced feelings of not belonging. Even though the other students thought that he spoke "good Swedish", there was something about how they used the language, a certain way of speaking, he was not familiar with. That deficit made him feel different. The other students did not exclude him from activities, for example from socialising during breaks such as playing football. The social distance between him and the other students, and the process of 'othering' in that context, was revealed in more subtle ways. For instance, in the way the other students reacted when they considered his Swedish to be incorrect.

Our adolescent interviewees in Denmark referred to stories when not only majority students but also teachers expressed that minority students were not speaking the language properly, which had negative impact on students' self-esteem. In being corrected because of their accent or bad grammar, minority students are not only excluded from communication during the lessons but they consider this as a form of discrimination and injustice that influences their school results. *"Sometimes they (teachers) would say: "Why don't you know those words?" (...) So it's like the Danes are better than us (minority-ethnic)"* or, described in another way by a minority ethnic girl trying to put herself in a more profitable position: *"You aren't stupid just because you are from a different country (...) Yeah, but all the time they say things like Danes can do more, for example. It might well be that they are better than us in Danish but I can still be better at English, Maths, Physics and stuff like that."*

As described in the preceding section, teachers in focus group discussions confirm this pattern among minority ethnic students. One of them said: *"Thus these students are 'behind' from the beginning. This also explains why 'minority ethnic' students tend to get lower grade averages."*

*Lower language skills do not only affect the grade (and learning process) in Danish, but all other subjects as well, since language is the key of learning.”*

However, not only bilingualism is concerned in this issue. Students use special dialects, slang, humour, that is part of their social group belonging, and thus language is an effective tool of inclusion in the in-group as well as of exclusion from the out-group. Whereas speaking the majority language improperly is a barrier and a form of exclusion from wider social activities, special dialects can serve as an instrument of inclusion into subgroups of those who voluntarily distance themselves from the “majority culture”. The Danish analysts called the specific language style of immigrants ‘multi-ethnolect’. Some of the boys expressed that they would not be able to imagine themselves talking like ethnic Danish youngsters. One female student said when expressing her view about how students try to fit in with their classmates: “[...] *If there’s only one “perk” in a class where there are Danes only, then maybe the immigrant will act just like the other Danes. If a Dane comes in to an immigrant class [...] then he would, for instance, be like the immigrants, he would, for instance, have same “perk”-style and talk the same language.*”

This indicates that there might be there a linguistic style among minority peers in the given neighbourhood (Fraser district) that is different from both the official school language and the other linguistic styles popular among peer groups. It is hard to say if this linguistic style can be solely defined in terms of non-proper knowledge in Danish but, interestingly, this way of expressing themselves shows the intersecting effects of a youth subculture (a form of rebelling by expressions) and “multi-ethnolect”, and it seems this combination adds to the local dimensions of self-perception and reflexive identity.

The last issue that was mentioned in almost all countries concerning language usage are jokes<sup>3</sup>. Jokes or special phrases that make fun of different ethnic groups are widely used. When asked about racism issues, students denied it was an issue at their school. However, they frequently referred to making fun of other groups of students in this context. They do not consider this racism, but it is clear that the borderline between innocent jokes and inter-ethnic bullying or mocking that can harm the personal identity of students or can develop into serious conflicts is very thin and fragile. Students in France reflected on the issue in the following ways:

*“It’s true that there are always little jokes, for example about Arabs, but it’s not racism. You can easily get a joke about blacks, but in this high-school there’s no racism. We can say that the foreigners are on top. If we were in a high-school like Sainte Marie (private Catholic), maybe it would be different.”*

*“Interviewer: We observed the class all day and there were moments when the atmosphere was tense.*

*- No, it’s just for fun, it’s always like that. Like when we’re in the neighbourhood, we laugh like that, and since there are several of us from different neighbourhoods (projects), we’re always having fun like that. It’s in our character to provoke each other, it amuses us. Sometimes teachers take it well and have fun with us, some don’t. It depends on the teacher’s personality. I’ve already been called «dirty Arab» and all, but I take it with a smile.”*

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<sup>3</sup> See a detailed discussion of the subject in the second essay of this volume on ‘othering’.

## Students of Roma origin

If students with immigration background hesitated to admit explicitly that ethnicity was the platform that interpersonal relations and social groupings were built on, then their Roma counterparts spoke more openly about ethnic divisions that evidently exist.

In Slovakia, authors of the Community Study noticed that it was two levels of friendship that Roma students brought up in the interviews. On a general level, they agreed that they had both Roma and non-Roma friends. However, as we noticed, by friendship they meant chatting with non-Roma schoolmates. When the issue was more thoroughly discussed, it became evident that the majority of them had only Roma friends. Girls usually referred to one best friend they grew up with and have shared experiences with, and this best friend very often belonged to their broader family. Boys usually have Roma friends with whom they hang out or listen to music.

Some Roma students pointed out that they preferred Roma friendship because they did not trust non-Roma fellows due to previous disappointments, betrayals, or rejections by them. Various theories of “psychological” differences of ethnic groups seem to be also developed ex-post, after experiencing some awful sell-out. This is indicated by attributions of such general characteristics to non-Roma as “double-dealing” and “false”. Turning false non-Roma away is the case with an excellent Roma student Ema, who attends a class where one third of the classmates are Roma so, theoretically, she has the opportunity to make both Roma and non-Roma friends. However, she is on friendly terms only with Roma schoolmates. She claims having let down by a non-Roma friend in the past (she does not specify this disappointment) and she is not sure if she would be able to trust non-Roma anymore.

Since Roma students suffer from severe stigmatisation caused by negative stereotypes, they welcome any classmates who do not make differences. Roma friendships are also positively interpreted because of ethnic solidarity and mutual trust: *“I understand better Roma (students) because non-Roma are [...] simply... they make differences that ... you are Roma, you are Gypsy and you have no access to us.”* Or put differently: *“But I know that if something happens a non-Roma will not stand up for me, or if the problem will involve a non-Roma, he will rather back up his side, not mine.”* (Roma students from Slovakia)

In Slovakia, like in other Central European countries, it is common that Roma students are excluded from after-school activities or school trips. Various interpretations were given by Roma students and their parents to explain why they do not participate in those activities, but three claims were especially frequent: 1. dislike of classmates or teachers, 2. lack of financial sources, and 3. parents worrying that “something bad could happen”.<sup>4</sup>

Roma families live in more or less segregated housing areas in all the investigated Central European communities. Roma students usually live in large families with many relatives in their surroundings, and their lives are subsumed to the broader social units of their friends or relatives. When living together, Roma build a real community of established social networks and contacts with emotional and personal ties and mutual solidarity. As a 14-year old boy living in a Roma neighbourhood in Hungary said: *“Those of us who live in the same settlement belong together. If anyone needs help we lend a hand out at once: for instance, someone needs to see the doctor and we have a car so we can give him or her a lift and we offer our help straight away. We never ask the person to contribute to the cost of refuelling. Solidarity is in here.”*

Most of the Roma schoolchildren in Hungary live in an ethnically segregated neighbourhood, in a so-called ghetto-like Roma settlement, surrounded by their relatives. This kind of isolation

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<sup>4</sup> Parents’ fear was discovered also among Muslim parents, where it may stem from similar causes: strong family ties and distrust in wider society outside their social networks.

prevents them from having a private life, so they consider individual activities boring and pointless. Preparation for the next school-day at home is approached with a similar attitude: *“I do study, but it’s sometimes boring, I have to say, boring, and then it is also difficult to study. It is boring being by myself, however, when my cousin N. comes by, or some other friends, we study together and make fun and then it is good.”*

These teenagers do not have a separate room and their flats lack the space for privacy. Their free-time is characterised more by social interactions than a set of individual ways of spending time.

The lack of intimate space was also stressed by the authors of the Czech Community Study. According to them, in Roma families children appear to be much earlier and more intensively included into the adult world than their majority peers. There are at least two reasons for this. 1) They are customarily more exposed to adult entertainment or arguing and, compared to non-Roma kids, they also typically take an active part in adult, often agitated, discussions (which then may make it difficult for them to behave “like good kids” at school: not to shout during classes, not to interrupt the teachers and classmates, not to use bad language, etc.). 2) Unlike non-Roma adolescents, Roma youth also tend to take part in money earning activities from an early age (in some cases already at the age of 14, especially during the summer school break, and of course “informally”), and are often supported in this by their own parents (see for more details in Marada et al. in this Report).

The different structure and meaning of home environment has huge impact on Roma students’ life at school. On the one hand, home and school represent two different worlds for them: in the former, community values are on the top, whilst in the latter, individual success is praised and demanded. On the other hand, home and school spheres can easily overlap under conditions of segregated Roma schools or classes. This phenomenon was reported in Hungary where the most burning issue in ‘Roma-only’ schools is that the school fails to understand the life of the children and promote the creation of new spaces, new problems and new relations. Hence, children maintain their activities and relations brought from home. The majority of the students of segregated classes know each other well from outside the school, as they are either relatives or neighbours, or have some friends in common. When opening the door and entering the school building, the environment does not carry in itself any sense of change for them. According to the teachers, one must encounter difficulties if the border lines between social spaces – such as the family, friendships or the school – get blurred, and the teacher is in charge of making children focus on school matters again. They claim the problem is that in the Roma class students know each other too well: they hang out together after school; they live in the same neighbourhood; and they might also be relatives. Hence, they always discuss their own issues during the class, which makes the teachers’ work difficult in such ethnically homogenous classes:

*“- Do you mean that the school communities and communities outside of school are overlapping with each other?*

*- Yes, there is no difference between the two. We, outsiders, have to figure out how we could become part of their lives, because they are living their lives the way they did at home. It’s not that easy not to stop them when something occurs to someone and says something to a friend that this and that happened and how it happened and that is what I did. We have to try to bridge it and return to our original topic, since we have a task in class we have to focus on.”*

At schools where Roma students are enrolled into the ‘weaker’ classes, inter-ethnic relations may cross the line of differentiations between the classes. This issue was identified in Romania, Slovakia and Hungary. In Romania, authors of the country Community Study noticed that Roma students did not feel such relations to be a means of ethnic ‘othering’, and not

even as causing some disadvantage, whether or not based on ethnicity, but they took it as something natural, and made the supposedly superior 'others' seem inferior by calling them duds. They tacitly accept their 'otherness' by avoiding occasions and places where they might not be welcome (like school festivities), though they do not explain their absence by this argument but mostly claim that these events are boring. Thus, also in this case, they try to symbolically change the hierarchy between the excluded and the excluding ones.

Students of Roma origin in the Central European countries experience even stronger verbal attacks from majority students than their minority ethnic peers in the West. Sometimes such aggresses adopt the form of jokes, however, occasionally they may be manifested in more serious mocking or bullying. Jozef, a Slovak Roma boy, has good relations with a "good" non-Roma classmate (boy) with whom he spends a lot of time together. "*He is more often with us than with whites.*" However, Jozef and his Roma friends feel embarrassed when they see that their non-Roma friend is laughing at a Roma joke or notes when Roma are being made to appear ridiculous. He says that they share their embarrassment with him: *When he is with us, we ask him why he laughed at such jokes. [We tell him] You are either with us or with them!*" – Jozef notes that sometimes teachers give a smile when hearing such jokes, or even make offensive remarks. For him, laughing at such jokes is a crucial attribute of the out-group of those who do not like Roma students.

If they rarely occur, inter-ethnic friendships are interpreted by Roma boys by claiming that their majority friends are like Roma. "*- I have a friend, he is white and he often says 'If I am white, I'll kill myself'. Because he would like to be like Roma.* - Interviewer: *And why?* - *He has better relations with Roma than with whites.*" – As it seems, be they intra-group or inter-group relations, ethnicity is an inescapable dimension of togetherness and belonging.

## CONCLUSIONS

As a result of the school setups chosen and of the underprivileged urban settings in which the community research took place, the general trend observed is that of a relatively low degree of educational integration of a considerable proportion of the minority ethnic students observed, at least in relation to the dominant norm in each of the countries involved. However, the distance between minority and majority adolescents, both in terms of their academic performances and in terms of their social relations, varies rather substantially across countries and to a lesser extent among the different schools in each one of the countries. Many extrinsic factors such as residential segregation, avoidance strategies of middle-class majority origin families, tracking systems which result in the high concentration of minority ethnic students in certain types of schools and classes, explain that individual schools do not always have the power to implement the integration measures which are required from them. Within schools it does appear, however, that teachers and administrations have some responsibility as to the manner in which classes are constituted and regarding the development of pedagogical measures which ensure at least minimal educational opportunities for minority youth.

We have seen that the ways schools deal with minority ethnic students range from their negative segregation into relegated and devalued dead-end classes reserved for handicapped, troubled or very low performing students which do not address the particular needs of these (mostly Roma in the Central European countries) students, but rather seeks to preserve the majority from contact with them, to those schools which have recruited qualified personnel of minority ethnic origin and have developed specific pedagogical measures to respond to the needs of immigrant or bilingual students (Denmark and Sweden). In other national contexts, such as in Britain and France, where we observed the celebration of multiculturalism or the assertion of a principle of



colour-blindness, the particular treatment of minority ethnic students does not appear to have such clear negative or positive consequences on their educational trajectories and academic performances.

As far as students' perception of their schooling is concerned, the varying strategies of commitment, instrumentation and opposition revealed that depending on both extrinsic factors, such as parents' cultural capital, and intrinsic factors, such as the existence of a clear hierarchy between classes, schools could represent, on the one hand, the unique means for individual success and emancipation, a possible investment in order to increase one's chances of overcoming the lower status associated with one's ethnic group, or become, on the other hand active agents of exclusion to be resisted. It appeared that the more underprivileged and potentially oppositional students were most sensitive to their particular school's policies and practices regarding differential treatment, while the highest performing, most committed students asserted an unflinching belief in the meritocratic principle regardless of the reality of segregation or of their actual chances of success.

The manner in which teachers relate to minority students is the result of a combination of national traditions and ideologies regarding the role which should be played by ethnicity and the recognition which it is due, of the individual school's organisation and coherence (notably the authority of the school head and the manner in which reform has been implemented), and of the training received by teachers in matters such as inter-cultural communication, bilingualism and the implementation of differential pedagogical style.

The analysis of some of the major means by which students identify themselves and assert similarities and differences with their peers revealed the fact that, compared to the often simplistic ethnic and cultural distinction which adults tend to resort to, for minority youth there exist complex intersections between ethnicity, local neighbourhood identities, cultural style, leisure activities and personal tastes. Youthful humour, inter-ethnic bantering and the use of derogatory ethnic epithets can serve either as a way of making light of latent racial tensions, or as a means for deepening inter-ethnic animosities and reinforcing strong socio-ethnic hierarchies. In this sense, teenagers can be regarded as a social group which is particularly sensitive to the dominant social hierarchies and racial stereotypes, but also as representatives of a globalised culture capable of transcending and subverting national traditions of differentiation and ethnic categorisation.

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**THE EXPERIENCES AND CONSEQUENCES OF 'OTHERING'**

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and Sarah Swann**

## **INTRODUCTION**

The purpose of this cross-country comparative chapter is to provide a meta-analysis of the specific themes and issues examined in the nine WP7 Community Study reports, produced by country teams in June 2010, with a specific focus on the experiences and consequences of 'othering'.

This essay presents a comparative analysis of the experiences of 'othering', focussing firstly on the voices of young people examining how these experiences are understood and how responses are framed, and secondly on voices of adult authority, including parents, teachers and community representatives.

## **VOICES OF YOUNG PEOPLE, STUDENT'S DISCOURSES OF 'OTHERING' AND THE CONSTRUCTION OF DIFFERENCE**

This section identifies the ways in which students have understood and expressed their perceptions of the causes and manifestations of 'othering'. It starts with the description of the structural constraints delimiting the minority student's relations to the unmarked majority and to other minorities as well. In this regard we identified two crucial delimiting factors. The first is residential segregation (students living in contexts of ethnic segregation have much less chance of having any out-group contact than those who live in mixed ethnic neighborhoods). The second is school streaming that works more often in hidden ways as ethnic separation. As a consequence most studies showed that students, who, due to the related residential and school segregation as well as strong family ties, socialise only within the same ethno/religious group and have very rare – or even totally no – contact with 'others'. There is a second category, to which young minority ethnic people belong who have regular contact with peers belonging to different ethnic and religious minorities, however, they never or almost never get in touch with majority youth. Mixed peer groups – including the children of the poorest strata of the ethnic majority – are most common in the socially disadvantaged residential areas.

Many examples have shown us that the structural factors do not explain sufficiently the existence or lack of interethnic peer relations, even less the form, the content and the social consequences of these relationships. All these are also depending on the cultural factors governing the perception of these relationships. These we try to comprehend through discourses and performative acts of 'othering', which our target group is exposed to and take part in as well (even if in a weaker structural position). We will also emphasize that 'otherness' or ethnic difference is not experienced continuously in most mixed milieus. As we formulated elsewhere ethnicity is experientially invisible or irrelevant in most nominally mixed interactions (which does not of course mean that it is structurally irrelevant). (Brubaker et al. 2006, p. 302) The same is true of otherness as well, which we see as the core element of social construction of ethnicity. The experientially relevant 'other' is created in certain moments of nominally constructed inter-ethnic relationships. Different cases will be compared here, on the one hand the strength of ethno-racial perceptions in students' everyday relations, and on the other hand, the extent of the freedom to choose other categories for presenting oneself as similar or simply as not different.

Our third point summarises the typical topics and issues, which we met in minority student's discourses of 'othering', underlying not only the similarities but also the typical differences between diverse minorities and European countries. Here two subsets of typical issues will be presented: first those which are in closer relation with students' personal experiences of 'othering' starting with narratives on (1) teachers' fair and unfair attitudes towards minority students, continuing with stories about (2) being treated differently because of language barriers,

through (3) conflicts around study trips and other extracurricular activities which raise basic questions concerning the school's relation to the students' private sphere, and finally (4) differences in understanding what is appropriate concerning leisure activities, friendships and partner relations. The second subset is related to more general topics starting with (5) racism and discrimination on institutional and personal levels, including the media, and its coverage of the criminality issue, which works as validation of the most fundamental or radical version of 'othering' and finishing with (6) cultural and religious traditions being seen as a justification for incompatible lifestyles.

In the last part of our comparative analysis we will discuss the performative aspects of 'othering': starting with (1) verbal conflicts or insults using usually derogatory or racist terms, continuing with (2) ethnically or racially framed teasing or joking, through (3) self-confident avoidance or downplay (under-communication) of ethnicity, and finishing with the reactive showing off or over-communication of collective self in ethnic terms, applying often a subversive strategy.

## **THE STRUCTURAL CONSTRAINTS OF PEER-GROUP RELATIONS**

### **Residential constraints**

Residential segregation of most of the families with minority ethnic children was found to be one of the most general tendencies in the nine countries. At the same time, their selective inclusion in the school system – formal inclusion combined with various forms of ethnic and social exclusion - was also a very frequent phenomenon. As a consequence, for most minority ethnic students it is hard – or even impossible - to socialise with their majority (or ethnically unmarked) peers, even less with those who belong to a different social class than their own.

Among the old EU-countries we found the most striking difference between the German and the French case: despite similar cultural backgrounds of the minority ethnic groups their chances of relating to the majority are quite different. In two districts of Berlin we found minority youth attending almost entirely segregated schools, consequently having almost no contact with their majority peers despite the fact that they live in less segregated multicultural districts. In the two schools in Paris, where most students come from socially deprived urban neighborhoods, the two schools appeared – as Claire Schiff (2010) formulated – more like spaces relatively protected from the harsh difficulties of social life and offering their students a chance to openness to other categories of young people. However, segregation is perceived by students in both cases in a positive way, as far as it protects them from confrontation with the 'other' which may remind them of their disadvantaged status. (The last point, the protective effect of segregation, goes hand in hand with the exclusive inclusion of minority groupings that we will discuss later.)

Paradoxically, and certainly with local variations, "ghetto youth" seem to be the most integrated as far as the inter-ethnic peer group relations are concerned. Being either in Paris or Coaltown in Hungary, in Copenhagen or Stockholm, students of urban ghettos are most likely to refer to their neighbourhoods, the major distinction being between the "ghetto-youth" (*jeunes des cités*) and "the others". The difference between "us" and "them" is often seen as a determinant of their dressing style and of their behaviour in class. In fact, urban identities function as an implicit mode of social, ethnic, generational and even academic distinction. They synthesise all the various dimensions of their identity, while permitting a degree of mixture between various ethnic groups since membership is acquired and not transmitted. Many students' feelings towards their local identities are highly ambivalent. The ghetto-identity is the major source of

belonging of the young people who feel removed from their parents' sense of community and from the dominant national identity too. At the same time the stigma attached to the image of the "ghetto youth" combines all the processes of differentiation and exclusion that impede their prospects for social integration (Schiff 2010).

The vast majority of Parisian students stated that their friends were of several different origins and that they had met them in their neighborhood or through primary or middle school. It was even more so in the Fraser area of Copenhagen where students also described their friendships with other immigrant peers as important and valuable. Some of the families themselves are mixed already. The mixed identity associated with the ghetto is constructed in opposition to the ways in which the ghetto is stigmatised by the outside world. However, in the case of Denmark the minority students going to the school situated in an upper middle class environment declared that they got along with and had friends among their classmates. Pertaining to differences in various inter-ethnic student relations, the authors of the Danish community study concluded that *"the level of inter-ethnic activities among students was high, as they say even surprisingly high. Signs of racism in student-student relations appeared to be largely absent."* (Moldenhawer et al. 2010)

In countries where large immigrant minority communities are concentrated in certain urban districts and at the same time in certain schools young people do socialise with other immigrants. This is the case of the two German sites (Berlin Moabit and Kreuzberg) about which Gaby Strassburger says: student peer groups are often mixed but usually Turkish and other different groups of Muslim students socialise with each other. But they rarely have German friends because, as they pointed out, they hardly find any German families in their neighbourhood. This is a fact deriving mainly from the residential segregation of the immigrant population often legitimised with cultural differences on both sides. Another important reason is that German families who live in a neighborhood with a large Turkish and Arab community show a strong tendency to enroll their children in private or church-based schools or to leave the neighborhood. Students of Turkish, Arab or Muslim background who live in communities with lots of peers of similar backgrounds - with whom they understand each other "without words" - do not seem to feel any need to get into closer contact with German peers. Some students have even directly argued that it is a very good feeling to be in a school where minorities are in majority, and the similar can be true about the neighborhood as well. They feel more relaxed and regard their neighborhood as a kind of protection against being discriminated by the members of the dominant society (Strassburger 2010).

The British site of our research, Northcity, has shown two features of the youth ghetto life, which, although partly case-specific, illuminates something very general about this milieu. The issue of 'postcode gangs' frequently emerged in discussions and the way they worked was explained by a Caribbean girl. She used the example of walking into the territory of the rival gang: *"So if I walked in to Northcity3 with a green bandanna on, I would probably get knocked out for wearing a green bandanna in a black bandanna area. And if a black bandanna came in to a green bandanna area the black bandanna would get banged for wearing a black bandanna in a green bandanna area and same with all of them."* For some young people the postcode gangs were associated with ethnic minorities only, especially with Pakistanis, Somalis and Yemenis. Pupils at one of the schools did, however, align themselves to the Northcity3 gang. Researchers found that age and gender differences (like ideas of 'strong' masculinity) are very important in the formation of gangs. Concerning ethnicity they claim, however, that there is a high degree of fluidity (Swann 2010). The inter-gang relations are often obtrusive and, as a consequence, the relations between the different ethnic categories are also not necessary friendly, but rather on the contrary, they are quite hostile. This is characteristic of the Caribbean and Pakistani youngsters in Northcity.

Extreme forms of segregation were found in the case of Roma adolescents in the four Central European countries. Due to the desegregation policies initiated on state levels, the majority of Roma are not enrolled in separate schools any more. Nevertheless, in many cases they still go to separate classes often located in separate buildings. The large majority of these children come from segregated neighborhoods as well. The consequence of the two simultaneous circumstances is that most of the Roma pupils do not even meet non-Roma children. As the author of the Romanian community report formulates there is a lack of interethnic contacts across classes as there are no relations at all between them. But one may suppose that this is a hidden manifestation of at least the reluctance to share the school space with the “other” (perceived in ethnic and/or socioeconomic terms). Roma students do not feel this as ‘ethnic othering’, and not even as a disadvantage based or not on ethnicity, but they take it as something natural, and make inferior the supposedly superior others. They tacitly accept their otherness by avoiding occasions and places where they might not be welcomed (like school festivities). (Vincze 2010) At the same time, the sense of difference between different Roma groups and families is more important for them than the difference that they feel towards the majority.

In Slovakia, three quarters of the interviewed students live in segregated neighborhoods. For them the mixed schools offer the only possibility for inter-ethnic socialisation. However, both Roma and non-Roma children make a difference between the “integrated Roma” with whom Slovaks and Hungarians want to socialise and the “non-integrated” ones from whom they distance themselves. The refusal is often explained by the majority students with the lack of the support of their parents. However, Roma students feel that the main barrier to friendship with their “majority” peers is that they are not “accessible”. (Kusa et al. 2010)

In Hungary, three different kinds of out-group social relations of the Roma youth were identified. The most closed and segregated ones are those youngsters who live in so called “Gypsy colonies” with their families in deep poverty. In these colonies the social life of students is organised around their extended families, therefore, peer and family relations do not constitute two separate spheres in their life. In fact, not having other relations, the new generation reproduces the outcast situation un-influenced or even touched by the school, and without any chance of breaking out of it. The world of the urban ghetto is quite different. Here, the most important point of reference is the peer group and it has a stronger class than an ethnic character. The Roma representation of the ghetto is, on the one hand, a majority construction. On the other hand, it is the focal point of a youth counter-culture asserting itself in opposition to the latter and more generally to the majority’s racism combining global cultural styles with local ethnic traditions. The third category is formed by children of socially mobile parents having permanent jobs and living in lower-middle class neighbourhoods. “Being Gypsy” means to them grievances caused by the majority society, standing as an obstacle in the way of individual success while its communal component have completely vanished. They are usually atomised boys and girls who get a mutual support from their schools and teachers, but remain in an in-between position in their peer relations characterised by a lack of ties in any direction (ethnic and non-ethnic) (Feischmidt et al. 2010).

### **Diverging school experiences**

In most case studies we learn about two categories of minority students, those with career ambitions who think that school will help them to achieve their aims, and those who have no ambitions, no concrete plans and therefore think that they do not need the school for this purpose. As the authors of the Danish case study have suggested, both perceptions are accompanied by a special strategy towards schooling: the strategy of commitment and the strategy of instrumentation. (About their consequences upon ‘othering’ see more details below in discussing the performative aspects of ‘othering’.) Besides the two ideal-types, there is one



more: the category of students with ambitions, committed to learning, who feel however that they are not supported enough. Some of them even think that this is because they are discriminated against by their teachers. This perception is most common in our sites in the new member states than in the old ones affecting Romani students. However in the French case, where the main distinction was between students attending the non-vocational stream, who had usually chosen this path and had specific career plans, and those in the vocational streams, who often had little idea of what they wanted to do, the latter ones, with a high ratio of minority students were also complaining about poor advice and insufficient support by their teachers.

### *The experiential relevance of 'othering' or of being identified as different*

We supposed that the intention of individuals of minority ethnic background was to distance themselves from their ethno-cultural "othering" and marking, though the relevance and the success of this intention could be very different. The theoretical foundation of our research allowed us to see the flexible and situative reality of ethnic distinctions and identifications and to differentiate situations when ethnic othering becomes relevant from other situations when students' ethnic identities remain in the background because a different set of categories are utilised to interpret the situation. This is even more so in the case of adolescents and young people who are struggling for their social acceptance and identity in the different aspects and dimensions of their life.

While we met the experiential irrelevance of the (virtual) ethnic "othering" in all sites, there were considerable differences concerning how categories and experiences of otherness became prevalent and when. Perhaps one extreme is the case of the immigrant children in the two Danish schools, about which the authors of the community study say: *"Generally speaking, our impression from the individual student interviews is that they seem to distinguish themselves from experiences of being treated differently because of their ethnic minority background. They more or less try to describe how they are just like everybody else of their peers who they know from the school and the neighbourhood. One tentative explanation could be that they do not want to be looked at as something special just because of their ethnic minority backgrounds; and to some extent hesitate to answer the questions of the interview regarding their 'ethnicity'. However, this does not mean that they are not at all concerned about how their daily life and future aspirations are affected by their position as ethnic minorities."* (Moldenhawer et al. 2010).

It happens very often that the nominal difference – which is a virtual feature of the participants in a situation – will not be realised in practice and reflected by the usage of ethnic categories. Somewhat less prevalent, though present in many minority situations is the concrete refusal of being 'othered', including a refusal to engage with the best-intended multiculturalist approach. This is what the authors of the UK case study found: at a surface level diversity is appreciated and positively valued, however, a considerable part of the students do not want to take part in programmes aimed to promote inclusion representing a multicultural reality. They feel that ethnicity became a constraint, a pressure coming – ironically – from the dominant society.

The other extreme is the situation of those Roma students whose sentiment of shame – because they are not dressed properly and regularly go to school hungry – and a common feeling of fear – because of the many experiences of humiliation suffered from their social environment – are embodied so deeply that there are very rare moments in their life – and these are usually when they are among themselves - when they can be abstracted from these feelings. The deepest and the most unconsciously habituated distinction is when people avoid the physical proximity of the persons 'othered' and try to keep the biggest physical distance possible. The Slovak community study documents the lack of ethnically mixed sitting order in the classes that is very frequent in Roma - non-Roma relations in the other Central and Eastern European countries as well.

Children sit in pairs and these pairs are self-selected. A generation ago the sitting order was a pedagogical tool: excellent pupils were asked to sit with weaker pupils to “have positive impact on them” and self-selection of pairs had been tolerated only at the second stage of elementary school. Now, the autonomy of children to sit freely with whom they wish has been extended also to the lower grades of elementary school. This strengthened the tendency to form ethnically homogeneous pairs. Ethnically mixed sitting is increasingly taken as “non-standard”. Non-Roma children regularly refuse to form a pair and hold a hand of their Roma classmates. (Kusa et al. 2010). The perceptual aspect of this kind of inter-personal hostility is a dichotomous set of ethno-categories which dominates Roma youngsters’ view of “us” and “the others”, as the authors of the Hungarian case study wrote about a very similar, deeply habituated situation of segregation in Chemtown.

Using a differentialist discourse of identity reflecting experiences of othering depends very much on key aspects of one’s social position. We know far too little about the important nuances to be able to give an accurate answer to this question. However, there are some connections that suggest that students who are successful in school and have future plans are realising a mobility project with the support of their parents. These children seem to be less preoccupied with differences and they are even inclined to hide or downplay their experiences of injustices and discrimination. However, from the German and the Hungarian case study we know examples that show that the successful minority students have a higher degree of ethnic and political consciousness and are more inclined to comment on grievances and put collective complaints on a political agenda.

## **Issues of ‘othering’**

### *Teachers’ fairness and unfairness*

Most students in our international sample think that they are in more safety in their schools than they are in the broader society, and that their teachers are fairer than the adults of the majority in general, about whom most of them claim to be racist and discriminative. We heard complaints about minority students being treated differently by teachers in only a couple of cases. In Berlin, minority students complained about their teachers paying more attention to majority students and being stricter with minority students. Similar complaints had Roma students in Slovakia, Hungary and Romania as well. However, this is far from being an objective statement. Pupils can have very different motives to blame their teachers. Nonetheless, what we can see from the international comparison is that there are schools and countries where students never complain about their feelings of systematically being discriminated and treated differently because of their ethnic origin or skin colour, and there are others where it is openly said that this happens regularly. Based on the experiences of students in the Gesamtschule, they are convinced that most of their teachers are not as they ought to be. Some students feel discriminated, others frustrated by their teachers while others cannot understand why their teacher does not respect them (Strassburger 2010).

While the British, the French, the Danish and the Swedish school staff seemed to be very conscious about the principles concerning the relationship between the school and the society and the role of the teachers in managing the conflicts and injuries arising from this relationship, their Central European colleagues faced with Roma students declare that this is not their duty. Sometimes, even worse, they reproduce – unintended or not – the anti-Gypsy attitudes of the dominant middle class be it Hungarian, Romanian Slovak or Czech. As an example, the authors of the Slovak case study wrote that “*the use of the adjective ‘Gypsy’ as a synonym of under-education and bad manners is rather widespread*”. Roma pupils from a Slovak school talked about a teacher who often made the following comment upon entering the classroom: “*I feel like*

*in a Gypsy village!*” by which (s)he meant that the classroom was messy and stinky (Kusa et al. 2010).

In all four Central European countries students were complaining that cases of harassment (being oral or physical) among students were not punished at all by teachers. Teachers usually do not even notice these incidents because – as the interviews with teachers suggest – most of them think that the school is not about changing cultural habits and presumptions. On the other hand, neither of the schools facing problems of educating Roma children had any special programme that would support mutuality and friendship among children from different social strata or ethnic groups. Neither of the schools has a special programme supporting self-reflection of teachers in their daily communication with minority children (Kusa et al. 2010).

The cultural aspect of teacher–student relations is not only affected by the cultural background of the students, but also that of the teachers. We assume that minority students in our French, Swedish, Danish and partially British schools feel more comfortable and relaxed because in these sites one third to half of the teachers are of minority origin. The significance of minority teachers in the education of minority students was recognised in the new member-states as well. New programmes have been initiated to support hiring of Roma teaching assistants. However, it will take a long time to reach the level of the Western counterparts and have schools with Roma and non-Roma children taught by both Roma and non-Roma teachers.

#### *Linguistic defects as barriers*

There are certainly “objective” differences between minority and majority students as well which can be treated differently by teachers. One of these is the linguistic barrier of the minority students that is more problematic in the case of the first generation immigrants and less of the second generation or even less of the Central European Roma (though it exists even in the last case). We had the most first generation immigrant students in our Danish sites, where students talked about their experiences of disadvantage in acquiring the subjects and getting good grades because their language competency is lower than those of the majority students. Teachers do not try to cope with the problem and sometimes they even make remarks on the language capacity of students during class, which the children sometimes find derogatory. The authors of the Danish case study, who paid more attention to the language issue, have found that spending more time in the country of immigration (Denmark) does not solve the problems of the national educational system with bilingual children because they remain socialised to a large extent in their ethnic community. Others, who grow up in an urban ghetto get used to a special “multi-ethnolect”, which is still far from the official school language: *“It is hard to say if this linguistic style can be solely defined in terms of non-proper knowledge in Danish but interestingly, this way of expressing themselves shows the intersecting effects of a youth subculture (a form of rebelling by expressions) and “multi-ethnolect”, and it seems this combination adds to the local dimensions of self-perception and identity. Multi-ethnolect is a term of language variety and stylistic practice associated with mixed groups of language users for whom Danish is a second language. This multi-ethnolect is known and developed among youngsters who are brought up in ethnically mixed neighbourhoods in Copenhagen with Danish as their common language.”* (Moldenhawer et al. 2010).

#### *Study trips and school festivities*

One of the most important themes among the sensitive issues targeting and thematising the process of othering in classroom relations was the question of the participation in extracurricular activities, especially in study trips. In the old member states the problem rises from the general expectation of the schools that all children, regardless of their social, ethnic and religious

background, should participate in more than a day long outdoor activity regularly organised at the end of each academic year. This is most problematic for Muslim families who think that teachers do not regard Islamic rules as acceptable or important. A mother argued in a focus group interview in Berlin:

*“Teachers think differently about us. They put our children under pressure. We see it each Ramadan, how hard they try to prevent our children from fasting. I am sure they would also encourage our children to try things we don’t want them to do. They would be really glad if our children would act and think like Germans do.”* Another Turkish mother in this discussion group answered directly to this argument: *“For me it is totally normal what the Germans expect. We live in Germany and we should strive for integrating. This is not an Islamic country. I always sent my daughter to class trips and never had any problems. I have a good relation with her teachers because I understand them. One cannot forbid children everything just because we were educated like that. Our children’s future is in Germany so they have to conform to this country.”*

This remark is instantly answered by a third mother:

*“Who says that we don’t adjust? We do follow all the rules and laws. Our children participate in everything, like daily excursions and all the other things.”* The latter is going on: *“One does not have to adjust in every aspect. The Germans also have to understand that we have a different religion and different opinions on how we want to live our private life. But teachers put such a big pressure on us that I don’t know how to react. They should accept the differences. Do we criticise their way of living? No, we don’t, but neither should they.”*

The argument makes clear that for some parents class trips transcend a line where school life interferes with private life in a way they cannot accept (Strassburger 2010).

The situation is exactly the contrary in the Central European schools having a large number of Roma students. In Slovakia, as well as in Romania and in one of the sites in Hungary, Roma students do not attend any of the extracurricular activities (including the ones which take place in the school), but for very different reasons. In these countries the graduation ball after the last year (the 8<sup>th</sup> grade) of the elementary school has a similarly important and crucial role as the study trips in German-Muslim youth’s relations. The Slovak case study mentions the telling example of a young man, an excellent student, who did not take part in this festivity. His explanation was that he did not go because nobody would have danced with him. Others both in Slovakia and in Romania say that in fact they do not want to participate because these events are boring, nobody likes them including their majority peers. From a sociological point of view this, however, cannot be explained other than by being the manifestation of the internalisation of a very cruel and powerful social distinction. In this sense, what happens at school festivities resembles the general patterns of public celebrations in the same localities. (The authors of the Slovak case study added the information that in the studied localities there were no or only strikingly few Roma taking part in some events like the Juniáles festivity at Egřešová School in Krásne or “Nightingale”. This latter is the singing contest in Hrdé where there were no Roma pupils among the representatives of either of the elementary schools from the Hrdé district.) (Kusa et al. 2010). We experienced just the opposite, namely the most general tendency of exclusion of Roma people (of different ages) from spaces and communities of public ceremonies, in Beta School in Coaltown. The 8th grader Roma students were accompanied by their families and relatives in the school-leaving ceremony which was then followed by a celebration either at home or in a restaurant similar to that of wedding or baptism ceremonies. The photos were organised into an album for both classes and one could recognized that Roma and non-Roma students were standing next to each other (Feischmidt et al. 2010).

### *Leisure, gender and partner relations*

There are some further issues that create and habituate cultural and religious differences in the field of leisure and age specific activities of young people. According to the interviewees in Berlin, German, Turkish and Arabic youths have different timeframes for leisure activities (evenings spent within or outside family), different locations where peers meet (with or without alcohol, with or without social control) and with a different composition of peer-groups (mixed-gender vs. gender-separated groups). From the beginning of adolescence these differences seem to get even bigger. In the eye of the Muslim youths and teenagers the major distinction between them and their German, French or English peers is their different understanding of gender roles and partner relations. The latter are characterised by more sexual freedom than they think to be appropriate. In their opinion Germans do various things which are not acceptable in their own community. Most examples presented may be interpreted as somehow relating to the danger of sexuality without any social control. Like, for example, to come home late at night or to drink alcohol that is probably understood in itself as a danger of losing self-control. Clubbing and attending discotheques are further examples for the type of behaviours that are considered as unacceptable from their own perspective. (Strassburger 2010).

Consequently, not only liaisons between Muslim girls and Christian boys (and vice versa) become prohibited, but also a culturally defined distance and difference between Muslim and Christian girls as well as Muslim and Christian boys turn to be more and more important. (This is certainly less significant for those young people for whom religion is just a symbolic issue that does not regulate their choices.) Although, the most distinct gender roles and concomitant norms are created by Islam, different understandings of gender roles can be found in the Roma-majority relations as well. In the case of a Romanian Roma group (the Gabor Roma) religion, a fundamental neo-protestant church together with a very strong patriarchal ethnic ideology is the main guardian of ethno-specific gender distinctions. Though generally not accepting the public education, the attitude to school has different implications for boys and girls. The girls do not reach other levels of education than that of secondary school. There are many cases when Roma girls abandon school because of family traditions, for example, they marry at the age of 12-13.

However, young women's relation to school, as well as the school's effect on their understanding of gender roles is much more complex. Enikő Vincze (2010) gave a deep analysis of this ambivalent relationship. The young mother of one of her Roma interviewees from another Roma group observed that although "*each and every Romani girl quickly falls in love*", "*we, the emancipated Roma do not marry at the age of eleven or twelve*". These kinds of differentiations prove that the boundaries between different Roma groups are also maintained in terms of norms referring to female sexuality, marriage and childbirth. Nevertheless, our interviews show that the "non-traditional" Roma mothers of today's teenage daughters, even they advise them about not marrying and giving birth at an early age, usually get married before their twenties and abandoned or never attended school. And frequently, these teenage daughters do have older sisters who have similar life trajectories with their mothers'. Altogether, one may conclude that even if women from these Roma groups aspire to give up their traditional destinies shaped by a patriarchal gender order, they hardly practice those models of life that they would like to follow (attempting by this to become "a civilized modern woman"). In this way they remain in-between two value systems, but have their strategies of solving the tensions resulted from this situation: while mentally detaching themselves from models that they did not agree with (incorporated by Gabor Roma), being unable to put into practice their options for life-styles that they consider positive, they pass the mission of accomplishing the latter on their daughters. At their turn, as children of their times, these girls (and in another sense boys, too) embody a new generation that give signs of being ready to transform the symbolic/desired integration into

a pragmatic/fulfilled one among others through (re)negotiating their assumed Roma bonds (Vincze 2010).

Besides the religious differences, the ethno-cultural proscriptions which prohibit any intimate relationship between Roma and non-Roma peers are sometimes even stronger and (re)produce the perception as well as the social reality of a caste-like hierarchical system. Financial possibilities and the place of residence is another factor limiting students' possible options of leisure activities. Many Roma boys living in villages or ethnic slums, who would like to do different sports, cannot afford this. The separation of places for leisure activities, or rather the exclusion of certain groups from the common facilities, is the most powerful form of othering, or more precisely of racism. The authors of the Slovak case study give the example that there are several discos in one of the studied localities where Roma are not allowed to get in. At the same time, there is at least one pub that is considered to be a "Roma pub" and non-Roma people avoid it (Kusa et al. 2010).

We were expecting that ethnicity will be in many respects less relevant for students than other age specific differences such as different dress or music styles. This expectation was only confirmed by research in the British case of Northcity. Here pupils openly discussed social groupings concerning dress styles and music tastes. Pupils reported socialising with others from a range of different ethnic backgrounds so on the surface ethnicity did not appear to be significant: *"Everyone is just like mixed, like sometimes you will see White people together, sometimes you will see Black people, Pakistani people, White people and sometimes you will just be with emos and everyone just mixes really"* (Caribbean girl, School 2), (Swann 2010).

### *Racism and discrimination*

Concerning the students' reports on cases of discrimination and their general experience and perception on racism our researchers have identified quite different situations in the nine case study countries. First of all, concerning the relevance of the perception as well as the experience of racism, in some countries, for example in France, young people reported having very few experiences of racism, while for others, like the Hungarian Roma, racism as an act of exposure and its legitimising ideology seemed to be a central topic.

About the first Claire Schiff (2010) says:

*"...in individual interviews it appeared quite clearly that most students did not wish to portray themselves as victims of "othering" and that for this reason they were very circumspect in their answers to direct questions regarding their personal experiences of racism or discrimination. Similarly, relatively few of the students interviewed offered testimonies about having personally been a victim of racial discrimination in school or outside of school. Several students specified that while they had not "yet" experienced any discrimination because they were still in school, they expected that such a thing might happen to them someday."*

Just the opposite was evident in the case of the Hungarian Roma. The most frequently heard narrative modality in which the social experience of being Roma was presented was various forms of complaints. The "ethnic complaints" of the young girls and boys are much like those told by their parents, reinforced by experiences of discrimination at workplace, in interaction with officials and in different non-formal interactions as well. These experiences are complemented by age-group-specific grievances arising from contacts with anti-Gypsy and racist youths and music subcultures, virulent especially in Chemtown and the neighbouring villages, that is, the research site in the North-Eastern part of Hungary. Students attending segregated "Gypsy" classes, however, meet the symbols and representatives of subcultures of

skinheads and “national romanticism” not only in the street and in bars but also at school, reminding them day-by-day of the fears provoked by such phenomena. (Feischmidt et al. 2010)

Though the complaints are generally somewhat less central, the experience of being “racialised” and discriminated against was presented in the Slovak, Romanian and the Czech case. The experiences of those who have darker skin are considered to be worse than those with pale skin. One of the Slovakian Roma parents explained that one part of the family has light skin and they experience decent treatment, while “*those who have dark skin and low education are totally lost*” (Kusa et al. 2010). The moments when they are “uncovered” are very cruel and traumatic. A young woman told how she was punished when her Roma origin was revealed. Tamara told us how she was “uncovered” as Roma when her boss met her with her older daughter who had darker skin colour than she and her younger daughter. She said that she was later fired as her boss hated Roma. Many students share their experiences (after being repeatedly invited to do so) of othering only after being pushed aside by their classmates) (Kusa et al. 2010).

Hierarchical or conflicting relations reproduced by structural and institutional forms of discrimination are usually characteristic for minority-majority relations. However, it can be peculiar for relations between different minority groups as well. The Pakistani community was different from the Caribbean in the UK in the sense that most pupils lived in a traditional ‘stable’ family structure of married parents, siblings and extended families. Strong family ties and cultural values potentially gave them a stronger sense of identity. Living in predominantly Pakistani neighbourhoods also potentially gave a stronger sense of community. Unlike the experiences of Caribbeans, Pakistani pupils never brought up the issue of racism as a matter affecting their own lives and some parents also shared this perception. On one hand, all parents felt that life in England offered their children better opportunities than living in Pakistan (Swann 2010). At the same time many members of the Caribbean community were hyper-aware that ethnic disparities still continued to exist:

*“If you look at every particular statistics in this country; if you look at the prison system you will see that there is a high proportion from the BME people in the prison system. If you look at education you will see that BME are 3-6 times more likely to be excluded than the White counterparts. If you look at Middle Management you will see that there are only a low percentage of BME people and the same with the Police. It is the same old, same old particular problem (second generation Caribbean man)”.*

Criminalisation is one of the worst and most oppressing forms of racist perceptions. This is usually linked to the image of the urban ghetto or the ethnic slum but often to concrete ethnic categories as well. In the British case study this aspect of racism was more deeply analysed, however, we think that it is also relevant to other sites as well. Society’s expectations of Caribbean boys were felt to be extremely low even to the point of being dangerous, “*He sells drugs, he uses knives and guns, he is not a very nice person, be scared of that person, you will get your phoned robbed*” (Caribbean girl, School 3). Similarly a focus group discussion described much of the same: “*And yes if you are a Black person with a hood they straight away assume that you are a criminal. Yes a gangster and everything. If you see a Black guy with a hood on then you are just going to walk the other way aren’t you?* (School 2, focus group discussion)”. Blackness is symbolically threatening with its associations of drug culture, crime and therefore danger, which means that Caribbeans are more likely to be avoided or shunned in public spaces (Swann 2010).

The racist image of minorities is, to a large extent produced by the media and students of immigrant or minority background are aware of it and its consequences. Negative images of Muslims delimit their public reputation and the chances for social recognition of youngsters belonging to many different minority groups, even in those countries where discrimination and

everyday racism do not belong to students' personal experiences. This is the case of the minority students in Copenhagen who reported investing enormous efforts in distancing themselves from perceptions of immigrants being associated with gang crime, social problems and religious fundamentalism.

### **Deprecating cultural or religious traditions**

A special form of discrimination is the lack of recognition of the right for difference. The most salient manifestation of this is when students are deprecated if they show their religious or cultural identity. As the author of the German case study formulated several students reported about discrimination because of their headscarf. One of them told that teachers in primary school criticised her headscarf and told her to remove it in sports: *“One female teacher was so brutal. She once even forced me to leave the sports hall without my headscarf.”* Now, in the Gymnasium she is allowed to wear a headscarf. *“They accept it. Therefore, I like to be here. Teachers here are used to us.”* Conflicts between Muslim girls and teachers about covering the hair may already be seen as somehow “traditional” if we take into mind that already the mother of the latter girl faced a lot of problems because of her decision to wear a headscarf when she was nine. Her father went to school to explain that he did not expect his daughter to cover her hair but that it was her who decided to do so. (Strassburger 2010).

Many students feel bothered by teachers who frequently bring up discussions about issues like headscarves, arranged or forced marriage and family life in Islam in general. Yet these teachers do not show any intention to enter an open discussion but just want to make clear what their own perspective is:

*“I have no idea why we are talking about these things. What should we learn from these discussions? Nothing! What they really want is to blame us. Even if we explain why certain things make sense or have to be seen another way, they stick to their opinion. Never make a difference between Islam as the religion, on the one hand, and Moslems who are sometimes acting badly, on the other. It's like the media. If there are German families who have abused their children you will not read very much about in the newspapers. But if a Turk or an Arab makes something wrong, newspapers are full of it.”* (Strassburger 2010).

In the two Danish schools minority students were also complaining about their teachers' intention to talk about cultural differences using them, the immigrant students, as personal examples. Although this happens with the best intentions, certain students disagree because they feel that it renders more difficult their strategy of becoming similar and hiding their special cultural habits in the school environment.

Deprecating is certainly not the only way cultural peculiarities of minority students are treated in the studied European public schools. There are many schools, like that of the German Gymnasium where the quoted young woman is attending, which have a kind of multicultural policy. However in the critical eyes of the adolescents negative aspects are dominant. As the authors of the British case study have shown although there were schemes in place which aimed to recognise and promote diversity and increase community cohesion between different ethnic groups, in practice they were not utilised effectively as learning resources. This was a point brought about in pupil discussions about Black History month: *“We haven't done anything on Black history; I've done nothing on other people's history either”* (Caribbean boy, School 3). Black History Month takes place every October in Britain to specifically highlight Caribbean and African achievements, icons and cultural history and experience. Although posters were put around school to promote Black History month, there were not any learning activities within lessons around it (Swann 2010).



Students in Central European sites are not complaining about the lack of representation of the community or their cultural peculiarities. We met one initiative in Southwest Hungary where one of the schools attended by a large number of Roma started to deal openly with Roma identity. Since lots of Roma children feel ashamed of their origin, the school put a special emphasis on showing positive values of Roma culture. They had a ‘Gypsy club’ where once a week in a two-hour session children learnt dances, songs and tales. This activity stopped two years ago for lack of financial support. However, Roma students do not miss it and generally they did not express a desire for more Roma recognition in the curriculum or in extracurricular activities. This is because the initiative started at a moment when the majority of Roma population of the respective locality (and even more the youngest generations) had already been acculturated had lost the affective emotional ties to their language and specific traditions.

The most eloquent counter-example in the Central European sites was that of the Gabor Roma, and similar traditional Romani groups can be found all over the region. Their otherness is perceived by the outside world with a special mixture of consternation and disdain while the members of the group look at themselves with some kind of pride. Enikő Vincze (2010) explains this ‘ethnic pride’ in the following way:

*“This is about the pride of their mother tongue that also functions as a medium through which social and cultural norms are transmitted. Their wear (particular hat, long moustache for men, coloured silk skirt for women, coloured blouse with various patterns, pleated apron coloured as the skirt and head scarf) makes them different not only from the majority, but also from other Roma. They also guard their distinctiveness through specific marriage practices. They marry at a young age and parents choose partners for their children exclusively from other Gipsy-Gabor families.”* (Vincze 2010)

## **PERFORMATIVE ASPECTS OF OTHERING IN EVERYDAY INTERACTIONS**

In the following paragraphs we will change our focus from discourses and issues of othering to the performative aspects of the everyday interethnic interactions and the acts of identifications. We will present four ideal types of othering, partly inspired by the analytical framework mapped out in one of our earlier works (Brubaker et al. 2006, 301-315), and partly relying on the comparative analysis of the ethnographic material of EDUMIGROM community studies. This perspective highlights very clearly that being different is not a continuous experience or issue in minority youngsters’ life and social relations. It comes up in a situational way, largely in ritualised forms of communication.

### ***Verbal conflicts, insults***

We begin with conflicts and insults which show the intersection of different reasons and frameworks for the interpretation of everyday relations. As ethnic or racial tensions, animosities and conflicts almost never manifest themselves in a “pure” form independently of other dimensions of social relations, involving distinctions based on factors such as residence, academic performance, attitudes in class, style, migration, or simply interpersonal affinities or animosities. Claire Schiff (2010) has also pointed out that it was impossible to interpret the testimonies and observations about conflicts and tensions among students or between students and school personnel in terms of a direct causal effect between the ethnic origins of the individuals involved and the particular instance of rejection or opposition observed. In fact, what appeared to the outside observer as the most frequent and often violent manifestation of racism, i.e. the use of insults and derogatory comments by students in reference to each others’ ethnic

origins, was not regarded, at least explicitly, by the protagonists as expressions of racism. When questioned about their propensity to tease each other about their ethnic and racial origins, minority students in particular would say that it was precisely because they could not be suspected of actually thinking what they were saying (in other words of being racist), that they were allowed to say it (Schiff 2010).

While the ambivalence of these situations has been emphasised by most researchers in the old member states, there is a striking difference between the majorities' relations to Roma in most Central European countries. As the author of the Slovak study has emphasized the most frequent form of learning of one's otherness is through being the target of verbal abuse. For example, the following children remember while complaining about situations when they were called 'Gypsy'. *"I did not tell anything anybody. It was that way. It was such a peculiar feeling. Then it has stopped when I have grown older."* "Softer" forms of chanting (calling "Hey gypsy") are embarrassing as well. Another child remarked on how it felt very unpleasant and frustrating that her schoolmates regularly treated her differently because of her darker skin: *"It is (disgusting) this shouting... For instance, if Roma girl goes around, they start to shout at her: Gypsy goes, look at her, Gypsy. However, if a white girl goes around, it is normal (nobody cares)."* (Kusa et al. 2010).

The Hungarian Roma youngsters living in the ghetto district of Coaltown were also complaining about the verbal insults which they had to endure from their Hungarian peers and, first of all from those whom they label as 'racists'. When asked about such a situation, two young interviewees described it as follows:

*"- Someone says something, I say something back and then the fight is on.*

*- Tell me one or two stories like that!*

*- Last time, down where I live, like a street or two from my house this guy was walking along and he says "What's up, Gypsy?", just like that, when I never said anything to him. I went up to him and said "Who are you calling Gypsy?" and then kicked off...*

*- Do they call other people their names, too?*

*- Well, that's pretty standard in school. Everybody calls everybody else names, but that's just kidding around.*

*- Can you help me understand the difference between the kind of calling you names that's just joking and the kind you take seriously?*

*- Well, they can also say "What's up, Gypsy?" but they do it jokingly. So I understand that as being a joke. If he's serious, he'll come over, start pushing me around, like that one time, and then that's it. Then I get riled up too" (Feischmidt 2010).*

### **Teasing and joking**

As shown in the above example, young people in all countries in our sample find kidding and teasing, which combines humour with structural constraints, the most acceptable ways of playing with their otherness. The manifestation of these 'fun' instances are, nonetheless, very different concerning their forms and outcomes. The most common subject of teasing is skin colour as in the following citation from a Hungarian mixed focus group discussion shows:

*" ... but we have our little jokes,*

*- Like, for example, chocolate boy..., like that*

*- That's how we show Feri we love him."*

Feri, who was mentioned in the dialogue above, is a successful and popular Roma student among his peers, not so much because of his academic achievements but because of his sporting prowess and his masculinity, as one girl characterised:

*“Like, Feri, who said like, I’m FERI the big badass, would like shush me, but he was just kidding around like, when he said “shut it” and he’s the one who usually says things like, ‘what’s wrong, Vivi, don’t you like coloured people?’, but he’s only kidding around. ...”*

Different possibilities or different restraints in ethnic teasing can mark the difference between majority and minority participants of such interactions. A Slovak Roma boy was telling about his good relations with a “good” non-Roma classmate with whom they spend a lot of time together. *“He is more often with us than with whites.”* However, he and his Roma friends feel themselves embarrassed when they see that their non-Roma friend is laughing at Roma jokes or remarks which make Roma ridiculous. He says that they share their embarrassment with him: *“When he is with us, we ask him why he has laughed at such jokes. [We tell him] You are either with us or with them!”* (Kusa et al. 2010).

Joking is not always different from insults; the mixture of the two is characterised with an ethnographic example in the UK case study. In a focus group discussion about connections to other countries, one Caribbean boy commented, *“Yes Pakistan. They used to run round playing football in bare feet’ [laughs] to which the Pakistani boy responded with, ‘Ha ha no they didn’t’”*. Later on when asking a Pakistani boy why having more Pakistani teachers would be a good thing, the same Caribbean boy responded with, *‘They have more fear of terrorists. [Laughs]’ to which the Pakistani boy responded with, “I’ll slap you, you Black shit’ [laughs]”* (Focus group, School 2). Although both boys were laughing which suggests harmless fun, there was a deeper layer of significance behind these exchanges. These were not examples of injecting humour into social interaction. Neither did it seem to be a marker social intimacy. Rather these were micro insults given by the Caribbean boy to the Pakistani boy and the laughter from both boys served to reduce the potential tension. When the meaning of these remarks was challenged the Caribbean boy stated, *“‘No it is just a joke; we are only messing about with each other’. However, this was a feeling in all three schools which suggests a wider social division between the two groups than school based issues. What was significant was that Pakistanis tended to ‘accept’ these exchanges. Although there was evidence of actively challenging it through ‘I’ll slap you, you Black shit’. This was a limited and highly constrained form of resistance.”* (Swann 2010).

The author of the French case study also emphasised the role of joking and teasing in reference to one’s ethnicity using terms which referred to each other’s country of origin, to stereotypes concerning immigrants “fresh off the boat”, or to particular representations about the negative characteristics of various ethnic groups. This kind of bantering, most frequent among minority students, often expressed itself as a form of competition between groups in view of proving the “superiority” of one’s own community over that of the “adversary”. Throughout the fieldwork it appeared as a common feature of youthful collective verbal exchange in the multi-ethnic urban neighbourhoods in which the research took place. Majority origin students usually do not participate as actively as their minority peers, perhaps because they are more at risk of actually appearing to believe what they are saying, and thus of being accused of being racist by others. Majority and minority students are as likely to be designated by such jokes, although the stereotypes concerning the different groups are different. While Arab students are more readily portrayed as delinquents or terrorists, black students are portrayed as lazy and uncivilized, whites or, as students say the “French”, are more often cast in the role of the nerd, the overly effeminate or spoiled rich kid. (Swann 2010).

## **Avoidance or downplay**

When students comment on situations of conflict or teasing they tend to give them an ethnic interpretation – this is illustrated by most examples above – but in other situations they may downplay the role of ethnicity, and moreover, neglect even the most plausible racist motivations. The author of the French community study emphasises that the minority youth in Paris and Bordeaux deny clearly existing racist motivation of ethnic/racial teasing, because their primary intention is to minimise the ethnic dimension of interpersonal relations (Schiff 2010).

When minority students carry out a strategy of avoiding ethnicity or downplaying their experience of different treatment, they can do this with two different intentions or motivations. They avoid it rather unconsciously, because ethnicity is simply not relevant for their social identity and self-understanding, whereas they are preoccupied with other issues and try to keep the communication on generation specific topics. On the other hand, it implies a more conscious effort by the minority individuals who would like to be accepted and appreciated by the school system or/and by their peers, and to this end they try to hide everything from their personal story what they think to impede them in this effort.

The authors of the Danish community study found that this strategy is characteristic of students who, on one hand, seem to be aware of their ‘otherness’ (and assertively keep contacts with their ‘own’ people), but, on the other hand, seem to have aspirations to be accepted otherwise: they rather think ethnicity neither will be a ‘capital’ nor a ‘hindrance’ in making their careers (Moldenhawer et al. 2010). In the new member states the Roma have very little chance to downplay their ethnicity, except for those who have a solid social and economic background and who are integrated both in terms of their residence and schooling. They also have the freedom to strengthen their other identities and ties.

## **Showing off**

The gap between minority students’ aspirations and their limited chances of success in school as well as their inferior position in many peer relations, create a diffuse yet persistent feeling of dissatisfaction and de-motivation. What the authors of the Danish case study are saying about two different perceptions of and strategies towards schooling – the strategy of motivation and the strategy of instrumentation – is characteristic of most cases examined in this project. The two strategies are very much in synchrony with the last two strategies of handling ‘otherness’ in everyday situations. The strategy of avoidance and downplay is strengthened by an attitude of subordination of all other interests to those of schooling and to efforts of getting ahead. This results in a strictly disciplined lifestyle, where showing off is linked to an oppositional attitude towards schooling. Students in the latter category found the school boring and they paid more attention to peer relations. Their feeling of hopelessness is transformed as the rejection of the school system is expressed through unruly behaviour, constant bantering in class, absenteeism and hypersensitivity to expressions of criticism on the part of teachers.

Whether this anti-school peer pressure permeates the general atmosphere of the class and student relations such as is the case in the boys vocational classes at Brassens, or whether it appears more latent and intermittent, such as is the case in the classes where girls are present, is not linked in any obvious manner to the proportion of minority students in the class or to their particular influence. Although the opposing figures of the submissive vs. rebellious student tend to be racialised in common sense representations, in the actual situations observed or recounted those who are teased and rejected by their peers for being too studious may be of minority origin (especially if they are first generation migrants), while one finds majority origin youth being some of the toughest most oppositional students (especially those who have grown up in public housing projects) (Schiff 2010). The acts of opposition to the school regime are very similar in

the Central European countries as well, smoking in the school, running off from school during classes, hanging out in the streets or in shops near at hand, and provoking smaller or bigger affrays and disturbances. The oppositional attitude sometimes finds its form and frame of meaning through ethnicity, where this is used as a basis to show off their repression and subvert racist discourses.

Despite the oppositional version of showing off, rooted in and mixing with youth subcultures, there are occasionally special events which work in a traditional sense as public representation of certain minority communities. Religious Muslim holidays, such as the Ramadan or the various Eids, are occasions during which students tend to assert more openly their ethnic pride. In the Paris site in particular there is a considerable amount of peer pressure for students of Muslim origin to “show off” their religiosity during these periods. On such occasions religious affiliation seems more akin to respect for youthful standards of what is “cool”, than to an organizing principle of one’s life. The fact that religiosity is more symbolic and externally determined among most students belonging to the second and third generation is made more obvious in contrast to the few cases we encountered of first generation students from Muslim countries (Schiff 2010).

## **VOICES OF ADULT AUTHORITY**

This section presents the ways in which teachers, parents and community representatives have understood and expressed their perceptions of the causes and manifestations of ‘othering’. This includes their assessments of whom or what is responsible for the relevant social differences, and who should do what to solve the problems of differentiation and inequality that influence their own pedagogical successes in terms of the students’ school performance, and finally, also the students’ life chances which depend on the gained school exams. These discourses evolve around key explanations including the role of the family, the role of ethnicity, culture, religion and race, or the role of socio-economic differences/class. Firstly, the views of teachers are analysed, this is then followed by an examination of parents and community views.

### ***Parents’ views***

In the cases of France, Sweden and the UK structural discrimination was understood to a certain extent through physical and neighbourhood location as parents were able to articulate physical ethnic boundaries in the cities they worked and lived. Although issues regarding the families’ low socioeconomic status remained fairly hidden during interviews with parents, their ‘exposed socio-economic position in society’ (Kallstenius and Sonmark, 2010) was signalled through a distinctive language style such as ‘multi-ethnolect’ (Moldenhawer, Kallehave and Hansen, 2010) and fragments of discourse. In Romania, Roma parents talked about situations of embarrassment “*when the school asks for money, however they should not do this, they make you feel ashamed in front of other parents if you are not able paying*”. Financial insecurity combined with peripheral physical neighbourhood position and limited social networks, meant that parents did not have much opportunity to help their children overcome existing obstacles in entering the labour market and become an integrated part of mainstream society. As a result, the parents’ disadvantaged position and general lowly sense of status towards themselves in relation to mainstream society were often unwittingly transferred to their children.

The educational background of students’ parents was for the most part modest. Most parents had not advanced past compulsory education. Most were working on temporary contracts in low status jobs usually in the service industry. Some were receiving some form of welfare provision such as unemployment benefit. To raise income, some were or had in the past undertaken illegal

or semi-legal activities (Feischmidt, Messing, and Neményi, 2010). Their own lowly socioeconomic status and experience of being excluded from the job market seemed to prompt their ambitions for their children. This seemed to be the case in Sweden in particular. However there were disparities in how minority ethnic parents framed their children's school success and achievement in school. On one hand many parents viewed school as providing an opportunity to 'succeed' in life by gaining qualifications which would enable entry into a high status career. Parents justified the importance of school by drawing on their own difficulties as adults arising from their own insufficient schooling. In Germany, Romania, the UK, Denmark and Sweden parents spoke about their children entering high status careers in law, medicine, and teaching or as a pilot. From this point of view, education was worth investing in. This sense of ambition seems to have been transmitted to their children as there was a common perception of some minority ethnic students having a higher sense of ambition which was discussed earlier. However, although many parents understood the importance of good educational performance many doubted that their children had equal chances in the labour market. This was the case for Roma parents in Hungary. Parents in Denmark supported their children but felt their children were disadvantaged by inadequate resources such as supply teachers. In other countries some parents did not consider education as a source of social mobility at all. In Romania and the Czech Republic some parents tried to guide their children towards traditional crafts because of family tradition which was a way of maintaining identity within ethnic confines.

Despite apparent enthusiasm for education, in practical terms parents' participation in school life often was low which perhaps reflected an ingrained attitude of despondency resulting from their structural position. Their low participation meant that they often did not understand what was required of their children and so their expectations were often misinformed. Many parents who migrated as adults did not know much about the country's education system and had to rely on the information they got from their children. Although parents saw it as their responsibility to support their children, by making sure they do their home work, and assisting with assignments, many simply could not. Several parents in the Swedish and Danish samples expressed difficulties because of limitations in the national language, foremost expressed by low educated parents. Likewise the Gypsies in the UK who had undergone some schooling nevertheless experienced severe problems as they could not read or write. As one mother commented, *"I just write on the letter 'too hard, my child cannot do this'. (...) Do you think I can read or write? Do you think I can do miracles? I am only barely starting myself do you know what I mean? I am not confident, I can do it but I am not confident, you need more confidence."*

Parents who were highly educated were able to manipulate strategies to improve the educational situation for their children by transferring them to 'better' schools where they would benefit widely from social networks. This was the case in Sweden and the UK. School reputation tended to be learnt via informal social networks in the UK.

Second-generation parents had better personal insight by having been part of the system themselves. This worked as both a benefit and a constraint. Parents' own negative experiences influenced the way they looked at their children's schooling in the current day. In particular, Gypsies in the UK and Roma in Romania and shared many commonalities of experience with shared community memories of the persecution their ancestors had suffered through war. In Slovakia however Roma memories of the Second World War period seemed lost forever as the generation of Roma survivors of that period had already died and their experiences and memories seem not to be shared with and preserved by their descendants. Stemming from their own negative experiences the main parental strategy in most countries seemed to be one of protecting their children against discrimination.

The sense of cultural divide or cultural conflict between home and school emerged through parents' narratives. It expands to school trips where parents feel immense trepidation about their

offspring being taken on away. Among the Roma in Romania and Gypsies in England, school rules and daily participation in activities with children of different ethnicity is – because of old customs – a threat to the cultural traditions. Likewise earlier reference was made to parents in the Czech Republic who tried to guide their children towards traditional crafts. This can be viewed as a means of ensuring identity is maintained within ethnic confines.

While there was a clear focus on higher education both among the low educated parents and those with an academic background in Sweden, the educational background of Pakistani parents in the UK did seem to matter more. Some low educated Pakistani mothers had a firmly placed belief in the role of serendipity for their children to succeed in their academic career as well as wider life. Similarly the Roma in Romania expressed ‘luck’.

The judgement of parents was often influenced by the general atmosphere and ethos of the school. In some countries the school context provided a sense of hierarchy, ‘an imaginary top chart’ (Romania) which was emotionally transmitted to parents. Complaints about teachers and/or school tended to come to the surface later in interviews, presumably because respondents felt trepidation in expressing their ‘true’ feelings immediately for fear of negative academic scrutiny. In Romania the researchers for instance note that, “...*at the beginning everybody thought (sic was) saying that they were pleased and everything was quite fine’ but this gave way to complaints which were articulated through ‘the language of discrimination and a tone of protest’.*”

Mostly perceptions of discrimination and unjust situations were explained through the individual micro level interactions experienced between their children and teachers or other pupils or their own interactions with educational professionals. Mothers in Romania and the UK relayed cases of inter-ethnic bullying and fighting between children that occurred due to the negligence of the teachers and the fact that they refused to recognise it as an incident motivated by racism. Overt tensions also arose between parents of different ethnic backgrounds. In Slovakia one Roma mother described a parent’s meeting where a non-Roma mother said she suspected that her daughter had caught head lice from a Roma classmate. This resulted in the Roma mother having to take a defensive stance, “*So I have also stood up and asked the teacher to tell parents right now if she has ever found sucking louses on my daughter and to explain things to parents and then the teacher has told them that my daughter has never had sucking louses and she is always dressed cleanly and often better than some children from white families..*”

The implication was that Roma children were unclean which exemplifies how distinctions are enforced in daily interactions between the majority population and the ethnic ‘Other’.

### ***Teachers’ discourses of ‘othering’ and the construction of difference***

The positions which teachers have taken on the issue of their minority ethnic students’ experiences of ‘othering’ are mixed with the teachers’ own views on the ‘otherness’ of the student groups at issue. This double meaning must be kept in mind when reading the following summaries and analyses. We summarise what the country teams encountered as the teachers’ perceptions of the ‘othering’ practices which minority ethnic students face in their everyday school life. At the same time, when discussing the presumably collective experiences which members of a certain ethnic group have to cope with – according to their teachers’ views – we also represent the teachers’ group constructions which are in themselves representations of the everyday ‘othering’ processes going on in schools (and outside of them).

A first comparative finding that we would like to stress is a certain convergence in the teachers’ discourses: there seems to be a common set of problem foci which the teachers address across the countries included in the EDUMIGROM study. In spite of the national particularities of different welfare regimes, immigration histories and formal conditions, or of the ethnic

compositions in the different countries, we find the same problem sources addressed by the teachers who were interviewed in the selected schools. We shall therefore present the interview statements in accordance with the structure of the encountered narratives. The teachers have pointed to the following focal points as being crucial, in their perception, for the (re)production of the differentiated school performances of ethnic minority/majority youths:

- Separation of classes along lines of ethnicity and ethnically biased streaming
- The emergence of ‘minority schools’ through ‘white flight’ and socio-economic flight phenomena
- Low learning standards and reduced educational demands in ‘minority schools’, producing an ‘Island Culture’
- The role of parents in school: perceptions of parents’ abilities, consciousness, and willingness to take part in their children’s school life.

The last point is the one which particularly characterises the teachers’ perceptions of the ‘other’ family cultures. It is, as such, the most prominent example for the ways in which the teachers themselves construct the ‘otherness’ of the minority ethnic youths.

A second dimension that we want to shed light upon with regard to the cross-country comparison concerns the ways in which teachers have taken explicit positions on the assumed differences between their students; be they explicit in terms of the taken for granted ‘otherness’ of some, or else explicit in terms of a declared indifference towards the impact of ethnicity, culture, religion, or socio-economic factors on the students’ school performance. In this respect we find some differences between the studied countries which relate to the basic features of the respective political cultures. This divergence becomes visible in the extent to which specific positions were taken on the above mentioned issues, and it will finally also be addressed as an expression of the:

- The reach of political correctness norms in minority ethnic schools.

### **Separation of classes along lines of ethnicity and ethnically biased streaming**

In spite of the fact that different policies for the integration of minority youths are followed in the studied countries, there is a strong perception among many teachers that these integration efforts were illusionary, and that educational separation along the lines of the majority/minority population groups was a factual condition in school life. The extent to which teachers assessed the factual ethnically biased streaming varied. In most cases of our sample it was simply taken for granted. The cases of Hungary and, to a certain extent, of Slovakia are exceptional in this respect. In the two Slovakian case study schools, opposite strategies are applied. The headmaster from Vážne School advocates such streaming and refers to an overall improvement of school results for all pupils. She admits that Roma parents disagreed in the beginning, „... *but later, when the first group of streamed pupils graduated, we have found that they have learned much more...*”. Her colleague from Hrde School is vehemently against separating Roma from non-Roma children because he expects negative effects for the schooling of the Roma: “*If they are too many together, they begin to set their agenda*”. In the Hungarian schools the separation of Roma and non-Roma pupils was rather treated as the only viable option. Teachers of the Gamma School in Hungarian Chemtown were “shocked” by the announcement that the town’s “Roma school” had to be “fully integrated” by their institution according to a directive of the Ministry. None of the interviewees there considered the opportunity that teachers and school management could be active agents in the process of integration, but they appeared to be passive bearers of a top-down decision-making mechanism. In particular they were afraid of the parents’ reactions



and feared in a large scale “white flight”. They feared that, if that happened, they would be forced to work with a completely different “material of children”. Thus they maintained the “pre-integration state” which they organised within their school: Roma children were separated from the ethnic majority, and the parents of the latter were convinced that “everything was the same as usual”. Chemtown’s Gamma School created a Roma-only class producing highly differential within-school composition primarily along ethnic lines. Hence, “Roma” and “Hungarian” were conceptualised as mutually exclusive entities with a significant gap between the two. Everyone’s social place, and ethnic origin or – as the students said – “race” has been taken as if it were a natural phenomenon. The norm of integration has thus remained an abstract idea and strong segregating mechanisms started to operate to prevent any change. Together with some Czech and Slovakian teachers’ statements, this example from Hungary is one of the most pronounced across our sample countries. A number of Czech colleagues stated likewise openly that they could simply not imagine teaching Czech and Roma students together.

In the other countries, the teachers either stressed that special classes were only built on purpose in order to foster the purpose of educational integration (like in the shape of preparatory classes), or they refused to apply segregating practices and thus implicitly – or maybe just officially – confirmed the aim of an educational integration of the minority students – even when the situation in their schools belied this notion: After all, across the countries one finds cases of factual ethnic separation although they appear to have been caused by mechanisms of choice; e.g. due to certain occupational choices in the French vocational schools, or due to a distinct educational agenda that is chosen to be followed, like in the voluntarily separated Muslim Schools in Denmark or Germany.

Teachers have rarely admitted the active part which they play in the ethnically differentiated allocation of pupils. The following example from Romania is typical of this. While the headmaster of school 2 explained that the distribution of the students over the parallel classes was just a matter of chance or coincidence, it was obvious that the most ambitious so-called “English special class” was populated only with non-Roma students who were living in better social conditions and showing better school performances. The Roma students were all enrolled in the “other” or in the “second” class from the fifth grade on. More generally, however, at the enrollment in the first and into the fifth grade, a great part of the Roma pupils had been already advised to choose a special school. In view of the fact that many parents – even low educated ones – respect the school very much and have considerable educational aspirations considering their children, the (in particular elementary) teachers’ advise to choose a particular school appears to be crucial. Yet this important and powerful role which teachers play in giving a certain advise for or against the school types remained unreflected to an astonishing degree in the teachers’ statements. We could thus only speculate about the driving motivations behind what seems to be one important allocation mechanisms to reproduce ethnic and social segregation.

### **The emergence of ‘minority ethnic schools’ through ‘white flight’ and socio-economic flight**

The flight of better-off families is something which the teachers fear – and have to cope with – in all schools with a considerable share of minority ethnic students from less privileged family backgrounds. The Hungarian example was again the most extreme in the ways in which this concern has been voiced. The management of Beta School in Hungarian Coaltown was most fearful of “the white flight” as a possible response to integration (in the proper sense) of Roma children in their school. The experience and/or anticipation of the teachers at this school pointed in the same direction. They saw the major issue, and also the main source of conflict with the non-Roma parents, as the mixing of Roma and non-Roma children in classes. In other words,

they felt under pressure from the non-Roma parents to continue with discriminatory practices against the Roma. In view of the competition of schools for students, the headmaster explained that teachers “*would do more for the Roma students if they didn’t have to take into consideration the interests of the non-Roma majority upon whom the school, and indirectly the teachers, depend existentially*”. In this respect, similar to ethnic streaming, the teachers’ discourses in the other countries were less explicit.

The difficult situation of teaching many students from weak socio-economic backgrounds was reflected upon throughout the cases of the sample, and the fact that resourceful parents tended to take their children away from a school with too many minority ethnic students was likewise described to be a problem in all cases. Yet in contrast to the Hungarian example of Coaltown where the teachers appeared to surrender to the preferences of the majority parents, most teachers in the other countries were rather critical of the lack of additional educational resources and material conditions to counter this well-known problem. A common opinion among the teachers was that teaching in a school with many students from poor families makes their work extremely hard and calls for special measures. In Sweden, for instance it was described by teachers as being particularly difficult “*to do a good job in a school like Harbour School with enormous needs and very limited resources... Many students are very weak and there is often a need of smaller working groups*”. The teachers generally see a gap between the available resources and the equipment they would need for effective work. The lack of finances has been frequently mentioned as an important factor that complicates their work and hinders the effectiveness in schools that face “flight” phenomena (lack of pedagogical tools, money for educational excursions, etc.). In the Czech case, however, teachers in several schools judged the scarcity of means, although a burden in itself, to work as a gradual selection process in itself. Since their work was more demanding, compared to standard Basic Schools, a great deal of new teachers would leave after a short time, and only those with positive attitudes and special commitment would remain. This underlines that teachers feel they get too little support in terms of additional resources to cope with what they feel to be additional hardship. Beside material conditions, the lack of political support was criticised as well. For example, in both of the German schools, teachers declared that they felt they were left out of political decision making with respect to this issue. While the concept of the *Gesamtschule* had originally been to bring together students of different socio-economic and educational backgrounds, there had not been any accompanying political strategy to make this vision a reality. The school choice that is left to parents creates segregated schools. In the same vein, a teacher at the *Gymnasium* in Berlin pointed to a structurally discriminating education policy which does not effectively react to the well-known fact that German families who live in a neighborhood with a large Muslim community generally enroll their children in private or church-based schools or leave the neighbourhood. Minority ethnic families with high ambitions or an academic background frequently do the same way, and this has also been reported from the other (West European) countries.

### **Low learning standards and reduced educational demands in ‘minority schools’, producing an ‘Island Culture’**

The school staff, whether head teachers, teachers, or teaching assistants, described more or less the same problematic habitual behavioral patterns of their students to be the characteristics of the ‘minority ethnic’ schools or classes: a low capacity for concentration among students, loudness, a lot of physical action going on in courses, immediate expressions of personal views and feelings, i.e. a general lack of discipline. Since these disturbances are so many, the teachers adapt their expectations. Most of them tend to tolerate minor transgressions that would be sanctioned in “normal” school situations (e.g. shouting in classes, interrupting teachers and fellow students, bad language), but react harshly to more serious activities (like physical

assaults, thefts, drug abuse). What the teachers (across the country sample) described as a lowering of their standards was not restricted to the students' social behaviour. Teachers admitted also that they had reduced the teaching contents in order to cope with the particular situation in this setting. Curriculum contents were cut to the utmost necessary minimum, just to make sure that the pupils succeed in proceeding to the next grade. It is often decided to put increased effort into basic subjects (mathematics, or the national lingua franca) at the expense of subjects that are considered as being less important (like for example arts, or foreign languages). Such decisions over teaching priorities are taken because teachers feel obliged to react to the problems facing them in terms of discipline and social manners they observe among their students from minority ethnic families. In other words, they try to inculcate a minimum set of basic habits and conventions which they perceive as being the 'normal' behaviour. Concretely, they train conspicuous children to wash their hands, blow their noses by using a handkerchief, sit quietly at a desk for a while, or ban the use of insulting words. Most of the teachers who work in a respective school or class showed their frustration over this problem. They do not see any alternative as a certain degree of disciplined behaviour is a necessary prerequisite to teaching. But the question remains whether teachers should be in charge of establishing these prerequisites. Most teachers do not see it as their duty but regard it as an additional burden which not only makes their work rather hard but also leads to a lowering of the teaching standards and to less time that can be spent on conveying the curriculum (this was reported particularly from schools in Germany, Sweden and the Czech Republic). According to the interviewed teachers, too much effort is invested into the students' socially disadvantaged situations, leaving too little space and time for increasing the students' knowledge in the taught subjects, or for improving their skills further. A result of this adjustment is the development of an 'Island Culture' which can be found in many of these schools: minority ethnic students feel safe and comfortable because they are not marginalised there; teachers tend to expect less of them so that even weak students may experience a certain level of success which they might not have elsewhere – at least that seems to be a fear among students. This has been articulated most pronouncedly in the French, German and Swedish cases. Even high-achievers among the students are hesitant to leave the confines of their socially detached context. They fear confrontation with majority society because they expect (more) discrimination but they also expect to be unable to meet the requirements, e.g. in a secondary school with mostly students from ethnic majority backgrounds:

*“The student coach of Harbour School [in Sweden]... often meets students in 9th grade, who are going to attend upper secondary school in the city district. ... young people with immigrant background are frightened and worried, even if they are successful in school with high grades. They are concerned that they will not fit in at their new school and that it will be too difficult to keep up with the teaching. One teacher there, of Chilean background, has experienced a similar context among his students with South Harbour being their point of social reference. They are accustomed to the life there and think it is safe. He says additionally that the students know that in their new school, most other students will have an ethnic Swedish background. He points out that it is not unusual to be worried about what school and program to choose for upper secondary school, 'everyone is', but what distinguishes these young people is the fear of facing 'Swedish society' and 'Swedes'”.*

The teacher can in the light of his own background understand the students. Nevertheless, he thinks that it is important for him as a teacher to make clear to them that this is something that must happen sooner or later. This fear of confrontation might indicate that teachers in the presumably cosy 'minority schools' tell their students unmistakably that they regard their performance level as being below the average, and that one would 'normally' have to demand

more of them. Peer pressure in the 'Island Culture' contributes further to limit their social mobility aspirations, i.e. the internal distinction among students between "nerds" or "intellectuals": Those who conform to the teachers' expectation are viewed rather negatively by their peers on the one hand, and the most undisciplined and oppositional students on the other hand tend to have the upper hand as far as the power relations between peers are concerned. Although this is a general problem and not particular to the 'Island Culture', it appears to be much more pronounced there that high achievements are valued negatively among peers, and it this takes on an ethnic twist. It is not unusual that the students from minority ethnic families perform as good as or even better than their peers of the majority population from comparable socioeconomic backgrounds, but the mobility aspirations of the ethnic minority members are lower. This tendency is also gendered, although girls from the minority ethnic groups tend to perform better than their male peers, their upward mobility aspirations are (even) lower. Such differences in learning motivation and a lack of role models were described to be significant in limiting their pupils' aspirations and school success by many teachers across the country contexts. Consequently, if teachers with a minority ethnic background are present, they are regarded as important role models for the students. This is something which the (altogether still small number) of respective teachers were well aware of, and most of them made a conscious use of their own biographical records to motivate students or ease situations for them. France is somewhat exceptional in that respect because of the norm of republican neutrality and voluntary ignorance of the students' cultural and religious differences in the classroom. In respect of the teachers with minority ethnic backgrounds, the republican policy made them extremely careful not to show any form of preferential treatment of students according to ethnic or cultural criteria. Many of them seemed particularly careful to limit debates about racism or expressions of religious or national identities by students, since they did not want to encourage self-victimisation or the exclusion of those who do not belong to those groups. The teachers' own biographies were not drawn upon for role model purposes in the French schools. Nevertheless, the presence of teachers with minority ethnic backgrounds does, of course, work as an example in itself and in that way confronts the 'Island Culture' with alternative options.

### **The role of parents: teachers' perceptions of parents' abilities, consciousness, and willingness to take part in their children's school life**

Teachers in the 'minority ethnic schools' share the view that the parents of the 'problematic' students are not sufficiently involved in their children's educational careers. The reasons for this are seen on different levels, and reactions from the schools differ as well. While some teachers have attributed the virtual absence of their students' parents from school life in the first place to a lack of abilities, others have assessed it to be a sign of generally lacking consciousness among socio-economically weak families about the importance of parents' engagement. A common opinion among teachers seems to be that poorly skilled parents tend to have either no or unrealistic expectations of their children's school careers, and that they would really not know what is required in school. Since many of the concerned parents have themselves either not enjoyed much schooling, or – in the case of immigrants – went to school in countries where traditional authority concepts may see the teacher (and only the teacher) in charge of all school matters, the aspects of a certain consciousness, the sheer knowledge, and culturally informed role concepts all of which are factors to influence the availability and forms of parental support are conflated in these problem assessments. For many teachers, the notion of the ethnic minorities' "cultural differences" comprises thus a number of these, if not all of these aspects. The key narrative around cultural difference is that of the "different worlds" between which the children move. In all the countries teachers have expressed with this phrase their view that the school symbolizes something very different from the minority ethnic students' home environments, yet there seems to be a certain East-West divide in terms of what moral judgment

is implied in the concept of the 'other culture' of the minorities. In the Western European countries the positive self-image of the majority draws upon personal freedom, individuality and gender equality, besides taking the adherence to disciplined forms of learning, regular school attendance etc. for granted. Many of the immigrant families, and Muslims in particular, are seen against this image as representing an outmoded authoritarian life-style, as denying girls and women equal rights, and as limiting their children's freedom too much, in particular when it comes to adolescents' gender roles and their sexual coming of age. As one Swedish teacher from Harbour School said, "*the immigrant students moved between two different worlds*". At home they would often be very strictly limited by rules, while the school was an area with more freedom, something that belonged to the Swedish society. In school they could try things that were impossible at home. For instance some Muslim girls removed their veils in school, and put it on again when going home. The opposition of a Western, liberal culture to a repressive traditionalist culture to be found in immigrant social contexts marks this discourse. In the Central European cases where we looked at the experiences of Roma youths, the notion of their 'other culture' seems to be less focused on gender but upon perceptions of less discipline in 'their' families and operates with a positive self-image of the majority society as being based on sober industriousness and self-discipline. It apparently does not entail as much reference to ethnically and culturally different relations and actions of girls and boys as is the case in Western Europe. Apart from these special accentuations of the own and the 'other' cultures, the perception of culturally different patterns of parental involvement in school has been reported from all the countries, but it is also combined with an acknowledgement of the weak socio-economic position of the respective ethnic minority groups. While some of the teachers stressed the economic and educational background of the minority families most explained the low participation rate of these parents in school activities with a sort of 'culture of poverty' account, others saw cultural factors like a different pedagogical agenda, or expectations about the role of school versus that of parents as the main source of the problem. Yet they did not deny that such factors have different impacts, depending on the social and educational resources within particular family settings. The discourses are hence not clearly distinct according to a typology of culturalist versus socio-economic explanations but are typically drawing on the net-effect of disadvantaging conditions under which the ethnic minority families live. This applies not only to the comparative reading of the voices from different countries but likewise to teachers' discourses within those countries. For example, the teachers' statements in the two studied German schools on this issue have mostly drawn on culturalist arguments. The immigrant parents' expectations of what the school should inculcate beside conveying learning contents were judged to differ, and the tendency among Turkish and Arabic families to cling to their original cultural norms and to their mother tongue would simply work against their children's educational integration. Only one teacher in Berlin has stated that he saw the problems of too little parental support as being mainly caused by socio-economic factors because he recognised the same problem with ethnically German families. In sum, teachers in the *Gesamtschule* didn't regard the parents as partners in solving education problems but as an important cause of them, and they felt they were blamed for failures of socialisation in the family. "*We can't make up for their mistakes*" is the message that was given in many variations, and there were no attempts to improve the parent-school relations. In the higher attaining *Gymnasium* the same problem was described, with just half of the minority ethnic parents attending the parents' evenings. One of the colleagues there favoured the development of an outreach strategy by the school and a change in the teachers' approach, "*most parents can't make appropriate suggestions to our students. Therefore it is our charge to provide information on career options and paths*". Traditionally, a special outreach policy is unusual in schools in Germany. It is simply expected that parents support their children by assisting them with homework, attending the parents' evenings and meeting the teacher at least once in a term to talk about the child's achievements and possible strategies of assistance if needed. If they fail to do so, it tends to be treated as their

own fault. To illustrate the discourse of cultural differences with one more example, the interviewed teachers in Denmark also described the cooperation with parents as being an issue of great importance and as being a source of problems with minority ethnic families. In Frazer School they saw the need to improve this. It had even been defined as one of the school's target areas. In Belleview School on the other hand, the teachers characterised the minority ethnic parents as being resourceful and as showing great interest in the school education of their children. The majority of parents there did participate in the four mandatory school meetings each year. Still, teachers found it difficult to balance between on the one hand the need to inform minority ethnic parents properly to understand the significance of independent learning skills, and on the other hand the desire to establish a mutually respectful relationship. Coming from other countries and school systems many of the minority ethnic families seemed to expect the teacher to act as a "traditional" authority and saw it as a signal of weakness if a teacher practiced an inclusive and dialogical pedagogy. Parental cooperation was therefore given special attention by using a translator in order to overcome lingual but also cultural barriers of comprehension. Cultural differences were also seen as responsible for the students' ways of behaving in Frazer school, e.g. a lack of respect was attributed to be typical of Somali students, while hardworking was associated with Albanians. Teachers differentiated accordingly between Arabic and Somali families that they described as being rather problematic and reluctant, and Albanian families that they characterised as being kind and cooperating. The combination of an assumed different culture with the consideration of poor socio-economic status was characteristic as well for the teachers' comments on Roma parents in the Central European cases. Among these cases in the sample, the teachers' perceptions in Hungary have drawn most upon the assumed cultural characteristics of the Roma, whilst the negative impact of their weak socio-economic status were stressed to a stronger degree by teachers in the other cases. In Hungary, almost all interviewed teachers emphasised different value-systems of the Roma and the non-Roma to be a significant cause of problems. Poor living conditions of the families and the hopelessness of unemployed Roma families were regarded as also important but they ranked lower than cultural differences in the eyes of most teachers. Interestingly enough, none of them took into account the structural mechanisms of the school system or teachers' attitudes as factors which might render an influence on the school advancement of Roma students. Only one teacher among the interviewees admitted that teachers share responsibility for the Roma children's educational career. At one school in Coaltown teachers seemed to be concerned a bit more about the problem of deep poverty, unemployment and experiences of discrimination of Roma. This school aims at developing and maintaining strong relations between teachers and parents which could be the reason why teachers showed greater awareness of the conditions under which the Roma families live. In the Czech Republic too, the teachers from several schools used both interpretation frames to explain Roma students' low interest in education, their poor school performances, and the distance from the mainstream educational system. These accounts emphasized, firstly, of inadequate material conditions of the families, which affected the children's physical and mental readiness, as well as material equipment needed for good school performance, and secondly, cultural and lifestyle differences that are incompatible with the educational system's requirements, especially material preferences, a lack of discipline, the habit of immediate consumption, and low life expectations. What they emphasised here as well very much was the complexity of the problem in a neighbourhood inhabited by people with a low income from social benefits or occasional low skilled jobs, with no or low education, and with a high prevalence of drug abuse, criminality, inadequate housing etc. To help Roma children from such neighbourhoods to achieve at school, preliminary classes existed for their pre-school preparation. The Czech teachers perceived this program as being essential to help socially disadvantaged Roma children to adjust to the school environment; because the norms and routines were different from what the kids were familiar with.

The same variables were expressed in Romania with the dominant interpretation being that the Roma's lower level of school performance was determined by the children's "family background" but the relation between material and ideational/cultural factors tended to be seen in a different order there. Teachers explained that some Roma kids did not have any real home, some families would not earn anything, other children were raised by single parents or grandparents, or they had many siblings to take care of. "Under these conditions" parents would not take any interest in their kids' school education". It is hard to evaluate how far the teachers' moral judgments of the families' living conditions and presumed cultural habits also influence their assessments in class. In the Slovakian study such an interrelation suggested itself, divisions between 'good' and 'bad' Roma pupils were argued to be based on the pupils' family living conditions and their parents' cooperation with school. Success or failure was seen to depend on the quality of social and family environments. In several Slovakian schools, those Roma pupils who were judged to be the most problematic also had parents who ignored school meetings or communication attempts. One teacher at Egřešová School divided Roma parents into one group that cares for their children and a second one that does not. In fact he has no contact with the second type of parents, so that he just assumes that they do not care but does not really know. Instead he draws conclusions from the divergences in clothing and behavior of different Roma pupils. The headmaster of Egřešová School in Slovakia confirmed that the teachers were helpful to children if their parents cooperated. This points to a dynamic of responsiveness which has only exceptionally been addressed by the interviewed teachers. In the Czech Republic, teachers of some schools pointed to the institution's culture as playing a key role for building mutual trust. Mistrust of the Roma toward the "institution of gadjo people" may be overcome in their eyes if the school managed to be open and created a climate that satisfied parents and children. When these teachers were supposed to describe the philosophy of their own school they said, "*we are open to families and parents*", "*we go straight to them*", "*we must know the families where our pupils live*" etc. In their views and experiences, such concepts can help break the barrier between school and disadvantaged families, which creates different worlds between which the children oscillate. The Czech case demonstrates as well that the structures of the educational system can be set in such a way that they create incentives for schools to win the trust of stigmatised 'problem groups'. It is due to the competition between schools caused by the funding system where more pupils mean more money for the school that a "family friendly atmosphere" can become one of the added values of a school profile.

This strategic attempt to win Roma families over for the Czech school system appeared to be exceptional among the Central European cases. The teachers' discourses in Romania, Slovakia, and Hungary in particular expressed various forms of declining responsibility. The low performance of students and their dead-end street educational careers were in many interviews regarded as evident outcomes of the poor social conditions of the family which entails low educational level of the parents who do not motivate their children but simply do not care. Furthermore, it was commonly held that all the above is indicating a culture of poverty which is incompatible with the norms and values of the majority and is (or was in the past) sustained by the welfare state's benefits and allowances. In a sense all the interviews with teachers suggest that the school has comparatively little influence on the educational careers of children when compared to the impact of the students' family backgrounds. Instead of identifying the school and the teachers as important actors that influence a child's future career, most defined the family's social background, financial opportunities, and cultural ideas as being crucial. This can be interpreted as a discursive and psychological strategy to cope with the personal and institutional failures and frustrations. Why, after all, would states have invented general schooling if it left no imprint on the children? Their own responsibility for the reproduction of unequal chances was only faced by exceptional teachers throughout the study.

## **The reach of political correctness norms in minority ethnic schools**

The question of the impact of political correctness norms comes into play when we consider how frankly teachers spoke about their students' belonging to a cultural, or ethnic, or religious group. In this respect, France is a special case: the Republican norm to voluntarily ignore the existing differences between pupils create a special public culture which teachers are obliged to represent. It might be less opportune and also politically incorrect to speak of "the Turks and Arabs" in Berlin, or to discuss "collective features of Muslim culture" in Sweden. Yet the French norms of politically correct speech reach much further in that they demand diversity and colour blind approach in all public institutions in order to create Republican equality. Teachers are to represent and to practice this institutional culture, and they are therefore expected to refrain from activities and statements that might be taken as discriminatory. Thus, even positive discrimination/affirmative action in support of particular groups seems inconceivable in France, and that distinguishes the situation of schools in France from other cases. The teachers in Paris appeared indifferent to their students' ethnicity. This is probably due in equal part to professional training and the deeply engrained Republican ideology of normative colour blindness, and to the habit and practice of teaching predominantly students from a minority ethnic population. The overwhelming visibility and diversity of students makes the issue a simple fact of everyday life, at least in the minds of those who have been working in such an environment for several years. Yet the latter holds true for the other studied cases as well where explicit statements on cultural differences had become a routine. The UK context is opposite to this with a declared policy of racial and ethnic inclusion which demands the respect of ethnic and cultural communities and attention to reducing ethnic inequalities. In between these two poles of well-meaning rejection of collective difference and well-meaning affirmative recognition of collective differences, teachers from the other countries either avoided or stressed the collective traits of their minority ethnic students but seemed to be uninfluenced either of these master narratives. Some of the quotations from teachers in Hungary or Slovakia about the Roma would be treated as expressions of pure racism in the UK, France, or Germany (e.g. comments on Roma as being messy, dirty, stinky, but gifted in dance and music – 'like Afro-Americans'; indicating inter alia that the existence of racist stereotypes which are openly drawn upon are not restricted to the Roma population alone).

Despite this divergence in general approaches, not all individual schools simply fit the dominant narratives that mark the mainstream position on ethnicity and education in their countries. Coaltown's Beta School in Hungary is one such example for it takes an essentially different approach towards the Roma children: neither segregationist nor colour blind. They aim at a "colour conscious" education, similar to official policy is in the UK. Beta School has always been the school in town where most of the socially marginalised and deprived children were sent and felt prompted to address the problem openly in order to solve it. The most important factors which stipulate the success of this local concept of a multicultural education is, that it is implemented within a professional context, where the quality of teaching and pedagogical innovation are given high importance, and within a social context, where both teachers and children/families feel comfortable and trust each other.

## **COMMUNITY REPRESENTATIVES' VIEWS**

Community representatives were chosen because they had rich knowledge and frequent contact with minority ethnic families and this covered a breadth of people working in different roles: pedagogical assistants (Romania); sports leaders (Denmark); volunteers working in school, paid assistants, librarians and parent advisers (Germany); NGO and state institution representatives



and pedagogical assistants (Czech Republic); government ministry official and people working directly with youth in the roles of career coach, disaffected youth worker, social worker and youth club worker (Sweden); representatives of local authorities and services and civic and church organisations (Hungary); local council officials, welfare and social custody officials, social workers, Youth Centre directors and psychologists (Slovakia); and outreach education services and youth workers working with ethnic minority students (UK). Many of these representatives provided a useful mode of access to the groups under study.

Structural discrimination reproduced and promoted by the operation of social and economic contexts was cited as the main reason for differentiation. This group tended to give a holistic picture of the factors impinging on students' (non) participation in education which included: parents being unemployed or on a low income; being raised by single parents; a student having other siblings whom they are expected to take care of. Under such constraining circumstances parents were not always able to give sufficient attention to their children's school education. Parental support and life at home however was deemed imperative for a child's educational success.

Minority ethnic status was sometimes viewed as a constraint and at other times viewed as a benefit by community representatives. Many community representatives, particularly those having ethnic minority status, acted to a certain degree as mediators between minorities and the larger society which brought about particular conflicts. On one hand as ethnic minority adults working in professional roles, there was a sense of reaching a point where they felt comfortable with their ethnicity. This was viewed as a feature of reaching adulthood and was often contrasted against their own lived experiences as teenagers where they wrestled with issues of identity. In the UK one African Caribbean man reflected how he had felt like a 'Bounty Bar'<sup>5</sup> whilst growing up as a Black child on a predominantly white council estate, living with white working class values and norms inside a black skin. In this way he felt exposed, "*I was the most visible being in a predominantly White school*". To some extent this feeling had continued into professional life as other African Caribbean community workers discussed the peculiar internal conflicts which working as a Black man in a professional position within a white middle class system brought about. In one community representative's words, "*I think England for a long time has been polarised, but at the same time I still feel comfortable in England, which is really weird, it is almost feeling comfortable in something which is uncomfortable*".

In conceptualising the causes of 'othering' the notion was that power and influence operated on the basis of white middle class norms and success could only be achieved by fitting into that 'norm'; "*BME (Black Minority Ethnic) people are always going to be at the opposite end, because people who have got power are often middle class White people; policies and politics are made by middle class White people*" (African Caribbean community worker, UK). This in itself provides a dichotomy. At a community meeting in the UK one African Caribbean parent highlighted herself and her children as the discriminated against 'Other' which conflicted with the African Caribbean civil representatives in their official role. In an African Caribbean community meeting where a parent complained about unfair treatment by white officials, a civil representative who himself was African Caribbean raised the point that the session would have no utility if it turned into 'white bashing'. Despite some seemingly progressive policies there remains a distinctly uncomfortable awkwardness in talking about ethnicity and racism.

For success in their professional roles, community representatives counted very much on certain forms of active participation from individuals in schools and strategic organisations. Participation was becoming more of a political issue towards the end of the research with massive cutbacks in public services in the UK. In particular the decision to absorb the service responsible for raising BME pupil achievement into another service focused more on disaffected

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<sup>5</sup> A milk or dark chocolate bar with a white coconut filling.

learners put levelling the playing field in education for BME groups into jeopardy. In particular the head of the service (who himself was African Caribbean) was viewed as 'selling out' and staff felt that he had not fought their corner.

Recognition of structural constraints on family and children's lives has been perceived differently across the selected countries. Some countries, such as Denmark, the UK and Sweden, undertook strategies which aimed to improve integration and diminish the occurrence of "othering". In Sweden action was taken by providing resources to help young people with applications for employment, designing CVs and helping with contacts to employers. This was not always received in a consistent fashion however. While the community representatives working with African Caribbeans and Pakistanis in the UK felt that large steps had been taken over the past few years, the inclusion worker working with Gypsies complained that discrimination was still very much apparent and that this group was always sidelined in favour of other minority ethnic groups.

Discussions with civil representatives sometimes reflected the view that students with a minority ethnic background performed academically better than white students and more likely to undertake an upward pattern of social mobility than their white counterparts. The career coach in Sweden stated that students with immigrant backgrounds performed better than students with a Swedish ethnic background and were more likely than their Swedish counterparts to achieve a better future labour market position than their parents. In the UK there was also a definite sense that white working class students did not take full advantage of the educational opportunities afforded them in the same way as minority ethnic students. As such they were commonly deemed the most 'at risk' group.

Educational success was viewed by community representatives as being determined to a large extent by the students' home circumstances. This was phrased succinctly by the career coach in Sweden: "*You should have the right parents to succeed in school*". Exactly which values 'right parents' encompass ran along common themes. It meant investing in their child's education and even making sacrifices for this reason. Some judged an individual student's problem in terms of their own and their parent's character, and the degree of priority placed on school education. In the UK some community workers felt that the likeliest students to drop out of education were both of the two participating African Caribbean students and the highest achievers were deemed to be Pakistani and Somali girls. Deeply intertwined within these beliefs was knowledge about family background. One representative mistakenly made the assumption for instance that both pupils lived in single parent households which were on full benefits. Children and adolescents with parents who are unemployed and with a low educational level do often not have the 'right' sort of cultural capital or the 'right' sort of linguistic ability to express themselves in the way the white middle class systems require, "*sometimes people who are not educated by the system will find it hard to converse, they will have difficulty doing that, because to the other person it will come across as being aggressive and 'do you really know what you are talking about?' They will find it hard trying to communicate what they are trying to say*" (African Caribbean community worker, UK). He later gave an example of an African Caribbean mother who had attended a community based workshop around understanding the education system. She was highly emotional and spoke about the daily discrimination she faced as a Black woman living in England. As the community representative saw it, "*she wanted a forum somewhere where she could offload how she was feeling. And in a way I felt a bit sorry for her, because it was a cry for help really. And basically what happened was they were basically telling her, 'this is not the right place, this is not the right forum'. And obviously she came from a Caribbean island, she was looking for a Black support group and that was it; that is what she found*".

Community representatives, possibly as a result of their own ethnic minority status, were much more ready to recognise racial and ethnic inequalities and institutional and individual

discriminatory practices than teachers. In all the countries practices and behaviour was described which excluded minority ethnic groups. Although overt racism<sup>6</sup> was very rarely apparent in any direct manner in teachers' behaviour towards students, community representatives recognised discrimination in seemingly innocuous everyday interactions. The social workers in Slovakia said that teachers were 'verbally aggressive' to Roma pupils. This came about through criticisms or verbal taunts which served to humiliate individuals in front of their class. For instance one worker reported how a teacher responded to a latecomer with, "*Hello, you are here? What is the holiday today? What has happened that we are worthy of such reward?*".

Rather than simply apportioning blame, community representatives also referred to community values and norms which were often in contradiction with those upheld by the schools. The French team was told by school personnel of several uncomfortable incidents of immigrant fathers who had slapped their child in front of school personnel during interviews concerning the students' academic and behavioural problems. The researchers viewed this as a mismatch stemming from insecurities on both sides:

*"...because parents are only called in to schools when their children's behaviour is very unacceptable, and because immigrant parents are very sensitive to the negative representations of them as parents who are either much too lenient or much too severe with their children, they probably tend to overplay the role of the authoritative father in such situations in order to save face in front of their child and the teachers. This is rather traumatic for teachers, and one such isolated incident in a school can easily be upheld as an example that is then applied to all immigrant parents. It can also be referred to by certain teachers to avoid facing the fact that they actually would rather not bother with calling in immigrant parents, with whom they often feel uncomfortable"* (Schiff, 2010, p.46).

In Denmark parents expected teachers to use a traditional authoritarian approach and viewed teachers' 'inclusive and dialogic' pedagogies as 'weak'. A common issue with all the countries was the fact parent-teacher contact remained very limited. This may stem from the fact that individual meetings between teachers and parents took place only if the student was displaying academic or behavioural problems. Sometimes, as in the case of France parents, were not aware of instances of their child's misbehaviour within school.

Handling ethnically diverse student populations brings about a huge tension between maintaining neutrality and respecting cultural differences. Each country had a different way of handling this. In France a colour blind approach was used stemming from a Republican ideology. In Sweden representatives for local authorities and organisations, stated there was not any distinct ethnic grouping which led to conflict within the district. In Denmark, interviews with representatives showed that 'integration ...on majority Danish terms is one of the most distinctive features of those institutions'. Here students attended sports activities in their leisure time. Rather than these activities being aimed specifically at minority ethnic students, they were aimed at everyone, meaning that friendships were formed with students from different ethnic groups whom they seldom had the opportunity to know from school. The Czech Republic reported some of the same. However as well as ethnically mixed sports groups the Czech Republic also found that organised activities run by NGOs were often 'purposefully and explicitly oriented to Roma kids'. Although, "*many of their activities are in principle open to non-Roma kids, too, but they may be little appealing to them, as the general impression remains these are 'Roma clubs', and also the interest to join such activities replicates the informal stronger ethnic divisions among teenagers outside schools*". The NGOs sometimes receive funds from the state and other agencies under the condition to orient the funded activities

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<sup>6</sup> Examples of 'overt racism' would include things like racial violence as well as everyday insults, jokes and abuse directed at racialised groups.

explicitly to Roma youth, and that's the way they are advertised and perceived. In the UK, the situation is to some extent at the polar opposite of France and something more like that described in the Czech Republic except with more explicit reinforcing of programmes of activities focused on particular minority ethnic groups both inside and outside school. As the coordinator pointed out to be eligible for one of the programmes, students had to be from a black minority ethnic (BME) background. Likewise Pakistani Study Support was set up to improve educational outcomes specifically for Pakistani students. Community representatives working on such programmes and parents whose children attended had very positive views of such schemes viewing them as valuable opportunities to raise pupil achievement but as reported elsewhere (Swann, 2010) students did not always share their positive attitude. In France, minority ethnic bodies are used strategically to promote 'exotic' cultural or artistic activities. Close examination of the names of those occupying prominent positions reveals the 'quasi absence of individuals originating from the African continent'. Those that have a role practically all appear in the "world cultures" sector since their position validates and deems the sector authentic rather than more prominent strategic sectors concerned with youth, housing, schooling or ordinary leisure activities.

Such strategic emphasis on ethnicity signifies relational identity politics where one group is seemingly valued more than another. Just as the UK's enrichment activities work by differentiating pupils according to ethnicity, in France people with European names work in strategic sectors, ethnic minority bodies working in 'world cultures' are there for authenticity's sake. They are not integrated into the mainstream but kept on the exotic periphery. Such mechanisms shape social opportunities but also always creates 'outsiders' and therefore also perceptions of unequal treatment and discrimination. While such activities are recognising and responding to ethnically diverse student populations this works by circumventing bounded 'islands' of racial and cultural distinctiveness, which by proxy eliminates the possibility of school as a 'melting pot' or fusion of different ethnic identities. Discourses of race are tied to issues of self-formation as much for those who are not racialised as those who are. One white informant working in the behaviour unit drew concern to the exclusionary practice such practice authorises. She felt that white working class students who were most in need of help were being sidelined in favour of those from minority ethnic backgrounds. Policy sanctioned attention drawn to an ethnic 'other' can perhaps be interpreted as the opposite of 'colour blindness', but this is not unproblematic.

Within school there were a variety of informal and formal practices which maintained ethnic boundaries. In Slovakia Roma students were segregated by being placed in 'special classes'. They were also excluded from extracurricular activities as those in receipt of benefits had to bring documentary evidence which was an added hassle they did not complete. Many community workers actively tried to challenge the structural faults which led to discrimination. In Slovakia for instance a number of social workers had been employed whose 'main task is to assist the socially excluded and help to fight against truancy' in schools. Their focus was mainly on school absenteeism and assistance with administration issues. The researchers witnessed a situation, when a Roma mother had received a letter from school that invited her child to be registered and she discussed the invitation letter with community social worker, if to go or not to go there. While the mother expressed a preference for her child to be placed into special school, the social worker tried to convince her to register the child in mainstream school.

## CONCLUSIONS

This essay has presented a detailed analysis of the perceptions and experiences of 'othering' across the case study countries. The persistence, durability and, in some cases, increasing

strength of ethnic identities, divisions and conflicts across these national contexts is evident, as has been confirmed in previous reports (Law et al. 2009). There are significant variations and differences in migration processes, economic development, welfare provision and forms of citizenship across these countries and there are differences in ethnic composition, ethnic mobilisation and patterns of racialisation which makes a direct comparison of the countries a complex task. But, this chapter has identified a cross-cutting set of key themes and issues in the perceptions and experiences of 'othering'.

In these varying situations of school-based and community-based 'othering' young people from minority ethnic groups adopted a range of responses. Three types of peer relations were identified amongst young people with some having very little contact outside their own ethnic group, some having weak social and friendship networks, others where strong bonds were formed. Young people did perceive teachers as generally fair but language barriers and extracurricular activities provided key sites of conflict. Outside school young people provided highly diverging accounts of racism and discrimination ranging from little experience (France) to being a central topic of conversation (Hungary), with linkages between 'othering' racialisation and criminalization being a key site for conflict and criticism. This chapter has identified the main types of reported experiences of racial and ethnic 'othering', which include teasing and joking, verbal hostility and abuse, forms of racial and ethnic discrimination, patterns of segregation and other types of differential treatment. It has examined how inter-ethnic mixing and patterns of informal ethnic segregation characterise everyday life, and how practices of 'othering' are enacted in the domains of school and peer relations and also in wider neighbourhood and family contexts, for example through downplaying hostility to oppositional showing off. It also shows where and under what circumstances children have experiences of discrimination and the factors that might lead to students perceiving ethnic bias. The gap between minority students' aspirations and their limited chances of success in school as well as their inferior position in many peer relations, created a diffuse yet persistent feeling of dissatisfaction and de-motivation for many. Highly complex and differentiated positions, strategies and perceptions were articulated by young people in relation to their experiences of school and community life. Young people's yearning to escape being 'othered' was strongly voiced with some able to articulate narratives of emancipation and liberation from differential and discriminatory treatment. But many felt locked into and unable to escape a tangled web of constraining circumstances and social worlds with serious consequences in terms of declining educational aspirations and dropout from the educational system altogether.

Parents' narratives confirmed the sense of cultural divide and conflict which existed between home and school and they pursued a number of varied strategies to both protect their children from discrimination and hostility and provide a range of forms of caring and support to facilitate their progression through life, often voicing well-articulated educational aspirations. This evidence contradicted teachers' perceptions, as many tended to blame 'the home' (especially parents' lack of interest and negligence) for low performance and also the 'Island Culture' - of minority ethnic students. Parents identified patterns of residential segregation as a key constraining factor on young peoples' life chances, as did the young people themselves.

In terms of teachers of the (re)production of the differentiated school performances of ethnic minority/majority youths there is a convergence of discourse around five key themes. Firstly, processes of ethnic separation and segregation, including streaming, characterise Central European countries and this was seen as normal by many teachers. Secondly, the emergence of schools with a considerable, and in some cases increasing, share of minority ethnic students ('minority ethnic schools') through 'white flight' and 'socio-economic flight'. Thirdly, lower learning standards and reduced curriculum in 'minority ethnic schools' accompanied by the development of an 'Island Culture' where minority ethnic students feel relatively safe and comfortable and where teachers have reduced learning expectations. Fourthly, teachers tended to

perceive many parents of minority ethnic children as problematic through a process of 'othering'. Parents were seen as uninvolved in their children's education careers with low attainment resulting from poor family backgrounds, and sometimes this involved negative moral judgements of these families, with an accompanying decline in teachers' responsibilities. Evidence of racialised teachers' perceptions was documented as well as evidence of exceptional teachers who faced up to these varied challenges. Fifthly, national policy approaches to ethnicity and education, whether colour blind (France), colour conscious (UK) or segregationist (Central Europe) were not always evident in school base approaches and in teachers' perceptions with differing and in some cases oppositional narratives in the foreground.

In examining community representatives' views it was clear that processes of structural discrimination in social and economic contexts, together with the power of white middle class norms and values were seen as central to understanding ethnic differentiation. Paralleling teachers' views, home circumstances were also seen as key to educational achievement, but they were much more ready to acknowledge racial and ethnic inequalities and discrimination. Community representatives were also critical of both the need to engage with and change aspects of community values and norms, as well as informal and formal practices which maintained ethnic boundaries within schools.

While the teachers interviewed were mainly white and middle class, a large proportion of community representatives were from minority ethnic backgrounds, for example those in the UK and also the pedagogical assistants in the Czech Republic. They had sometimes experienced their country's specific education system first hand and were working in community based roles with young people. As such community workers often had more background knowledge of the neighbourhoods and families that schools served than teachers and more awareness of everyday youth activities than parents. Whereas teachers tended to adhere to the abstract endorsed ideal of equality in discussing their experiences of teaching in ethnically heterogeneous schools, parents and community workers tended to voice a more grounded version of everyday social realities.

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## **IDENTITY FORMATION AND FUTURE ASPIRATIONS**

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## INTRODUCTION

This chapter focuses on the conditions of identity formation among our target groups: second and third generation migrants in selected Western countries (Denmark, France, Germany, Sweden and the UK) and Roma youth in four Central European countries (Czech Republic, Hungary, Romania and Slovakia). The major goal is to show how self-identifications and ascribed identities intervene in the educational careers, attitudes and achievements of students in transition from the elementary to the secondary school level. Our work is based on extensive field research, consisting of interviews, focus group discussions and participant observation, in which not only the major target groups (students 14-18 years old) have been involved, but also their parents, teachers, teaching assistants, school principals, social workers and representatives of local NGOs and authorities. We have especially oriented our research toward ethnic identification and self-identification, which often get articulated in relation to – opposition to or affiliation with – national, racial, religious or local identities. We take (ethnic) identity and self-perception as reflective notions: ethnicity is not a natural given but a perspective that social actors adopt and employ in their orientation toward the surrounding world and in their self-understanding.

The following discussion has faced some methodological challenges. Its central subject is the conditions, models and strategies of identity formation among 14–18 year olds, who presumably are in an age of exuberant self-expression, sometimes playful, experimental or provocative, and at the same time, often emotionally charged as tied to (the development of) a sense of personal dignity or stigma and related to the growing sense of personal autonomy. Therefore, the analysis had to take into account specific developmental/cultural facets of ‘the self in the making’. That is, the role of age had to be reflected both when we tried to understand the ‘reality-status’ of the data (respondents’ propositions, etc.) as well as when we interpreted the data within a larger context. We had to take into account that the respondents’ self-identifications reflected the general ethnic (religious, national, racial) labelling at hand in the given country context in a particularly sensitive way.

The understanding of identity and its formation has evolved tremendously over the past decades. As opposed to the previously held, non-problematic and essentialist notions of identity, in which it was seen as a fixed trait permanently attaching one to a certain community that he or she is seen as a representative of, contemporary professional literature acknowledges the diverse, unstable, and often contradictory and ambiguous nature of identity, underlying its potential internal tensions.<sup>7</sup> Ethnic identities are particularly prone to internal conflicts, such as those between ascription and self-ascription, social pressure and voluntarism, as far as their formation is concerned, or positive and negative associations, the simultaneous or alternative presence of different qualities and references, in terms of content. This type of identity thus is likely to be compound, de-centred and hybrid. The sense of belonging characterising minority social groups is especially liable to become problematic and perceived as such, pointing out these recently discovered characteristics of modern identities.<sup>8</sup>

The essentially unfinished nature of identity gains extra significance and, indeed, validity in the case of the adolescents at the centre of our research. These 14-18 year old students belonging to some visible social minority that is seen as representing the ‘Other’ in the eyes of the majority

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<sup>7</sup> Actually, two primary types of understandings of identity coexist and are occasionally mixed. For instance, in discussing the hazards of ‘modern’ identities, Charles Taylor (1992) deals with some typical contemporary challenges of identity formation, while heavily drawing upon a relatively essentialist conception of identity formulated by Erik Erikson (1980).

<sup>8</sup> Post-colonialist and post-structuralist literature has greatly contributed to the study of identity issues by exploring the effects of power and violence, domination and exclusion, symbolic representations and political constructions in the formation of identities, as well as by outlining political and cultural strategies to combat identity threats and achieve autonomy (Fanon 1963, Said 1978, Hall 1996, Bhabha 1993, Gilroy 1993, Spivak 1988).

obviously do not possess ready-made identities. Therefore, in the course of community studies or when conducting individual interviews and focus group conversations, it is important to keep in mind that the personality of these young people, as they give an account of their future plans and aspirations, has not matured yet but is still in formation. Thus, although the narratives presented reflect upon the respondents' actual experiences in the family, school, peer group or broader environment and express the ways in which they see and interpret their position in society, the future visions expressed by our students are often not all that realistic. Hence, while presenting plans and aspirations in connection with the social background of individual persons mapped during the research, we refrain from understanding future perspectives in terms of a predetermined fate derived from the present.

The professional literature, in particular, studies in developmental psychology and social psychology, suggests that ethnic identity is formed as the result of a long development, over the course of which a person belonging to a minority group acknowledges his or her ethno-racial membership. An important element of this process is the selection or, rather, the identification of values associated with the given group, which determines whether the individual will be able to achieve a positive identity by appreciating his or her group (Tajfel 1981), or, on the contrary, he or she will show negative self-image and identity as a result of denying his or her group belonging because of the negative connotations attached to it, either in inter-group comparison or owing to some outside threat (Voci 2006).

The formation of ethnic identity enables the development of a kind of understanding whereby persons with a minority background can position their group in society at large. This kind of consciousness may develop only gradually, as a result of a process that has three stages, according to Phinney (1992). The first or '*unexamined*' phase is when the minority person does not yet question, but simply adopts, the opinions and attitudes regarding the group to which he or she belongs, mediated by his or her family and narrow environment. The next phase is that of '*exploration*,' when the child born into a minority group starts comparing the customs and *cultural* traits of his or her community with those of the dominant social group. Finally, the third or '*achieved*' stage is characterised by an elaborate knowledge of ethnic heritage that includes not only information concerning the group in question but also a commitment to its values and aspirations. Insofar as awareness regarding ethnic identity is attained in this way, ethnicity plays an important role in the person's life. However, depending on the given social setting, this process of psychological development may be intensified and accelerated or hindered and prevented from becoming fully realised.

A minority person's identification with his or her group of belonging may be frustrated by normative expectations arriving from the majority that specify the way toward successful social integration. The pressure exercised by the majority puts individuality, differentiation from others, the coherent internal organisation of identity and positive self-esteem at risk. Any group easily identified by the social majority based on outward appearance is an easy target of such identity threats. For instance, skin colour, gender, or even characteristic behaviour and clothing attached to cultural belonging represent typical starting points of stereotypical notions resulting from the perception of the group in question as a homogeneous whole. Minority persons, in turn, who notoriously experience being treated not as individuals but as members of a stereotypically viewed group, inadvertently internalise this kind of majority projection in their self-regard.

Although not in a positive direction, the formation of ethnic identity may be facilitated by such everyday experiences like, for example, the scarcity of opportunities available for minority persons or their inability to access services, activities or practices open for their majority counterparts. Racism and stigmatising differentiation faced by minorities, including ethno-racial discrimination experienced either on a personal or on an institutional level, represent serious threats contributing to minority consciousness to an even greater extent. At the same time,

reactions to discrimination are also assumedly related to the adoption, awareness and acknowledgment of ethnic identity. Differentiation is regarded differently by those perceiving its manifestations as simple and isolated events and those identifying racism, for instance, as a system of thought historically developed in the given society. Responses to discrimination may take a variety of forms, too, depending on personal differences as well as conditioning by the possibilities made available by the community and the society. Typical reactions include withdrawal from pernicious influences and enclosure into one's own community; resigned acceptance of the status quo; and the active and confronting opposition to majority society perceived as a hostile entity.

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The following discussion consists of two larger parts, each containing further sections. Part I addresses the intervening factors and contexts of identity formation. Part II accounts for the various identity models thus formed and explores the strategies with which these models are adopted and employed as well as their impact upon educational careers and experiences. To begin, Part I identifies three levels of environmental conditions that affect the identity formation process, and it is respectively divided into three sections:

*The larger environment.* Here, we explore and compare the role of the dominant civil rights discourse (in the given countries as well as internationally) in providing symbolic and legal representations (points of reference) for collective identity formation among observed communities. We look at the ways in which respondents refer – directly or indirectly – to mediated images (stories, reports, public opinion polls, etc.) as a source of collective self-understanding and/or categorisation. The discussion makes note of the fact that it also is the existence or non-existence of official ethnic categorisations (statistics) that affects the self-understanding of ethnically-minded actors. And we also take into account the possible or actual role of symbolic representations of particular (ethnic, religious, national) communities, especially in sports and arts, and – to the extent to which we have available relevant and reliable data – also in other contexts (world politics, science, media icons, etc.).

*The proximate environment.* Here, we especially focus upon the role of family environment and neighbourhood in the process of identity formation. We try to understand and describe how particular types of family arrangement and patterns of socialisation intervene in the identity formation process, especially in its ethnic-collective dimension. Intervention of the families' socio-economic status in this process is also reflected. Further we explore to what extent and in what sense the particular character of a neighbourhood (e.g. ethnically mixed or homogeneous) may be a source of either positive or negative ethnic self-understanding. Reflected also are the role of peers and street life, organised activities outside school, local congregations, NGOs and various types of community authorities in the process of identity formation.

*The school environment.* In the final part of this section, the focus is on the role of the school environment in the process of identity formation. We deal with the question of how the character of the school – the ethnic, social, gender, etc. composition of the student body in school and in classes, the ethnic composition of the teaching staff, the location of the school in a particular neighbourhood, the reputation of the school, etc. – can or does intervene in the identity formation process. But we also focus on more dynamic aspects of the matter in that we ask, e.g., what is or may be the role of actual experience within schools: such as school performance, relationships with other students and teachers, possible feelings of injustice (from teachers) or bullying (from other students) perceivably or assumedly on ethnic grounds, possible disciplinary transgressions, possible language problems, present or absent multicultural education, extracurricular activities organised by the school, etc.

Part II employs some of the findings of the previous section as well as more general results of the country Community Studies, in order to comparatively account for dominant identity models among the target populations and especially for the more dynamic aspects of the identity strategies.

*Identity models.* In this section, we define the identity models of students and families living in selected communities of the participating countries. Considered as decisive factors of the social construction of ethnic identity, we analyse the role of socio-economic and educational background of families, different family types and ways of life, families' relations to religion, traditions, country of origin, language, and the various forms of families' social embeddedness within the local and broader communities. We take into account that all these aspects have a potential influence upon parents' and students' attitudes toward schooling and education, which can be mediating factors in social mobility and integration into the majority society. Identity models reflect upon facts, experiences, views and ideologies that have been formulated by our respondents in connection with the above mentioned structural factors and shape their perception of being a member of the given minority ethnic group.

*Identity strategies.* This section will explore how 'minority ethnic' students relate to their 'ethnic' belonging and how they see their current and future positions in society. We analyse the interplay of social, gender, 'ethnic' and religious factors in contributing to how different groups of 'minority ethnic' students define their positions within the immediate and larger communities. The discussion focuses on how far minority ethnic students feel that their culture, customs, behavioural rules are acknowledged and respected, or to the contrary, how far they feel excluded because of the given implications and traits of their 'ethnicity'. We then construct a typology of educational and occupational aspirations of minority ethnic students, in order to cluster the varied aspirations and planned strategies related to future life. The central question is whether the envisioned educational paths, chosen occupations, and family life may possibly strengthen 'ethnic' separation and reliance on one's own community or whether they may lead toward integration into the larger society.

Each section of this essay, while elaborating on the distinct topics mentioned above, addresses the following general questions:

- To what extent, in what contexts and in what ways does the *sense of ethnic distinction* (difference) appear in and through the data: at what occasions does it matter; in what kinds of relations does it get stronger or weaker, for whom is it important and for whom is it unimportant; is it associated to or in conflict with other factors intervening in the identity formation process (social class, gender, religion, etc.); how such sense of ethnic distinction (if it exists) affects or may affect self-positioning within a larger social-cultural environment (relations, e.g., to the national community, other immigrant or ethnic minority communities, and – where and if relevant – minority cohorts in other countries or in countries 'of origin' in the case of immigrants).
- How is the process of identity formation tied to *educational experience* in the broadest sense of the term: is identity formation related to adoption of certain attitudes toward schooling and the school; are general attitudes about (the worth of) education part of a particular (collective-ethnic) self-understanding; are there any conflicts around this issue among the concerned actors. Consequently, we reflect upon whether the identity formation process and/or internalised self-understanding is in any way related to school performance and how personal and ethnically coloured self-understandings affect further educational or professional aspirations, plans or visions, etc.
- Given the comparative nature of the study, each section also employs a *comparative perspective* in its topical discussion and analysis. Throughout, we address possible

differences (around a particular issue, like, e.g., the typical family environment and identity formation) among various countries or types of observed communities, following closely cases illustrating similar or identical patterns and the factors at work in the background. Finally, there is the question of whether there are any signs of possible clustering among the analysed country-cases or community-types.

## **THE LARGER ENVIRONMENT**

This section will account for how historical, social, cultural and symbolic structures and representations shape and influence the collective identity formations among youth in the observed communities. A comparison between the EDUMIGROM countries reveals considerable differences in the patterns as to how these structures and representations affect the collective identity formation of immigrant and ethnic minority youth. The following discussion will give an overall account for the revealed patterns regarding the importance of the larger environment for the collective identity formations among the observed communities. The reasoning will follow the line of geo-political divides to shed light on the divergences in the observed patterns against their historical formations. First it will be Roma youth in the Central European countries to be put into the focus, then it will be followed by an account along certain corresponding variables about immigrant youths in the Western European countries.

### ***Central Europe***

The marginalized and vulnerable situation for the Roma population in the studied Central European countries has historical roots. Since the Roma entered Europe in the fourteenth century the life of the ethnic group has been marked by marginalisation and discrimination (Law et al. 2009). After the Second World War the communistic regimes in Central Europe was engaged in an effort to eliminate national differences which included an attempt to assimilate the Roma population. The specific nature of the Roma community and the particularity of the Roma culture were denied. In Romania, for instance, the consolidation of a national unity and the idea of a homogeneous Romanian society were priorities of the communistic regime's agenda (Magyari et al. 2008, Vincze 2010). The target was to eliminate national differences, and assimilate ethnic minorities. Roma were considered to be foreign elements that had to become Romanians. The communistic government improved the living conditions for the Roma by improving the access to education and employment. Nevertheless, the social situation for the Roma was further weakened since the provided employments was mostly unskilled and low-paid which resulted in obstructions for them to get access to civilized housing, health services and education. As a result, the Roma was confined to the lowest social strata. A consequence of the suppression of ethnic and cultural differences was that the claim of the Roma population to be recognized as a specific ethnic group was denied. The situation was similar in all observed Central European countries (see Feischmidt, Messing and Neményi 2010, Katzorova et al. 2008, Kusa, Kostlán and Rusnakova 2010, Kusa, Dral, and Kostlán 2008, Laubeova and Laubeova 2008, Magyari et al. 2008, Marada et al. 2010, Vajda and Dupcsik 2008).

The situation for the Roma changed dramatically after the fall of the communistic regimes in 1989. This can be illustrated with the cases of Slovakia and the Czech Republic. In Slovakia, the fall of the regime brought about a dramatic economic recession which resulted in considerable unemployment, especially among Roma, followed by significant changes in social security (Kusa, Kostlán and Rusnakova 2010, Kusa, Dral and Kostlán 2008). This development caused double harm to the Roma population. Firstly, the general decrease in social protection of the unemployed gave cause to a continuous dependence on social welfare for many Roma.

Secondly, the inadequate social security gave cause to a general deterioration in the Roma's ability to live in accordance with public expectations of the majority society, such as sending children to school, paying rent and so on. This contributed to negative attitudes toward Roma who were considered "lazy", "dirty" and "uncivilized" by the majority population. Another aspect of the development for the Roma population in Central Europe after 1989 was the official recognition of Roma as an ethnic minority group. In Czech Republic, the Romani culture and language was recognised, and several Roma became members of the Parliament (Laubeova and Laubeova 2008, Marada et al. 2010). However, a parallel development in Czech society was the growth of racism and the emergence of extreme right parties which included anti-Roma measures in their political programmes and a general growing tension in the relations between the Czech majority and the Roma. These examples illustrate how the history of the Roma has influenced the social position of the ethnic group within the observed communities, and have had a significant impact on the attitudes of the majority populations and the inter-ethnic relations. Since the 1990s Roma have been repeatedly stated in opinion polls in all observed Central European countries as the least acceptable ethnic group. The anti-Roma attitudes have also manifested themselves in discrimination and open expressions of racism.

This historical retrospect points at a set of important factors that influence the collective identity formation among Roma youth. One important aspect has to do with relations to the majority populations in the observed communities. In general, there is a division line between Roma population and the non-Roma population, which is clearly reflected in the self-identification and collective identification of the Roma. The observed communities in Central Europe are marked by substantial cleavages between "us" and "the others". The general rationale behind these contrasting categories is that "us" refers to the majority population and "the other" to the diverse Roma-population. One example is Czech Republic (Laubeova and Laubeova 2008, Marada et al. 2010). One of the most numerous groups of immigrants in the country are from Ukraine. Due to historical reasons the Ukrainians are legally defined as a traditional national minority and are therefore entitled to be represented in official bodies for national minorities and to be supported in cultural and educational areas. The Ukrainian minority is not positively viewed by public opinion, but still it has a better reputation than the Roma. The general view of the majority population depicts Roma as uncivilised, stupid, dirty, criminal and promiscuous. Public polls indicate that a large proportion of majority Czechs want Roma to be excluded from their neighbourhood and that they should be denied all welfare benefits. The cleavage between the Roma and the majority population is clearly reflected in the conducted interviews with Roma youth. Quoting a Roma student living in Hungary: *"They are showing off because they are Hungarians. They are the bigger ones, they act differently and they despise us while they are talking to us. I don't feel well while I'm with them"*. Several of the interviewed Roma students indicate the existence of a social barrier to friendship between Roma and non-Roma. A Roma student from Slovakia puts it this way: *"I understand better Roma (pupils) because non-Roma are... simply, they make differences that... you are Roma, you are Gypsy and you have no access to us."* However, Roma can also be an active part in building up barriers to exclude non-Roma. In Czech Republic, for instance, it exist a significant division line between "gadjo" (meaning non-Roma Czech) and Roma, where the label "gadjo" symbolically and actually mean "not one of us". The "gadjo"-labelling can also affect members of the Roma community if they diverge from the social, cultural and traditional ways and expectations in their community and close environment.

Many Roma in the studied Central European communities are proud of their ethnic belonging. However, not all consider their "Roma-ness" as an important aspect of their life, or as something positive. One Roma student from Slovakia explains that he is proud of being Roma. He says: *"I am proud that I am Gypsy"*. Nevertheless, he considers his ethnic belonging to be a disadvantage and describe how he and his friends often are faced with rejection and restraints

due to the fact that they are Roma. This experience is shared with Roma students from the other observed communities. One boy from Romania says: “*It is a disadvantage to be a Roma, because Romanians know that many Roma are dangerous, bad and steel, so when they see you as a Roma, they may think that you are alike*”. Similar patterns have been reported from the other observed Central European communities. Romania has both the largest number of Roma in Europe and a considerable Hungarian minority (Magyari et al. 2008, Vincze 2010). Both politically and symbolically the Romanian inter-ethnic map is dominated by the Romanian-Hungarian relationship and the so called “Roma-issue” is generally viewed as principally a socio-economic problem by the public, or occasionally as an exotic cultural element. Romanian society is marked by the existence of anti-Roma prejudices and discriminatory attitudes towards Roma both in case of the majority population and the Hungarian minority. In Hungary, being Roma is often associated with widespread negative stereotypical images, stigmatization, and various forms of discrimination and in some cases physical violence (Vajda and Dupcsik 2008, Feischmidt, Messing and Neményi 2010). Slovakian Roma experience in a similar way that their ethnic affiliation is a disadvantage due to prejudices and discrimination (Kusa, Kostlán and Rusnakova 2010, Kusa, Dral and Kostlán 2008). In spite of historical and social differences between the countries in question there is a salient and significant division line between the majority population and established larger national minorities on one side and Roma on the other, and a general perception of “us” and “the others” accompanied by stereotypical images, prejudices and discrimination. In general, this division line has a spatial dimension and coincides with socio-economically and ethnically segregated housing and schooling. In many cases the Roma are in a disadvantaged position. The spatial separation and the maintenance of the division line between Roma and non-Roma can however be both voluntary and non-voluntary. The cleavage between “us” and “the others” can therefore be viewed both as an undesired stigmatizing and discriminating hindrance for Roma, and as a valued source for an ethnic collective cultural and social identification.

A comparison between the observed communities reveals the existence of social hierarchies and dividing lines also *within* the Roma-population. For instance, in the Hungarian case the observed community reveals the existence of three subgroups with distinct characteristics: Vlach Roma, Beash and Musician Gypsies (Feischmidt, Messing and Neményi 2010). The relations between the subgroups are strained and all three groups emphasize existing differences as a mean to reinforce their distinct ethnic identity as a defence to the homogenizing perception of Roma presented by the Hungarian majority. Similar patterns are to be found in the other observed Central European communities. In Czech Republic for instance, there is one division line between poor Roma living concentrated in socially disadvantaged neighbourhoods and better off Roma living scattered outside these communities (Marada et al. 2010). Another division among Czech Roma is between the Olah Roma and the other Roma, where the former view themselves as the “real Roma” and therefore for instance prevent inter-marriage with other Roma subgroups, and the latter regarding Olah Roma as uncivilised and the reason for the majority society to discredit Roma. With other words, the Roma population is diverse and consists of several sub-ethnic groups characterized by different historical, social, cultural and economical attributes. The intra-ethnic relations within the Roma population are marked by tensions, conflicts and stereotypical images of “the others”, at the same time as the Roma population at large constitute a joint “us” (or “the others”) in relation to majority society.

In several cases, but not all, the Roma neighbourhoods are generally marked by an evident absence of majority population. The Roma districts are often surrounded by a bad reputation and receive negative attention both from the public and the media. The conducted interviews and focus groups show that both students and parents integrate these social and symbolic structures and representations as a part of their self-picture and identification. There exists a generalized feeling among Roma that the majority society is hostile and discriminatory towards them.

Students expect suspiciousness and discrimination in their contacts with majority society. In general they feel not welcome, or that they don't belong, in the surrounding environments. Quoting a Roma student from Hungary: *“Well, let's think about the skinheads. They hate the Roma. It happened when we went to the downtown and they kept picking on us. There were 3 or 4 bigger guys with us who could have beaten all of them. I said that we should disregard them otherwise they would report us to the police and then our Roma origin matters. It happened many times that I was differentiated. Even in my street. A few Hungarian lives there. They threatened me that they would report us... They said they wanted to call the police because there was music going on after 10 pm, say. And the police came as always. However when we call them because they play music loudly, the police doesn't come always. Sometimes they do, and sometimes they don't”*. At the same time, the interviewed Roma students and parents describe how the Roma neighbourhood is viewed as some sort of a protective shield against hostility from the surrounding society. One Roma student from Hungary explains: *„Those of us who live in the same settlement belong together. If anyone needs help we lend a hand out at once: for instance, someone needs to see the doctor and we have a car so we can give a lift to him/her and we offer our help straight away. We never ask the person to contribute to the cost of refuelling. Solidarity is in here”*. A salient social and mental distance has emerged between Roma and non-Roma as a consequence of the social and ethnic spatial segregation. An existing social and ethnic distance has manifested itself in spatial segregation due to historical reasons, at the same time as the current spatial segregation reinforces the existing social and mental distance between ethnic majority and Roma. Both the majority population and the Roma have a generalized and/or stereotypical social picture of “the others” based on a collectively reproduced experience.

The division line between “us” and “the others” is clearly present in everyday life if the Roma students and their experiences different manifestations of “othering” in school and their contacts with the surrounding society. One direct manifestation is the evident school segregation in the observed communities, both between different schools and within schools. “Roma-schools” or “Roma-classes”, an epithet ascribed schools or classes with a large proportion of Roma-students, are generally viewed as less demanding and marked by social problems and are therefore surrounded by bad reputation. The Roma students compare themselves with non-Roma students, and often picture themselves as in disadvantaged positions. In contacts with their majority peers their appearances, like how they dress and their skin colour, is generally a clear disadvantage and the word “gypsy” is often used as a synonym for bad manners. Quoting a Roma student from Slovakia talking about a teacher at school: *“She always comes in and she says ‘I feel like in Gypsy village’, so what would you do? She says that on every lesson... Because there is shambles in class. But it is not like only we do it, also our schoolmates. Even in class is ok she says ‘It stinks here like is Gypsy-village’”*. Two illustrative examples can be drawn from the Romanian case study (Vincze 2010). During classroom observations the term “Gypsy” was used by students to illustrate that something was being considered as poor and with low social status. When talking about the situation in larger cities in India one student made the comparison: *“slums are neighbourhoods where Gypsies live”*. The term was also used when pointing at bad behaviour. When two Romanian boys skipped class another student said: *“These Gypsies ran away from this class”*.

A comparison between the observed Central European communities shows that this segregation and stigmatization of Roma clearly affects the Roma students' identity formation, but also their attitudes and images of the surrounding majority society and how they picture their future adult life. To define and identify oneself as Roma generally imply a certain degree of loyalty towards the group. The sense of belonging can emerge from birth and kinship, and from a commitment to the community and its traditions and cultural inheritance. The presence or absence of inter-ethnic relationships, the inclusive or exclusive character of the workplace, neighbourhood or school, the peer relations, and the mutual separation and spatial segregation based on ethnicity



can all constitute important elements in the formation and maintenance of Roma identity. The Roma identity is however also strongly affected by the relationship to majority society and existing public and media discourses. In general, both students and parents experience that they are categorized and associated with certain attributes based on a generalized, stereotypical schematic image of “Roma” which put them in a disadvantaged position. A name, a way of speaking, appearances and physical markers or a residential address that associates with “Roma-ness” can give cause to various forms of prejudices and discrimination. In that way, being Roma is connoted with negative experiences of stigmatization, marginalization and a salient disadvantaged social position. Generally, this reinforces the division line between Roma and majority society and undermine the integration and recognition of Roma, and their sense of belonging.

### ***Western Europe***

There are historical differences among the minority ethnic groups in the studied Western European communities, both regarding group-specific factors (such as e.g. religion and migration history) and the relations with respective national majorities. The countries in question have been the goal for diverse flows of immigration that differ in historic, cultural, political and economic background (Szalai, Messing and Neményi 2010). The immigrant flows can be divided in two main categories: *post-colonial migrants* from former Western European countries and *economic or labour related migration*. Germany has a long tradition of immigration and the largest migrant group consists of guest workers who arrived between the mid 1950s and the late 1970s from Southern Europe, Turkey, Morocco and Tunisia (Ohliger 2008). Another significant group of immigrants arrived to the former East Germany from socialist countries, for instance from Vietnam. The conducted German Community Study focuses on Turkish and Lebanese youth, the two largest groups of minority ethnic students in the studied communities in Berlin (Strassburger 2010). The population of the United Kingdom is ethnically diverse due to historical migration foremost due to colonialism and post-war economic migration (Law et al. 2008). Three specific minority ethnic and migrant groups have been selected for the UK Community Study: the Gypsy/Roma/Traveller population, black Caribbeans and Bangladeshis. The rationale behind the selection is that all three groups have been subject to different levels of political and cultural recognition, various forms of discrimination and practices of restriction and exclusion. France has a long history of immigration due to the country’s colonial past (Schiff 2008). One important immigrant flow originates from former colonies and protectorates in North Africa, such as Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia. Another significant immigrant group is the Turks. In the late 1960s and early 1970s a Turkish workers were recruited. In the 1980s Kurds and Christians living in Turkey fled to France due to political repression. Therefore, the French Community Study focuses on youth originating from North Africa and Turkey (Schiff 2010). Immigration is a more recent phenomenon in Sweden and Denmark and coherent immigration and integration policies exist since the 1990s (Law et al. 2009). Denmark has a history of labour related migration since the 1960s and 1970s, and later on war refugees (Moldenhawer, Kallehave, and Hansen 2010). The Danish Community Study is conducted in Copenhagen. Since the 1960s and onward the population in Copenhagen has become more ethnically diverse and the largest minority groups in the selected communities originate from the Middle East, former Yugoslavia, Pakistan and Turkey. The Danish Community Study focuses on youth originating from Pakistan and Somalia. Sweden has become more ethnically diverse over the last decades due to labour related migration and in increasing number of refugees (Kallstenius and Sonmark 2010). Currently, the most frequent national origins among the immigrant population are Iraq, Poland, Denmark and Somalia. The Swedish Community Study focuses on a composite of migrant groups. The rationale behind this selection is the evident division line

between the majority population and the immigrant population in general within the Swedish context.

All observed Western communities are marked by considerable cleavages between “us” and “the others”. Although the group specific attributes (such as migration history, religion, culture et cetera) may differ among the studied communities, the rationales behind the contrasting categories are to a large extent based on the notion a division line between the (often white) majority population on one side, and the diverse immigrant population on the other. One example is Sweden, where “us” refers to ethnic Swedes and “the others” to the heterogeneous and diverse composite category “immigrants” (Kallstenius and Sonmark 2010). The term “immigrant” was coined in the 1960s as an administrative category, replacing the previously used term “foreigner”. However, it did not take long before the term “immigrant” was associated with generalized stereotypical conceptions of “the others” and different kind of social problems. During the last decades a strong conception has emerged where the Swedish population is regarded as divided into two major groups with distinctive characteristics, “Swedes” and “Immigrants”, or basically “non-Swedes”. One manifestation of this is that the children of immigrants are also considered “immigrants” – in spite of the fact that they are born in and have lived in Sweden their entire lives. This division line is present in the political as well as the public discourse, often in the shape of generalized stereotypical images. To be conceived of/categorized as an “immigrant” is often associated with difficulties in basically all societal arenas, for example labour market (unemployment and ethnic discrimination), housing (housing segregation and high concentration in socially disadvantaged neighbourhoods) and education (lower grades and a less common transition to higher education). More generally occurring manifestations of the significance of the division between “Swedes” and “Immigrants” is found in social categorizations and subjective identifications expressed by first and second generation immigrant youth and their parents, as well as their majority peers. Youth with first or second generation immigrant background are often classified as “immigrants” or “non-Swedes”, more over they often identify themselves as such.

Similar patterns are to be found in the other observed communities in Western Europe. In Denmark, ethnicity has a strong influential effect on how minority ethnic families position themselves within Danish society, and in general they picture themselves as different from ethnic Danes (Moldenhawer, Kallehave and Hansen 2010). In France the distinction between “us” and “the others” is clearly salient. However, due to the dominant French ideological model which opposes any form of differentiation based on ethnicity references to social background and neighbourhoods are more explicit than references to ethnic origin (Schiff 2008). In United Kingdom, the darker skin of the Caribbean and Pakistani minorities mark them as “the others” and they face discrimination and prejudice and racism from white British people (Swann and Law 2010). In a similar way Turkish and Lebanese youth (especially with Muslim background) represent “the others” in the German context, and are subject to different forms of “othering” and discrimination (Ohliger 2010).

In general, the division lines between the majority population and the immigrants in the observed communities coincide with segregated housing along socioeconomic and ethnic lines in the way that immigrants and ethnic minorities reside in low status socially disadvantaged districts, and the majority population in more affluent districts. As a consequence the youth with ethnic minority background lack contact with majority peers. Quoting students with immigrant background in Germany: “*You don’t find Germans here! In our neighbourhood you find Turks and Arabs.*” or “*Where should I meet Germans? Here are hardly any!*”. Students from the other observed Western European communities expresses similar experiences. In the French case, the distinction between “us” and “the others” most of the time refers to residential categories (Schiff 2010). For instance, in one of the observed communities most students with minority ethnic background live in socially disadvantaged urban neighbourhoods while the students with

majority French background to a large extent reside in better-off suburbs. The spatial separation gives cause to an “us”, living in the “projects” in relation to the “others” living on the outside. In the studied Swedish community, the interviewed immigrant students state that they share the common characteristic of being “non-Swedes” which gives cause to a sense of solidarity and understanding (Kallstenius and Sonmark 2010). In general, interviewed students and parents state that they feel secure and “at home” in an environment where they share the social living conditions and the experience of being “non-majority” with the other residents. Quoting an immigrant student from Afghanistan: *“Here in South Harbour [the observed Community] it feels like home. You can speak your language. Don’t have to be afraid of not fitting in.”* In many cases the students express a strong identification with their neighbourhood, and also distinguish amongst themselves referring to different neighbourhoods. One dividing line in general use is the previously mentioned spatial segregation between immigrants and ethnic minorities residing in low status socially disadvantaged districts on one hand, and the majority population in more affluent districts on the other. On illustrative example is a student in the Swedish sample with African origin: *“My friends and I have a similar type of behaviour, way of speaking, with an accent, by using words from our native languages. It is quite different from how they [the “Swedes”] speak in the city”*. This evident spatial division line reinforces the experiences of “us” and “the others” and adds a geographical dimension to the cognitive and emotional sense of belonging.

The interviewed students and parents describe experiences of direct and indirect effects of being ‘othered’ when they are in contact with surrounding majority society. For instance, that it is principally when they are in contact with the surrounding majority society that they feel that their ethnicity plays an important role, that they are not “ethnic majority”. Quoting a teacher interviewed in the Danish Community Study:

*“They find it a little bit difficult to relate to what they really are. But we [the teachers] keep saying that they are born and raised in Denmark so in fact they are Danes but it’s not even all of them who have Danish citizenship, so you can’t really say that they’re Danes. So they have a problem of belonging... well problem... they don’t have a firm base in Denmark, so that’s why they hold on to their ethnic minority group, they’re Albanians, Turks, Lebanese, Arabs or whatever they are. And they really hold on to that.”* Quoting a student with Eritrean origin in Sweden: *“I feel like an Eritrean because I look like one. It is very obvious with my dark skin and dark eyes. If I meet someone in the street, they don’t look at me as a Swede; they think I am an African or an Eritrean. Therefore I feel like an Eritrean.”*

The interviews reveal an often painful awareness and concern regarding the existence of discriminatory structures in the surrounding society. The minority ethnic and immigrant youth, and their parents, consider their foreign sounding names, their appearances, and how they speak as probable obstacles in the future during their initial attempts to enter the labour market. This is especially the case with students with Muslim background and/or students originating from Africa where a common feature is an expectation of negative differential treatment due to their religious and ethnic belonging. Quoting a Muslim student living in Germany: *“Look at my hair, look at my skin! How could I be German? And on top of that, we are Muslim!”*. Another aspect of the geographic, social and mental distance between majority and minority youth is that the observed students constantly compare themselves with ethnic majority students, or rather with an image of ‘majorityness’ since they in general lack personal contacts with majority peers. Majority students are constantly present in their utterances and reflections as some sort of a yardstick and the students compare their linguistic competence, behaviour, aspirations and future prospects with this envisaged sense of ‘majorityness’. The students are undoubtedly affected by the often stereotypical representations of “immigrants”, but also their neighbourhoods, presented by the media.

### *On the importance of the East-West divide*

There are historical, political and social differences among the observed communities along the division line Western Europe – ‘Eastern’ Europe (meaning the post-socialist world), additionally within each of the two clusters. However, the comparison equally underlines the existence of important similarities and point at recurrent patterns and relevant themes regarding the larger environments influence on the identity formation among immigrant and minority ethnic youth in the observed communities. One central aspect is the manifest and general existence of a significant division line between on one hand immigrants in the case of Western Europe and Roma in the case of Central Europe, and ethnic majority on the other. The cleavage between “us” and “the other” is present in basically all societal arenas and has a major influence on the identity formation of immigrant and/or minority youth and affects their relations to majority peers and the surrounding society just as well as their self-picture and aspirations for future working and educational careers.

The comparison between the observed communities show that the identity formation of first and second generation immigrant youth respectively Roma youth, is influenced by historical, social, cultural and symbolic structures, and subjective mental structures. Their self-images and collective identification is constituted and shaped by the interplay of structures, institutions and discourses of the outside world, and of their personal and significant others’ factual experiences. Ethnicity, gender, age, religion, socio-economic background and social status are important elements in their identity formation and this process includes on going negotiations on the meanings of the individual and collective identifications, and the social categorizations made by others. In this sense, identities are contextual, relational and dynamic. Identity is a constant process of producing and reproducing the division lines between “us” and “the others”, being simultaneously about belonging and dissociation, inclusion and exclusion, integration and separation. Being an “immigrant” or “Roma” is in many situations considered a stigma. A disadvantaged socio-economic background coincides with a minority ethnic or Roma affiliation and gives cause to a vulnerable social position at the bottom of the societal hierarchy.

One recurrent and highly important theme in the observed communities is the link between neighbourhoods and residential segregation, and the identity formation among first and immigrant youth respectively Roma youth. In general, they reside in socially deprived neighbourhoods marked by unemployment, low educational levels and an absence of majority population. In that sense, the socio-economic and ethnic housing segregation can have give cause to negative consequences such as concentration of social problems, marginalization, isolation and lack of interface with the surrounding majority society. In general, these social and symbolic structures and representations are incorporated by the youth and reinforce the experienced differences, disadvantageous position and division lines between themselves and their majority peers. At the same time the residential segregation can work as a protective shield from majority society. However, there is a painful awareness among youth in the socially disadvantaged neighbourhoods of the existing discriminatory structures and prejudices in the surrounding environment. They feel that they do not belong and that they are not a part of majority society.

### **THE PROXIMATE ENVIRONMENT**

According to our working definition, the proximate environment as one of the main factors, sources and contexts of identity formation (interwoven with others, like the school environment) includes children’s immediate home/family arrangements and connected socio-economic status;

the surrounding neighbourhood into which these are embedded; home-related peer groups and street life; but also institutions and/or organized activities from the nearby residential sites and/or those focusing on the latter. On the basis of the country reports we may affirm that regardless of its contents, the configuration between the economic, social and cultural capital of ethnic Roma of the new EU member states and that of second generation immigrants from the old member states – relative to their local context – generate patterns of identity formation within which tendencies of integration are mixed with those of separation. Strategizing with (ethnic) identification might play socio-political functions that are shared across country borders however the role of ethnicity in the matrix of residential urban identity is performed differently in different situations.

At its turn, the proximate environment is structured by the broader socio-economic and political regime. In this sense, the nature and dynamics of the proximate environments of our target groups from Central European countries (or new member states of the European Union) – that is Roma communities served by the selected schools – are affected by these countries' post-socialist and post-industrial condition. Most importantly one needs to observe that while the socialist state and political economy was interested in the cultural assimilation of Roma, but as well as in using their labour force, the post-socialist privatization, marketisation and re-appropriation of buildings and lands left their majority as long-term unemployed lacking any properties, and subjected them to evacuations and relocations to isolated/ marginalized/ stigmatized sites.

At this sub-chapter our leading question refers to the extent to which experiences and perceptions of the proximate environment lived and understood by students, parents and teachers are relevant for people's ethnic identification. Or, differently put, we are interested here to learn about how ethnic classification functions and is reproduced through and due to people's proximate environments, and how are or are not the latter ethnicised, and used or not used as such in discursively explaining the causes of differences and inequalities in school performances and future aspirations.

Extracting data from the country reports, the aim of this sub-chapter is (1) to identify the major types of the proximate environments of school children under scrutiny, and – in their light – (2) to suggest clusters of identity formation that might cross country borders, and last but not least (3) to conceptualize on the relationship between the proximate environment and ethnic identification.

### ***The proximate environments – patterns of residential segregation***

Describing the neighbourhoods of the investigated students' homes, the country reports focusing on Roma communities from Romania, Hungary, Slovakia and Czech Republic – however using different terms for naming them –, according to their ethnic composition, basically identify two major types of vicinities (ethnically homogeneous, and ethnically mixed). Referring to their socio-economic condition, the same papers make a distinction among Roma families living in different degrees of poverty or deprivation (depending on how many disadvantages they are cumulating), and those with a relatively better socio-economic condition. Juxtaposing these two classifications, they also observe that even if a poor neighbourhood is ethnically mixed, predominantly it is perceived as a place inhabited by ethnic Roma as far as 'Roma identity' becomes synonymous with 'poor' and with cumulated social problems, and vice versa.

The distinction proposed by the Hungarian analysts between ethnic ghettos and underclass ghettos might be completed by the classification noted in the Romanian report among ethnic colonies whose residents are voluntarily and proudly separating from the outer world (including majority population and/or other ethnic minority, among them other Roma groups) and those

whose tenants are involuntarily segregated while aspiring for integration into the majority society. Furthermore, the term proposed by the Czech analysts ('socially excluded localities') might be used to refer to ghettos as units of residential segregation produced as a result of social exclusion (which might or not coincide with ethnic marginalization), and not of self-assumed cultural separation. The documented Slovak cases also show how social housing or pre-fab accommodation units are usually left by non-Roma tenants and "the Roma 'categorization' of the neighbourhood increased."

Ghettos and colonies (ethnic or multiethnic) are not necessarily located on the geographical margins of the investigated urban (or nearby rural) settlements. However, even if they are in the inner city, and/or are dispersed on several peripheral districts, they are marked by separating architectural structures (like roads with high traffic, railways, factories) and/or by elements of nature (such as rivers, hills or forests). The most deprived urban Roma ghettos are the ones settled near or on wage dumps or sewage water treatment plants, in the case of which geographical isolation overlaps with social marginalization, and sub-human living conditions become markers of an ethnicised stigma.

Analyses on immigrant communities from old EU member states also use distinctions between social and ethnic ghettos and observe different patterns of social segregation: like the formation of working class neighbourhoods in suburbs (for example in France, with mentioning that there are in-country differences among cities regarding the extension of such socially deprived areas); or the polarization between the immigrant dense suburban areas and the affluent suburban districts in Stockholm City; or the slowly transformation of the working class inner city into a predominantly immigrant neighbourhood (like in some Danish cases); or the constitution of the inner city socially deprived areas parallel with the development of middle class suburbs in outskirts (like in the documented German case, or – with a few exceptions – in the United Kingdom). In the case of these countries the appearance and enlargement of spaces of poverty in the inner city is a more usual pattern than it is in the new member states, where they are mostly (but, as said, not always) evolving on the peripheries of settlements. But in their case, too the practice of directing immigrants to the public housing in socially disadvantaged suburban districts is also working. Besides, one definitely needs to observe that spatial patterns of social and ethnic differentiations changed in time with the transformations of the countries' immigration and housing policies, and economic developments.

Regarding the relation between residential and school segregation, a major difference between the 'Western' and 'Central European' societies is that in the latter the two are much more often in a causal relation than in the former. Despite the fact that catchment's areas are not any more compulsory in these countries, "pupils from low-income families are much more bound to the given school than pupils from better-off families" (like in Slovakia), "Roma children predominate in the schools near socially excluded localities" (like in the Czech Republic), and the same happens in the studied Romanian case which also shows that the soft school desegregation policy cannot compete with the hard effects of economic polarisation also reflected in housing trends. However, one should observe that the degree of the impact of residential segregation on schooling also depends on the changing educational policies, as some of the Hungarian cases prove: here, due to measures targeting Roma inclusion, "high prestige schools with practically no Roma or socially deprived students had to take children from the urban ghetto", nevertheless the effective results of these changes varied a lot from a location to another depending on the degree of local stakeholders' dedication to the principle of integrated education, but also on the resistance of Roma parents to send "their children to schools located farther away from their homes". Our 'Western' cases prove that the formation of segregated schools is also determined by factors beyond residential segregations. For example, as the French report shows, "the high concentrations of these groups in certain schools is due as much to the differential educational choices and strategies of majority and minority families as it is to

the effect of increased residential segregation.” This is resonating with the German case, where analysts observe that “many of them (upper and middle class people) would not enrol their own children in a ‘mixed’ school. The reason behind: they have relatively little confidence in the school system’s capacity to deal with diversity.”

People voluntarily inhabiting colonies spatially separated from the rest of a settlement are not necessarily living in poverty. Vlah Roma of communities from Hungary, Gabor Roma from Romania, Olah Roma from Czech Republic, or Vlachika or Sinti from Slovakia are maintaining functional relations with ethnic others through their income-generating trading practices, while sustaining their sense of distinctiveness and superiority as Gypsies who maintain authentic traditions. But ethnic colonies might be also spaces of poverty (and in this case they are not chosen voluntarily and should be named ghettos), especially if they are resulting from administrative measures (that relocate Roma families in the same neighbourhood after evicting them from their former homes where they could not pay their rent and/or utilities); or are formed as a result of a ‘volunteer’ change of residence motivated by searching new resources of income or by looking for cheaper living arrangements or by following informal networks; and/or are created due to the fact that non-Roma population leave the vicinities populated by “too many Roma.”

Adults of ‘Central European’ ghettos (in the sense of segregated colonies of poverty) usually are having a low educational level (but economically better positioned colony tenants might also lack school education) and are characterized by long-term unemployment or at least by vulnerable positions on the labour market (their working periods being followed by unemployment and/or by work in informal economy and/or by work-related migration beyond the borders). The most secure elements of their income are different forms of social benefits for which they often perform public work. Due to financial uncertainties that they struggle with, their rate of indebtedness is very high and they are unable to pay their rent and/ or utilities due to which they are subjected to further evacuations. Inhabitants of Roma or of the ethnically mixed colonies are doing relatively better as far as at least a few adults in the family are having a more or less secure income, and an educational and job history that increases the chances of their further employment. However, even the relatively better position on the labour market means in this case only the occupation of poorly paid jobs that require low-qualified work force.

Since the collapse of old industries and strengthening globalization (due to which manufacturing moved to Asia), residential areas of high public-housing concentration from the old EU member states know higher poverty and unemployment rates than the countries’ averages. As reports show, the economic situation of very many immigrant families (whose members previously were providing low-qualified labour force) is heavily influenced by either unemployment or an employment situation that does not provide the necessary minimum income for a decent living, and many of them receive a financial welfare aid.

Country reports show some predominant patterns of housing conditions in the ghettos. Roma families that are usually numerous households (with at least three or four children) are living in one room dwellings that never were connected to utilities such as running water, canalization, gas or electricity, or often were disconnected from them due to non-payment. For this reason these spaces of living are overcrowded and know no spaces for privacy and intimacy. Besides these living conditions, the basic concern of ghetto dwellers (the structural source of their permanent insecurity) is the fact that they do not own these homes, so are often also lacking permanent identity documents and related citizenship rights (this is especially so in Romania). Ghettos (but also the relatively better positioned colonies) might be populated by several extended families due to which informal networks and kinship ties are overlapping.

The extent of households in the case of immigrant communities differs from one ethnic group to the other in the Western ghettos. Their spatial location changed and housing conditions

improved during their histories in the host countries, however they were always offered some sorts of social housing that were, by case, slum housing built to accommodate factory workers, or publicly subsidized low-income housing. Analysts observe that the ethnicised immigrant urban ghettos are reproducing the older social separation between middle class residents and the working class population. They are 'favoured' by (the especially new) immigrants because are placed in districts affordable due to their substandard developments and low prices, while the concentration of ethnic groups here is also facilitated by the phenomenon of chain migration.

Colonies and ghettos may function as spaces of solidarity/ protection and sources of positive identity, or contrary, like territories of conflicts/ exploitation and supplies of negative self-perception (and not only in the perception of outsiders, but also of the inhabitants). This depends on how they were constituted (do they have or not a longer collective history, is peoples' cohabitation spontaneous or forced, voluntary or involuntary). But the consequences of living in the ghetto are also shaped by the degree to which kinship ties are juxtaposed with larger social networks, and/or to which boundaries between family, peer groups, school and work place are overlapped. Eventually the solidarity potential, or to the contrary the conflicting nature of ghettos is also governed by the hierarchies of its internal order (due to which mutual dependencies might take the form of some dwellers abusing on others). Some of our country reports are also referring to these aspects of pupils' life. In the studied Roma colonies from Romania, *"the mechanism of reciprocal assistance ... functioned in some cases and aspects, but it ... happened that under these conditions marked by several shortages, the competition on scarce resources, mutual suspicions and the inability of jointly organizing ... structured the order of cohabitation. Moreover ... people living in encapsulated spaces might become dependents on and at the mercy of local informal leaders and entrepreneurs, who exploit their cheap labour force."* The Hungarian analysts highlighted that *"<Romaniness> as a subculture has also political dimension: the neighbourhood is a protective shield against young people who are hostile with the Roma and identified with the skinheads. If they leave the settlement they always act in groups since otherwise they would be more exposed to both physical attacks and verbal insults."* The ambivalence of feelings towards pupils' local identities is also pinpointed by the French report: *"they are at one and the same time the major source of a sense of belonging for young people who feel far removed from their parents' sense of community as well as from the dominant French identity. At the same time the stigma attached to the image of the "ghetto youth" combines all the processes of differentiation and exclusion that impede their prospects for social integration."* One of the Danish case studies emphasize that the neighbourhood provides a sense of belonging and security: *"minority ethnic students living in Fraser area form an ethnic solidarity group on the basis of being 'a Fraser', and not because of common religion, language, culture, or psychical appearance. In this less divisive and non racialised school environment, most students from Fraser school frequently draw upon discourses of 'us' inside school and Fraser Area, and upon discourses of 'us' and 'them' outside Fraser Area, and appear to find safety in their local community."*

In the majority of the studied cases from colonies and ghettos, the social life of students and of their parents' consists of hanging around the home or in the immediate neighbourhood. Even if they state that they would like to integrate into the majority society and ethnicity does not matter in making friendships, they have few or no contacts with the outside world, these being reduced to schooling or labouring at the working place and usually disappear after leaving the latter. The few formal institutions serving these neighbourhoods' children's needs in socializing, mostly centred on after-school programs and/ or sport activities, are places where they predominantly meet peers belonging to similar socio-economic categories. Our country reports observe: *"while we have witnessed little separation along ethnic lines in schools, this seems more evident in life outside schools"* (Czech Republic); *"ethnically mixed schools are important opportunity for friendship but there are various impediments from using this opportunity: lack of accessible*



*organised after-school activities, requisite of payments, shortage of 'pocket money' to join more affluent class-mates going out and also necessity to commute and dependence on (not enough dense) public transport of commuting students"* (Slovakia), *"... all the interviewed children expressed a strong will to socialize with the ethnic majority (but less with other groups of Roma) and to accept other life models than those that were predominant in their families and immediate communities. For them, the school definitely is a channel through which belonging to the outer world might be practiced, but – under the impact of different sorts of material constraint that their families are faced with and of the recurring anti-Gypsy attitudes they encounter in the school or on the street – this path is under the risk of locking up and redirecting them back to encapsulation"* (Romania); in the case of Roma living in areas that are *"geographically located far from the town, it is difficult for people to establish or nurture social contacts other than their few neighbours. Whereas there seems to be ways out of the ghetto, this social setting might be a dead-end street for both the adults and the children"* (Hungary). Regarding the leisure activities of students with migratory background, the German report notices that *"most students mention that they spend a big share of their spare time with their family"*, so *"the amount of spare time which is spent outside the family is rather limited"*, and moreover, *"the differences between leisure activities of Germans and students of Turkish, Arab and Muslim origin seem to aggravate when entering adolescence... and these differences are regarded as somehow related to the core values of Turkish, Arab or Muslim culture."* Cases observed in France also showed that the fact that *"minority students have a tendency to have more friends who are of the same ethnic origin is more often the consequence of the socio-ethnic composition of their neighbourhoods, their schools and their families' acquaintances, than a result of their membership in a structured ethnic community, or of pressures for them to remain with their 'own kind'."* In the United Kingdom minority *"pupils reported socializing with pupils from a range of different ethnic backgrounds so on the surface ethnicity did not appear on the face of it to be a significant issue in pupils' everyday social experience;"* nevertheless, *"an important part of identity for both Caribbean and Pakistani pupils and particularly for boys was bound up with allegiance to area."* The Swedish report observes that *"ethnic boundaries are more apparent among boys compared to girls"*, so *"the group of boys originating from The Middle East and Africa socialize together in a relatively large group"*, while girls *"have wider friendship circles from an ethnical point of view compared to the boys."* But altogether notices that *"the experience of 'not being Swedes' is an important foundation for closer relations in the community, regardless of country of origin"*, and *"the students' utterances indicate an experience of segregation, and of living outside of the Swedish society."* In some Danish cases, sharing the same school space is not followed by socializing in ethnically mixed groups outside the school: *"although the ethnic minority students at Belleview School feel that they are included in a common 'we' inside school, they do not stay together with majority peers outside school."*

### ***Patterns of identity formation from rejecting stigma to embracing pride***

As the context of people's family arrangements, socio-economic positions, housing conditions, and informal/ formal networks of the vicinity, their proximate environment plays a central role in their identification. Most importantly, as citations from above proved, our analysts observed that identification with the neighbourhood can both reinforce and transcend ethnic boundaries.

The separation of ghettos from the outer world has not only socio-economic consequences (and these spaces are not simply locations on the geographical map), but it also bears particular cultural meanings (like stigma and/or pride associated with ethnicity). Consequently, it has an impact on peoples' self-perception and perception of others, functioning as an important element

of their psycho-social maps<sup>9</sup>. The ghetto is a marginal spatial arrangement, which in the case of Roma and people with immigrant background is about projecting ethnic identification into classifications of spaces (of living, schooling and working). Ghettos might be conceived as 'Roma' or 'immigrant' spaces even if they have a multi-ethnic character and even if are also inhabited by natives, as far as categories of 'Roma' and 'immigrant' are used as stigma. As a result, Roma or immigrant ethnicity is recognized or manifested as linked to an impoverished segregated space. The construction and maintenance of spatially marked boundaries does not only have the function to signal the distinctions between ethnic minority and majority. The meanings attached to the life style of the community inhabiting a particular spatial area (especially by those expressing a desire of integration) do also have the social function to signal to the majority that the homogenising Roma/immigrant image is false. Country reports observe that in many instances – in the strategies of identity formation – the internal differentiations among ethnic Roma are at least as important, as or even more significant than maintaining boundaries between Roma and 'majority'. Just to mention a few examples: "The first important intra-ethnic classification is the ... distinction between Roma living concentrated in the 'socially excluded localities' and those Roma families and individuals, usually better off in terms of social-economic and in many cases also educational status, who live scattered outside these areas, among and with the non-Roma population" (Slovakia); "Romanianised Roma, expressing a strong will and also sense of belonging to the majority community, while explaining their failures in integration, maintain their sense of positive distinctiveness by distancing themselves from the Gabor Roma" (Romania). As the French report shows, internal differentiations are also reflected in "stereotypes concerning the different ethnic groups: while Arab students are more readily portrayed as delinquents or terrorists, black students are portrayed as lazy and uncivilized." In the case of United Kingdom, "part of the differences in immigrant experiences between Caribbeans and Pakistanis could be viewed as religion. " The Swedish report stresses the differences between the first and second generation of immigrants. Beyond internal differences, in some cases – as the German report demonstrates – differences within the community are neglected as being of minor importance: "in reaction to the negative mainstream discourse about Islam many students showed strong solidarity with their families by underlining that they agreed with their parents and by stressing that their commitment to certain rules was completely deliberate."

Roma groups voluntarily separating from the majority society (using the latter as an object to trade with) nurture a sense of positive identity exactly due to their ability of maintaining their (sense of) separation, autonomy and self-sufficiency (this is illustrated, for example, by the case of Gabor Gypsies from Romania: "in Gabor Roma families 'otherness' is associated with pride – at least on the level of statements – and not frustration. This is about the pride on their mother tongue that also functions as a medium through which social and cultural norms are transmitted. Their wear (particular hat, long moustache for men, coloured silk skirt for women, coloured blouse with various patterns, pleated apron coloured as the skirt and head scarf) makes them different not only from majority, but also from other Roma. They also guard their distinctiveness through specific marriage practices") Contrary to this, groups of Roma accepting life models associated with the majority society construct a confident self-image based on their conviction that they are different from Gypsies named by them as "traditional", or "uncivilized", or "non-integrated" (this is highlighted by each country report referring to Roma from the new member states, here to be sustained by a quote from the Slovak team: "in the eyes of many non-Olah

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<sup>9</sup> By using the term psycho-social maps we are suggesting to go further from the traditional perspective of mental maps, and to understand (by following for example Arreola 1995) urban identity as a constructed idea that is tied to a real or imagined landscape, and not as a "mental map or a sense of space." In such a way one may describe how a city or a city neighbourhood might be associated with a specific ethnic group even if its population is ethnically diverse.

Roma, the Olah ones are the 'bad' ... or the 'uncivilized' ones who discredit Roma people at large in the eyes of the majority.

As the French report shows, for children with an immigrant background, traditional factors of social differentiation (such as parental income, occupation or educational level) play a less important role than qualifying themselves according to their local urban or neighbourhood identities: "urban identities function as an implicit mode of social, ethnic, generational and even academic distinction. They synthesize all the various dimensions of their identity, while at the same time permitting a degree of mixture between various ethnic groups, since membership is acquired and not transmitted." Moreover, students ending in the least desirable schools and classes assert their ethnic identity as a means of compensating for their inferiority within the educational hierarchy. The British report distinguishes between first and second generation of immigrants living in the United Kingdom as far as they cope with racism and embrace ethnic pride to a different degree: "unlike their parents who 'accepted' racism because it had not always been like that, the second generation of Caribbeans had always been plagued by the persistent reality of racism. Expressing their identities meant not just anger and resentment but a sense of pride and dignity in their ethnicity." Being associated with terrorism, Pakistanis had a harder time with sustaining their ethnic dignity: "being viewed as having an identity that is at odds with British cultural norms meant that Pakistani pupils felt more prone to stigmatisation." Among people with immigrant background, the Danish team "founded the strongest identification with ethnicity within the strategy of ethnic pride, less strong identification within the strategy of reflexive ethnicity and lowest identification within the strategy of downplaying ethnicity." The Swedish report also distinguishes between three models of identification: in the case of the first pattern that "reveals a strong ethnic identification ... a voluntary ethnic differentiation and segregation often occur to make a clear separation and distinction from the Swedish society"; "the second pattern reveals a more open and distanced attitude toward ethnicity and the group belonging, ... which might reflect a more threatened identity"; while in some other cases "the strive for integration can result in a tendency of pushing the issue of ethnic origin into the background". Belonging to a particular neighbourhood and living on the edge, shape self-understanding and as such they affect – among others – aspirations regarding schooling and future plans. Due to financial reasons, Roma parents living in poverty send their children into nearby schools about whom they get information through their kinship and informal networks, so the latter to an extent are reproducing their home environment. This is not the case of the better-off Roma and those aiming at being integrated. Acknowledging their possibilities, parents consider that their children would not be able to handle other types of schools but ones with lower level of expectancies and competition, and most importantly with a higher degree of openness towards disadvantaged groups. Also as a result of these processes, schools serving neighbourhoods of Roma colonies – even if not having a predominantly Roma student body –, are subjected to ethnic stigmatization, however, some schools from Hungary successfully countervailed this by consciously attaining at mixing.) In the old member states many minority students also make their choices for schools according to their spatial proximity condition: "they simply end up in their program because of a pre-determined set of constraints like grades, proximity of the school, record of undisciplined behaviour, knowledge of others who have gone to the school" (France); in the case of the Pakistani community, among some other factors, the distance/transport from home to school was influencing the choice for schools (United Kingdom); "as 90 percent of the students attending the local school are of another ethnic background than Danish, this indicates that more parents with an ethnic Danish background chose to find a school for their kids outside Fraser" (Denmark). Generally speaking, in these contexts, people's life strategies are dominated by the practice of living in the present (as cultural reaction to the socio-economic conditions of poverty and deprivation). This is operating with ways of treating the relation between time and money that cannot imagine and afford the long-term investment into school education, but concentrate on solving the immediate

challenges of each and every day (among whom assuring school attendance on a regular basis is only one, usually subordinated to other emergencies). Under these conditions, children start economic activities early (helping with household activities and child-care in the case of girls and earning money outside home in the case of boys). Cooperation on working out the everyday material urgencies of the families affects children's self-perception, enforcing them to mature earlier and, related to this, to gain a sense of independence and the satisfaction of participating on processes of mutual assistance, which might be perceived by them as elements of a proudly assumed ethnic minority identity.

### *Associations between the proximate environment and ethnic identification*

Given conditions of the proximate environment (as manifestations of macro-structural factors at local level), its formal and informal networks (as micro-spaces of social relationships), and the ways all these are experienced and understood (as cultural configurations) are important building blocks of personal and collective identities. They constitute people's social personhood that embodies – among others – ones sense of belonging to and/ or detachment from his/ her immediate environment (including family and housing arrangements, socio-economic conditions, informal networks, and related life styles and modes of thinking).

On the other hand, dealing with peoples' proximate milieu while analyzing identity formation is also important because this is one of the sites (composed by different actors, processes, factors) where consequences of structural/ institutional discrimination are directly felt, getting inscribed deeply and invisibly into personal and collective identities.<sup>10</sup> Furthermore, types of peoples' closest environment that acquire meaning relative to other kinds of milieus existing in the broader social context – regardless of their concrete local contents – generate particular clusters of identity formation, which – making abstraction of their particular meanings – are shared across country borders. Locations of marginality (geographically isolated housing arrangements, socio-economic conditions of deep poverty, family and kinship enclaves) universally produce hybrid identity strategies and identity models, in which the tendency of integration is mingled with that of separation, and positive self-perception is mixed with negative elements. Our research proved that – depending on the resources of the extended families and informal networks as suppliers of self-confidence and related proud – marginalized people perceive themselves as minorities lacking something in front of the majority embodying 'normality', so their identity strategies are more or less reactive (a situation that characterizes all powerless groups). To different degrees, they practice a threefold identity strategy. In the case of Roma this includes separation from other types of Roma communities than theirs (as embodiments of negative identities), integration into the majority society (as container of a desired life or at least as an instrument that provides resources for living), and the maintenance of a separate, positive self providing the sense of a particular body related to and bridging between different life-worlds.

Threefold identity strategies characterize immigrant groups as well. The Danish and Swedish reports make distinction between the strategy of strong identification with ethnicity (that, although does not emphasize a clear separation from the mainstream society), the strategy of ethnic pride (linked to a positive approach to cultural diversity, perceiving ethnic background as an advantage and sustaining voluntarily separation), and the strategy of downplaying ethnicity

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<sup>10</sup> As anthropologists emphasize (for example Lawrence-Zunigas and Low 2003), while analyzing the material and spatial aspects of culture, one might address the issue of embodied space. On the base of this idea, we are suggesting here that to the extent to which the territory of living is imagined through negative meanings like poverty, violence, isolation etc. as linked to particular ethnic groups, features of embodied subjectivities (such as skin colour) are transformed into identities.

(mostly played out in the case of a threatened identity, and characterized by a distanced attitude towards ethnic belonging and promotion of mixed immigrant identities). But they also observe that, for example striving for “Swedishness” is a general trend as being an attempt for social mobilization and a higher social status.

In the case of post-colonial minorities from France, their “social integration and exclusion is intricately linked with residential inequalities and with the existence of neighbourhoods which are often regarded as quasi-ghettos, even though they are in fact ethnically very diverse.” The separation along ethnic lines in the studied cases from Germany was “aggravated by culture related lifestyles based on different values, tastes and affinities,” but it also was sustained by pragmatic concerns (like the fact that “students of Turkish, Arab or Muslim background who live in a community with many peers of similar background where it is quite easy to make friends who will understand each other without words do not seem to feel any need to get into closer contact with German peers”), or by moral arguments related to sexuality (“students of Muslim background ... are perceived by the majority as representing outdated attitudes or as being the result of oppression, ... so they prefer the convenient way of spending their time with people who share similar thoughts and accept them just the way they are”).

Our parents and students theoretically sustained the importance of school education: in the case of those choosing voluntary separation this was about taking up a not favoured, but necessary socio-economic instrument, while for those opting for a stronger integration into the majority society was also a moral/ cultural choice. Anyway, for both categories, attitudes towards school and its role in identity formation (for example the self-understanding according to which ‘we’ are those Roma or Muslims who express ‘our’ will of integration by frequenting school) were re-enforcing positions assumed in front of their immediate environments. So in people’s identity configuration the perception of school was always relative to that of home: by expressing opinions about school one formulated views about whom he/ she was at home and vice versa. Moreover, as far as experiences of home (by case being the proximate environment of deprivation) were the ‘real’ elements of one’s identity that prescribed what one really might achieve due to his/ her conditions, ideas about school embodied its ‘imagined’ building blocks (as something desired and achievable or unreachable, or as something necessary but unrealistic or feasible).

Huger the discrepancies between the proximate home environment and the outer world, and sharper the boundaries between what is thought as a private/personal and as a public sphere, stronger the inward ethnic identification of minorities. One might suppose that to the extent that, as a group, Roma do not have a history of cultural autonomy (as traditional ethnic minorities from the new member states have), but they possess a well-developed sense of accommodating to the outside world, Roma communities are practicing their ethnic identification both in the front of the latter and among themselves. As far as Roma ethnic identity is not learned at school or from textbooks (however, to different extent in different countries, this is an evolving tendency), questioned about this, people tend affirming that it is not important in one’s choices (however, observing their practices, it is definitely a factor that affects their options in many domains of life). On the base of this, one may conclude that this type of ethnic identification is more a pragmatic/ practical than a narrative/ reflective one, while being developed – as it happens in the case of any other type of identity – situationally, as a strategy of self-positioning in the context of reacting to challenges inscribed into different sorts of relationships.

Non-reflection on students’ cultural or ethnic differences is also characterizing the post-colonial minority youth. At its turn, in the French context this is fuelled by reasons like the shared values of republican neutrality and colour-blindness on the side of the teachers. As a result, the French school culture (for which references to ethnicity remain taboo) clashes with students’ lived experiences, whose life at home and outside the school is marked by ethnically stigmatized

social distinctions. In one of the studied Danish cases, “ethnicity is downplayed as a signifier among majority and minority students inside school, but is still a marker of division outside school,” and “the lower the students are on the social ladder, the stronger is the role of ethnicity as a self-explanatory ‘ideological construct’ that they use for rationalising their case of existence.” In the studied German cases the research team observed that “students with Turkish or Arab background are mostly joining groups which are ethnically mixed, only sometimes they could be seen in groups which are either exclusively Turkish or exclusively Arab,” but very few students of Turkish background joined distinctive ‘German’ groups.

Beyond the proposed directions on which the rich empirical materials offered by our country community studies might be compared, at the end of this sub-chapter we would like to stress the theoretical potential of addressing the relationship between the proximate environment and (ethnic) identification. In this sense one should think further about our piece as a possible contribution to the interdisciplinary perspective called „the spatial turn“, which tackles how the social constructions of space are interwoven with how space and geography is involved in the construction of social relations, or differently put. For this perspective helps us to recognize that “*where* things happen is critical to knowing *how* and *why* happen” (Arias and Warf 2009), or it makes us conscious about the role of territoriality in the constitution of cultural practices (Derek and Urry 1990). Furthermore, we would like to appreciate that our work also promises to understand how in the case of Roma of new EU member states and of people with immigrant background from the old member states the “ethnic landscape” (Appadurai 1996) is imagined both as territorial (as linked to a particular space with specific meanings) and as trans-national (as linked to images/ constructions of ‘ethnic groups’ such as ‘Roma’, ‘Muslims’ or ‘Caribbeans’).

## **THE SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT**

First of all, we wish to emphasise the diversity of the schools in our sample, with regard to their type (primary versus secondary), generational profile, ethnic composition, social composition and the physical location of the facilities in different residential and neighbourhood contexts. The limited space of this report does not allow us to describe all such variations in detail; on the other hand, the diversity of collected data provides us the opportunity to grasp common patterns affecting the formation of ethnic identity in the school environment. The following sub-sections consider three main themes: 1) how educational institutions react to the ethnic diversity within schools; 2) what we learn about the problems of discrimination, racism and ethnically driven conflicts within the schools; and 3) what types of ethnic belonging we encounter and the typical contexts for their relevance. In addition, we also address the issue of ethnic minority teachers, the role of the school atmosphere and reputation, and finally, the interplay between gender and ethnicity.

### ***Modes of (non)recognition of students’ ethnicity in the schools***

The investigated schools developed different ‘cultures’ in their approaches to pupils’ ethnicity, i.e. they recognise the relevance of ethnic background and its role in school life differently. We can divide their approach into three general modes:

- 1) *Segregating schools* actively divide children on the basis of their ethnicity, yet not as an open strategy. Ethnic division – visible in the composition of classes or based on the segregation into different buildings in case of big facilities – is legitimised as the result of the impersonal and objective mechanism that sets up classes according to the academic achievements of pupils. These schools usually follow the ethnic divisions inherent in their

social context and try to conform to what they assume is also the parents' will, who for different reasons, do not seek to change teaching methods to help their children overcome social disadvantages. We encountered segregating schools in Central European post-communist countries (Czech Republic, Slovak Republic, Hungary, Romania), where, because of a nationalised educational system, the heritage of previous schooling practices, as well as a slowly changing educational culture, affects the entire schooling system, not only individual schools. As segregating schools reproduce, objectify and institutionalise ethnic boundaries, they also contribute to the praxis of imagining ethnic divisions within society (by teachers, students, parents) and through this they also shape the identities of the pupils. On the other hand, separation in the schools often hinders ethnically framed tensions or conflicts. It is not only the question of anticipated problems but also a result of experienced events.<sup>11</sup>

- 2) *Ethnic-blind schools* promote (at least discursively) a republican civic principle with limited recognition of ethno-cultural differences, which are conceived as having their own realm outside the public (civic) space and institutions. The republican tradition is especially strong in the French schooling system, but we encounter this approach also in the case of other countries - for example, in the Czech Republic, Hungary, and Denmark, although these countries have not developed comparable republican school cultures. An ethnic-blind approach brings some unintended negative consequences. Firstly, it may serve as an alibi for the reluctance to provide support for pupils with minority backgrounds. Further, if ethnic differences play a role in the practical life of families and represent a source of disadvantage, then schools are partly out of touch with the reality of trying to help pupils from underprivileged ethnic minority families. Moreover, positive recognition of minority ethnic cultures would serve as an important step in the process of inclusion through supporting a better image of minorities (Taylor 1992). Finally, an ethnic-blind strategy may encounter serious practical difficulties and, in the end, teachers de facto must take ethnicity into consideration.<sup>12</sup>

On the other hand, an ethnic-blind approach seems to be suitable in the case of highly motivated and successful minority pupils who do not need additional support as well as for those who follow the strategy of striving for integration. Regarding the positive potential of the ethnic-blind strategy, the French team noted the fact that it helps to cultivate the notion of success as the result of personal virtue, an attribute that does not rely upon ethnicity. Thus, it may partially mitigate the appropriation of minority identities. It is worth noting that some pupils recognise the official school strategy of indifference to the specific minority cultures. But the recognition of the republican tradition is sometimes disputed, due to certain religious (particularly Muslim) traditions/practices, which were originally developed in a cultural context where the division between the public and the private spheres has a different pattern. This 'structural' setting actualises some cultural tensions because it challenges the self-identity of pupils, which conceive of their religiosity as a private matter but with inevitable (and unintended) public manifestations.

- 3) *Ethnically-sensitive schools* recognise ethnicity as one of the factors influencing pupils' lives both outside and inside institutional walls. They manifest their sensitivity in various ways. Practically, it provides the basis for multicultural education or any forms of support aimed at minority students. For instance, the researched UK schools alleged that this approach is very

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<sup>11</sup> For example, in the Czech Republic and Hungary, after the integration of two recently ethnically segregated schools, majority and minority children have been re-segregated, this time within the school, due to tensions where parents also played an important role.

<sup>12</sup> For example, teachers in one Parisian school accommodated their teaching to the religious practices of some of their students; specifically, they avoided organising testing during Muslim holidays. In general, however, they still support the overall ethnic-blind republican culture.

desirable and one of the facilities declared its aims ‘to help students to understand the interdependence of individuals, groups, nations and the local environment, and to both comprehend and celebrate the multicultural nature of North City society’. Nevertheless, schools vary considerably in just how much support they offer students. Schools that are open to ‘ethnic discourse’ but do not provide any *systematic* support in the form of specific programmes (multicultural education, more language classes) represent one pole. On the other hand, some could be labelled ‘community schools’, as they conceive of themselves in this manner and they build their educational policy by referring to the disadvantages of respective minority *ethnic* groups. For example, one of the Czech schools was established in the spirit of promoting the education of Roma children, which is in sharp contrast with other schools in the town, where Roma children are prevalent but schools are reluctant to support their Roma identity or to try and develop it in a non-stigmatising and positive way. However, positive support of ethnic minority identity among some minority pupils – especially when conducted as an ‘ethnic awakening’ project – also has unintended consequences. It can confuse those who are rather integrated or try to be integrated and/or do not use ethnic categorisation as the core of their self-identity. This issue proved to be relevant in at least in the case of Roma respondents in one Hungarian school and also in the aforementioned Czech school. Also students from the UK declared negative stances toward ethnicised forms of support which could be perceived negatively:

*“Yes you think you are going to achieve something but then they come along and say, ‘we think you need help’ and it puts you down. Yes it puts you down and you are like, ‘so I am not doing that well’, and you think you are doing really well and you know you are going to do well and then they just go and put you down.”* (Focus group discussion)

One of the basic differences between countries resides in the level of the variety of ethnic groups within the schooling systems. In the Western European countries (France, Germany, Denmark, Sweden, and the United Kingdom), the ethnic diversity in the schools is much broader than in the new EU member states from Central Europe (Hungary, Czech Republic, Slovak Republic, and Romania). Higher levels of immigration account for the high number of pupils from underprivileged ethnic groups in Western Europe. There are substantial numbers of newcomers in the Czech Republic, but the growth of minority pupils in the education system takes place very slowly. Despite this, modes of none/recognition of ethnicity in the school environment described above *are found in all of the countries more or less simultaneously*. However, in France, the general tendency toward the second mode is legitimated and enforced by official educational policy and in the Central European countries, segregating school practices operate more often than in the Western European countries.

Modes of (non)recognition exercised by schools are one of the ways in which to approach the question of identity formation in the educational environment. Although we are able to generalise with regard to the three modes of recognition, we found that the actual results could be rather diverse and even contradictory. This underscores the fact that we cannot isolate and analyse the impact of the school environment as such because of the intersectional character of identity formation with the broader milieu (for example, the educational system, different civic cultures and their notion of the ethnic division of society etc., as described in sections A and B) and with the family environment and strategies (for example, different identity strategies, status and other characteristics such as cultural backgrounds, etc., as described in sections A and B.).

### ***The reputation of schools and their atmosphere***

Schools can have a negative impact on self-image through their low public reputation, which is inevitably transmitted to students, regardless of their actual school performance and the social



status of their respective families. According to our interviews with teachers, students and parents, reputation of a school is connected with the following:

- the educational programs are provided by the school
- the social status and ethnicity of the students
- the school's history and its prestige in the past
- the prestige of the neighbourhood of the school
- the prestige of the neighbourhood of the students

In particular, the last two factors can be exaggerated by the broader public, which may lack actual experience with the respective schools. For example, we learned that one French school has a good reputation because it is situated in the neighbourhood of a good quarter of the city and further, it retains a sense of prestige rooted in educational programs that no longer exist. But the reputation of a particular school does not seem to be a primary factor underlying pupils' feelings of comfort/discomfort and satisfaction/dissatisfaction with the school environment. When students express their sentiments to the school and to the teachers, it is not determined by the formal/objective characteristics such as the composition of the teaching staff and their qualifications or the shape of the building (or any other aesthetic factors) and its infrastructure. By far, the most important circumstance is the atmosphere, and above all, the *atmosphere in the class*, which is formed through the relationships in the peer group and between students and their teachers, as well as with non-pedagogical staff that is an important part of the educational process (assistants, psychological consultants, etc.). What we may regard as positive is the fact that schools can temper their public reputation by creating a better internal atmosphere. In general, schools with a significant proportion of pupils with ethnic minority backgrounds usually have a negative public reputation. But the impact of this upon shaping pupils' identity can be countered when schools seek to build up a good and relaxed atmosphere and a cohesive classroom setting. The following citations were provided by two French students who positively evaluated their school:

*“Well the atmosphere of the high-school is not heavy. It's friendly, it's open. Yes, it's good. It's better when there aren't too many students. Because then teachers know our trajectories, they know our difficulties and they can help us.”* (second-generation Algerian girl).

*“What I like about teachers in this school, it's that they don't put you aside, and they take the time to explain things. When I don't understand, I ask and they take the time. It's not like junior high-school where you are set aside, I mean I was in math and all, because I really don't get it. I like teachers here.”* (second-generation Turkish girl).

However, it requires *the will* of the school personnel to foster a friendly atmosphere, which can be demanding and require considerable extra work. We found several types of activities targeted at improving class atmosphere, including:

- providing lessons outside of class time for students making slow progress
- working to establish mutual trust based on communication with students and their families
- organising social life in school with activities that are not exclusively oriented towards academic issues

Thus, some schools (or at least a part of their teaching staff) take over functions that are beyond their primary role as mediators of an academic curriculum.

Schools were generally conceived as a typical 'majority institution', especially for underprivileged families living in the localities where the same minority ethnic group (or groups with similar social characteristics) is concentrated and everyday life is usually locked in with the

neighbourhood and family ties. The potential for disaffection is strong, as the school system is rather hierarchical ('good' and 'bad' schools; different schooling programs with different prestige) and achievement oriented (evaluating and marking), with students from underprivileged ethnic groups typically overrepresented at the bottom of the educational system. When students feel that they are not treated and judged exclusively on the basis of their performance – including the hierarchy between programs and classes (or between different schools) – they more often conceive the school as a place providing support and help for solving problems different from those that are exclusively school oriented.<sup>13</sup>

The schools with many underprivileged children but without developed strategies regarding how to support mutual trust showed a tendency to put a one-sided emphasis predominantly on following rules and/or on pupils' school achievement – thus promoting a competitive rather than a cooperative environment. As a consequence, they tended to reflect more tension in student-teacher relationships as well as an unfavourable milieu to prevent ethnically framed conflicts between pupils.

### ***Teachers with minority ethnic identities***

The rate of teachers (including also assistants) with minority ethnic backgrounds was usually between 10-15 percent, but we also encountered schools, or classes or programs within these schools, with a significantly higher proportion (30-50 percent) or, conversely, schools without such personnel at all (Hungary). In general, the lower proportions were found in Central European countries, while in Western European countries, the proportion of teachers from ethnic minorities was higher.<sup>14</sup>

A number of the teachers from ethnic minorities consider their job a mission to help children from the most disadvantaged families and/or a question of ethnic solidarity. Others take advantage of policies supporting the employment of ethnic minority group members in the schooling system. But, regardless of their motivations, ethnic minority teachers or other qualified non-pedagogical personnel could provide a positive example of upward social mobility for children from underprivileged families. The following citation from the Hungarian research shows that it is reflected also by teachers who reflect the abovementioned low numbers of those in Central European countries as well.

*Teacher 1: "If they were surrounded with more people of Roma origin who have already achieved something in their lives and therefore could be role models for them, then that would be a motivating force for them. They get lost somewhere in the system because we shall note that there are Roma college or university graduates but they disappear. However their guidance would be important."*

*Teacher 2: "I tend to disagree with you a little bit. There is K. (teacher's assistant) who demonstrates by personal example what could be achieved through education."*

*Teacher 1: "He is the exception."*

The positive role of these teachers and their contribution toward helping to reduce the potential mechanisms of alienation between schools and minority children is not always straightforward, however. We must take into consideration the interplay between ethnicity and class distinctions.

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<sup>13</sup> This strategy and its impact upon the process of shaping self-identity is mostly relevant in the case of pupils from families where nurturing from parents is missing, either because of their work-overload or as a consequence of the overall family deprivation.

<sup>14</sup> It is more often the case for those minority groups who have lived in the country or in the locality for some generations. A similar effect applies in the case of source countries of immigration, which are simultaneously brain-drained (although some of these countries are primarily provided by developmental aid based on the brain-gain). Both circumstances contribute to constitute a group of educated people with ethnic minority background.

Most pupils at our schools come from families that are not only marginalized ethnically but also (very) poor, which is not usually the case for their professional, educated co-ethnic teachers. In our research, we found that students sometimes conceived of them as ‘turncoats’, with different habits, which would not always be evident – to the uninformed outsider, they simply appear to share the same ethnic group membership and solidarity. At the same time, some teachers from ethnic groups make these distances also important:

*“Interviewer: -And being of the same origin as students, is it an advantage, a disadvantage?”*

*Person1: - I think that competence has no colour, no origin. I would even go further. These stories about racism have never been my preoccupation, frankly. Some might find it strange, but I just live with it. As I said I used to be at the head of a workshop crew, so I managed men with a certain level, with a good collaboration.*

*Interviewer: - And do students talk about this with you?”*

*Person1: - No, no. As I say, the communication I have with students is purely professional. I maintain a certain distance. I am very close to my students, but always in the trade. 90% of our communication concerns their future and the profession. If they find me in class, in the lunch room or outside, we talk about life jokingly, but not in depth.” (Sub-Saharan African migrant)*

We did not deeply explore these distance maintaining strategies but we may - besides the question of authority over pupils - take into consideration also the role of self-respect, prestige, and related strategies seeking to “escape from ethnicity” as the citation indicates.

### ***Levels of ethnic group belonging***

Our research has demonstrated that the school environment provides opportunities for the emergence of different levels of ethnic group belonging. To limit the question of ‘ethnic’ identity only to the ‘usual’ categories (for example Turks, Pakistanis, that is, those based on nation-state categories) is often a too narrow approach. A more nuanced approach reveals the complexity in the strategies of actors when they utilise ethnic group memberships, identities and categorisations.

We found that different levels of group belonging could be analytically categorised, moving from the broader to the more specific in the following hierarchical fashion:

*identity of ethnic otherness > broader ethnic categories > specific ethnic group categories > sub-ethnic categorisation*

*Identity of ethnic otherness* would be characterised as a perception of being different from the mainstream core. It is a broader category of ‘We’ and has the potential to involve all ethnic out-groups due to their shared position in society, including low symbolic status. It is generated through negative public stereotypes that categorize minority youth as *problematic* (because of poor school performance, bad behaviour, inadaptability, as well as dangerous and violent tendencies). As an example, we turn to a case noted by the French team while mapping life in a school where minority pupils from an ethnically mixed neighbourhood prevail. School trips to the city centre, outside the usual surroundings, provided the opportunity to activate otherness through the reactions of ‘common French’ as well as through indirect provocation by the voluntary manifestation of the ‘tough boys’ image on the part of some pupils. In contrast, this broader layer of self-identity does not manifest in the case of the new EU member states, as the Roma are the only relevant ethnic out-group in educational system. The identity of ethnic otherness also has a potential impact upon shaping the second type of belonging, as described below.

*Broader ethnic categorisation* is based on regional, racial and religious categories which are usually mixed, because, for example, being from Maghreb countries would also mean being Arab and Muslim. This categorisation is quite important in school life because pupils utilise them when establishing peer groups as well as when explaining intra-school ethnic cleavages. Teachers also apply these categories when describing youth and life in the schools. We encountered the following broader categories: sub-Saharan Maghrebian (specific to the French case), Caribbean (especially in the U.K. and France), Blacks, Arabs, Whites, and Muslims. Religious differences appear to be the most significant, probably due to two circumstances. Firstly, religion usually claims to constitute a community of believers and thus overlaps more particular ethno-national belongings (here, we invoke the ‘transnational’ concept of the *Ummah*, which includes the entire ‘Muslim world’). Secondly, different cultural practices stemming from the religious background concern music tastes, dressing, food habits, sexual life, and after-school activities etc., which are important in the life of pupils also from the point of view of their grouping.<sup>15</sup> In particular, it is Muslim identity that seems to be the most inclusive, having the potential to integrate a broad diversity of regional and racial categories.

*Specific ethnic group categorisation* is based on ethno-national categories (Roma, Somali, Turks, etc.), which could be further decomposed into *sub-ethnic categorisation*. For example, as mentioned earlier, Roma ethnic identity could be decomposed into sub categories of Vlach Roma, Slovak Roma, old Czech Roma, etc. The Central European teams encountered this division as a common pattern, especially as a strategy for defending one’s dignity in the face of the overall negative public image of the Roma ethnic group. Sub-categorisation provides the opportunity to divide Roma into ‘bad’ and ‘good’ subgroups and thus distancing oneself from the ‘bad ones’ who are ‘different Roma than we are, making our reputation bad’.

### ***Racism, xenophobia and discrimination***

We might expect that ethnically driven distinctions are one of the basic factors shaping interpersonal interactions, relations and overall class and school atmosphere, especially in the context of the overall pattern when groupings in schools follow ethnic lines. But in most of the investigated schools, regardless of their ‘ethnic setting’, solely racial or ethnic tensions appear to be exceptional phenomena, not a common visible part of everyday life in schools. The explanation of this relative invisibility of clear ethnic tensions can be partially addressed through the following two sets of circumstances.

*Firstly*, we investigated many schools where minority ethnic students dominate or dominate in specific classes or/and educational programs. These ‘school ghettos’, attended by pupils from families sharing a minority ethnic background and very often living in the same (or similar type of) neighbourhood, prevent ethnic tensions – their students much less often feel directly (in a face to face manner) exposed to negative experiences based upon their ethnicity. This occurs mainly in larger cities, where many middle-class and better situated majority pupils have the opportunity to choose different schools if they or their parents are dissatisfied with a particular facility. This phenomenon generates not only ethnic ghettoisation of schools (usually described as ‘white-flight’) but also (social) class ghettoisation. Majority students from poor families or studying in a specific programme have limited opportunities to leave their schools and thus more often stay with their ethnic minority peers, with whom they share social class status, and in some cases, also the neighbourhood. These class similarities may also play a role in relative invisibility of the ethnic tensions in specific environment of ‘minority schools’. Ethnic minority students attending ‘majority schools’ are more often exposed to stigma-generating situations because of their relatively lower social position with regard to their classmates. But we must be

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<sup>15</sup> For example, some Muslim students in Germany and France expressed their otherness on this ground as their peers regard their habits in the sphere of intimacy and sexuality as being non-modern.

careful in delineating such a sharp distinction between these two settings. Many segregated schools in Western Europe also provide the opportunity to encounter the ethnic others, because they have, in fact, a multiethnic character. Thus, we need to add another clarification for the *relative* insignificance of ethnic based tensions.

*Secondly*, ethnically based conflicts appear as directly observable phenomena only exceptionally. Moreover, conflicts are mostly related to different types of social distinctions, such as school performance, life style and place of residence. Hence, it is impossible to use a mechanical causal interpretation for ethnic tensions in the school system that links any particular ethnicity with discrimination, racism, conflicts, etc. To conclude, the existence of racism and discrimination in schools - whether among students or between students and teachers - is a complex and ambiguous phenomenon, which may be easily misinterpreted in both manners: exaggerated as well as underestimated. In any case, to interpret tensions and negative experience in schools through the lens of ethnic identity was rather rare among pupils.

The most frequent visible forms of ethnically based conflict take on the character of *verbal attacks*. But more or less aggressive insults, offensive comments or ethnically coloured jokes are not, on the part of students, automatically interpreted as a manifestation of racism. They are basically described in two ways: as more or less innocent jokes or as the instruments for insulting the other person, i.e. as the means serving in the conflicts that are not primarily ethnically driven. In both cases, racism and ethnic conflicts produce cultural forms, including discursive repertoires, which could be instrumentally used in different contexts. On the other hand, they are understandable and efficient as jokes or insults only in connection with their original function as ethnically coloured insults (such as 'Muslim terrorist'). Thus, they still remain potentially powerful to generate tensions and are not as innocent as pupils usually claim. *"I don't feel good here. They're always making fun. It's a class of immature kids. They're always talking. Yeah, there's racism. It's jokes, but sometimes it really annoys me. My girlfriend, she calls me a dirty black and I don't like it."* (second-generation Malian)

Beyond the 'unspoken agreement' between students regarding the character of verbal insults and teasing, they are viewed as a real problem by teachers, who usually do not tolerate them – even in those cases when pupils (including victims) provide the same reasoning. Here, we can address the fact that some teachers see the inter-ethnic relations between pupils in a more critical manner than their students.

*"I don't like those little jokes, those little remarks, they are like sparks. Some teachers just let it go if students are having those disputes. Then it disturbs the class, it degenerates and sometimes it can lead to fights. I tell them they shouldn't become too familiar: 'You're friends, and there you're laughing. After a while those kinds of jokes, that humour becomes tiring, and then maybe you will be in conflict with each other'."* (teacher, North African migrant, Paris).

The ambivalent character of this phenomenon signals that racial insults among students are easily and therefore more often utilised by those who are not of majority origin and would be conceived rather as victims, not as the source of racial discourse due to their disadvantaged position (and some majority teachers are quick to stress this apparent paradox). For example, Slovak Study (page 83) mentioned that "all pupils agreed that it is big difference, if Roma pupils verbally attack non-Roma pupils and vice-versa. In case, Roma pupil is a victim, then everybody speak about racism. In case, non-Roma is a victim, all pretend, nothing happened. According to them, to call them 'negro' is the same as if they called them 'gadjo' (Roma word for white people)." Majority students are more suspected of playing the 'ethnic game' seriously, and within the frame of anti-racism, they could be more easily blamed for intolerable behaviour. It seems that they would have to share a relatively good relationship with their non-majority peers, if they wanted to use the negatively coloured ethnic vocabulary in a non-serious way. Although

it may sound strange, noticing the offensive vocabulary could also be the sign of cohesiveness (as only good friends should use it without harm) or it may be just as well the opposite case.

*“Interviewer: - But doesn't it get bad sometimes?”*

*Person1: - No. Not between us, the guys from the cité, it never gets bad between us. It's especially those who come from the country, they're not used to it. So among themselves they get nasty. They want to act like us, but then they can't take it like us. They say we're the worst, but we understand when we're joking. In fact the class is divided in two. There are those who want to have fun, and those who are strict with themselves. It's like they're afraid to have fun.”* (second-generation Algerian, France)

We found that teachers' discriminatory or racist practices relate to a great extent to the overall school atmosphere. If the atmosphere is relaxed and friendly, the students themselves tend to express non-critical attitudes towards their teachers. In schools with a tense atmosphere, teachers' behaviour is more often interpreted as racist. In any case, *open* racism on the part of teachers toward students is very rare, although some teachers may have negative stereotypes of ethnic minorities. This is not surprising since discrimination and racism are not acceptable - at least in the public sphere - in any of the countries where we conducted research. What is more interesting is the strategy of blaming teachers for racist or discriminatory practices on the part of students, who make use of it as an instrument against the teachers' authority:

*“One boy was naughty so I gave him some extra work and he told me I was a racist. When I asked him to tell me why and what he thinks racism means, he wasn't able to say that, he was just trying. They hear that at home, on TV, and it's kind of a swear word.”* (Teacher, Czech Republic)

These 'ethnic games' are not mentioned by the students but almost exclusively cited by teachers, who consider it very frustrating as it cannot be easily resolved by 'objective' counter-arguments and it also attacks their moral integrity. Nevertheless, such a strategy rarely has any serious consequences, because students know that the teachers are familiar with their motives (and teachers know that students know... etc.).

Finally, the conflicts inside school classrooms are often based on the cleavages between those who conform to school and/or teachers and those who are in opposition to an institution where pupils from underprivileged ethnic minorities usually occupy non-prestigious position. A part of the pupils rebelling against official school culture purposely uses street sub-culture norms, roles and images associated with bad reputation ('coloured') neighbourhoods. While the public (including teachers) sees this sub-culture as too oppositional - and therefore undesirable - some pupils find it rather attractive and use it as a source of group and personal pride. Because in neighbourhoods with a high proportion of minority ethnic groups the street sub-cultures are ethnically coloured, ethnicity may be invoked as the part of an 'identity game', through which pupils can establish their own position in peer groups and also express their relationship with the school.

### ***The interplay between gender and ethnicity***

There are three areas where the interplay between gender and ethnicity results in less favourable conditions for girls than for boys.

- 1) The 'ghetto identity', i.e., being 'dangerous', represents a specific form of reputation and thus provides some positive meaning, although it is generally perceived as a counterculture. But the potential positive value manifests more frequently for boys than for girls, not least because it is, in the first place, a *macho*-subculture and it does not

cultivate the image of 'rough girls'. Put differently, girls are not provided with the same opportunity to adopt an ethnically coloured street-culture identity that re-evaluates and turns negative images upside-down. On the contrary, it is not valid for some relative new youth subcultures typical for white girls and boys such as "emos" and "ghotts".

- 2) Girls who come from families with strong religious beliefs, especially those belonging to Muslim communities, are more restricted in some activities organised by schools compared to boys (or girls from other ethnic groups) if they attend ethnically mixed schools. For example, they usually do not participate in swimming lessons or do not make long-lasting trips. They are also more limited in their contacts with boys as it would be considered as improper behaviour. Their more limited contact with peers is the main reason these girls usually form cohesive and rather closed groups. In this respect, we can see that internal cleavages based on different (gendered) obligations to religion and culture may also exist within communities. It seems that some minority girls – particularly those from groups and families with strong religious traditions, i.e. Muslims - are more obliged to follow previous family patterns when they are choosing educational careers.<sup>16</sup>
- 3) The third area where gender and ethnic identity may significantly resonate with each other is with regard to the gender of teachers. In some countries of origin, where the gender order has a clear patriarchal structure (e.g., Pakistan, non-urban, rural areas of Turkey, etc.), men have a significantly higher status and authority (at least in the public space) than women. In some cases teachers - especially women - suggested that their male colleagues sometimes assert authority more successfully. But it does not seem to be a regular problem that negatively affects everyday school life and education. It usually arises in interaction with 'tough boys', i.e. not with girls and not with 'ordinary students'. Moreover, we have to bear in mind that the same pattern holds for non-minority pupils. What we want to point out here is the possibility that in the case of ethnic minority students this situation occur more often, as their cultural background would legitimate not following the authority of female teachers. At the same time, the problematic situation when teaching students of non-European or Roma origin is easily framed in this way and thus would be exaggerated. At any rate, the gendered question of authority has been mentioned by our teachers and it cannot be ignored.

In sum, we found that schools are not perceived as the typical discriminatory institution or the place where the ethnicity of children determines their success (of lack thereof) and their future. The feelings of inferiority or injustice are more often generated by the outside world (through media, police, the labour market, local/state authorities, etc.). Considered within the context of the whole society, schools are a relatively peaceful environment. At the very least, they do not openly reproduce the prevailing negative stances throughout the rest of society toward marginalised ethnic groups. Further, they successfully promote the idea (or ideology) of individual effort as the main source of good educational achievement. Injustice in education is generally interpreted as the failure of individual teachers who do not follow the objective criteria and not as the failure of the educational system as such. On the other hand, schools, as the place where children's ethnic identity is shaped, do not help to level their marginalised position and do not prevent them from acquiring minority identities. In this respect, some school environments actually contribute to this process if they are not adjusting or even willing to tackle the challenge of minority pupils' education (i.e. the case of segregating schools or ethnic-blind schools). School environments resonate with the cultural and class background of their pupils because

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<sup>16</sup> But it is not only the question of religious traditions that impose specific gender roles. For example, some Czech Roma girls are – according to their teachers' interviews – discouraged by their families to seek educational careers, which is not so often the case for boys.

some groups are more predisposed to be handled as problematic - especially children from Muslim families with strong religious traditions and children from marginalised Roma families.

Central European countries are less prepared to tackle ethnic diversity in their schools as their universalistic civic culture has been cultivated for a shorter period. On the other hand, Western European countries face greater numbers and diversity of ethno-cultural groups, which is more demanding when searching for good strategies. Despite the differences between countries and school environments, the results are very similar when we take into consideration the reproduction of marginalised statuses that are bounded with minority identities.

## IDENTITY MODELS

In this section, we explore the more durable patterns of identity formation among the target populations, among the students and their families alike. In particular, we focus on the ethnic, religious and national self-identifications of our respondents. First, we touch upon the issue of ethnic (ethno-religious, ethno-national) awareness as such, the urge, need or inclination to express feelings of a minority belonging in the context of the wider social-cultural milieu. It is the major – and most extensive – part of this section, and it develops a basic grid of identity models that have appeared in our findings: we call the models *separated*, *aggregated* and *amalgamated* identities. Related to this is the question of othering, which – as we will see – mostly takes the form of self-othering vis-à-vis the predominant national patterns of behaviour.<sup>17</sup> It will lead us to the question of whether and under what circumstances ethnic self-identification serves as a source of pride or stigmatisation for the minority youth. And finally, the question of identity development in the context of family relations will be discussed. In our field research, we have encountered some important differences in articulating ethnic (and religious) sensitivity between respondents in the Western European countries on the one hand and the Central European countries on the other. The former are predominantly second or third generation immigrants to the countries studied, while the latter are students of Roma origin. In the following text, we will not always specify this difference in the character of the target groups, yet it should be continuously kept in mind by the reader.

### *Ethnic awareness: separated, aggregated and amalgamated identities*

Community Study reports show that, *in general, students in the old EU member states manifest stronger ethnic awareness* than respondents (and students especially) from the new member states. This is apparent in all country reports (with the notable exception of Denmark), although there also are differences – among old member states and among new member states alike – not only in the intensity of ethnic self-perception, but also in the forms through which such self-understanding is expressed in actual situations, contexts or relations. A notably strong self-perception in distinct racial terms has been encountered among British Caribbean youth: even children of racially mixed partnerships ‘never identified themselves for instance as being both white and black’, and ‘all mixed race pupils within this study identified themselves as black’. Yet the British case demonstrates a strong ethnic awareness also in cases in which the colour of skin is not the distinctive feature of an ethnic belonging, namely, in the case of Gypsy-Travellers. Their sense of ethnic uniqueness is based on an adherence to a traditional way of life (mobility, attitude to children, dress, etc.), which by and large is not shared by other

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<sup>17</sup> We will only make a short observation on ‘othering’ related to the identity issue, since ‘othering’ is the central topic of one of the previous chapters of this study.



population(s) in the country, making the Gypsy-Travellers a socially distinct group. We will return to this topic below.

It is symptomatic that a majority of Czech and Slovak Roma youth in particular says they are first of all Czechs or Slovaks, while, e.g., ‘the absence of a statement like “I am a German” is quite obvious when we have a look on the various ways to describe identity’ in the German case. Moreover, other country reports indicate that *the stronger the feeling of an ethnic uniqueness and the stronger the urge to present oneself as first of all a member of an ethnic minority, the less inclination we can find from the respondents to make references to the state-national environment of their current lives*. This model of self-identification we call *separated identities*. It signifies expressed separation of an (‘original’) ethnic belonging from the (current and formal) state-national belonging, along with giving preference to the former. There indeed are differences within the country samples alone. The Pakistani students in the UK sample, for instance, are generally more inclined to exhibit their Britishness, even though this is typically in relative terms or situational contexts. That is, they characteristically express their British affiliation in relating themselves to other ethnic minorities, especially Caribbean groups.

Young respondents in the Czech sample – as the country Community Study says – ‘have by and large shown no straightforward relationship to their assumed ethnic identity. Instead, ethnic or ethnically coloured self-identifications emerged in the interviews and focus groups in rather scattered, fragmented, elusive, sometimes metaphorical and frequently inconsistent ways, or by proxy’. As a rule, they have not made sharp distinctions between (their) Roma ethnicity and the state-national belonging. As the reader will be reminded repeatedly throughout this section, they don’t deny Roma (self)-identifications. Rather, they tend to present it as unimportant for their lives, *blending* it with their self-perceptions as Czechs and occasionally emphasising the latter: *“I am Roma, but I have lived here since my childhood so my experience is normal, like Czechs have. (...) I think it is the same [to be Roma or to be Czech]”*. The same interviewed student also shows an unprompted distance to what he otherwise accepts as part of his identity, however reluctantly. When he is asked to say what distinguishes the Roma from the majority of Czechs, he refers to ‘his own’ ethnic group as ‘them’: *“They (Roma) are good at rhythmic things... dancing, singing”*. And also the Slovak report states repeatedly: ‘[The] majority of interviewed Roma parents and pupils does not consider ethnic belonging to be [an] important (positive) resource of their life. They are not in need of following ethnic traditions and moreover, they are not aware of such traditions. (...) Several boys and girls have been very reluctant to pick up some distinct Roma characteristics. They do not seem comfortable to be close into a distinct ethnic group. Important was their need to be approached individually’.

In this respect – a more relaxed attitude to an ethnic minority background and an openness to a ‘new’ national self-identification – the Danish and French findings appear to parallel the Czech or Slovak ones to a greater extent than among minority youth in Germany, Great Britain, or Sweden. Yet even the somehow analogical cases of Denmark and France require further qualification, and this will shed more light on the differences in prevailing patterns of ethnic awareness between Western and Central European countries in our sample. It is perhaps better seen in the two Community Study reports for Denmark and France: even when young second or third generation immigrants in Western European countries are less determinate with respect to their ethno-national feelings, they still tend to make a sharper distinction between collective belonging to the ethno-national ‘home’ of their parents or grandparents, and the ‘host’ countries in which they were born. In other words, our Danish and French younger respondents have manifested a *stronger sense of the ethno-national distinction* (but not separation as in the above sense) than in the Central European cases. They just have been more inclined to explicitly identify with the national community of the home country, either as an appreciation of the environment (rights, opportunities, etc.) or in more symbolic terms.

The former ('appreciative') mode of attachment to the 'new' national home has been especially prevalent among the Danish young respondents who 'all (...) strongly insist on being part of the majority society with equal rights and to some degree equal opportunities'. Thus, although 'most [Danish] students acknowledge that they are and also perceive themselves as an ethnic minority (...), the prevalent pattern is that the students are considerably more included in the Danish society' (see Danish Community Study). A typical expression of such inclusion is then captured in the following statement of an interviewed minority student: "*Well, I would say that it's better [living in Denmark] than in other countries, because even though it's not like our country, you still have rights to do all sorts of things. One has equally many rights as the "real" Danes. It's better – it's good.*" (Emphasis added)

The latter ('symbolic') mode of expressing attachment to the dominant national community, while at the same time retaining a strong sense of ethnic difference, is to be found in numerous expressions of French students, especially of the North African origin:

*"I just live with it in fact! No, I'm just fine as I am, I'm proud of my origins... If someone asks me about my origins, I just say I'm Algerian... But otherwise I was born in France. I'm Franco-Algerian. I'm of French nationality, but I'm Algerian. I think it's balanced."* (A second-generation Algerian)

*"No, I never told myself that (it would be easier to be something else). I'm proud to be Moroccan, I'm proud to be me. If I work, if I do this and this and that, I'll succeed. Even when I'll have French citizenship, I'll stay Moroccan."* (A first generation Moroccan)

*"I'm French, but also Algerian. Well, I have a French side, which is more important than the Algerian one. But I do have Algerian origins, so it's not a problem."* (Mixed parentage)

It is difficult to generalise when a subjective feeling of collective belonging is at issue. Yet the reluctance to declare Roma identity as primary or equal to the national one was already apparent from the (previous) survey data, especially among Czech respondents. The students interviewed in the Central European countries did not deny their Roma self-perceptions outright, still they often presented them as blurred by or subsidiary to their national self-identifications. Thus while the 'non-separationist' model of mixed ethnic-national identity among the Western respondents tended to take the form of an *aggregate* (as seen from previous quotations), the prevalent Central European model more readily takes the form of an *amalgam*. And this not only applies to the Czech or Slovak cases. Prototypical expressions of this kind have also been encountered among other Central European respondents: "*I am a Romanianised Roma. We have no traditions. Our family only speaks Romanian.*"

The comparative perspective on ethnic awareness among the researched youth thus indicates a *culturally established and socially reproduced habit of (self-)ethnicisation for the Western European societies (old EU member states)* to a greater extent than for the Central European societies (new EU member states). In the Western European countries in our sample the young respondents by and large took ethno-national distinctions for granted in their explicit responses and reactions. They more readily identified themselves with a particular ethnic (minority) community, although they did not always see this as the *dominant* reference point of their collective belonging. And they were more pronounced in identifying the cultural differences between various ethnic, ethno-religious or ethno-national communities. This may well be the result of a longer historical experience of these (Western European) societies with a multi-ethnic environment, especially as supported by the pervasive ethno-multicultural discourse of the past few decades. This is a legacy which the Central European Roma (and not only Roma, but the population at large) miss to a greater extent than ethnic minorities in Western Europe.

Whatever the source of this rift between Western and Central European respondents, we should not immediately jump to the conclusion that ethnicity is basically unimportant or even unknown for and among young people in the Central European states. Certainly, this is not the case for the Roma students we interviewed, either individually or in focus groups. They also feel a sense of ethnic distinctiveness, but – as indicated above – they are, on average, more hesitant to *explicitly* refer to their ethnic background as to a primary source of their collective identity and sense of belonging. Such reluctance correlates with the more widely (than among their Western European minority-counterparts) encountered unwillingness or inability of Roma children (especially in the Czech Republic and Slovakia) to reflect upon a specifically Roma ethnic culture or other distinctive ‘ethnic features’. The universalistic ethos (‘all people are the same’ – not: ‘after all the same’, simply: ‘are the same’) finds its presence among the reactions of the Central European Roma youth to a larger extent than among reactions of the youth from ethnic minorities in Western Europe. When asked about her ethnicity (Roma or Czech), one Czech student who we identified as Roma told us: *“I do not know... there is no difference for me. A man is a man, no difference”*. And such reluctance to decide has been significantly more frequent among Central European Roma than among the Western European respondents. Again, the immigrant and ethnic minority youth interviewed in the Western European countries in our sample did not deny the universalistic ethos, they just tended to put a noticeably stronger accent on their ethnic self-identifications and sense of ethnically defined collective belonging. (See above for examples of citations.)

Having said this about the difference in the degree and forms of ethnic awareness (or rather articulated sensitivity) between Western and Central European young respondents, we also should point out two interesting (and potentially important) observations. First, while the Western European respondents speak more freely about their minority ethnic belonging, they also tend to stress more often that ethnicity is employed in everyday relations as a source of jokes and teasing. The UK Community Study speaks about ‘a defiant and subversive form of ritualized banter (...) between Pakistani and Caribbean pupils’, which finds its expression in descriptions of inter-ethnic (!) everyday relations like the following: *“Yeah we are just having a laugh”* so they will say, *“oh you Black shit”*, and then you will say, *“oh shut up you Pakistani”*. And the researchers stress that ‘the repeated emphasis was on the fact that it was not to be taken seriously, *“everyone knows it is a joke”*. The Central European respondents, on the other hand, tend to downplay the importance of possible ethnic differences in everyday relations, yet in the moments when they do speak about inter-ethnic relations, they are more open about and oriented to more serious sides of inter-ethnic conflicts among peers or with the non-Roma population in general than just teasing: *“There is a skinhead in our class... Well, we have beaten him several times because he was saying all this nonsense like smelly Gypsies...he was not addressing us in particular, but was saying these things just like that.”* (Hungarian Roma pupil) or *“On a tram, all people watch us (Roma girls and boys) when we get in. It is embarrassing.”* (Czech Roma girl)

Second, it seems that for the Western European young people in our sample, ethnicity (or/and the religion often tied to it) represents a ready-made opportunity structure for an *exalted self-identity expression* (‘showing off’) to a greater extent than for their Central European counterparts. They much more readily introduce their ethnic belonging as a source of personal pride, as seen from the previous citations or as it has been observed among the Gypsy-Travellers by the UK research team, to introduce two examples of the country Community Studies. To the extent to which this is the case, among Western European respondents in particular, we can infer that this has to do with: 1) the abovementioned stronger sense of ethnic distinction (uniqueness); 2) the greater ability to identify distinctive cultural traits (defining signs) of an ethnic belonging; and 3) the individualising attitude to such belonging (cultural performance of ethnic belonging as a free choice rather than the result of social control and pressure), as explicitly observed by

the German research team (see below in this section). To make a general observation: these attributes of one's relationship to ethnicity (source of pride, sense of uniqueness, identification of ethnicity with a certain cultural habits, and culturally performed ethnicity as a free choice) distinguish – despite all nuances and internal differences – the Western European minority youth from the Central European. Put simply, while the former are more willing to exhibit their ethnic belonging and grant it a subjective importance, the latter are more inclined to blur it and deem it unimportant.

### ***Ethnic identity, ethnic culture and self-othering***

The above mentioned case of British Gypsy-Travellers points to a crucial factor at work in the observed differences in the strength of ethnic self-identification. As already suggested above, it is a regular pattern that *intensity of ethnic self-understanding positively correlates with the articulate sense of a distinct ethnic culture*, especially in cases of *separated identities*. This pattern is, for example, succinctly captured in a respondent's statement presented by the German Community Study: *“Although I am a German citizen I don't regard myself really German. My passport is German but our culture doesn't fit”*. Strict statements of cultural separation like this are rarely found among the Central European young Roma respondents, while the ideal typical cases of *aggregated identities* (more frequent among the French and Danish respondents than among others) correspond to a more situational mode of expression of ethnic distinctiveness: *“I feel French when I'm in school, when I work. When Algeria qualified [for the World Cup, probably – note added], I was Algerian 100%”*. Another example from the French Community Study may seem paradoxical, but it also spells the situationally conditioned ethno-national self-perception: *“In France we feel more Moroccan and in the home village we feel French.”*

It comes as no surprise that respondents able and willing to identify specific cultural markers of what they perceive as their own ethnic group are also generally more inclined to point out alienation from and distance to what they see as characteristic life strategies or behavioural modes of their peers representing the settled host or culturally dominant societies. And, besides the Gypsy-Travellers, such inclination is particularly salient if one's ethnicity is at the same time perceived in religious terms, which is especially the case for Muslim respondents in the Western European countries involved in the project. The Swedish Community Study recognises this pattern in one of the three models of self-perception appearing among their respondents, exemplified by the following quotation of 'a girl of second generation immigrant background from Iran (who) emphasises that her Iranian roots are very important to her and that cultural and religious activities with other Iranians are a natural part of her social life. Her experience is that the Iranian traditional values differ from the ones that characterise the Swedish society'.

*“When I am among Swedes it is like they expect me to be Swedish. (...) It is like they do not want us to be there. But I do not want to adapt the ‘Swedish behaviour’ to be accepted. I do not want to forget where I come from.”*

Since we have specifically focused on and interviewed respondents of a minority ethnic background, we have not recorded firsthand the signs of othering from the majority – although we have encountered this indirectly in some of our observations or scattered expressions of our respondents, like the one just quoted.

If the young Roma respondents say they are proud of being Roma, as in the Slovak case, they as a rule do not link this feeling to a particular cultural trait or way of life. Rather, they 'at the same time say that ethnicity is not important to them'. According to our findings, for a larger part of the Roma youth in the Central European countries (and the Czech Republic is a paradigmatic case here), if they become socialised into an environment understood as a distinct ethno-cultural world, this happens to some lesser extent and later in the life-course than in the case of their

Western European minority age-mates. Ethno-cultural self-understanding certainly is not completely absent among Roma youth in the Central European countries. In our interviews and focus groups, however, it was typically expressed either by hesitantly pointing out a particular single trait rather than a distinct set of cultural values ('Roma are good at rhythmic things... dancing, singing') or in the form of vague anticipations ('it will be expected from me to behave like Roma as I grow older'). Yet, as the following paragraphs demonstrate, there is a notable exception from this to be found in all Central European countries.

We have observed among the immigrant minority youth in the Western European countries as well as among the Roma youth in the Central European countries that their *ethnically conscious relationship to the majority populations affects and is affected by the intra-minority relations*. While in the former case this takes the form of occasional quarrels among different immigrant groups or individuals about who is less or more adaptable to the Western European conditions (see chapter on othering for more on this), in the latter case, intra-ethnic distinctions often become a salient issue of Roma self-reflections and self-perceptions. We specifically refer to the particular ethno-cultural status of the Vlach Roma (in Czech Republic, Hungary and Slovakia) or the Gabor Roma (in Romania). These two sub-ethnic groups are considered different from other Roma, as we will see in the next part of this section. They alone present themselves as the true carriers of a Roma culture, which in their eyes makes them different not only from the majority population but also – and especially – from other Roma. Although, as the Romanian Community Study shows, the Gabor Roma in Romania also manifest inclinations to adapt what they perceive as the Romanian (majority) way of life, they at the same time are more prone to stress their ethno-cultural distinctiveness among other Roma and they also find themselves under stronger pressure from their parents to retain 'the true Gypsy culture and way of life' than other Roma respondents. The following observation from the Romanian Community Study points out the exceptional ethno-cultural status of Gabor Roma quite succinctly:

*"The problem of what and who is worth following is a matter of constant thinking both for pupils and for their parents. From this point of view, the norms of Gabor communities do not make room for doubts. However, as we have seen, when young individuals are exposed to outer stimuli, they choose eventually models given by the outer world and not by their family. For the Gabor-Gipsy families from Forest district the model of extended family, keeping traditions, and distance from the majority population represent the foundation of identity strategies. They try to keep distance not only from other ethnic groups but also from other Roma groups. Ethnic identity for them is very self-conscious; they call themselves Gabor-Gipsy and not simply Roma. During interviews and discussions, no one used the term Roma. Instead, they use the term Gipsy. Their identity model built on their own particular traditions cannot accommodate outer systems of norms used by majority society. Therefore, education does not occupy a prominent place in their life."*

The position of Vlach Roma in the other Central European countries is very similar. What is important is that the differences between Roma and Gabor (Vlach) Roma are especially assumed and perceived by and within the Roma communities alone and much less so from the outside by the non-Roma majority populations. As the Czech Community Study stresses, 'this distinction [between Vlach Roma and other Roma] is largely invisible and unknown to the non-Roma population, but it plays an important role among Roma themselves (...)'. And further, 'it is especially the Olah-Roma community that keeps a methodical distance to other Roma (e.g., preventing inter-marriage, etc.), conceiving themselves as the real Roma people (by respecting the Roma King, for example) – thus adding another layer to the intra-ethnic identity distinctions in terms of ethnic authenticity'. It often is in relation to Gabor or Vlach Roma that other Roma respondents stress their affinity to the majority and tend to downplay ethno-cultural distinctions

between themselves and non-Roma Czechs, Hungarians, Romanians and Slovaks respectively.<sup>18</sup> And it is in this context that their heightened sensitivity to othering from (signs of distance received by the non-Roma population) can be better understood.

The above mentioned differing trends in attitudes to the ethnic background between respondents in the old and the Central European states seem to correlate with the value attached to particular ethnic representations. In general, and not surprisingly, interviewed students in the Western European countries (who were more ready to accept their distinct ethnic affiliation as an important fact of their lives) also more frequently and intensively presented their ethnic origin as a source of pride – including those who, in their words, sought a fuller integration into the host society. On the other side, students who tended to downplay the importance of ethnic affiliation for their lives and life prospects (especially in the Central European states), when they got to reflecting on ethnic differences, they were frequently inclined to adopt a negative image of their (Roma) ethnic group – although often with reservations. The cases of expressing Roma identity as a source of pride were quite rare in each of the Central European countries where our research was conducted.

There were two regularities apparent in the Roma respondents' ethnic self-evaluation: 1. the above mentioned reservations towards and against generalisations in matters of ethnic-based differences (individual qualities and achievements are what matters); and 2. identifying the source of a negative image of Roma ethnicity as a whole in specific life styles of certain Roma ethnic sub-groups (the above mentioned Gabor and Vlach Roma). The internal divisions among Roma were a salient issue in many interviews and focus groups conducted in these Central European countries, and perception of these divisions among our respondents significantly shaped their attitudes towards their own ethnic background. As already discussed in the preceding sections, while respondents affiliated to the Vlach or Gabor branches of Roma communities often presented themselves as the true carriers of the traditional Roma culture and heritage (and therefore of Roma ethnicity as such), the other respondents identified as Roma kept by and large a distance towards both Vlach and Gabor Roma groups and (to the extent described above) also to the Roma ethnicity: *"We are normal, but the Vlach Gypsies are different from us. They relate to everything differently, they talk differently, they are self-conceited. (...) They cannot have fun without fighting and making a big row. They act as if they were kings. We are not like that, we know how to have fun and to party, we can talk to any people, and we don't care whether the person is Hungarian or not Hungarian."* (Hungarian Roma student)

The Czech Community Study provides a more general observation pointing in the same direction: 'This [inter-ethnic distinction] bears moral implications for the Roma actors themselves. In the eyes of many non-Vlach Roma, the Vlach ones are the 'bad' (sometimes related to organised crime, and getting undeservedly rich this way) or the 'uncivilised' ones who discredit Roma people at large in the eyes of the majority. Then also some teachers and teaching assistants tend to take this distinction for granted, or they at least incorporate it into their expectations towards pupils from Olah-Roma families. And they may feel re-assured in this by the relatively frequent tensions and quarrels between non-Olah and Olah Roma kids in schools'.

Here is a typical excerpt from an interview with a Czech Roma female student, which illustrates not only the status of Vlach Roma among other Roma, but also some more general features of the model of amalgamated identities:

*"Interviewer: -Do you have more friends among Roma or non-Roma children?"*

*Person 1: -I think it's the same.*

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<sup>18</sup> We will return to this issue in the following part of this section.

*Interviewer: -And do you see any differences among Roma?*

*Person 1: - Like some of them are worse and some are not.*

*Interviewer: -In what respect, worse?*

*Person 1: -Like in how they behave, they behave more badly than others.*

*Interviewer: -And do you distinguish some Roma groups, kids used to say Vlachs...*

*Person 1: -Ye*

*Interviewer: -Can you distinguish that, do you recognise?*

*Person 1: -“Ye”*

*Interviewer: - According to their behaviour?*

*Person 1: - According to their behaviour, by how they speak, dress, and things like this.*

*Interviewer:- And among the Vlachs, do you have any friends among them?*

*Person 1: - Not that.*

*Interviewer: - In what are the Roma different than other people?*

*Person 1: - In nothing.*

*Interviewer: - Some say they are musically gifted.*

*Person 1: -They are.*

*Interviewer: - And anything else?*

*Person 1: -Perhaps maybe in dancing and stuff like this.”*

### ***Ethnicity and patterns of family relations***<sup>19</sup>

It is especially among the immigrant families (in the old EU member states) that we have observed the following pattern: *students who express a strong adherence to their ‘original’ ethno-cultural (religious, national, racial) belonging tend to explicitly portray their parents as models for their future personal developments to a correspondingly greater extent.* Here is the typical expression of this kind, coming from a Kurdish boy of the first generation immigrant background, whose family practices Islam and now is settled in Sweden: ‘I want to go the same way as my parents, become religious when I get older. My father was not very religious in my age but now he is. It almost happens automatically when you get older’. In our identity models scheme, we attach expressions like this to the model of separated identities, and we would hardly find such strong statements of the desire to follow parents’ worlds and ways of life among the two other model types. This, however, by no means is to say that respondents whose declared positions do not fall under the category of separated identities feel less respect for their parents. As a rule, they appreciate their life efforts and care, sometimes express pity for their lives and failures, but they do not explicitly hold them as strict models for their own lives.

Although the above quotation also indicates a certain sense of inevitability in the life-course, even most of those respondents who want to observe their original ethnic-religious values and ways of life say this is their own *free choice*, not enforced by their families. Or, as the German report suggests, this may well be a strategy of protecting their families and ethno-religious

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<sup>19</sup> Here we only focus upon one particular type of regularity observed among our respondents, which is directly related to the question of identity models. The role of the family environment – as well as the roles of school, neighbourhood and larger national and international environment – is discussed in general and in detail in other sections of this essay.

communities from the reputation of being too oppressive towards their own members, restricting their life choices and forcing them to follow a particular ('their own') ethno-religious tradition. At the same time, however, many young respondents (especially those of Muslim origin) who expressed their intention to follow their parents' ways of life and stay firmly embedded in their (parents') ethno-religious traditional world support this position by referring to this ethno-religious tradition as strongly *family-oriented*. And this, in the views of many of them, makes their 'original' social-cultural milieu different from the wider environment of host societies. In general – and we can find this not only among Muslim respondents, but to a higher extent than among other researched minorities also among the UK Gypsy-Travellers and the Gabor and Vlach Roma in Central Europe – strongly declared adherence to family values pertains to the model of separated identities, and it is a frequently given criterion of the felt rift between one's own ethno-cultural world and the world of the (Westernised or individualised) majority.<sup>20</sup>

On the other hand, *those young people who show a stronger willingness or desire to become culturally and socially integrated into the host societies and somehow loosen their 'original' ethnic ties are also less prone to present their own parents as life-models, as they are more hesitant to acknowledge that they have any role- and/or identity-models to follow*. The tendency of these respondents to avoid pointing out a definite role- or identity-model in general is one reason we cannot speak about a generational revolt against parents in the immigrant families in this latter case. Another reason is that we have no evidence that parents of these respondents would object to the efforts of their children to 'acting white' for being integrated. In fact, the parents may well support their children in this respect or even strive for the same, that is, for a deeper social and also cultural integration into the host societies. One of the most common paths toward fuller integration is seen in obtaining a better education than that of their parents: "*My parents advise me to study at some good secondary school. But they say it is my decision*" (Czech Roma female respondent). And it is among the immigrant communities in the Western European countries that visions of a more general social-cultural integration complement their picture of the future:

*"For us as adults, there are not a lot of possibilities because we came here as adults. But I think that our children have possibilities. Our children will not be like us. Our children will be different. And in a way that is good capital to the Danish society; that they become a part of society. I mean they have a more Danish mentality and culture than us. So they have options and will become a resource for society."* (Afghan father)

Yet even the respondents open to social-cultural integration often express their will to stay close to their families and relatives in the future. But this intention is less driven (legitimised in the interviews and focus group discussions) by an explicit will to remain faithful to 'their original' ethno-religious traditions and more by the fear of failure in the attempts at a fuller integration and by the need to still have a safe social recourse at disposal. While these respondents express their will to be more independent of their original families as well as their ethno-religious communities and traditions, they see it as realistic that this environment may well remain to them as the only social source of ontological security. Those who seek a fuller integration into the host societies may not introduce their parents as role- and/or identity-models, yet they by and

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<sup>20</sup> As other sections of this essay clearly indicate, a notable difference in this respect is to be found between especially Muslim young men and women who feel that social control and pressure to conform to traditional ethno-religious norm and values is more strongly applied to Muslim women than Muslim men. The Swedish Community Study, for example, observes that "*among the girls the most common view is an experience of a closer belonging to those with the same family characteristics, values and rules from home. They must not necessarily originate from the same country. However, the girls express that those who share the Muslim religious affiliation often have similar home situations in how parents raise them. Among the boys the ethnic origin seems to be of more importance in relating to peers (...)*".



large show *respect* to their parents' 'original' ethno-religious or ethno-national cultures. The general observation of the Danish research team is typical in this respect: 'Although most of the ethnic minority students are born in Denmark, they also talk about their parents' birthplace with passion and feelings of belonging. They are however (...) culturally integrated in the sense of being able to operate with some sort of double and ethnic mixed identities. When they describe, how they differ from ethnic Danish students, they emphasize how certain kind of difference, e.g. linguistic barriers, does not change the fact of experiences that they are also part of the Danish society.'

## IDENTITY STRATEGIES

Our research took place in both the western and the eastern parts of Europe, in countries differing in their historical past, social organization and school system, among students attending various types of schools selected for the purposes of investigation, while the ethnic minority youth in the centre of the research also come from a wide variety of national/ethnic backgrounds. Therefore, our analysis is focused on certain shared characteristics or common features that, in connection with minority identity, delineate potential models of strategies concerning the future. The discussion that follows thus examines the ways in which the future visions of students reflect their present situation, the responses they give to stereotype-threats, stigmatising opinions and discriminative practices that have more or less become conscious by adolescence, and the reactions and strategies they formulate in the face of such effects playing a decisive role in the formation of their personalities and sense of being different. In short, it is about their future expectations and aspirations.

### *Visions and strategies concerning the future*

Beyond cross-country comparisons, the rich empirical material accumulated during our research enables the specification of some basic types as far as the conditions and attitudes related to the future expectations of adolescents are concerned. Considering the key dimensions relevant for our research, the main criteria in determining these basic types include the maintenance, as opposed to the trivialization or negligence, of ethnic difference, on the one hand, and the involuntary or non-conscious, in contrast with the voluntary or conscious, assumption of ethnic belonging, on the other. Along these two axes, the resulting typology forms a two-by-two diagram in which four basic types can be placed as shown in the following figure.

### *Significance of ethnicity in future visions*

	Maintenance of difference	Trivialization of difference
Involuntary / Non-conscious	Ghetto-life	Underclass
Voluntary / Conscious	Ethnic pride	Integrationism / Cosmopolitanism

In naming the individual types, the most characteristic 'outputs' or perspectives provided by of specific configurations were taken into account to facilitate categorization by reference to certain key phrases known from professional literature. In reality though, each type contains a variety of subtypes that may reveal to a smaller or greater extent the characteristic output of the type in question, functioning as an 'ordering principle' of the type and its scholarly perception, while the broad category remains over too general and occasionally a little far-fetched when particular manifestations are considered. In order to underline their key features without losing a sense of

diversity and particularity, the types are illustrated by quotes drawn from the interviews with ethnic minority students of our international sample.

In the following, each type regarding the effects of ethnicity, depending on its power and significance in the particular context as well as its ascribed or self-ascribed nature, is described in detail, by reference to background factors and their observed results.

### **“Ghetto-life”**

When the life of a person is determined by the forced separation from majority society, and ethnicity as a permanent marker plays a major role in his or her social exclusion, he or she will most probably envision a future in which this ‘ghetto-life’ continues unchanged, as virtually no opportunities of breaking out appear on the horizon.

This type delineates from the responses of students living in rather poor, segregated neighbourhoods (‘socially excluded localities’). They usually come from extended families living nearby and have many siblings. The parents tend to be undereducated and occupy weak position in the labour market, often being more or less permanently unemployed.

It is partly because of socially deprived situation that religion and culture do not play an important role in the (self-) identification of these people. Occasionally though language is significant, mostly as a marker of intra-group distinctions, i.e. used to differentiate among the people forcefully grouped together in the ghetto. The same applies for local schools: while minority students represent the majority there, no efforts are made to thematise ethno-cultural differences.

The characteristic social determinations and cultural configurations suggest that this category is filled, first of all, by Roma from Post-socialist states.

Given the general destitution of the area, the district schools where these children belong are usually of a poor quality, which, together with the lack of any realistic perspectives held by the students, determine low school performance and provide strongly limited opportunities of further education. Students, if at all, continue their studies in nearby vocational schools, typically enforcing strong gender distinctions. Thus girls may be trained as hairdressers, shop assistants or kitchen employees, while boys may become mechanics or painters. Such kind of education ensures that these people will, at best, remain in low-paid blue-collar jobs for their entire lives. *“If you are Roma and you are a bit brown, you can hardly find a job”*, said one of the Roma respondents in the Czech sample expressing the lack of opportunities in education and employment. When, in turn, ethno-racial discrimination has less of a grasp on individual expectations, the future seems to be unpredictable, impossible to control by will: *“If I finish school and find a job then it will be good enough. It might be better, or might be worse... One can’t really plan for the future,”* said a Hungarian Roma teenager.

The often miserable circumstances in the ghetto can, in themselves, explain why those born there relinquish any hopes for a better future. Nonetheless, the generally experienced hostility on the part of the larger society and the psychological effects of (the fear from) discrimination and racism, should not be neglected. Thus even if, at an early age, the children of the ghetto, like their age group in general, freely entertain hopes for a full adult life, they soon understand how futile such day-dreaming is. The loss is made even greater by understanding that their fate is tied to that of their community and, *vice versa*, they are not only unable to change their own lives but also the future of the community. The acknowledgment of this sad state of affairs is expressed by a 15-year-old Roma girl from the Romanian sample who, describing the life in the ghetto, explains how she was giving up on her future ambitions and adopted to the actual circumstances:

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

Given the perceived lack of future opportunities and/or realistic perspectives, a kind of resigned passivity and lack of future ambitions characterize these students. Such defeatism originates in the strong stereotypes held against the group, grounded in the visible signs of ethnic difference, which become interiorised as auto-stereotypes that function as self-fulfilling prophecies. In other words, these children tend to view themselves with the eyes of the majority and conclude that, since they would fail in whatever they try to do, they had better not even try. *“I think non-Roma are different because they want to achieve some goals. Roma do not ... they are often lazy, without goals,”* explained a Czech Roma.

By means of compensation, ghetto communities often seek to heighten their self-esteem by devaluing other groups of a similar social standing and/or ethnic background. Thus in case they cherish any particular sense of difference as a collective trait, this is usually based on inter-group stereotypes and only rarely express any feelings of ethnic pride. *“We are normal, but the Vlach Gypsies are different from us. They relate to everything differently, they talk differently, they are self-conceited. ... they can not have fun without fighting and making a big row. They act as if they were kings. We are not like that, we know how to have fun and do party, we can talk to any people, and we don't care whether the person is Hungarian or not Hungarian.”* (Hungarian “Romungro” boy)

The other source of self-differentiation is represented by the frequent conflicts with society. Ghetto communities have very scarce inter-ethnic relations and even less connections with the majority. This state of affairs is clearly signalled by the physical distance referring to residential or other type of (e.g. educational) segregation. Such coercive means of holding a community together result in a kind of weak self-determination that fails to produce positive self-esteem.

As a consequence of all these factors, ghetto youth usually come to the conclusion that, given the lack of opportunities to initiate any changes, they had better stay in the neighbourhood that they are familiar with, and continue with the way of life experienced in the family. They want to follow the marital rules and gender determinations in career choices accustomed in the family. Thus such visions of the future, again, reinforce community ties: *“we hold together more”, “Gypsies and Gypsies are more attached... they do not look down on one another”*, said a Hungarian Roma.

Even though the resulting group cohesion is a product of mostly negative conditions, it may become suitable to function as a supportive network and, particularly owing to family traditions, as a source of orientation for the individual, which points to the potential development of ethnic pride. In other words, by way of making a virtue of necessity, the possibility of positive identity appears on the horizon.

### **“Ethnic (or religious) pride”**

When, in turn, separation from the majority society occurs on a voluntary basis, the perspective of a relatively enclosed community correlates with ethnic/religious consciousness and differences on such basis are filled with (mostly) positive contents.

Students in this group, just like those belonging to the previous category, come from segregated neighbourhoods, though not necessarily, or even typically, characterized by bad housing conditions. Rather, the residents of such ethnic or religious colonies are voluntarily and proudly separating from the outside world. *“I am proud to be a Roma... they like traditions, we like traditions, Romanians do not have so many traditions,”* as a Roma girl from Romania has put it.

However, besides scarce examples of relatively wealthy and self-conscious Roma (like the Gabor Gypsies living in Romania), Roma are less represented in this group than in the previous one. In turn, this category is filled especially by Muslims living in urban neighbourhoods, together with other people of similar origin and religious background. Such places are characterized by a particularly strong sense of solidarity and group cohesion, that is manifested in a variety of forms starting from family businesses, through peer networks, to broader, mostly religiously based communities. National, ethnic or religious origins and cultural background are often seen as having greater significance than citizenship, however, it is important that people belonging to this category are much less vulnerable and defenceless than those living in ethnic ghettos.

As for family patterns, the great number of children is also frequent in this category but, as opposed to the case of “ghetto” inhabitants where family planning is often less conscious, high fertility here tends to express accommodation to ethno-cultural or religious norms. The family also represents an important economic unit as well a social, cultural and emotional resource. It may function as the basis of family enterprises (run by the smaller or nuclear family), or provide a supportive network (formed by the more extended family). The parents – characteristically first or second generation immigrants or recently urbanized Roma who have managed to attain higher social standing and better material circumstances – often serve as models for their children in their career choices, further education and lifestyle. It is also typical from these parents to encourage their children in fully exploiting their opportunities in order to create a better life for themselves, underlining the value of education that they might not have been able to attain or utilize effectively (in case the degree obtained in the country of origin was not accepted in the host country).

Children born into such circumstances usually attend schools dominated by the social majority, yet sensitive to ethnicity and cultural difference, or, if available, schools run by the minority. Education has great significance as the source of individual success and upward mobility in the family as well as in the students’ mind, and any means, notably positive discrimination, are seen as providing important opportunities to that end. Further education is generally realized at the instigation of, and according to the patterns provided by, the parents, in conformation to their high expectancies interiorised by the children. *“The government says that there are many advantages for Roma.. The advantages are the scholarships for Roma. I don’t know yet if I want to go to university... I need my parents and friends help to do that,”* claimed a Roma boy from Romania.

The proud assumption of ethnic or religious identity often involves active connections with the country of origin. The resulting positive ethnic identity is heightened when the multicultural environment in the host country allows for complex attachments. *“I live in Denmark and I’m happy for it... but I’m also still happy for where I’m coming from, like, I like the religion, I believe in Islam [she is wearing a headscarf] and the culture we have at home,”* described her multiple ties a Palestinian girl from Lebanon living in Denmark. Ethnic traditions are also seen

as protective: *“A girl from the Comores has a lot of prohibitions. When you’re young you ask yourself why all these rules, but when you really think about it, it’s good for us, it preserves us, it keeps us from doing a lot of stupid things. Our customs are great.”*, as a Comorian girl living in France has put it. The importance of religious belonging often overcomes the significance of national and ethnic ties in terms of providing orientation in life as well as in the formation of community: *“...for us, the Muslim community, religion plays a very important role... If he simply respects religion, it means that between the ages of 10 and 12 he will know the way to the Mosque. So if he knows that way, there won’t be any problem. Just with his lessons at the Mosque, leaving the national education aside, we’ll see that that child will be well educated compared to a child who doesn’t even know about religion... My friends are Muslim like me, an Algerian, a Tunisian, a Mauritanian, it’s mixed. That’s why I say the country doesn’t count,”* explained a Moroccan boy from the French sample.

Group cohesion, the conscious adoption of traditions, the determining power of religion and related cultural practices – all these factors affect future employment, the establishment of a family, forms of marriage (e.g. the acceptance of arranged marriage), the number of children, in short, the conception and realization of the ‘good way of life’. As a Turkish boy, living in Germany affirmed: *“It is important to know Koran very well to educate our children in the right way. It is important to marry within the same religion.”* Although ethno-national background may also be important in determining future aspirations, the cohesive power of religion seems to be especially strong: *“When I get married, it is very important that she has Kurdish background and my parents want that as well. Then we will share everything, religion, culture... I don’t want to break that chain... I want to live like my parents do and then it is important to have a Kurdish wife”,* said a Kurdish boy from Sweden. Or: *“Never ever would I marry someone who isn’t Muslim. Never in the world”,* affirmed a Moroccan student living in France.

The ideological background mediated mainly by the family is accompanied by its practical value in providing a security network: *“I am not afraid that I might be unemployed since my father has a big company. But I would prefer to be independent and to have some qualification.”*, said a Turkish boy from Germany. *“I often help my father in the butcher business. All our family helps him. And he gives work to all of us,”* reported a Turkish-German boy. Apart from the family, the broader community can provide the same sense of security: *“Sometimes when I meet other Moroccans, I feel protected in some way even though I don’t really know the person,”* said a Moroccan student living in Denmark.

Well established and strong ethnic communities are likely to develop local identities that, while based on ethnicity and religion, express detachment from the country of origin and relatively stronger links with the community and place of residence in the host country. This is often the case with second generation immigrants. Illustrative examples are provided by Turkish students from Kreuzberg in Berlin: *“In Turkey I am a foreigner. They don’t regard me as an ordinary Turkish boy like themselves but as someone from Germany. Therefore they regard me as rich and special.”* Or: *“My parents will definitely return to Turkey when I am grown up and have my own family. But I will stay here. I feel bored in Turkey. Here in Kreuzberg is my home.”* Or: *“I never felt discriminated and I never was called a ‘Scheiß-Türke’ or something like this. Here in Kreuzberg I was always part of a majority and not of a minority.”* Occasionally, the perspective of living abroad, alone, is regarded as temporary, for instance, when someone wants to attain professional expertise in order to serve his or her people upon returning to the country of origin: *“I want to be admitted to places reserved for Roma... I want to become a lawyer... or Romani language professor. I would like to be a professor,”* said a Roma boy from Romania. Apart from the moral choice affected by the neediness of one’s people, the sheer love for the place of birth, and hence positive identity and ethnic pride, may also determine, in itself, future ambitions to return back home one day: *“When you think of how it’s like in Morocco – summer all year long – I sometimes think to myself: I want to go back.”* *“We are proud to be Berber, we are proud to*

*be Moroccan,*” exclaimed a Moroccan student living in Denmark who, after finishing business high school and working a couple of years as a policewoman, plans to go back to Morocco and open a business of her own, like store or restaurant there.

It is worth noting that volunteering is not the same as consciousness regarding the adoption of group identity. What is more, in interpreting the former attribute characterizing the minorities in this category, the moment of coercion should not be dismissed. This is basically because of the fact that power as such always represents an important element in the formation of social groups. Thus even though (the chance of) a self-conscious assumption of group identity provides far more autonomy and opportunities than the situation characterized by virtual enclosure in an ethnic ghetto, coercion, i.e. the curtailing of individual freedom is not at all absent in this case, either. The workings of power and the effects of coercion can be detected in two main forms or manifestations in the case of the category labelled ‘ethnic pride’ after its most important ‘product’: as an antecedent and as an ever-present element of group construction.

While the maintenance of distance from other groups and particularly from the majority represents a strong aspiration, both at the level of individuals and of the community, it may look back on a past full of coercion and characterized by a lack of opportunities. However, when for some reason, due to legislative and policy changes and/or economic and social transformations affecting the group in a positive way, the group in question has become more established and accepted since, it may have attained a kind of positive self-consciousness. What is regarded as ‘ethnic pride’ in this context is a historically developed phenomenon, a kind of reaction to previous exclusion and, at the same time, a motor of emancipation, while having little to do with immanent group characteristics.

Nevertheless, it can be affirmed that members of groups organized around some traditional (religious or ethnic) core values are especially prone to develop a sense of pride and hold together as a community on that basis. Thus voluntary choice is an important element of ethnic/religious belonging in such cases, inasmuch as membership can be regarded as principally based on self-ascription, while the classifying attempts coming from outside, especially from the social majority, are mitigated or neglected. However, the resulting group cohesion necessarily entails the development of intra-group hierarchies, structures of power and dominance, and even the use of internal policing to keep members within the community and discipline them according to its norms. In this sense, as far as communities as structured groups are concerned, the moment of coercion seems to be irreducible in any case.

### **‘Underclass’**

When forced separation from the majority society occurs primarily on social grounds, ethnicity and cultural identity is pushed to the background as compared with social and residential marginalisation. Without sharing the assumption that people living in such circumstances are lacking culture or their culture is characterized by lack (cf. the thesis of the ‘culture of poverty’ developed by Oscar Lewis (1959) as a typical feature of urban slum dwellers), it can be acknowledged that, due to certain administrative and policy measures, as well as affected by social pressures and cultural projections, this kind of marginalized collectivities are driven virtually below the social hierarchy and are thus seen as forming an “underclass”.

Given the strong marginalisation, entailing struggle for scarce resources in a social space that is characterized, to a great extent, by the extra-legal status of its inhabitants, group cohesion is usually weak in communities belonging to this category. Nevertheless, underclass background is characterized by some level of integration: the mixed residential areas, with several kinds of minorities and marginalized segments of the majority society living together, develop some kind of internal structure and mechanisms of competition and cooperation.

This type of excluded localities are typically urban neighbourhoods, in the outskirts of cities or in deprived inner city districts, that are stigmatised just like ethnic ghettos, though not by reference to ethnic stereotypes but based on assumptions about, and aversion from, poverty, low social status, destitute residential areas and marginal lifestyle. Examples to this situation can be found, primarily, in the French, British and, to a lesser degree, Danish and Swedish samples, collected in urban areas with a high rate of immigrants. Some mixed Roma and non-Roma neighbourhoods in deteriorated and economically collapsed Central and Eastern European cities, where the common denominator of inhabitants is deep poverty and social exclusion, also fit this paradigm.

It is mainly because of their deprived situation that families in this category tend to be quite complex, with a variety of possible formations: mixed families, single parents, parents living in polygamous relationships, adoptive parents, relatives taking care of the children, etc. The chaotic background of children virtually predestines them to low school performance and strongly limited perspectives of further education. This problem is only intensified by the schools where the rate of minorities is much higher than the national average, while efforts of thematising cultural or ethnic difference are absent or ineffective.

Children are often at a loss as how to identify themselves – but not because of multiple attachments, as in the case of those categorized under the label ‘ethnic pride’ but precisely due to multiple exclusion and the lack of positive ties. *“When the Danes look at me, they see a perker (which translates as nigger). When the perkers look at me, this was more when I was younger, they would call me a Dane... It has a big influence on how I'm looked upon and what expectation I have to live up to. Most people look at me like I'm something else than I am,”* complained a Somali boy. While self-identity remains blurred, inter-ethnic differences easily become stereotyped, grounded on prejudices expressing hostility, ignorance, and social distance. The image of black boys was described by our respondent – a girl with mixed ethnic background from the UK sample - as follows: *“He sells drugs, he uses knives and guns, he is not a very nice person, be scared of that person, you will get your phone robbed, he is a woman beater, he is a man slag, he cheats on his girlfriends’. That is the typical Black guy.”* A black girl, in turn, is typically viewed like this: *“She’s a bitch, she’s right hard, she’ll bang you, don’t mess with her’. Do you know what I mean? Do you know how many times that has happened to me? It’s unbelievable.”* The same respondent also described the image of Asians: *“He’s a suicide bomber, he’s from the Taliban.”*

Yet, to some extent, inter-ethnic relationships do exist within the local communities, involving the suspension of prejudices:

*“It’s not that girls say they won’t go out with us because we are Malian or other, it’s because some girls have their styles. There are girls that we call ‘black guys’ chicks’ for example, because they only go out with blacks, and there are girls who don’t and only go out with Arabs, that’s all. It’s the same with guys, there are ‘black chicks’ guys’ and ‘Arab chicks’ guys’ only. And there it is. It’s not racism, it’s a question of taste. After that it’s true that Saint Denis is a city where there are only people who hate girls who like blacks. Because there are girls who say they prefer blacks to Arabs. They say it’s because blacks are more tender and all that, and that Arabs are violent and all. Then people go on and say: Yeah, you like blacks because this and that. Then it’s true sometimes you hear ‘dirty nigger’, ‘dirty Arab’, but that’s just making fun, it’s just teasing, ‘cause we get along. It’s just humour. It’s the way people laugh together in Saint Denis. It’s precisely in Saint Denis... I don’t know if you’ve noticed... but in each neighbourhood there’s a black and an Arab who hang out together,”* – this is how a Malian boy described the nuances of inter-ethnic connections in a French “banlieue”.

The future vision of students in this group reveals, in general, that, as opposed to ethnicity, social standing is much more determining in their lives. However, given the awareness of the lack of opportunities in education and employment, they show similarities with ghetto inhabitants, including occasional ambitions, fuelled by specific personality traits, to break out from their situation. Our Kurdish respondents in Denmark have provided some illustrative examples:

*“Education to me is important because I do not want to end up as most of the other Kurds. I have tried to work in my father’s shop, they work twelve hours a day. It’s hard. I do not want to end up as them. It’s not because I have anything against it – they do not have any other possibilities, but when one then gets the chance to get an education, why not then go for it? You know Kurds, if you have an education as a Kurd, then the other Kurds also look upon you in a different way than if you only have a pizzeria – okay, he is smart that guy, he wants to do something.” “I have to earn a living for the rest of my life and I don’t want to do it by working in a supermarket. So education is more...you have to get one.” “I don’t want to work in a supermarket [later on in life]. I can do that now, whilst I’m in elementary school or in high school, when I still don’t have an education. But why do it if I can get an education instead? I want to be something.” “It’s my life. I have to live it so I have to be the one to make the decisions. If they [her parents] have something to say, they can say it. But if I don’t like what they think, it’s my choice.”*

Thus, while future visions allow for some ambitions towards emancipation, these are strongly limited by the awareness of stigmatisation, exclusion and discrimination based on visible traits, like skin colour. *“I feel like an Eritrean because I look like one. It is very obvious with my dark skin and dark eyes. If I meet someone in the street, they don’t look at me like a Swede, they think I am an African or an Eritrean. Therefore I feel like an Eritrean. ...I want to move to another country because I don’t think my opportunities are that many here. For instance, my brother is an educated machine engineer but gets no job and has to work in the subway. The same with my father. When I look at my family, I see how it works here.”*

The lack of opportunities and the background reasons, that is, poverty and stigmatised ethnicity together, experienced as a source of shame and embarrassment, lead to stereotype threats, low self-esteem and self-hatred. *“Sometimes, I think that the others are afraid of Roma people.”* And: *“Czech people sometimes slander them [Roma people]. It is because all of them [Czechs] think they [Roma people] are the same and do the same things, that they steal, that they are criminals,”* said our Roma respondents from selected Central European countries.

When it is feasible, getting away to somewhere else, like a better place within the same country, is considered: *“Of course, I will have a better job and live in a different area. In a big house, where the Swedes live. I would never let my children grow up in this area. I know how the atmosphere can be here,”* accounted for his plans a Kurdish boy from Sweden. Occasionally, emigration to a third country is also regarded as an option, as revealed by some of our Roma respondents, as well as the Ethiopian girl who, feeling comfortable in South Harbour where almost everyone has a minority ethnic background and where she often meets relatives when visiting with her family, intends to move there on the longer run and establish a family there: *“I want to choose a partner myself, based on personality. I think my family here would understand it and accept after a while. But my relatives in Ethiopia would be very contradictory. They think that white people are bad people...”* Importantly, neither the girl, nor her family feel like joining any Ethiopian cultural or religious activities when visiting relatives in South Harbour. The same girl also entertains fantasies about returning to the country of origin that she does not even know: *“I have seen so much in Sweden, I want to get to know another part of the world. But I don’t know yet, maybe Ethiopia.”* Finally, the perspective of cosmopolitanism may also appear



on the horizon, although such ambitions are not as articulated as in the case of our forth category (described below). Instead of principles and personal convictions, the desire to do away with national or ethnic origins arises from some kind of disillusionment, and actual experiences and practical considerations play a greater role in such a decision than principles derived from some post-modern ideologies. As a Tunisian girl living in France admitted: *“Personally I’m not too inspired by my origins. Some call me the corrupted girl... I may have Maghrebian origins, but I’m more often with blacks or people of colour, than with Arabs... When I came back from Tunisia, at the beginning I was really into religion. And now I’ve put that aside, because I noticed that if you get into religion too young you don’t live... I would never wear the veil, I’m against that. I’m for putting it in religion, but not before, because it would prevent me from doing lots of things.”*

In sum, as for the identities of the members in this group, they are usually mixed or hybrid, and effectively situational, what is more, reactive in character, and generally negative as a source of self-esteem. As a consequence, the future visions of students in this category are full of uncertainties and anxieties, though – mainly owing to their young age – some way out is also envisioned by them. However, breaking out is mainly thought of being realized by fleeing from actual circumstances and, instead of clear-cut and viable plans, such ambitions seem to add up to no more than sheer escapism.

### **‘Acting white’ for integration / ‘Cosmopolitanism’**

The forth category of our respondents is represented by students whose lives are not determined either by poverty or by ethnicity because their ancestry has managed to break out from ethnic ghettos or slums. They usually come from well-off middle-class families and neighbourhoods, and their parents have better education than of those in the three other groups. These conditions obviously do not preclude the possibility of cherishing ethno-cultural traditions and commitment to one’s own ethnic group. However, certain contextual features as well as personal characteristics may induce, instead, a wish to integrate into the social majority or, alternatively, to get rid of any ethnic or national ties and belong, instead, to some more abstract, supranational community. The two alternatives, of course, are quite different, nevertheless, turning away from one’s own ethnic community, accompanied by the desire to melt into another, usually larger one are common features, just like the basic sociological characteristics shared by those belonging in this group.

The typical candidates to be classified in this category are second-generation immigrants coming from families that had a relatively high social status in the country of origin, and are able to manage more or less independently in the new place, without the need to heavily rely on ethnic networks. The other kind of members of this group are represented by the descendants of Roma parents who have managed themselves to obtain a better social standing and higher respect, yet they are afraid such achievements are unstable and a lot depends on conformity to majority values.

The parents in such families, as a rule, while having good education and/or business experiences, are able to attain only a low social status (in the host country, in the case of immigrants, or among the majority, in the case of Roma), yet they remain positive about the value of education. For instance: *Samia’s father studied philosophy in Lebanon, however, his degree was not validated in Germany. Thus he had to take a variety of menial jobs, like painting, construction work and employment in factories. Samia plans to stay in Germany where she already has a lot of friends and where she wants to become successful. She accepts it as her new home, without forgetting about her real homeland, Palestine. Emotionally, she does not care about her German citizenship; instead, she is concerned if Germans would accept her as one of them.* The goals of children, often set by the parents, involve further education in

demanding professions characterising the host country (to become, for example pilot, IT specialist, lawyer, or doctor) and having a decent family. *“I would just like to have a normal life, where you have a job and a home and feel well. [Goals?] I think the ideal family, as it is completely ordinary, maybe two children, like completely normal,”* said an Afghan student from Denmark.

Children born in such families attend majority-dominated schools that do not select among students based on ethnicity. Thus when distinctions are made, these are not effected by institutional practices but exercised by peers. The attitudes of concerned institutions thus reflect the aspirations of the members in the fourth category, standing in the trivialization of ethnic differences and the neglect of religious background, or the outright rejection of any attachments whatsoever. Severing any ties, in turn, may be motivated by a desire for conformity as well as informed by a kind of modernist, European way of thinking.

The future plans of children also suggest that they have turned away from their original community that, for that matter, may be completely virtual in case they were already born in the country of immigration or if the family has already given up on its roots. The refusal of traditions typically arises from pragmatic considerations: *“I don’t want to live in South Harbour in the future. I want to find an area with many Swedes. It is important that my children learn the Swedish language well, and people speaking good Swedish are really lacking in South Harbour,”* explained an Ethiopian girl whose family has immigrated to Sweden. Talking about his marriage plans, a Turkish-German boy said: *“She should know German, otherwise she can’t support our children in an appropriate manner.”* However, the rejection of ethnicity as an over too significant marker may be grounded in principles, too. A student who would like to become a psychoanalyst and travel and live in different countries expressed his thoughts as follows:

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

The downplaying of ethnicity helps in breaking down walls and establishing group solidarity based on other values, more responsive to actual personal experiences and needs. For instance: *“It [i.e. ethnic background] doesn’t matter because we are still like brothers. One is from Iran, the other is from Palestine, and the sixth is from Afghanistan. It doesn’t matter because we are not in those places now... You can always have a prejudice against someone but then if he’s nice to you, if he’s your friend, then you skip the prejudice. That is, if you get to know people then prejudices disappear. Most of my friends are of different nationalities,”* said a teenager who wants to continue his studies in a high school and then a business school because he plans to open a café of his own one day. Anti-prejudiced attitude and a great deal of reflection concerning such social problems are characteristic traits of students in this group. As our Swedish respondent coming from Ethiopia explained talking about prejudices against white people held in Ethiopia: *“I think it has to do with the colonization... even if it was a long time ago. Those prejudices stay. I will live differently than my parents. I can focus more on my individuality, what I strive for. They have never done that, they have always put the family first.”*

A heightened sense of individual autonomy, on the one hand, and the adoption of majority values, characterizing every walk of future life (from the continuation of studies to plans regarding employment and expectations related to having a partner and establishing a family), on the other seem to be typical in this category. These characteristics, just like the great number

of inter-ethnic relationships (in which ethnicity itself remains insignificant), suggest a great deal of openness on the part of these students. Yet it is important to keep in mind that their choices are often constrained by certain conditions they are unable to change anyway, thus adapting to them instead seems to be the most rational choice. These determining conditions curtailing individual autonomy range from the availability of educational and employment careers favouring the adoption of a majority lifestyle (and the unfeasibility of other professional careers characterizing the economic niches of the minority in question), to expressions of social hostility, like xenophobia, racism and discrimination, which drastically influence the lives of minority people. What is important here is that striving for being integrated and, although to a much lesser extent, even cosmopolitanism, do not represent at all perspectives to be freely realized. What is more, these perspectives are often unreachable or prove to be illusory due to the stigmatisation of minorities. As a consequence, the plans of the adolescents in our fourth category, even though reflecting a great deal of pragmatism, may be doomed to remain fictional.

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By constructing a typology of identity strategies we wanted to demonstrate that adolescents' vision about their future life is deeply embedded into their present situation: family background, location, families' relation toward traditions, religion, peer-relations within and outside school, possibilities concerning further education – all these factors influence future plans in terms of identity strategies.

Some situations, however, can be characterized by other determining factors as far as identity strategies are concerned that remain outside our typology. Some of these suggest that future life is determined not so much by the conditions of the given country and location where the study was carried out, but by special external facts.

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

## CONCLUSIONS

Since our main concern is the role of school and education in the construction of minority ethnic identity and identity strategies, we have to overview our results in this respect as well. Ultimately, what we want to know is how (the sense of) discrimination, exclusion and marginalisation are affected by educational policies, considering the actual implementation of such policies in particular settings. The underlying idea of this inquiry is that – rather than simply a product of particular cultural traditions – minority identity is formed by multiple social forces among which school and education occupy a prominent place.

As we have seen, where integrated education has been realized and the atmosphere is tolerant and diversity-conscious, i.e. open towards the problem of minority identities, as opposed to repressing such issues as it happens in a segregated and competitive environment, there are much less conflicts and peers with different origins and backgrounds are more readily accepted. Such a situation favours the development of ethnic pride and the formation of student identities that allow planning for the future and generate a belief in the chance and of, and point in, meeting expectations.

Likewise, where separation is voluntary, i.e. students and their families opt for special treatment due to religious or ethnic difference, positive identity becomes viable and ideas about a prosperous future are attainable. Nevertheless, the question as to the long-term acceptance and tolerant attitude of host societies remains open: as German, Danish or French examples suggest, ambivalent or explicitly negative anticipations are reasonable all over Europe.

As we have seen, schools do not operate in a vacuum, thus contents and methods of education are not simply developed according to the attitudes of the management, on the one hand, and the needs of parents and students, on the other. Instead, the parameters of education are perceptibly related to the dominant discourses and ideologies and the public opinion of the given society which, in turn, reflect the broader social, political and economic contexts. Thus the differing historical trajectories and cultural traditions in the participating countries, determining the arena of majority and minority relations, are highly relevant for our analysis. As already demonstrated in the Survey Report, the traditional *a priori* distinction of East and West proves to be inadequate; instead, we have distinguished post-colonial, economic migration and post-socialist countries, each category having historically developed characteristic relations with their visible minorities, either historically present or having appeared recently to pose challenges in terms of accepting religious, linguistic, life style, cultural, etc. differences. Divergences are well reflected by the rights and provisions minorities are entitled for in individual countries and country clusters.

As part of welfare services, schools represent particularly effective means of socialization in forming students' knowledge and sensitivity through mediated values and attitudes and as a result of the composition of the student body, either promoting the coexistence of majority and minority or their differentiation and separation. For instance, the colour-blind French ethos prevailing at schools as well, prioritising citizenship rights over everything else, clearly affects all visible minority adolescents of the republican country, including those following Muslim religious traditions. We have also seen how schools in Central European states, where ideas of equality and inclusion are reluctantly assumed yet not interiorised, produce – with the mediation of the management, the staff and the larger and proximate environments – Roma youth who regard themselves as second-rate citizens already as teenagers. By contrast, observations in countries of migration where schools reinforce separation suggest that students of Muslim faith representing, first of all, religious minorities, may benefit from such policies in terms of self-respect, while the same measures prove to be ineffective in instigating social acceptance by the majority.

Thus, as part of the elements of ethnic and religious identity, the influence of educational policies sometimes reinforce and at other times mitigate, displace or override the aspirations of minorities as regards occupying their position in society and developing relations with the majority. This suggests that the “normative” function of schools is also noteworthy, consisting in undermining or, to the contrary, intensifying (and often distorting) the significance of ethnic or religious differences and divisions. Such effects are typically exercised in the framework constituted by majority norms in general (i.e. mediated by other mainstream institutions as well), and realized either in conformation with, or contradiction to, family and community influences. Importantly, indoctrination according to majority norms may occur by negative means as well:

when the school intensifies ethnic distinctions but fills ‘othered’ categories with negative contents (i.e. by practicing discrimination and selection), ethnicity is heightened, even though students may try to free themselves from its consequences. Thus schools, as locations of socialization and the formation of identities, represent sites for comparison where, besides country-specific characteristics and typical developments manifested by clusters of countries constituted for the purposes of research, other, more general rules can also be examined, giving insight into – the often complex and contradictory – processes of integration and ‘minoritisation’.

There are also findings that seem general on the part of observed minorities, principally the strive to have a “normal” life. This phenomenon is unanimously present in our empirical material, discernable from all the interviews and represented in every group of identity strategies constructed for the purposes of analysis. In other words, students in any of the samples wish to have an independent life, separately from parents, in their own home, establishing their own family, able to control the number of their children and – regardless of gender – having a paid job to make a decent living. This is what they regard as the “modern” way of life considered “normal” in Europe. This is what appears as the dominant pattern or model, even though some of our highly committed (primarily Muslim) respondents may accept arranged or polygamous marriage, strict education according to religious doctrines, and intend to pass down such traditions to their own descendents. In general: strategies of survival demanded in Europe appear to be conceived based on some conception of modernity that is associated with – if not secularization or cosmopolitanism, as suggested by traditional approaches, but – the fundamental value of autonomy. Considering it as a consensual value that may constitute the minimum standard of (mutual and self-) respect, a broad sense of autonomy, including cultural, social and economic aspects, appears as an important key to the success of EU-integration.<sup>21</sup>

The question arises whether contemporary politics in general, and educational policies in particular, promote or inhibit the feasibility of social integration, by undermining categorical ethnic difference and enabling multiple attachments as necessary elements of a “normal life”? The discursive framework underlying political endeavours is ambiguous and ambivalent in this respect. On the one hand, a kind of “happy” though increasingly disillusioned and fading multicultural talk, advertising the values of diversity and present to a greater or lesser degree all across Europe, influences explicit and formally accepted political norms at the European level. Thus EU member states, including the more recently joined Central European countries, have introduced the prohibition of discrimination based on race or ethnicity at least at the level of legislation, and have made steps towards social inclusion and the equalisation of opportunities. On the other hand, discursive traces of (anti-)immigration and (anti-)Roma policies, revealing growing xenophobia, have also surfaced over the past decade, frustrating attempts of integration as well as the free assumption of cultural identities.

General principles and tendencies affect educational systems, too, thus previous efforts to institutionalise the principles of multiculturalism seem to have thwarted in this field as well. With the growth of hostility and aversion against minorities, and the perception of differences between Muslims and Christians, Roma and non-Roma increasingly, as essential and ultimate, schools have been transformed into sites of ethnic and religious conflict and/or suppression of identities. The charge of “being incapable of integrating”, well-known from 20<sup>th</sup> century history,

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<sup>21</sup> This idea implies that, as opposed to the political and economic interests of the nation state or of supra-national formations, the aspirations and opportunities of smaller entities – social groups formed along ethnicity, religion, life style or simply social history, often discriminated and not accepted, and potentially cross-cutting country borders – should be the basis of interpreting autonomy. Such an understanding entails the acknowledgment of cosmopolitanism and multiple attachments, while securing necessary guarantees at the national and supranational levels. – For a challenging discussion of models of EU-integration, see Erik O. Eriksen (2007).

has become notorious, appearing in more and more places, like Germany or France, and – having more continuity here – intensifying in Central Europe.

The sharpening of differences as a result of contemporary political climate and institutional mechanisms, provokes a sense of solidarity in minority groups and ambitions to separate from, or occasionally even aggressively confront with representatives of, majority societies. While first generation immigrants generally made efforts towards linguistic and cultural adaptation, trying to become “invisible” and “melt into” host societies, the visual representation of cultural difference, like wearing the veil or manifesting other symbolic signs of otherness, becomes a common aspiration among second and third generation immigrants. By the same token, Roma of Central Europe also show a tendency of voluntary separation, seen, for instance, in the spread of a characteristic sub-culture, inspired by American rap and other ethnically marked outfits, looks, tastes, music, etc. Besides in the increase of self-esteem, the rise of minority self-consciousness has other, more directly political positive aspects, as ethnic or religious identities give way to a heightened sense of cultural and political autonomy, effectively instigating the articulation of claims and self-organization to implement them.

In majority societies, however, the increased self-consciousness of minorities and their attempts to maintain differences (coupled with the fact that in selected countries their rate within the population has grown to the extent of having reached or crossed a critical threshold in the eyes of social majorities implying the endangering of their own survival) have alarming echoes, resulting in increased fears and xenophobia. The reinvigoration of nationalisms and the reinforcement of anti-minority voices and political forces mark a conservative turn both in the East and the West, which has become the starting point of mistrust in, and dismantling the results of, desegregationist policies. Events like the appearance of aggressively intolerant parties and movements, or political steps made towards the reinterpretation of citizenship along strict ethnic lines (cf. the new citizenship act in Slovakia or the act regulating dual citizenship in Hungary, as well as attempts to create a common European basis for policies to suppress immigration) suggest that the present climate is not at all favourable for minorities. Thus it is not only the resurgence of right-wing extremism but also the changing official attitude of state agencies and international political bodies – occasionally seemingly promoting the integration of minorities (as in the case of certain prescriptions of immigration and naturalization policies, or measures favouring the public employment of Roma) – that contribute to the challenges faced by minorities. Policies, in turn, are often implemented by brutal police actions (see, for instance, the expulsion of Roma of Romania from France), or official reactions attract public attention for other reasons (for example, for being associated with particularly severe events, like 9/11), contributing to often radical changes in public discourse. As taboos are lifted because politicians and other media personalities, including scholars, release the ghosts of the past from the bottles of social consensus, previously suppressed terms and concepts (like “Gypsy criminality”) and relatively new constructions (like “Arab terrorism”) – instrumental in making undue generalisations, blaming the victim, denoting scapegoats, and mobilising against vulnerable social groups – become parts of everyday talk. Media-responses, so apt to exaggerate dimensions and distort proportions thus altering the significance of facts, further intensify social conflicts and divisions in making assumptions consequential and, hence, real.

Does this mean that, with the slackening of multiculturalist values and the reinvigoration of more militant perspectives and ambitions regarding the constitution of societies as political and cultural communities, former conceptions of identity, reflecting processes of a substantial decolonisation that, at the level of individual identities, manifested in the celebration of commixture, diversity and relative freedom<sup>22</sup> have become displaced and outmoded? Have

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<sup>22</sup> For conceptualising societies from the indicated multiculturalist perspective, see the once extensively cited works of Fanon, Hall, Bhabha and Gilroy (Fanon 1963, Bhabha 1993, Gilroy 1993, Hall 1996).

essentialist conceptions of identity and difference, in fact, become more realistic and up-to-date for better describing the contemporary state of affairs? Although tempting, such a conclusion would be unacceptable and false. While simplistic and superficial accounts of typical conflicts and processes taking place in our world may have become fashionable well beyond their merits<sup>23</sup>, readily overshadowing the assets of more sensitive and complex analyses, there is no reason to throw out the latter. The glittering surface of seemingly self-explanatory claims and arguments hide inconsistent theories informed by ill-considered principles (based on assumptions regarding the primacy of ethno-racial belonging resulting in unchangeable cultural differences that give way to non-resoluble conflicts), far less attractive than the values of equality and human rights nourishing somewhat heavier accounts of society. Thus, although essentialist notions of identity should be revisited in order to explain some contemporary political processes, the multiplicity of the aspects, levels and foci of analysis, just like the perspectives determined by progressive social values, should nevertheless not be abandoned.

But how does theory translate into practice? Today's social reality, as we have seen, is not shaped according to very progressive social values. Integration, as a political goal and a viable objective, is being challenged in many ways. Thus, the question whether inclusive policies can be maintained at the level of schools remains to be answered. As evidenced by the EDUMIGROM research (and quantitatively shown by the Comparative Survey Report), integrated education, as long as it is coupled with multiculturalist principles, diversity-conscious sensibilities and readiness to reflect upon (the consequences of) differences, results in better school achievement, improving perspectives of further education, and generating more positive future visions. (Szalai, Messing, and Neményi 2010) However, it is unsure whether achievements attained so far can be protected and further developed, or problems originating in the political climate and intensified by the present economic crisis will thwart the efforts and dismantle the results of recent decades, so that the next few years will witness attempts to find other, less friendly or even explicitly anti-migration and anti-minority, solutions to problems of diversity in the field of education as well.

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<sup>23</sup> See, for instance, the sudden popularity of Samuel B. Huntington's thesis of cultural conflict after 9/11. (Huntington 1996)

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## **CLOSING REMARKS**

**Júlia Szalai**

Arriving at the closing section of this Study, one is inclined to draw a rather gloomy conclusion: taken in one, the three large essays of this volume paint a picture about the lives, opportunities, and future perspectives of minority ethnic adolescents in Europe that is contoured by extensive risks and experiences of ‘othering’, frequent endangerments of identity development, and the powerful institutionalisation of curtailed notions and practices of inclusionary citizenship. Whether looked at through the lens of institutional structures in education, or through the lessons drawn from their accumulated life-experiences, young people from second-generation migrant and Roma backgrounds share a common fate of being marked with dubious contents and implications for coming from ‘other’ settings than most people – the majorities – around them.

The term ‘other’ refers to a vaguely defined compound of cultural traits, appearances, modes of parlance, behaviours, tastes and orientations – in sum, it embodies constellations that mainstream societies denote as ‘ethnic difference’. True, ‘othering’ is not confined to ethnicity alone: we know very well that notions of significant difference – meant as deviation from the prevailing social norms – are bound also to a range of other groupings either on the ground of their socioeconomic and class positions (cf. the powerful label of the ‘underclass’), or because of the manifestations of particular sexual traits (cf. the stigma attached to homosexuality), or due to peculiar health statuses and bodily characteristics (cf. the terms around disability and/or mental/physical deficiency). Nevertheless, ethnic ‘othering’ stands out for at least two reasons: because of its inescapable *collective* content, and also because of its unavoidable implications for being destined to fulfil social roles and positions that, apart from rare exceptions, are usually *valued less* than the comparable roles and positions met by people from the mainstream.

As the discussions showed, ethnic ‘othering’ is an all-encompassing phenomenon in the investigated nine countries, though its social functions and implications vary to a great extent. At one end of the scale the distinctions that are expressed this way remain confined to the terrain of cultural (at times: also religious) diversity that do not necessarily imply social, economic and political devaluation of the involved individuals and communities. Although ‘othering’ always carries the risk of being turned into stigmatisation and social marginalisation, the societies in question make strong efforts to observe the boundaries of distinction and invest into countervailing it by provisions, services and established conditions driven by the notions of equal citizenship and social inclusion. In our sample, it is the Nordic countries (Denmark and Sweden) that best demonstrate the indicated ambiguities and the societal efforts to overcome them.

At the other end of the scale ‘othering’ becomes deeply institutionalised and serves as a “self-explanatory” principle for constructing and maintaining sharp divides in the social structures as well as differential rules in access to provisions, services, and opportunities. This is the case in the post-socialist societies of Central Europe where ‘othered’ Roma are kept apart from the majorities in education, on the labour market and also in the paths that drive access to welfare, housing or health care. In these societies, ethnic ‘othering’ is often used as the ultimate argument for justifying the bifurcation of citizenship and for creating visible ghettos of social exclusion that keep minority ethnic people away even from attempting to strive for integration on equal grounds. The mainstream needs for ethnic segregation are rooted in massive uncertainties and lasting frustrations of large groups of the majority who fear the loss of their fragile advantages and who gain assertions for socio-cultural superiority by pointing to the disadvantages and downgraded positions of an entire collective which is identified in the stigmatised ways of ‘othering’ as ‘the Gypsies’.

It is needless to say: there are substantial differences as much in the forms as in the immediate and longer-term implications of ‘othering’ at these two ends and also in-between. Nevertheless, it seems important to emphasise the shared traits and also the commonality of the dangers that they entail. For ‘othering’ even in its milder forms becomes a *condition* that tends to attract

inequalities of all kinds. Furthermore, distinctions made on the foundations of “obvious otherness” provide a fertile soil for turning class differences and the related social, economic and political conflicts into the manifestations and struggles of hierarchically valued cultures that appear to be constructed and continuously reproduced along the lines of ever-lasting traditions and biologically conditioned inheritance. Through such transformations, ethnic ‘otherness’ becomes a mighty metaphor for maintaining the status quo – that is, for justifying the arrangements of majority-ruled power and the ‘natural’ deprivation and subordination of all those who are considered the ‘Other’.

The discussions in this volume showed the mightiness of ‘othering’ also from another perspective. It has become clear through the analysis of interviews with students and their parents that being ‘othered’ becomes an important constituent of the self and a significant point of departure for adolescent identity development. As it turned out, minority ethnic youth perceives the world around through the lens of ‘difference’. Whether accepting and internalising the derogatory contents that are assigned to ‘otherness’ or entering a personal struggle to overcome them, whether giving up early aspirations for betterment or utilising ‘otherness’ as a drive for attaining outstanding achievement, whether expressing desires for the safety of ethnic enclosure or striving for full-fledged integration into the majority – the point of reference always remains the deeply ingrained experience of inescapable ‘otherness’.

In the lack of comparable information about the development of adolescent identity among those from majority backgrounds we cannot establish whether the all-encompassing awareness of ‘otherness’ gives rise to peculiar patterns of identity formation that maintain ‘difference’ also on the deepest personal level, or it is but just a variant of the frames of reference that are substituted by similarly powerful constructs (also with relativistic contents) in the case of majority youth. However, one is inclined to assume that being continuously reminded of the differences hinders healthy self-reliance and tends to weaken trust in the just and equitable working of the society and its institutions around.

At the same time, our analysis also showed that awareness of ‘being different’ can provide also the foundation of new forms of social cohesion and solidarity. In this sense, the potential disadvantages that are associated with ethnic distinctions can be transformed into clear advantages and lasting sources of togetherness. It might well be that it is just the case of the ‘sour grapes’ but the more minority ethnic adolescents experience forceful separation and exclusion the more do they express dispositions to refer to the unique strength of the bondages and the rich potentials of cooperation that the shared fate of being refused and excluded has brought about in their immediate communities.

Beyond the interplay and mutual determinations between experiences of being ‘othered’ and the elaboration of reflexive responses as parts of adolescent identity formation, the discussions in the three essays revealed the tough conditions that the socioeconomic and power structures in the investigated nine societies have created by institutionalising ‘othering’ and the accompanying manifestations of ethnic discrimination. The most prevalent occurrences of institutionalised discrimination appear in the varied formations of residential segregation on ethno-social grounds. While it is obvious that minority ethnic families often live in commingling with households of the majority, it is still justifiable to state on the ground of our research that wherever minority ethnic people represent a substantial part of an urban community one tends to find them in spontaneously or deliberately designated segments that are often set up ‘just for them’. The rise of such separated ethnic enclaves often follows from the particular welfare provisions that are distributed on the grounds of positive discrimination in order to assist the settlement of newcomers; at other occasions, it is the invisible intra-ethnic networks that help the recurrent waves of immigrants to accommodate upon arrival; yet on other occasions, it is the evolution of urban slums that attracts people with scarce resources to find accommodation in

cheap and affordable areas; and finally, it is most often the intense fleeing of better-off families of the majority that leaves behind minority ethnic people who are stuck to remain amidst the multitude of pressing conditions and scarcities.

At any rate, separated urban segments inhabited dominantly or exclusively by minority ethnic people have become self-containing arrangements that embody intersecting poverty and ethnic marginalisation in all our societies. As the wide array of parental histories shows, families tend to remain confined to the given conditions, and thus the intergenerational reproduction of marginalised positions appears to be self-sustaining. Breaking through the walls of the emerging ghetto necessitates a good deal of social and financial capitals, and requires also a network of contacts and support. It is thus no surprise that there are only a few families in such communities that actually succeed in moving geographically outward and socially upward; the rest can at best hope for some outstanding individual performance – and this is exactly that parents of adolescents expect from their children and that the most dedicated young minority ethnic students consider the primary goal for their adult life.

The hopes and strives for breaking out of the captivation of ethnic ‘otherness’ and the accompanying socioeconomic downgrading provide the context where education enters the stage with prominence. After all, minority ethnic youth and their parents are equally aware that successful advancement in schooling is the one and only chance for leaving behind one’s marginalised conditions and aspiring for meaningful integration into society at large. However, schools that principally should serve the goal demonstrate a catch 22 for the most part. Being affiliated with the communities where minority ethnic people make up a substantial part, the public schools that ‘othered’ students attend tend to be as much segregated as the neighbourhoods around. As schools serving the immediate locality they mostly provide education for children living in their proximity, or if their set-up makes them open for a broader community, it is often the recurrent processes of ‘white flight’ that turn them into designated ‘minority’ institutions. As such, these schools hardly can escape the usual concomitants of declining quality in teaching, high turn-out of the teaching staff, falling reputation and a self-sustaining fleeing of all those – both from the majority and the ethnic minorities – who have the energy and the contacts to search for a placement for their child somewhere else. This way local schools serving minority ethnic youth become captivated by the very processes and forces that they should assist to overcome. The inescapable marginalisation of the schools implies an inescapable marginalisation of their students as well: this way local educational institutions of the minority ethnic communities become potent mediators of social and cultural disadvantages and, instead of countervailing them, contribute to the deepening of the fault-lines that maintains the distinctions between ‘ordinary’ young people and their ‘othered’ peers.

True, local school policies aiming at true diversity in their students-body and teaching staff can make an important difference. Our findings show that dedicated local leadership at schools and in the municipal administration can assist minority ethnic students to catch up with – often even outperform – their majority peers; furthermore, innovative teachers can demonstrate remarkable achievements in assisting their students in successful advancement while they also contribute to strengthen their self-reliance and self-esteem. However, these attempts usually remain isolated and prove weak against the currents of ethnic marginalisation and inclinations for social exclusion. The heroic attempts of the local school personnel and the supporting civil organisations behind them are at best enough to engage in a start of a struggle for recognition on behalf of the communities that they serve and represent. However, their capacities are too limited to turn the wheel around by allowing for a gradual diffusion of the values and practices that they embody and thereby to expand the local struggle for recognition to initiations of genuine reforms. Due to their built-in limitations, such promising local initiatives usually remain admirable exceptions that work against the mainstream currents but that are actually confined to

become captivated by their very exceptional traits: after all, they end up in isolation and as such, face increasing pressures to adapt to what is considered the 'norm' around.

The scarce examples of schools that follow the principles of multicultural inclusion orient one's attention toward the larger-scale associations that forge schooling of minority ethnic youth. The associations in question are very well known from educational sociology. After Bourdieu it counts as a commonplace to state that the fundamental functions of education in distributing knowledge and, together with it, providing justification for the prevailing social, economic, cultural and political inequalities bind the schools to the foundations of the structure of the given society. It follows that schools nowhere can be very different in their structures from the structures of the society that they serve. If the ethnic implications of these strong associations are considered, one can establish with resignation that poor-quality education of minority ethnic youths is a 'natural' concomitant of their 'othered', discriminated and downgraded standing in the society that they are part of. Consequently, schools as agents of representing diversity and equal opportunities against the main currents are confined to become marginalised in their grand attempts. Hence, the solutions lay outside the realm of education. It is the coordinated policies toward (re)establishing the foundations of multiculturalism as much on the level of political representation as in the day-to-day relations within the communities that might provide the framework and the conditions for schools to attain the still widely believed goals of equal opportunity, equity and diversity-blind inclusion in education.

However, such a (re)turn to multiculturalism and the praising of diversity requires conditions and structures that put majority/minority relations on utterly changed foundations and that provide new safeguards against the emergence of ethnic hierarchies and the accompanying widespread practices of 'othering' and discrimination. It will be the task in the final phase of the EDUMIGROM project to scrutinise the potentials for such reforms amidst the varied constellations of inter-ethnic relations and the diverse materialisation of inequalities in recognition and redistribution that the historically forged welfare regimes of our nine countries entail. In the light of the discussed historical differences among them, it can be projected on firm grounds that even the best reforms will be strongly confined to remain within the prevailing structures and practices and thus one hardly can hope for an all-round breakthrough that all of a sudden opens a new epoch in inter-ethnic relations all over the place. Our goals are and will be more modest than this: by utilising the strength of comparisons, we aim for calling public attention and action to the need for deconstructing the systems and routines that penalise certain groups simply because of being of different origin. And as one can conclude from our inquiries, the need for mobilisation for inter-ethnic equality and equity has become apparent as much for minority ethnic people as for the majorities: after all, it is the working of the established democratic order within and between the nation states that is at stake.