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Apart or together: motivations behind ethnic segregation in education across Europe

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I. The context

There is a longstanding academic and policy debate about the possible causes underlying the performance gap between ethnic majority and minority students across Europe. The fact that ethnic minority students under-perform compared to their peers has been widely demonstrated by a range of national as well as cross- country comparative studies. (OECD 2006, Crul and Schneider 2008, Modood, Dronkers 2010, Park and Sandefour 2008). A number of factors underlying this gap have been identified, of which the most important are the lower socio-economic status of ethnic minority populations, in general and their language disadvantages. The analysis of the intersecting effects of these two factors reveals some important country-specific differences though: when groups with similar status and identical language backgrounds were compared the gap disappeared in several countries (France, Norway, Sweden), diminished significantly in others (i.e. Germany) or stayed significant (Belgium, Luxembourg, Switzerland) (Park, Sandefour 2010). These results suggest that behind the performance gap there must be other factors related to the organisation and practices of education. Besides individual characteristics such as the generation since immigration, the country of origin (Dronkers 2010), systemic factors such as comprehensiveness, selectivity and inclusiveness of the school systems (Alegre and Arnett 2007, OECD 2007), the level of ethno-social segregation seem to contribute to the disadvantages of ethnic minorities in education. This chapter will discuss the role of the factor mentioned last: ethno-social segregation.

Irrespective of the method applied and of the definition of the category[1] 'ethnic minority' researchers agree on the prevalence of ethno-social segregation in European societies. Regardless of the diversity of educational policies and the organisational setup of the educational systems of European societies, it has been demonstrated that a significant proportion of children from ethnic minority backgrounds (especially if also from low social status) tend to be educated in segregated conditions: *"Findings indicate that, in several countries, many immigrant students attend schools with high proportions of first-generation or second-generation students."* (OECD 2006) Countries with highly

[1] whether it includes first or second generation migrants or both, non-migrant minorities (such as Roma/Gypsy)

stratified educational systems tend to have particularly high levels of ethnic segregation at a very early age (Belgium, Switzerland and the Netherlands), while countries operating more comprehensive school systems show lower levels of ethnic segregation, because tracking (specialization) and with it ethno-social separation reaches students at a later age (France, UK, the Nordic countries). (Angel and Ferrer-Esteban 2010) However, the actual reasons behind the segregation of 'children of colour' from their 'white' peers as well as the consequences of this phenomenon vary greatly depending on the countries' educational policies, the structures and the administering of compulsory education, the traditions of interethnic cohabitation in communities, and the policies to which the local managements and the schools themselves subscribe.

The EDUMIGROM investigation – an in-depth analysis of educational paths of 2nd+ generation migrants and autonomous ethnic minorities in nine countries of Europe, – extended the focus by including in its analysis both Western and Central European countries and the experiences of the students from minority backgrounds, their families and their teachers for understanding the complexity of reasons behind the lower educational attainment of the groups in question. By applying a multi-method approach, the research identified processes that are at play in ethnically segregated school environments and revealed forms of segregation left unnoticed by larger-scale surveys. The present chapter first discusses mechanisms that lead to ethnic segregation while the later part demonstrates how various constellations of ethnic separation may affect young people's lives and future opportunities.

Also in the introduction the concept of ethnic segregation has to be clarified: we use this term to indicate the constellation of students with ethnic background being significantly overrepresented in certain schools and / or classes within the institution, while ethno-social segregation refers to the situation when school composition is characterised by the intersection of students' ethnic minority belonging and low social status. There are no de jure segregated schools in European countries; ethnic segregation is always de facto and arises as consequence of macro ad micro level social processes discussed in the following chapter.

II. Mechanisms of institutional selection and ethno-social segregation

2.1 Early selection

Early selection of children into different school-types strongly correlates with ethno-social segregation. The OECD PISA data demonstrate that 31per cent of the variation in the extent of ethnic segregation may be explained by the age when the first selection into differentiated tracks takes place in the given school system (Angel, Ferrer-Esteban 2010). There are essential

differences across European countries in this respect. In some countries tracking happens as early as the age of 10-11 (Germany), while in others (Nordic countries) children are kept together until the end of comprehensive compulsory education (e.g. in Denmark until the age of 16). Indeed, the TIES project[2] found that the number of years spent in an un-tracked institution is decisive for educational opportunities: "[…] *the percentage of second-generation Turks who make it into an academic track increases with the rise in the number of years of common education prior to selection*". (chapter XX, Crul and Schnell 2013) Further evidence from a research by Diefenbach (2005) in Germany supports the statement: Germany is a country where both comprehensive and non-comprehensive schools for secondary education operate parallel in the different federal states (Länder). She found by comparing the comprehensive and non-comprehensive schools that significantly more migrant students reached both the medium and higher qualifications in the comprehensive schools than in non-comprehensive ones. (Diefenbach 2005)

The primary school systems of the post-socialist countries, which provide general public education for 8 (in some cases: 9) years, seem to be comprehensive at first glance, but as soon as one gets a closer look it becomes evident that they are also stratified since many countries operate parallel systems. Although, primary education generally lasts for 8 years, in fact, long-track (6 or 8 year) grammar schools, which work in parallel to primary schools, cream out the best students - most of whom come from the upper strata of the society - at the age of 10 and 12. The rest of the students stay in the primary school until grade 8[3] and continue into less prestigious four-year academic or vocational tracks. Early tracking is practiced despite the evidences accumulated by child psychology about the fact that 10 to 12 year old children – especially boys – are not mature enough to make decisions that have important implications for their long term educational opportunities and occupational chances. (Salami 2008) Consequently, such forced early decisions about further education will reflect parents' ambitions rather than the actual aspiration, potential and talent of the student.

The rigidity of the secondary school system is also a factor that influences underprivileged students' opportunities, especially those from ethnic minority backgrounds. Obviously in cases where early tracking is coupled with a rigid division of tracks and lack of passage among various school types, students with any kind of difficulty are trapped into the lower segments of the educational systems very early on. In Germany, for example, early selection together with limited

[2] TIES; The Integration of the European Second Generation: The TIES project is a collaborative and comparative survey investigating 18-35 years old descendants of immigrants from Turkey, former Yugoslavia and Morocco in eight European countries: Austria, Belgium, France, Germany, the Netherlands, Spain, Sweden and Switzerland. s. The project focuses on the long-term consequences of the large scale labour migration experienced by all western and northern European countries since the 1960s.

[3] Grade 9 in Poland since the public education reform introduced in 1999.

options for mobility between school types[4] leads to highly unequal chances for working class and minority students to obtain qualifications that are valued on the labour market. In contrast to this, in the Nordic countries comprehensive school systems keep students together during their compulsory school age and streaming within the same school allows students to flexibly find the ways best suited to their capacities and preferences.

2.2. Unsubstantiated tracking into special schools

A further systemic cause leading to prevalent socio-ethnic segregation is that ethnic minority children are disproportionately directed into ***remedial schools*** designed for educating mentally retarded children with special needs. This phenomenon exists in all European countries though in varying degrees. In all of the Central European countries the ethnic composition in these special/remedial schools is characterised by an over-representation of Roma children (ERRC 2004). Although, officially, students entering into special schools should go through a process of thorough testing by professionals, there are a number of instances where ordinary students or those with slight mental hindrance who are able to study in regular school end up in special educational units. The practice of labelling ethnic minority/ Roma children as mentally deprived and placing them in special schools is extremely widespread in the Czech Republic and Slovakia (in the latter, 60 percent of Roma children study in such institutions according to a report by Amnesty International) (Amnesty International 2010). The same phenomenon exists in Romania and Hungary to a somewhat smaller, though still significant, extent. Similar trends are at work in Western part of Europe, though to a lower extent (Heckmann 2008, Artiles 2003). The NESSE[5], network of experts also emphasised this fact in their report to the European Commission "*There is an overrepresentation of migrant children in schools for children with special needs*". (Heckman 2008)

In addition to the stigmatising effect on ethnic minority students, the problem with such practices is that transition from special schools into regular schools hardly ever occurs. This is all the more painful, since, due to lower expectations and a reduced curriculum, these schools most typically serve as dead-end to the educational career of their students. The paradox is that all the involved parties are interested to a greater or smaller extent in maintaining this harsh form of segregation: locally elected officials can satisfy the demands for ethnic distancing from their local middle-class electorate; teachers of regular schools are happy that they do not have to bother with 'problematic' children; often even minority parents may accept without reservations the board's decision about their children being directed into special schools because they consider

[4] Only 3 per cent of 7th, 8th and 9th grade students swapped across school types and the direction of such mobility was usually downward. (Altrichter et al 2012)
[5] Network of Expert in Social Science of Education and trainig, set up in 2007 and funded by the European Commission's Directorate General for Education and Culture

them to be “safe” places where their children enjoy a relaxed environment, small class sizes, increased attention and tolerance on the part of both their teachers and their peers.

2.3. School type

Educational segregation on the institutional level is often enhanced also by the diversity of school types with regard to ownership and maintenance. Evidence shows that pupils with different socioeconomic and ethnic backgrounds, and gender, tend to enrol into different types of schools. There is a divide in the Czech Republic, Denmark, France, Germany, Hungary, Slovakia and the UK between public schools financed through taxes and government grants (and therefore free of charge for the families), and private schools funded, at least partly, by fees or donations, paid by the parents. The limited presence of minority students in private schools suggests that tuition fees may constitute serious obstacles for many ethnic minority families.

Another phenomenon that deserves attention is the role of faith schools. Faith schools most typically enhance ethno-social segregation but in very different ways across Europe. In Germany, Denmark and the UK faith schools are institutions permitting voluntary separation of religious ethnic minority communities. As they are set up and run by the community, children of families belonging to certain ethno-religious groups attend such institutions. An example may be Muslim schools in Denmark or Turkish schools in Germany, or schools serving the Pakistani communities in the UK. However, schools run by religious communities may boost ethnic segregation also the other way round: Catholic or Protestant schools in Central Europe represent a way for white middle class families, even those without a strong religious identity, to flee from deteriorating public schools with an increasing presence of low status Roma children. Further, certain faith schools may also enhance segregation the other way round: they may serve as a last resort for the children of the most marginalized families who have been omitted from all public schools. Most recent statistical evidence suggests that the rapid expansion of faith schools since 2010 in the Hungarian educational sector has considerably increased ethno-social segregation (Sárközi 2012).

2.4. Free choice of schools and students

A further important characteristics, which influences ethno-social segregation on a systemic level is the *working of catchment areas and the right of parents to opt out* from them. The way catchment areas are shaped and applied may reduce or, on the contrary, enhance the consequences of residential segregation for the ethno-social composition of the student body (Szalai, Messing, and Neményi 2010).

In most of the European countries geographically shaped school districts exist, but parents have a right to express preference for a school located outside the district. In some countries – i.e. France and Germany - catchment areas are applied rigidly; meaning that a student's address determines the public school in which the child has to be enrolled. In the case of both countries, however, evidence indicates that upper and middle class families have found ways to circumvent the existing restrictions of the districting systems by either registering at a secondary address outside their current district of residence or choosing an educational option, for instance a particular language or specialisation, which is not offered by the local school. Furthermore, a family can choose the private or faith school sector which is not subjected to the constraints of catchment area regulations.

In most European countries, however, parents have the right to choose a school within the public school sector, though authorities may intervene to certain extent, in the allocation of students within the public school segment, to prevent over- or under-utilization of school infrastructure. Research has demonstrated that the free choice of schools enhances ethno-social segregation to a certain extent, but even in countries where no arrangement of open choice exists, it is the highly educated, middle class parents, whose children benefit most from the system, and end up in the best quality schools. (Raveaud and van Zanten 2007, Ball 2003) Factors such as parents' educational level, their social status and knowledge of the majority language not only influence their tendency to use, but also the degree to which they are informed of their formal right to choose among schools.

Free choice of school promotes *"white flight"*[6], a spontaneous process that significantly increases ethno-social segregation. In Europe, "ethnic majority, middle class flight" would better cover the meaning of "White flight" a concept taken from the US vocabulary for it is typically the middle class phenomenon more intense toward the lower segments of the middle-class. The phenomenon may be detected in almost all European countries, though to varying degrees depending on countries' historical arrangements of inter-ethnic cohabitation. The recently introduced free school choice, for instance, has resulted in an increased socioeconomic and ethnic segregation of schools, at both primary and secondary educational levels in Sweden (SOU 2000, p.39; Söderström and Uusitaio 2005). The situation in the Central European countries is similar. Roma parents rarely choose a school outside of the socially disadvantaged and marginalized district in which they live, even when they have the formal right to do so. In fact, most of them are not even aware that they possess this right, while white middle and lower

[6] White flight refers to the spontaneous process driven by middle class white parents' decision to leave the school as soon as the proportion of ethnic minority children reaches a certain extent.

middle class parents extensively use this right and invest considerable time and effort into fleeing from their district.

An even more important factor in terms of socio-ethnic segregation than parents' right to opt out, is *the schools' entitlement to select among applicants*. That is to say that not only parents may be in a position to choose among schools, but the schools may also be free to decide whom they accept among applicant children. The analysis of the PISA data on this issue demonstrated that cross-country differences in the level of ethno-social segregation are significantly associated with the possibility schools have for selecting among children. (Algere, Ferrer-Esteban 2010).

2.5 Internal segregation

Internal separation is another prevalent practice in regular schools of Central European countries which exacerbates the separation of children of colour within formally comprehensive and untracked primary schools. Many of the schools in Central European countries try to fight against the spontaneous processes of white flight by separating disadvantaged ethnic minority and middle class majority students into parallel classes. They want to assure middle class majority parents that their child will not share classes with low status minority children. Depending on the proportion of ethnic minority and socially disadvantaged students, techniques range from picking out middle class, well performing students and placing them into classes offering specialisation in prestigious subjects to collecting socially deprived, mostly Roma children into one separated class. Thus, the struggle against spontaneous processes of ethno-social segregation results in further segregation within the confines of the school. Schools systems in which students are kept together for a relatively long time might actually be highly unequal due to complex and often implicit forms of internal differentiation such as within school segregation. In some countries schools start tracking students as early as the first grade (at the age of 6-7) according to the parents' choice of subject specialisation, which results in high status student ending up in maths or foreign language specialisation classes, and lower status or Roma children in classes specialized for physical training or without specialisation or in preparatory classes. In Slovakia, for instance, all students, who are declared not be mature for the school by the age of 7 are tracked into zero classes. Evidence tells that they are kept together in the same class throughout their primary school carrier and also, that these classes are overwhelmed with Roma children. Regular primary schools frequently apply internal streaming also at the end of the lower stage (after grade 4 at age 10) by grouping students based on their performance, but often without providing additional services for the low- or high performers.

The above description summarises some of the most important - implicit or explicit, purposeful or unintentional – mechanisms which may result in high levels of ethno-social segregation on a macro level. But how does ethno-social segregation lead to lower performance or diverging opportunities? What are the processes and mechanisms that work in such cases?

3. How does segregation and/or various patterns of coeducation effect students?

In terms of the ethnic composition of the schools' student body, three trends in the organisation of education for ethnic minority students in Europe may be distinguished.[7] The first case is that of segregated institutions in which the proportion of ethnic minority students is overwhelming. The second group consists of schools which mix ethnic minority and majority students, while the third case includes schools which at first glance may seem to be ethnically heterogeneous, but which upon closer inspection reveal internal separation of their students. These three constellations together with the schools' approach to ethnic diversity and pedagogy seem to be decisive in terms of students' performance, attitudes towards education, their future chances and perspectives as well as their identity development and peer relations. (Szalai 2010, Messing, Szalai, Neményi 2010)

3.1. Segregated schools

An important form of ethnic segregation on the institutional level is the separation of ethnic minority children into distinctive school types. The case of the Czech Republic is a good illustration of this arrangement: it turned that if one wants to see and interview Roma students, than hardly ever finds them in the regular schools for the majority of them attend basic practical schools, a school type, which were set up following EU's and international organizations' urge to stop segregation of Roma children in special schools for mentally retarded students. Despite the reorganization of the system, basic practical schools mostly 'took over' the function of former special schools: they follow a restricted curriculum and many are ill famed for being 'Roma schools'. It follows that students studying in these institutions are deprived from obtaining meaningful further education. Despite the imbalanced ethnic composition teachers sharply reject the hypothesis that this school type serves as an institution of ethnic segregation. "*We are still accused by journalists […] that we try to get rid of Roma children and we put them into practical schools. It is nonsense! We cannot push anybody anywhere.*" (teacher focus group, Czech Republic) Still, the outcome

[7] The EDUMIGROM research was constructed in a way that the selected schools for surveying were either ethnically heterogeneous or were dominated by ethnic minority youth. Most typically the proportion of ethnic minority students in the selected schools was between 20-60 per cent, though a few schools with a dominant majority of ethnic minority students have also fallen into the sample. Given the overall composition, this research allows to study the various patterns and constellations of ethnic mix and their effects on youths' life and future perspectives.

is the striking ethnic imbalance in this school-type. The research identified an important mismatch of presumed preferences of actors. While Czech parents and teachers presumed that Roma parents preferred to have their children be in segregated institutions with lower expectations and restricted curriculum, Roma students attending segregated schools were clear about their preference for mixed schools – they were aware of the fact that 'majority' schools were not only better in terms of instruction and future chances in education, but also concerning other services, such as food and extracurricular activities. In sharp contrast to teachers' and ethnic majority parents' narrative, Roma parents recognised the drawbacks of the segregated environment and justified their preference for the mixed school, primarily because of its role in socialisation: "*Because children would better know how to behave among non-Roma. […] my children are only among Cigans, it is not good. I would prefer them to grow among white. […] Roma kids need positive examples*" Also, in sharp contrast to teachers' account, Roma parents gave testimonies of direct discrimination during the process of enrolment: "*When I went to basic school registering to that school, there was the headmaster and he was known for not taking Gypsies and he told me right away: 'No, do not try to register here. We are full'.*" (focus group discussions with Roma parents in the Czech Republic].

A Slovak teacher assistant of Roma origin explains the complex mechanism that leads to the overrepresentation of Roma kids in special schools as follows "*…I think that these overcrowded special schools reveal a lot…the majority of Roma children are not mentally retarded. …there was no willingness to find a different solution…to put them into a special school is the easiest way and it artificially produces mentally retarded children. But parents also do not understand it, because everyone presents them how beneficial it is for their children, how happy they are in that school where not so much is demanded from them.*"

Less overt mechanisms of discrimination and exclusion work in most of the countries: ethnic minority students are disproportionately directed into educational units for special needs children because of being misdiagnosed or because social or language disadvantages are interpreted as mental handicaps by the culturally biased tests on both sides of Europe. The consequence of such organisation of education for students is obvious: students might feel good about the more tolerant and less demanding nature of such schools, but they also feel stigmatised and incorporate the notion of 'otherness' and 'inferiority' into their identity. As to their perspectives for further education and adult life, all parties are aware of the fact that students graduating from these units have essentially no chances for further education nor for obtaining a qualification which is valued on the labour-market.

An essentially different case of ethnic segregation on the institutional level is that of ethnic minority or faith community schools. Muslim faith/community schools in Denmark and Germany, and the Ghandi Secondary School, a community-established Roma grammar school in

Hungary are examples of educational units in which ethnic separation is a result of the voluntary choice of the minority community. Some other, non-community funded, public schools which in the process of ethnic segregation became – in the figurative sense - 'owned' by the minority community, may be classified into this category, as well. One example is that of Sweden where due to the liberalisation of school catchment areas and enrolment policies enhancing white flight, schools in some of the migrant populated urban areas became overwhelmingly attended by youth of migrant background. These schools differ from the segregated school in the Central European region in several important aspects: teachers are aware of the special needs of their students, and make conscious efforts to adapt to such needs (language support, upgrading of the knowledge of students to the majority culture, practices for enhancing self-confidence) without stigmatising their students. The staff itself is also multicultural and a significant number of ethnic minority teachers work with students.

The EDUMIGROM research found that the presence of ethnic minority teachers, or the lack thereof, might be an important factor for minority students: teachers who themselves experienced how it feels to be minority are more likely to understand and treat such students empathically. Schools with multi-ethnic staff also more frequently use a genuinely multicultural curriculum, organise various extracurricular activities, and stress the importance of maintaining good relations with ethnic minority families. Although students are aware of their 'otherness', they experience less stigmatisation (at least in the school environment) and their negative experiences outside the school are countervailed by a strong notion of rights that often work as a protective shield; parents are usually more involved in the activities of the school and are regarded as partners, or at least, they do not feel ashamed of not being fluent in the culture and language of the school. Though students do not necessarily perform better in comparison to their peers, they develop high expectations towards further education and future life. Still, attending a school exclusively with peers of their own socio-ethnic community, students are unsure about where to continue studying, and have concerns about, whether they will be able to adapt to and perform well in mixed secondary schools. Because of the lack of opportunity to socialise with majority peers, students are especially concerned about being able to adjust to their new circumstances after graduation. As put by a teacher in Sweden: "*These young people fear meeting Swedish society and the Swedes*".

3.2. Mixed schools

Many of the schools in both parts of Europe have a student population which represent a genuine ethnic mix. There are however great differences in terms of the proportion of ethnic

minority students as well as regarding the approach of teachers and the school's ethos towards its ethnically diverse student population.

In the Central European countries the level of tolerance towards ethnic diversity in schools is much lower than in the western part of Europe. Depending on the geographical parts of the country and on the traditions of co-existence, 20 to 40 per cent of Roma children is the threshold which triggers white flight. The respective proportion of ethnic minority children is usually much higher in the western part of Europe. The EDUMIGROM research provided a telling example when it compared the consequences of merging two schools in two countries. In the Czech example the merger of the two schools – one with middle class majority and the other with a dominantly Roma student population – 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 situated in separate buildings. In the Danish case the change in the proportion of minority students from 10 to 40 per cent led only an insignificant number of families to decide to leave the school.

The other factor producing significant differences in terms of consequences for youth is the approach of teachers and the school community towards ethnic diversity. The *colour- blind approach to ethnic diversity* is most prevalent in France, where the principle of non-differentiation of citizens on the basis of their origin is at the heart of the French republican model of integration. Schools not only avoid making a distinction between native French and migrant background students, but do not speak about ethnicity at all, nor do they consider the need for introducing differential services for minority students (Schiff et.al. 2008). Differences of performance between various ethnic groups are attributed exclusively to the disparities in families' social backgrounds by many schools sharing the colour-blind approach also behind the borders of France.

Some of the ethnically mixed schools in Central Europe typically have a similar approach towards ethnic diversity, but in contrast to France, diversity blindness in this region is not rooted in state-level ideology, but is more promiscuous, being a function of the individual schools principal's attitude and conviction. Furthermore, the organization of teaching in a diversity blind manner is based not on the idea of equality, but on the conviction that the recognition of ethnic differences would lead to their reinforcement. "*I do not distinguish Roma and non-Roma…I imprint them with one theory and one principle that there are only two kinds of people – good people and bad people.*" (Slovakian headmaster) Hence, ethnically mixed classes are the norm in diversity-blind schools of Central Europe and all students are expected to adapt to the same values and standards, to accept the same rules and get the same services. In principle, no ethnic group is discriminated against either in a positive or in a negative way. A science teacher in Hungary expressed clearly the idea behind

the principle of non-differentiation: "*The emerging problems, such as disorganised or unprepared students, are independent from ethnicity and one can rather blame his/her personality.*" In France, 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 colour-blind schools students tend to group together with those of the same ethnicity; they do notice ethnic differences and play them out; they are aware of the negative consequences of their belonging and have experienced discrimination and prejudice outside of the school. "*Racial insults, jokes about others ethnic origins are an integral part of the oppositional and conflictual class dynamic.*" (notes of participant observation in a French school)

Another important difference between diversity-blind mixed schools of France and Central Europe is the employment of ethnic minority teachers. While French schools employ a large number of teachers with migrant backgrounds irrespective of the ethnic composition of the school, there are virtually no Roma teachers in Central European schools. The frequently mentioned excuse about the lack of well-educated Roma is unjustified, as even university educated Roma pedagogues do not get a job in public schools. The only position they can reach is that of a Roma teacher assistant, a project based, fixed-term placement. Roma teacher assistants work under the guidance of the teachers, and deal exclusively with Roma students. They handle problems stemming from the disadvantaged position of the students' families (truancy, mediating with families, organising extracurricular events, taking care of Roma children's behaviour), more frequently than they do academic tasks. Accordingly, they are usually not considered as genuine members of the school's teacher community, nor are they respected by the non-Roma students and parents.

The other subcategory of ethnically mixed schools includes those, which appreciate and encourage ethnic diversity in the recognition that ethnic differences coupled with differences in cultural and socio-economic background may lead to conflicts. In response, *diversity-conscious 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 that are usually underprivileged in the wider society. Such schools carefully and truly integrate students of various ethnic backgrounds and make sure that the division of students into parallel classes does not result in the concentration of any one ethnic or social group.

An important sign of the diversity-consciousness of the school is that they employ ethnic minority teachers and staff whose task is primarily to deal with issues and problems stemming from ethnic and social diversity. Danish multiethnic schools, for example, have bilingual teachers,

who help bilingual students to understand the material, and some units employ an ethnic counsellor whose duty it is to mediate as well as to provide a forum in which ethnic minority parents gain easier access to school matters. Other countries understand the role of an ethnic minority teacher in a wider sense and attribute a broader function to them: they may provide a positive role model, make children feel more comfortable. The following quote by a teacher gives us an example of what it meant to be aware of differences stemming from ethnic diversity and to handle them. He explains that a teacher has to recognise that some students do not dare to ask things that are evident to others: "*It's hard for all the children to read, very hard, but it is even harder for her because she doesn't know what "gummirøjsere" (older phrase for gumboots) are. It's not certain that all the Danish children know, but she most definitely won't know… Danish students can ask their parents, she can't.*" (Danish teacher)

All the schools in the UK investigated in the EDUMIGROM research were ethnically mixed secondary or comprehensive schools with a considerable proportion of students of minority ethnic backgrounds. Despite the fact that these schools occupied various positions in the educational market and showed great variations in interethnic relations, all of them were successful in handling ethnic and social diversity. Even in the school in which ethnic majority parents 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 the multi-cultural nature of the city's society*". (Swann, 2010)

Teachers in a diversity-conscious school treat bullying or teasing about one's ethnicity or family background very critically. *"There have been a couple of times where they teased* (name of boy) *with the fact that he's Jewish, but I came pretty harsh across on that, or talked to them about it, saying that's absolutely not ok. It's actually racism even though it's for fun. And they understand that."* (Danish teacher)

According to interviews with ethnic minority students and their parents this is not generally the case in colour-blind Central European institutions. A good example of the few diversity-conscious schools in Central Europe was a school in Hungary which provided education for children living in a poverty-stricken urban Roma slum area and introduced a highly prestigious German multilingual track, which also attracted middle-class Hungarian families. Quite uniquely in the region, the school principal was dedicated to the reduction of inequalities translating her dedication into a diversity-conscious approach. Students of various social and ethnic backgrounds were distributed among parallel classes with ethnically mixed compositions and multiculturalism was practiced during the classes as well as during extracurricular activities. However, even in this school a Roma teacher could not be employed due to the resistance from ethnic majority parents.

Irrespective of the country, diversity-conscious schools are the ones in which ethnicity is considered as an 'asset' that needs not to be hide but one can look at with pride and. It follows from this by expressing and promoting diversity, ethnic background does not become a factor of "othering" and ethnic hierarchies.

3.3. Mixed schools with internal segregation

A frequent justification for separating ethnic minority students into parallel classes within the school is that this arrangement is a necessary evil that prevents the school from white flight and what follows: i.e. the institution becoming a segregated Roma school. As mentioned previously, ethnic majority parents' tolerance towards Roma is extremely low in Central European countries; most of them decide to change schools as soon as they find out that the number of Roma children in class is above a certain level. A school principal described the bind he faced after the school was merged with a "Roma-only" school as follows: "*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 parents of the latter were convinced that 'everything was the same as usual'*" (teacher, Hungary). The EDUMIGROM research found a number of similar stories in the region: Roma students were tracked into parallel classes, specialisations was set up in order to keep non-Roma parents satisfied and to prevent white flight. The differences in the critical proportion of ethnic minority students that trigger white flight can, to some extent, be explained by the general level of tolerance towards diversity: in a European comparison Hungarian society proved to be the least tolerant towards ethnic diversity, respondents in Sweden and the UK were the most tolerant, while Germans and Danes were positioned in the middle of the axis.[8]

A frequent justification for the selecting practices is the application of meritocratic principles in organising school and teaching. A Hungarian teacher voiced the idea behind such separation: *"Classes should be divided into good and bad students […]. The reason why we need this separation is the fact that a huge gap develops between good and bad students by the 8th grade."* As a consequence of such organisation of teaching the social and ethnic composition as well as requirements and prestige of the parallel classes may strongly differ. In highly demanding prestigious classes a few to no ethnic minority students are present, while classes with lower academic demands are filled with minority children. Even in Denmark, pupils may be sorted and differentiated according to their teachers' evaluation which results in segregating practices within schools and classrooms (Moldenhawer, Kallehave 2008). A Slovak school principal formulated the outcome of such placement practices:

[8] European Social Survey 2010. The measure of tolerance towards ethnic minority was composed of the difference between how much respondents would welcome migrants with the same and with different ethnic background than their own. Romania and Slovakia were not participating in the ESS survey

"*We created a sort of classy class […] All the time, many teachers, including myself, noticed that we had not created a good atmosphere. So we gathered the best students into the one class and teachers do not want to teach in the B, C or D classes, because it is rubbish*".

The consequence of such arrangement is the concentration of students with low motivation and learning or behavioral problems in classes where teaching becomes extremely challenging and motivating students becomes almost impossible. It follows that such organisation of classes leads to damaging outcomes: low performance, high truancy and drop-out rates and stigmatised identities of children. These worrisome phenomena are coupled with frequent occurrences of open conflict, bullying, hostility between parallel classes which translate into ethnic tension within the school. It is an obvious consequence that teachers working in such classes frequently lose control and often consider teaching as a punishment: they are unable to maintain discipline or make children fulfil the minimum requirements. Segregation is even more obvious and visible in those schools in which Roma classes are isolated in distant parts of the school building. Our research identified such practices in the Czech, Slovak and Hungarian schools, but also based on the news and on antidiscrimination legal proceedings it is obvious that the stigmatising and humiliating practice of physical separation of Roma children is a practice existing across all Central European countries: "*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 shout at them and they shout back*" (Kusa 2008).

Despite such outcomes, many still argue for the legitimacy of internal segregation. Most of ethnic majority parents are clearly in favour of segregation, and some teachers are also of the opinion that it is better to group students with greatly differing ethno-social background separately. Most Roma parents and students however refute the legitimacy and the beneficial nature of ethnic segregation within the institution and are on the opinion that students attending segregated classes suffer disproportionately. EDUMIGROM data support their experiences: it shows that internal segregation deprives students not only of quality education and meaningful interethnic peer relations, but also of their dignity and self-esteem. The decision to keep Roma students apart seems to cause the most interethnic conflict in the long run. A school head from Slovakia argued manifestly about why segregation is not sustainable for long "*Those children do not know each other and if we do not know each other, we do not like each other. And if we do not like each other, we do not respect each other. And in the end we can even do something bad to each other*".

Conclusion

This chapter has attempted to identify the most significant mechanisms that lead to ethno-social segregation across Europe, and to demonstrate how various constellations of the ethno-social composition of schools may affect students' feelings towards the school and studying, their aspirations as well as peer relations in multi-ethnic public schools.

Various sources of data (OECD PISA[9], TIES[10], EDUMIGROM[11]) on ethnic minority students' school carriers have pointed out that segregated conditions deprive most students from aquiring quality education and from opportunities to obtain a valuable qualification compared to their peers studying in integrated settings. Despite these facts, ethno-social segregation is widespread and apparently resistant to anti-segregation policies. However, the nature of segregation and its consequences may differ significantly: our research demonstrated that segregation is most harmful if it coincides with a diversity-blind approach of the school and if separation has a stigmatising nature. The least favourable environment – in terms of self-esteem and aspirations – are schools in which segregation takes place within the walls of the institution; where ethnic minority and majority students are separated from each other into parallel classes, and are often also physically isolated. Even if separation is a result of other rationales – such as specialisation, or meritocratic principles, or aims at providing special attention to disadvantaged students' everyday experiences of separation along ethnic lines can be disruptive to adolescents' identity formation and may negatively influence their self-esteem and future aspirations, not to speak about their peer-group relations.

Institutional and internal segregation are, however phenomena which are deeply embedded in the essential organisation and relations of the society and thus may not be challenged with solely administrative tools. In societies, in which tolerance for multiculturalism and ethnic diversity are low any form of segregation is welcomed by most of the actors. Several examples across Europe show how anti-segregation policies are resisted by most parties involved in education, be they parents, schools personel, or local authorities.

[9] OECD PISA: OECD Programme for International Student Assessment. is an international study conducted three-yearly since 2000 in a growing number of countries (43 in 2000 and 57 in 2006). It is an internationally standardised assessment of students' performance that was jointly developed by participating countries and administered to 15-year-olds in schools.

[10] The Integration of the European Second Generation, is a collaborative and comparative research project on the descendants of immigrants from Turkey, Ex-Yugoslavia and Morocco in eight European countries.

[11] 'Ethnic Differences in Education and Diverging Prospects for Urban Youth in an Enlarged Europe' A collaborative project funded by the EU Framework 7 programme.

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