

Virág, Tünde

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Different patterns of boundaries between Roma and non-Roma neighbourhoods

Virág Tünde

(co-author: Váradi Monika)

HAS Centre for Economic and Regional Studies, Institute for Regional Studies, Budapest

G_S Social segregation, poverty, and social policy in space

Introduction

Based on empirical research results, our paper seeks an answer to what processes, and what structures created, and maintain the segregated dwellings of the population considered to be Roma in various small city, and village spaces, and what factors explain the differences appearing in the form of local patterns of spatial segregation.

Over the past decade the central issue of professional discussions on ethnic segregation has been the re-definition of the concept of the ghetto defined as the *concentrated dwelling place of poor people belonging to various ethnic minorities in large cities*, and the description, and analysis of the transformation of the area defined as *ghetto*. The most widespread definition is associated with the name of Wacquant. The definition says that while the concentration of poverty, and ethnic segregation are characteristic features of ghettos, a space qualifies as ghetto only if four of distinctive features are present: (1.) the area is clearly set apart from the rest of the settlement, and is easy to enclose. (2) The area and the families living there are often described by negative attributes by the majority society (stigma); (3) the families living there have moved here not by their own free decision, but under the some (economic, administrative, symbolic) pressure (4); and they use a parallel institution system separate from that of the majority society. The social, and institutional, spatially separated system of the ghetto serves partly the maximum economic exploitation of the excluded group, and the protection of the members of the majority from contact, and daily encounters with those living in the ghetto, and thus from the symbolic dangers that, in the eyes of the majority, are associated to ghetto dwellers. Wacquant at the same time interprets spatial and social exclusion as a dynamic process with two ideal-typical extremes – the socially heterogeneous ethnic neighbourhoods characterised by blurred boundaries, and the ghetto – the continuum between which represents the most varied, and continuously changing forms of segregated spaces Wacquant 2004, 2012).

The transformation (Wilson 1999) along spatial, and social factors of the ghettos working essentially on an ethnic basis throughout the 60s, focuses our attention on the differentiated use of the concept. On the one hand, the concept of the ghetto lends itself to interpretation only in a given social history context, and it is never independent from the internal conditions of the surrounding society. On the other hand, concepts like the institutional ghetto, the jobless ghetto (Wilson 1999), ethnic neighborhood– hyperghetto, (Wacquant 2012), or

enclave-outcast ghetto, (Marcuse 1997) are ideal types ¹ that never exist in their pure form because reality only creates mixtures of these, while the point of the research is to highlight similarities and differences (Marcuse 1997). Mario Louis Small places the emphasis also on the necessity of re-thinking the generalising concept of the ghetto, and the necessity of its differentiated use, and brings to the fore the investigation of social and ethnic heterogeneity, and the role of institutions in analysing the difference among ghettos of large American cities (Small 2009). As regards the Roma population of Eastern Europe researchers see the fundamental features of ghetto formation becoming reality in the case of ethnically homogenous villages, and urban segregated areas, adding that there are also significant numbers of Roma families living in ethnically heterogeneous spaces, and that the spatial distribution of the Roma is primarily determined by their social position, and the integrative/segregative politics of the given country (Ladányi-Szelényi 2006; Wacquant 2012).

Although the settlements that we researched, and their segregated parts are not located in large urban spaces, it is our conviction that similarly to American black ghettos or French *banlieus*, the conceptual framework created of ghettos, and changes of the spatial appearance of ethnic, and social segregation are capable of helping interpret various forms of spatial exclusion of Roma living in rural settlements (see Powell 2013). The ethnically segregated settlement parts that we investigated, and the ‘Roma segments’ of villages, and cities have themselves undergone significant changes over time, and take their places on the continuum between ethnically homogenous neighbourhoods, and the ghettos.

The status of, and the labels used to refer to various spaces, and areas inside a settlement – *ghetto*, *gypsy colony*, *gypsy city*, *chicago* – are not permanent, but change to reflect the relationship between leaders forming settlement policy, the majority population, and the poor of other ethnic groups, this relationship appearing in local practice, and discourse, and ‘policies’. That relationship determines also whether local institutions are accessible to the poor Roma population living in various segregates spaces, and the extent to which the systems of institutions, and services reserved for the majority society, and the Roma minority are separated, and segmented. In other words: has the parallel institution system characteristic of ghettos of large cities already formed, or is it in transformation?

In what follows, we are going to present various patterns of space separated and reserved for social groups considered to be Gypsy.

¹Marcuse distinguishes three types of spatial concentration created along ethnic and class situations. Contemporary black ghettos are home to those excluded from the mainstream of the city’s economic, social, and political life. Essentially different from these ghettos are the cultural, and migrant enclaves of certain cities. In addition, he also uses the concept of *citadel* to refer to spaces where families of high status separate themselves from other parts of society (Marcuse 1997).

1. Different Faces of Spatial Marginalization of Roma Segments

The elimination of Roma segregated neighborhoods started in the early 1970s and rearranged the spatial distribution of Roma families. Since to date no integration of habitation has taken place locally or nationally, segregation continues to determine spatial distribution.² The elimination of Roma segregated neighborhoods was a definitive intervention having strong effects upon the spatial and social segregation/coexistence of Roma and non-Roma. Since the programs were coordinated by the village/town councils, it was the power structures within the area of competence of the given council that designated the areas where Roma families could move from the populous Roma segments. The manner of eliminating the Roma segregated neighborhood, and whether the Roma families that moved into the village were given plots of land at the edge of the village or further away, or whether they were scattered all over the settlement, was primarily determined by the size of the Roma segment and the number of families living there, as well as by the previous coexistence between the Roma and the village populations. Local villagers were trying to make certain that the village would receive only as many Roma families as the majority population could “tolerate.” That allowed differentiating between Roma families. Eliminating Roma neighborhoods took place gradually, first by letting the “regular” Roma families deemed worthy of trust into the village which most thought as a sign of recognition by the majority society. At the same time, this course of action naturally left a concentration of “deviant” families unable to adapt in the Roma segment. Village society was more accepting towards those Roma families with whom they were sharing a workplace, who they had known from earlier periods and with whom they had shared positive experiences and events which eroded feelings of mistrust. In villages where the majority society was unable to have control over the incoming Roma, non-Roma families were shocked by new Roma neighbors appearing daily, which frequently led to the “flight” of non-Roma families.

The conditions of habitation of Roma families have been significantly transformed over the past two decades: the state granted one-time, non-refundable assistance to every family for the construction or renewal of their home based upon the number of children (the so-called “social housing subsidy”³), and later a similar funding mechanism was created for increasing the availability of used flats or homes (called “half social housing subsidy”). During the Socialist era, this form of assistance extended to Roma families with regular income and provided them with an opportunity to establish homes; however, with the same assistance losing value, and with the lack of other sources of income after the system changed, it was barely sufficient to reproduce low-quality dwelling units. Although the subsidy was rather high, by itself it was usually insufficient to construct an entire flat or house. Without adequate drainage of water, sewage, and insulation, the conditions of such houses quickly deteriorated, which was further aggravated by owners frequently heating only one room in the whole house during winter. (Órszigethy, 1999) The municipal government appointed plots for the

² The Ministry for Social and Labour Affairs started its program for the elimination of Roma segments in 2005, re-regulating its general rules gradually year by year. The program, seeking radical changes in the habitation conditions of people living in ghetto-like environments, was operating exclusively with Hungarian resources, as the provisions of the ERFA Decree disallowed using EU resources. As a result, 31 settlements started such programs with varying experiences and results.

³ Its usual abbreviation in Hungarian is *szocpol*.

construction of “social housing subsidy” homes for poor/Roma families mostly at the edges of settlements. Thereby a new form of segregation began to appear in most settlements: the “social housing row.” Frequently it was “habitation units of reduced value”⁴ from the segregated housing of the 1960s and 1970s that were rebuilt during the new “social housing subsidy” campaign in the same neighborhood, effectively perpetuating exclusion of habitation.

The settlement policies of the 1960s and 1970s caused significant societal changes in areas with tiny villages and settlements at the peripheries; due to a lack of jobs, closing institutions, and a denial of development grants, everyone that was able to do so moved out of such settlements. Due to selective migration, the societies of such settlements were homogenized, both ethnically and from the point of view of their social composition. The most characteristic factor in the creation of the “Gypsy villages” – Roma-only localities formed as a result of such processes – was not the strengthening of ethnic concentration, but rather a process of selective migration based on social status, independent of ethnicity. Stunted societies were formed in these villages where the overwhelming majority of the population has been affected by poverty, low levels of education, and permanent exclusion lasting for several generations. (Havas 1999, Ladányi-Szelényi, 2006 Virág 2006, 2010) Outmigration has been less characteristic or nonexistent in settlements—usually larger ones—with better transport and where jobs and operating institutions were easily accessible, either locally or by daily commute, thus keeping local societies differentiated and stable. Thanks to the successful strategies of assimilation based on continuous employment—primarily during the decades of socialism—and to the educational ambition which naturally appeared in the next generation, local Roma society was also differentiated in settlements enjoying more favorable circumstances. Though that process stopped at the time of the system change and reversed in many locations—since the overwhelming majority of Roma families today live excluded from the labor market and from the majority population—such differences between various types of Roma families, with respect to their relationship with the majority society and their survival strategies, have remained. These differences are also reflected by the spatial positioning of Roma within settlements, as well as in the character and extent of spatial and social segregation.

The spatial distribution of Roma families, their situation within settlements, and their connections to majority society are further complicated by the numbers and percentages of Roma within the total population. Though our research sampling included only settlements with a significant number of Roma families, there are a higher number of Roma inhabitants in the investigated towns; however, Roma percentages within the total population are low in each of these four locations. While a Roma community counting several hundred people is barely perceptible in the everyday life of a larger settlement—due to spatial segregation within large settlements or country towns and the segregated use of institutions whereby Roma and non-Roma can get by without ever seeing each other, even a few more Roma families in a smaller settlement having 300-500 people represents a significant ratio. In these

⁴ Designated as Category CS = “habitations of reduced value.” This State program, started in the late 1970s, mostly sponsored single-room homes with kitchens but without “komfort” [the term “komfort” in Hungarian refers to bathrooms, water closet, modern heating, sewers and insulation] for the Roma moving in from the former segregated neighborhoods.

contexts they cannot be ignored in everyday life or in the use of institutions. In other words, Roma and non-Roma families tend to establish an everyday practice of living together in settlements with smaller numbers—even if by necessity—while this is frequently avoided in larger, more segmented settlements.

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

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

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

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

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

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

2. Sharp Boundaries – Symbolic Walls

2.1 Sharp Boundaries within the Settlements

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

While the ghetto appears, in the eyes of the city, as a uniformly stigmatized and criminalized area, stepping inside the neighborhood one can find streets and houses of various statuses which can be understood as a reflection of the past 40 years of campaigns for eliminating Roma segments as well as the different economic situations of the different Roma families. The dwellings along the former Roma segment are still inhabited to this day, having been transformed into homes with the support of the “social housing subsidy” program in the 1970s. The “buildings of decreased value” were built at the edge of town during the 1970s, followed by a number of “social housing subsidy” houses that were built in the 1990s. In the ghetto, better built and more livable homes is situated side-by-side with shacks ready to collapse. This demonstrates how Roma families in this town have only been permitted to live on this one street, irrespective of their financial situation. At the same time, all families living in the ghetto must contend with the mountains of refuse piling up in empty lots, stray dogs, and a preponderance of alcohol, drugs and prostitution in their neighborhoods. Many families suffer from these problems and people are aware of those responsible. But families remain largely helpless with the tools at hand. Police will not take action in the ghetto, if they can avoid doing so. What helps the everyday lives of families living in the ghetto is the unceasing presence of small congregations, especially that of the Pentecostal Church, the Baptists, and the Assembly of Faith.

2.2 Sharp Boundaries around Settlements – differences between Roma-only localities

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

One of the Roma-only localities we researched is an iconic symbol of deep poverty. The outer appearance of the village mirrors local society. The public institutions have varying degrees of neglect, with only one common denominator: they all have bars on their windows. The primary school is in a deplorable state; no renovation has taken place for years, and the paint is falling off the walls. The new preschool building has been in operation for some years; a fence with locked gates and bars protects it from vandals. All the streets of the village look very similar. Houses have been razed ("*here one house disappears every week*"); there are damaged homes without fences, with only temporary cables to hook up electricity. The ownership of homes is unclear as families frequently move from one house to the next, and relatives live with one another according to what seems best at any moment. At the same time, one can find a few exclusive homes on almost every street; there are homes with sophisticated workmanship, painted in garish colors, surrounded by ornate fences with gates featuring lions. The lowest level of differentiation from local society is shown by the fact that more and more Roma families have recently enrolled their children in schools located in neighboring villages—which were otherwise struggling with a lack of students—instead of the local school where "*all they would learn is to swear.*"

In other words, better-off families living in the village do not plan their future in the same settlement, but rather in a different one. Omnipresent stray dogs also reflect the chaotic state of the village; the municipal authority has no funds to collect the animals, though everyone knows they run around unvaccinated for years. If you leave your home, you must carry a stick

with you; this is simply a rule of everyday life. The struggle for survival naturally involves theft and break-ins every day. According to the estimates of family services, about 10 percent of the adult population is in jail. There is no permanent police station in the village, but drugs are present, as is prostitution, which involves more and more young girls between the ages of 15 and 17. Bankruptcy proceedings were started against the municipal government two years ago, and last year the District Attorney charged the mayor and a significant portion of the local representatives with the embezzlement of funds paid out under the “social housing subsidy” program. Though every one of the accused defends themselves, the municipal government has largely ceased to function. The family assistance administrators work every day, together with the district nurse for young mothers and childcare and local schoolteachers, trying to fill in for the functions of the state and its system of institutions.

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

3 Spatial Reflection of the Differentiation and Formation of Layers among Roma families, a Varied Representation of Segregation Patterns

The town in has all types of variation: a stigmatized ghetto across from a better-looking segregated neighborhood, a village-like area with blurred boundaries, and an area where some Roma families live scattered throughout town. One of our expert summed it up like this: *“There are three kinds of Roma families: the ‘well-to-do’ who can easily make a living, the middle category who will listen to what they’re told, and a third type who no one can handle.”* That categorization appears in an even more differentiated form spatially: most of the “well-to-do” live along the other side of the railway line in the middle of a field, in “residential units of reduced value” built on a street far away from the center of town, or in housing built under the social housing subsidy program in an orderly neighborhood—although separated from the rest of town—with cultivated gardens and domestic animals. We had an interviewee from the municipal government who did not even regard that part of town as a segregated

neighborhood due to its orderly exterior. She placed that street within the mental map of the town, despite its physical distance. Some of the Roma families live in the poorer parts of town which look more like a village, designated in various development documents as a segregated neighborhood; however, we did not regard it as one in our research since none of our interviewees did. One reason for that is the status of this area has been greatly advanced by infrastructural developments in recent years.

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

The spatial and social differentiation of Roma families is also reflected in the system of educational institutions: the primary school in the center of the micro-region has always been considered an elite school in the region and the town. Thanks to the good reputation of the school, it has been flooded with children from better-off families from the neighboring countryside and has never suffered from a lack of students. A side school⁵ with primary classes has been operating in the ghetto neighbourhood from the 1980's, taking exclusively Roma children from the Roma segment. The city school was unable to handle the behavioral problems and low knowledge base of the children arriving at the upper four grades from the segregated side school. The school leadership decided last year to “help the children” by starting the upper four grades school as well. There has been a strong social expectation of the city to keep the ghetto school operational, and to extend it to an eight-grade institution – thus keeping “problematic children” away from the town and the “regular” children.

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

⁵ Side-school (*tagiskola*) is a 4 to 7 grade primary school subsumed as a sub-unit of a central school.

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

4 Blurred Boundaries, the Necessities of Living Together/Side by Side

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

There is a settlement in South Transdanubia, established from three formerly separate villages, with Hungarian, Roma, and Schwabisch inhabitants. One street at the edge of the former village was established for the Roma families, who previously lived in a segregated neighborhood at the edge of the forest; its name is Újtelep [New Settlement]. Later generations of Roma in Újtelep gradually moved into the increasingly vacant houses, and now Roma form the majority in the village. Despite that history, the Roma and non-Roma we interviewed there were equally disinclined (with the exception of the mayor) to look at either the streets inhabited by Roma as a world separated from the rest of the village, either in spatial or social terms. Local discourse on poverty and Roma does not see poverty as an ethnic problem, as it affects both Roma and non-Roma. Teachers talk about “*blonde Roma children*” born from mixed marriages. The collective memory of the village includes experiences of shared work, commuting, and pursuing leisure activities together, and there are still client-patron relationships between Roma and non-Roma who jointly use the institutions

of the village such as the preschool and the primary school. (Another characteristic is that both institutions of education have Roma and German ethnic programs of education, and that not one local person expressed wonderment when a talented Roma student once participated in a county competition for the recitation of German poetry.) In this case, we can say that the mere fact that Roma—even if impoverished—live intermixed with others does not give rise to local inhabitants regarding their streets and areas as segregated or homogenous units from an ethnic or social point of view. The local Roma were presented in the Baranya County area as peaceful, “regular” folks, and coexistence was unanimously described as being free of conflict. Where conflicts were mentioned at all, it was not linked to “our Gypsies,” i.e. Roma families who had been living there for a long time, but rather to Roma who recently moved in, and who were perceived as having a different culture and an unwillingness to integrate.

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

Conclusion

The forms of spatial and social exclusion are determined by the social histories and the patterns of ethnic co-existence locally established in the settlements, the regional positions of these micro-regions and the characteristics of settlement structure. There are significant differences in social history: while in some settlements several ethnic communities (Hungarians, Germans, Beash Roma, Vlach Roma and Hungarian Roma) have cohabited for a long time, ethnic mixing is limited to Roma living alongside. The geographical distribution of Roma families as well as their position within the settlement, and their relationships with the majority society correlate with the size of the settlement, and the number and ratio of the Roma in the entire population. Although the communities targeted by our fieldwork had a considerable number of Roma families, in the Great Plain in the settlements with larger populations, and in small cities functioning as centres of a region of dwarf villages there were more Roma in absolute figures, which, however, amounted to a lower ratio among the entire population. In settlements and small cities of larger populations Roma groups of several hundred are hardly visible or noticeable during the daily life of the settlement given that the increasingly segregated use of space and institutions reduces the chances of encounters, and relationships of Roma and non-Roma. However, in small communities and dwarf villages of a population of a few hundred already some Roma families amount to a high ratio, and daily encounters are inevitable in public areas and institutions. That means that in small communities Roma and non-Roma families, even if under pressure to do so, acquired the daily practices of coexistence and cooperation that, in larger communities are possible to avoid.

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

The segregated neighborhoods do show a great variation from settlement to settlement, and sometimes even within the same settlement. Social distance between Roma and non-Roma is shown by either sharp or somewhat blurred physical or mental boundaries dividing Roma streets from the rest of settlement, which also determine the opportunities for social contacts and relations. Another factor that usually reflects the various assimilation attempts of the 1970s and 1980s, and today's levels of differentiation within local Roma society, along with its layered forms, is how many Roma families live in segregated neighborhoods versus how many live scattered around the given settlement. One result of the territorial rearrangement processes of the 1970s and 1980s has been the process of ghettoization in villages, a special pattern of segregation. At the same time, we must differentiate between two kinds of Roma-only localities, although both share similar statistical characteristics: one type of ghetto village—generally a criminalized settlement—is where people live in extreme poverty, struggle with a total lack of social organization and a lack of connection to the institutions of the majority society; the other is a socially and ethnically homogenous village where everyday

life is orderly and people have connections to the institutions of the majority society and the informal labor market.

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