Minority towards Majority
– What makes Roma students change their self-reported ethnic identity?

Tudományos Diákköri Dolgozat

Konzulens: Kisfalusi Dorottya

Andrásí Krisztina
ELTE PPK
Alapképzés
Pszichológia szak
III. évfolyam

Horlai Sára
Társadalomtudományi Kar
Mesterképzés
Szociológia szak
I. évfolyam

2013. március 25.

A BCE Közgáz Campus Tudományos Diákköri Konferenciáját a TÁMOP-4.2.2/B-10/1-2010-0023 azonosítójú “A tudományos képzés műhelyeinek átfogó fejlesztése a Budapesti Corvinus Egyetemen” című projektje támogatja.
Table of contents

Abstract ......................................................................................................................... 4
Introduction .................................................................................................................. 4
Theory ........................................................................................................................... 7
Hypotheses .................................................................................................................... 23
Data and sample .......................................................................................................... 24
Methods ......................................................................................................................... 25
Results ......................................................................................................................... 28
Conclusions .................................................................................................................. 30
Discussions ................................................................................................................... 31
Abstract

Research concerning the definition of ethnic identity indicates that various classification systems may provide different information. Moreover ethnic identity, being both relational and contextual, should be treated as a continuously changing process. The formation of one’s identity occurs through one’s identification with significant others. This is especially true among adolescents, when peer groups play a crucial role in creating one's identity. Our aim is to reveal the most influential factors which incline secondary school Roma students to alter their minority identity.

Therefore we assume, that identity change of Roma students can be effected by:
1. How their peers classify their ethnic identity.
2. The amount of Roma peers in the class.
3. The strength of their ethnic identification

Our research is based on a subsample (N=23 classes) of a national network panel study (OTKA K 81336). For data analysis, contingency table analysis and multilevel regression models are used1.

Introduction

Both international and national research examined the influence of the context on identity, and particularly on minority identity change (Marcia, 1980; Ladányi and Szelényi, 1997; Song, 2003; Csepeli and Simon, 2004; Doyle and Kao, 2007). As the formation of one’s identity occurs continuously through one’s identification with significant others, identity, being both relational and contextual, should be treated as a continuously changing process (Hall, 1996; Berger 1986; Stets and Burke 2000, 230.). Contraint factors as historical time, geographical situation (social and cultural milieu of the given region), politics, family, socioeconomic background, interethnic relations, classification by others, phenotype, education (the way to assimilation but it can also be the way to gain consciousness about the ethnic heritage, history, etc.) and religion can influence the way individuals relate to their ethnic heritage.

1 Special thanks to Bereményi Ábel Bálint, Dorottya Kisfalusi and the RECENS group
However, in identity research there is little about the influence of the school environment on minority children’s identity formation. Identity inconsistency and change are associated with adolescent development. Adolescents examine and question their group memberships which is particularly important in the case of minority adolescents. They have to evaluate both the values concerning their cultural heritage and those of the receiving society (Crocetti, Rubini, Luyckx and Meeus, 2008). Their concerns about ethnicity, shifts from learning to understanding its meaning (Spencer, Icard, Harachi, Catalano and Oxford, 2000). Csizmadia and her colleagues refer to empirical results which shows that almost two thirds of the respondents changed their minority identification between the age of thirteen and fifteen (Csizmadia, Brunsma and Cooney, 2012).

Friendships also play a crucial role in identity formation during this period. It has only been recently recognised in terms of identity change, that the influence of cognitive mechanisms on identification lag in relation to changes in the adolescent social structure (McFarcland and Pals, 2005, 309.). School classes have a particular importance because in Hungary, classes are relatively closed units and opportunities for moving outside the boundaries of the classroom are low, therefore the effect of class composition is more powerful.

We assume that children with multiple or flexible ethnic identities are more likely to be successful in the process of integration to the society, therefore we aim to explore the factors that could contribute to more open, more fluid identities. In that sense, school is the most important institution of identity formation because it could be the place where minority children become acquainted with their majority peers, and can adopt to majority mainstream role models. Cooper and his colleagues argue that a student’s ability to move between the borders of different ethnic identities affects their chances of using educational institutions as stepping stones to their further education, work experiences and a meaningful adult life (Cooper, Jackson, Azmaita and Lopez, 1998, 3.). Messing Vera and her co-authors argue that identity formation of minority students can have a „potential impact on attitudes towards schooling and education, and thereby on the prospects for social mobility and integration into the majority society” (Messing, Neményi and Vajda, 2011, 96.). According to Forray (1998), gypsy families consider 11-12 year old adolescents as adults, and expect boys to work and girls to start their own families. Good academic achievement has low prestige in their traditions. As the children experience discrimination by the majority and rarely have success in school, they will choose their families over fighting for integration into the larger society.
In addition, to fulfill the expectations of their families, Roma students are staying away from school more frequently than non-Roma students, which is not tolerated by the school administration. Hence the low level of education among Roma people is based on rational decisions. It is not surprising that Roma parents do not support their children in their studies as Hungarian schools are not the schools of Roma children (Csongor, 1998).

Our findings can address concerns of how can a class be composed so it can function effectively and can also contribute to our understanding of processes that are framing ethnic identification in our society.

Therefore in the present study our aim is to examine the magnitude and the direction of identity shifts and to explore possible factors that can contribute to a change in self-reported identity. As we do not have data considering the reasons why students are choosing a certain identity, we can only measure the change in the self-reported ethnic identity, and its relation to various contextual factors. We still think that examining this phenomenon is sociologically relevant, in spite of the fact that we can not measure whether their identity has indeed changed or just superficially. As we have already mentioned, identity is both relational and contextual, and the salience of ethnicity can depend on the given context. Children may change their self-reported ethnic identity if they face prejudice but it does not necessarily mean that they have truly changed their personal identity.

We will outline the relevant psychological, social psychological, anthropological and sociological theories, emphasising the impact of adolescence and minority origin on identity formation. First, we will introduce the most important concepts and definitions of ethnic identity. Afterwards, we will move on to the psychology and social psychology literature concerning identity in general, social psychology theories on identity and the influence of context on its formation. Minority identity formation will also be discussed in more detail. We will describe theories concerning identification in anthropology and sociology. Then we will continue with discussing the questions why people are classified as Roma, and why are they classifying themselves as Roma. In the following section, we will shortly sum up the history of Romani identity formation in Hungary, then we will discuss the three possible effects of identification which are in the focus of this study. The first is the strength of minority identity and the existence of multiple identities, then comes the effect of the relations with the members of the ethnic minority and finally, we introduce literature on the effect of peers and school on ethnic identity formation. Afterwards, our hypotheses, data and sample will be
discussed, then we will move on to the introduction of the methods we used for data analyses. Finally, we will outline our results, conclusion and make suggestions for further research.

Theory

Clariﬁing the concepts of ethnicity and race is very important because instead of melting into a “global culture”, different cultural identities are getting even more and more diverse with the high volume of immigration and mixed marriages. In many contemporary societies, ethnicity is one of the most important factor in determining social divisions. Miri Song (2003) conceptualise an ethnic group as a group of people who believe in common ancestry, and assign particular importance to symbolic elements as religion, kinship, shared territory, language, physical appearance and identity. More than that, they also bear a certain consciousness of their cultural distinctiveness. Ethnic identity can be conceptualised as „a fundamental aspect of the self that is associated with an individual’s sense of belonging and commitment to an ethnic group and includes an individual’s thought, feelings, perceptions and behaviours associated with ethnic group membership” (Spencer et al., 2000, 365.). Individuals can actively participate in the formation of their ethnic identity, therefore identities can not be considered to be stable, they are continuously subject to change.

Members of ethnic minorities are often referred to as racial groups. The invention of the concept of race served for the justification of the distribution of power between groups over, by differentiating them on the basis of biological distinctiveness. Nowadays, the term race signifies the distinction between human groups on the basis of phenotypical differences such as skin color, rather than genetic differences (Song, 2003).

In contemporary theories, there is a general agreement on the socially constructed nature of race and ethnicity. Based on the research of Ladányi and Szelényi in different Eastern-European countries, overlappings between ethnic classiﬁcation made by the environment and the self-reported ethnicity of the individual - in other words, the rigidity of the classiﬁcation system - could largely differ from country to country. They found that the rigidity of the classiﬁcation system was more ﬁxed in Bulgaria like in the United States of America, but more ﬂuid in Hungary and Romania similarly to Brazil. Therefore, they conclude, that race and ethnicity are determined by social mechanisms rather than biological or genetical factors (Ladányi and Szelény, 2001). As there is much intertwining between ethnic and racial groups, in the following theoretical review we will be referring to theories about both ethnic and racial identity.
Whether the formation of ethnic identity depends on the choice of the individual or on external constraint factors such as history, politics or region, is a debated issue. Past research about ethnic identity indicates that both individual and network characteristics contribute to an understanding of ethnic self-identification (McFarcland and Pals, 2005). In order to explore the different mechanisms of the formation of ethnic identities, we will start with the evaluation of psychological and social psychological theories of identity formation.

Identity development can be described as “a process involving constant negotiation among different parts of the self, among different times of the self, and among the different settings or systems to which each of us belong” (Melucci, 1996, 49.). These parts include different group memberships such as age, gender, ethnicity and religion.

While the term identity is often used to refer to personal identity, social identity has also been observed in detail during the past fifty years. These two constructs are frequently studied separately while they are inherently interconnected (Azmitia, Syed and Radmacher, 2008). This interconnectedness is even more salient in the case of deprived demographic groups such as ethnic minorities, and these groups are generally more aware of their social identities than people in more privileged positions.

According to the psychosocial developmental theory of German-born developmental psychologists Erik Erikson (1950), identity formation is the results of a normative crisis which typically takes place during adolescence and early adulthood, and has both personal and social aspects. Erikson described this period as the stage where the main task of the individual is to create an independent identity from their parents. According to the theory (Erikson, 1950), there are eight stages of development, all eight centered around one crisis that the individual has to solve in order to develop. Each stage has two possible outcomes, and individuals can reach certain psychosocial virtues as a results of completing one stage. Identity formation can be the results of the fifth stage of development where the other possible outcome of the crisis is role confusion. For Erikson, identity means answering the questions “Who am I?”, and “How do I fit in to society?”. The virtue to gain in the stage is fidelity or loyalty.

This stage was later studied and described in more detail by American psychologist, James Marcia (1980). According to his theory, the process of identity formation consists of exploration and commitment, and the stage has four possible outcomes: foreclosure, identity diffusion, moratorium and identity achievement. Foreclosure refers to a state where the individual commits to an identity without exploration. Identity diffusion is a state without
exploration or commitment while a person in the phase of moratorium is actively exploring identity alternatives. Identity achieved is a phase where both exploration of alternatives and commitments have occurred.

The task of identity formation is an especially complex one when it comes to the members of minority groups such as ethnic minorities. When students from an ethnic minority enter secondary education, they are already familiar with many aspects of their ethnicity. For example, they recognize the different labels and properties by which their minority ethnicity is characterized, and have already formed the basis of their attitude towards their ethnicity (Cole and Cole, 2006). There are people who simply adapt to the values and culture of the majority, and this way, they do not attempt to explore their ethnicity, while some others explore their ethnic identity actively. While context has an important part in exploration and commitment in through identity formation for everyone, its role is especially influential when it comes to ethnic identity (Phinney, 1989).

Ethnic socialization is an important part of ethnic identity formation. This concept refers to both the explicit and implicit messages that are communicated about ethnicity (Hugher et al., 2006). Implicit and explicit messages vary from context to context, with family and school context being the most influential ones when it comes to ethnic socialization. This is the reason why it is also important to study the effects of school context on identity. School context includes teacher-student interactions, peer relationships, and overall school culture (DeCuir-Gunby, 2009; Lannegrand-Willems and Bosma, 2006).

Context, which among other things influences identity formation, is described in more detail in the Ecological Systems Theory (Bonfenbrenner, 1977). According to this theory, there are four levels of interactions that form the context of and for the individual, which are highly interconnected. The microsystem consists of context directly influencing an individual such as the family, or school. The mesosystem refers to the interaction of two microsystems. To use the previous example, the values conveyed by the parents and the school can have an interactive effect on the identity formation of an adolescent. An exosystem has an indirect influence on the development of the individual. Finally, the macrosystem refers to the wider socio-cultural context.

Adolescence is a particularly important period of development both when it comes to identity and friendship formation (Cole and Cole, 2006). During these years, there are several changes in peer relations: the size of one’s peer group typically rises in this period, and peer
relationships become both more frequent and more intensive. Attitudes towards and values about friendship also change during adolescence: while the most important basis of a relationship in childhood is participation in games and playing activities, adolescents choose their friends based on factors such as common interests, shared values and attitudes, loyalty and intimacy. In this way, it can be said that friendships acquire a different quality compared to the companionships formed in childhood (Blos, 1966), and friends become more similar to each other during these years (Cole and Cole, 2006). Friend selection and identity formation are interrelated to a large extent. People prefer similarity over difference when it comes to making friends, this phenomenon is named homophily in the relevant literature (McPherson, Smith-Lovin and Cook, 2001). While homophily can be based on various personal characteristics such as age, race, gender, religion, education, ethnic homophily remains its most dominant form. Racial or ethnic characteristics are visible, and people primarily tend to select based on these surface attributes.

Relationships based on loyalty and intimacy are prerequisites for mutual tolerance, feedback and understanding in everyday discussions which serve as important basis for self-exploration and identity formation (Cole and Cole, 2006). Therefore, peer relationships have important influence on creating one's identity, and self-concept, and influences judgements made about others and the world in general (Hartup, 2006).

In a study by Jean S. Phinney (1989), based on interviews and questionnaires with tenth-grade students in the United States of America from different ethnic backgrounds (Asian-American, Black, Hispanic, and White), the stages of minority identity formation were explored based on the theory of James Marcia. Phinney found that the phases are similar, and devised a three-stage model which includes unexamined ethnic identity (foreclosure and diffusion), ethnic identity search (moratorium), and ethnic identity achieved. Of all the students participating in the research, 50% have not explored their ethnicity, 25% were in the stage of moratorium and were exploring actively, and around 25% have already explored and were committed to their identity (Phinney, 1989). An unexamined ethnic identity can either mean that the person lacks concern for their ethnic identity (diffuse), or that the person bases their view about ethnicity on the opinion of others, and not personal exploration.

Empirical analyses show that there is significant fluctuation in exploration, commitment and identity status achievement in minority adolescent students that can be connected to family cohesion, proportion of same ethnic-peers and ethnic centrality (Kiang, Witkow, Baldelomar and Fuligni, 2008). The results of a study based on a sample of
European, Asian and Latin American adolescent students suggest that students with stronger family ties and larger proportion of same-ethnic peers are more likely to explore their ethnic identity. In the case of students who reported their ethnicity to be a central aspect of their self, exploration and belonging was more frequent compared to their peers who reported ethnicity as less central (Kiang, Witkow, Baldelomar and Fuligni, 2008).

Identity formation is influenced by both immediate, and wider social context, and individuals vary in their motivations - which can greatly affect the construction of their identity. Social Identity Theory (SIT) places human interactions on a scale where the two end points are interpersonal interactions and inter-group interactions. Tajfel and Turner (1979) define social identity as the part of a person’s identity which stems from group membership. This includes evaluations about the properties of the group, as well as prescriptions about the ideal group properties. The theory also assumes people are motivated to maintain positive self-esteem which can be reached partly through positive social identity.

Social identity and identification often leads to social categorization. This process tends to create strong ingroup and outgroup categories where differences within the group are perceived to be smaller than compared to the outgroup. This may lead to stereotyping, and prejudice. An extension of SIT is Self-Categorization Theory (SCT) (Turner et al., 2010) which focuses on the question how do categories change in different contexts. It states that the self is not a fixed construct but is often determined by intergroup context. Social identity is a salient and central part in the lives of people who belong to an ethnic minority group, although this also changes between the different stages of development (Tajfel and Turner, 1979).

According to the self-esteem assumption of SIT, the aim of the individuals is to have a positive social identity. In the case of minorities, these groups are often associated with negative concepts, stereotypes and prejudice by the majority of a society. There are four strategies that members of minority groups may choose to resolve conflicting (Stangor, 2004). First, the individual may try to leave their disadvantaged group physically. This option is not available to all the minority groups, therefore a second possible strategy is to only leave the group psychologically by distancing themselves from the group. A third option is to change the perception of the group from negative to positive by, for example, focusing on dimensions that are favourable in comparison to other groups. Finally, an individual may choose to participate in actions which aim to change the social situation of the group such as becoming an activist.
Some theories doubt that this motivation to maintain a positive self-esteem always triggers actions to change either actual social position, or just to create a psychological distance. Jost and Banaji argue that people are generally motivated to justify the status quo (Jost, Banaji and Nosek, 2004). According to their System Justification Theory, even groups who are disadvantaged in a certain society can be motivated to maintain the social order which - with other factors - can lead to the internalization of inferior status and negative properties associated with their social group. Interestingly, the motive to justify an existing social order can sometimes be the strongest in individuals from disadvantaged social positions.

Maintaining positive self-esteem is not the only motivation connected to social identity. According to the Identity Process Theory (IPT) of Glynis Breakwell, the concept of threatened identity is also very important when considering minority groups (Breakwell, 2010). In her theory, identity is defined as a “dynamic social product of the interaction of the capacities for memory, consciousness and organised construal with the physical and societal structures and influence processes which constitute the social context” (Blackwell, 2010, 6.3.).

The identity structure consists of contents, and a value attached to each content, that is being revised constantly. Actual social context and historical period highly influence identity formation. Social context refers to both interpersonal networks, group and social-category memberships, intergroup relationships, as well as social influence processes such as education. These latter form the basis of social representations, norms and attributions that create the “mental” context of identity formation.

Blackwell (2010) emphasizes the importance of guidance principles which are culture and time specific: these define desirable states for the structure of identity. She brings an example: “in Western post-industrial cultures the four prime guidance principles discernible are desire for continuity, distinctiveness, self-efficacy and self-esteem” (Blackwell, 2010, 6.4.). Apart from social factors, identity is also determined by, for example, personal agency and cognitive abilities.

A threat to identity can be regarded as a state the individual is not able to accomplish the guidance principles for that certain society with the dynamic processes of assimilation-accomodation. In Western cultures this could mean that these processes are not able to operate according to the principles of continuity, distinctiveness, self-efficacy and self-esteem.
The conscious perception of this threat creates a state where the individual is motivated to change to comply with these principles. Blackwell (2010) draws attention to the importance of coping strategies that individuals use in order to deal with this threat. These strategies include the choice of denial, as well as participation in activism (Kende, 2005). The selection of coping strategy is based on several factors in interaction: type of threat, prior identity structure, the salience of the social contexts and available cognitive and emotional capacities. They can also be present on different levels: intra-psychic, interpersonal and intergroup. Being a member of a minority group, social deprivation and cultural difference is often associated with identity threat (Kende, 2005).

Refering to Messing and her co-authors, identity formation strategies of ethnic or racial minorities is largely dependent on the given social context (such as possibilities and benefits of social integration) and on the opportunities and aspirations of the individual. They also argue that identity formation - partially depending on the social status of the minority and the differentiation imposed on them by the majority - results in maintained or refused ethnic identities (Messing et al, 2011). Crocetti and her co-authors suggest that in terms of acculturation, ethnic minority adolescents can either choose the “integration strategy” - identification with both majority and minority culture -, the “separation strategy” - identification occurs mainly with the minority and low attachment to the majority culture - and an “ambivalent strategy” - low attachment to both minority and majority culture (Crocetti et al. 2008).

Research have also explored strategies that Roma people choose to form their identity. Belénesi Éva introduces three identification strategies of the Roma: 1. strong ethnic identification which is characterised by the strong attachment to the traditions and values of their ethnic group, 2. bicultural identification which is characterised by the identification with two ethnic groups, 3. mainstream identification which is characterised by the strong attachment to majority culture and traditions. She refers to the concepts of identity building by Manual Castells (1997) which consists of legitimating identity - the role of institutions in society that can dominate the identity formation of certain actors, resistance identity - the act of individuals who are stigmatized in the society, to produce different principles of their identity that are in opposition to the former, the legitimating identity, in order to survive. The last one is project identity, which refers to the act of individuals who are building a new identity, in order to redefine the formerly negative elements of their identities (Belénesi, 2002).
As we have already mentioned, constraint factors as historical time, political system and minority policies, geographical situation, education, socioeconomic background, family, traditions, sociodemographic factors, classification by others, status in the given society and interethnic relations can influence the way individuals relate to their ethnic heritage. In the following sections we will outline relevant theories regarding the above mentioned phenomena.

The right to practice minority traditions is limited by the norms and expectations of the given society. Identity issues of Roma are very complicated because these people are living in diaspora with no claimed homeland (Belénesi, 2002). Csepeli and Simon state that „the history of Roma in Central and Eastern Europe in the last few decades was one of non-identification” (Csepeli and Simon, 2004, 131.) The formation of double identities were not supported by the socialist regime, fast assimilation was required to the Hungarian society. Today Roma people can practice more agency in formulating their ethnic identities, but there is still no political and societal consensus about who can be considered as a Roma or what is the meaning of Roma identity (Szabó and Örkény, 1997). Parallel with these notions, Havas and his colleagues (1998) conclude that in spite of the many societal changes in the last century, neither symbolic nor real ethnic boundaries have changed significantly (Havas et al., 1998).

Ancestors of the Romani people migrated to Hungary between the sixteenth and the eighteenth century, and while they learnt to speak Hungarian, they kept their Romani language for a long time. In the socialist era, the state aimed to improve the situation of Roma people. As there were lot of new work opportunities for unqualified workers, Roma people had the possibility to emerge from their highly deprived position, and this process contributed to the tendency among Roma to identity themselves as non-Roma. This rapid change of lifestyle and quick integration to the society generated the loss of ethnic identity for many Roma people. The amount of people who spoke the Romani language was also decreasing rapidly and this is a contious tendency even today (Csepeli and Simon, 2004). Mutual help, solidarity and shared interests can help minority groups to practice significant agency in their situation in society, while according to these historical processes, Roma people are not able to practice any of the above mentioned phenomena (Messing et al., 2011).
According to Csepeli György and Simon Dávid, different disciplines of social sciences have different approaches concerning the ethnic identification of the Roma. Anthropological theories emphasise that Roma people do not form a homogenous group, they can not be defined by common ancestry or shared territory, and they only see their ethnic group as homogenous when they are differentiating themselves form the gadjos (non-Roma). Contrarily, sociologists assign more importance to the generally low status of the Roma in society, they put the concept of ethnicity in a conflict theory framework, and treat the group as if it was homogenous. Lastly, theories of human history focus on the impact of historical processes on Roma identity formation. Csepeli and Simon argue that while the focus of anthropology is more closer to the way Roma people see themselves, the last two disciplines mainly reflect the opinion of the majority of society.

There are three main subgroups of Roma in Hungary, the Romungro (or „Hungarian”) Gypsies, Vlach (or „Wallachian” or „Olah”) Gypsies and Boyash (or „Beás”) Gypsies. They speak different languages, have different traditions, and occupied different roles in the Hungarian society. They are also differing based on the extent of integration/assimilation to the Hungarian society. Ladányi and Szelényi are asserting that language is one of the most important aspects of the self-identification of Roma. In case a person speaks any of the Romani languages, they are more likely to have a strong Roma identity. Even though we are aware of the differences between Roma subgroups, our research has very limited data on subgroup affiliations - probably because in the recent decades, the significance of subgroups in the lives of adolescents is considerably low - therefore we could not explore its possible effects on identity formation.

With regards to education, results of past research shows, that it can have controversial results. It can happen that an educated Roma person will have a strong or stronger ethnic identity than before, but it is also very likely that this person will aim to assimilate to the majority, and will hide or get rid of their Roma identity (Csaba and Závecz, 2011; Kende, 2005). Csongor (1998) argues that Roma students in secondary grammar schools are rarely choose Roma as their self-reported ethnic identity, because these children are usually in a good socio-economic position or find assimilation important.

Minority children who are trying to acquire the mainstream role model of majority children, are often referred to as “acting white” in the relevant literature (Fryer and Torelli, 2005)
Csizmadia and her colleagues (2012) found that neighbourhood racial composition predicts the salience of race for multiracial youth. Consequently as the amount of same-race people rising in the community, race becomes more salient to its members.

In Hungary, the size of the settlement can highly influence the relation to ethnic identities and assimilation procedures of Roma people. In their study, Janky and Kemény draw attention to two parallel processes. In small settlements that are relatively segregated, traditions are more easily sustained because interactions are wedged in the borders of the community, which mainly consists of relatives and other Roma people. On the other hand, in big cities, there are more possibilities to accomplish civil organisations, schools and organise cultural and political programs (Janky and Kemény, 2000). Messing and her co-authors are also arguing that Roma people who are living in small segregated settlements, ‘ghettos’, face a special situation in the society. They argue that „conventional ethnic markers like language, customs, or religion have only very limited significance, if any at all. Instead of communal ties, feelings of not belonging anywhere dominate in the ghetto. (Messing, et al., 2011, 99.). Because of the lack of future prospects, youth in the ghetto usually continue with the way of life (marital rules, gender-specific career choices) seen in the family. Parallel with these findings, Lubbers and her colleagues (2007) found, that respondents with a dense family network had stronger ethnic identifications than others.

As we have already mentioned families play a major role in the way individuals are formulating their ethnic identities. Through ethnic or racial socialization, parents teach their children about race as it relates to their social status in society, memberships in racial groups and interactions with members in and outside of their racial group. Parents race related experiences have an impact on how they talk about race with their children. Csizmadia and her colleagues identifies three general patterns of racial/ethnic socialization. The first one is cultural socialization, which means parents share their knowledge about their cultural heritage with their children. The second form is the “preparation for bias”, which means they teach their children how to cope with discrimination. Finally the authors refer to the process by which parents are instilling racial mistrust through the socialization of their children (Csizmadia, Brunsam and Cooney, 2012).

Socio demographic factors, such as age and gender can also influence minority identification. With regards to age, as we have already stated earlier, fluctuations in identity are more frequent during adolescence, younger children are more prone to identity crisis. Gender can also has an impact on minority identity formation because of the certain typical
gender roles that are assigned to the members of an ethnic community. Some research found that male adolescents desire greater autonomy than female adolescents and are less closely allied with peer groups (McFarland and Pals, 2005), and also that they are more strongly related to their Roma identity (Koltai, 2011).

Ladányi and Szelényi (2001) assert that people who regard themselves as Roma usually have more children, and are more likely to be unemployed. The effect of the socio-economic status was also significant in the study of Csaba and Závecz (2011), they found that even if the environment regards someone as Roma, if the agent is living under good material conditions, they will be more likely to decline Roma identity.

Status in the society also have a particular importance in the way minorities form their ethnic identity. Ladányi and Szelényi claim, that self-reported identities often change in time, which is partly dependent on the extent of prejudice in the society, because ethnic minorities may hide their ethnic identity if admitting it would contribute to a deprived position. As minorities are usually occupying low status positions and facing prejudice in the society, changing their ethnic identity could mean that they aim to attain higher status positions and/or counter prejudice (Ladányi and Szelényi, 1997).

Considering the current situation in Hungary, Belénesi (2002) argues that for many Roma in the country, roma identity means a stigmatization, racial prejudice and stereotypic categorization, which leads to a sense of negative identity and hiding or denying this identity. L. Ritók Nóra - head of the Igazgyöngy Foundation which organization has introduced new methods of social inclusion of Roma people in the past few years - had several opportunities to discuss the issue of minority identity with Roma children. In her book, she writes that most of these children say, in case they enter secondary education, they would aim to hide their romani background, otherwise they would be discriminated by their classmates and teachers (L. Ritók, 2011).

In terms of identity formation of Roma people Csepeli and Simon (2004) emphasise the importance of the effect of the classification of the majority. In their opinion Roma identity construction can only take two forms, it can either be imposed or adopted. To explore how others classify one’s ethnicity is also important, if we are aiming to examine discrimination based on negative ethnic stereotypes (Telles and Lim, 1998).

Ladányi and Szelényi address the problem of ethnic classification based on the stratification theory of Pierre Bourdieu. According to this theory, people are constantly
fighting for the power to classify themselves positively and others negatively in order to maintain or raise their status in the society. This is particularly important in periods where the social system is altered and people are fighting to attain a high position in the society. An easy way to exclude others from desired social positions is to attach negative values to ethnicity and this way construct an ethnic hierarchy in the society. A similar process is to identify poverty with ethnicity and claim that - because of genetic or cultural aspects - they are responsible for their position (Ladányi and Szelényi, 1997).

Contrary to this theory, Havas Gábor and his colleagues are arguing that ethnic categories can not be transformed this easily, and economic and social aspects of ethnic identity are not that important as Ladányi and Szelényi state. People leading a more similar lifestyle to the majority can still can and will be classified as Roma by a major part of their non-Roma environment (Havas, Kemény and Kertesi, 1998).

Even though there are certain correspondence between the meanings of race and ethnicity for the members of the majority, these meanings can also vary from person to person, as an example the meaning might be different for someone who frequently interacts with members of ethnic groups or for someone who is an expert. According to Ladányi and Szelényi, experts - such as specialists of social or educational institutions, representatives of local administration - identified Roma communities based on their lifestyle(s). In case the given family was living under better socio-economic conditions, experts were more likely to report uncertainty about their ethnicity. They also argue that certain people may classify based on the concept of “one drop of blood” which means that the individual had at least one ancestor who was Roma. In large cities, experts mainly regard people with frequent societal and social problems to be of Roma origin. They can also classify people as Roma based on their own intuition which is probably typical to the ordinary people would do it.

Based on their research, Janky and Kemény (2003) conclude that the environment regards a person as Roma if their skin color is brown and/or if they have Roma origins (for example their parents are Roma people). Regarding international research on minority identity change, individuals whose phenotype is more similar to that of whites, may have greater latitude over racial choices than those who have darker skin tones (Doyle and Kao, 2007, 419.) Consequently, individuals with more typical minority phenotype are less likely to change their minority identity because of the contraints of their physical appearance. Csepeli and Simon have also identified certain characteristics such as, perceptions of skin color, family name and lifestyle, which can contribute to the construction of the Roma category in
Hungary. They also argue that patterns of categorisation can depend on the ethnic and socio-demographic status of the ones that are making the categories (Csepeli and Simon, 2004).

As we have already mentioned in our introduction, there is a gap between the ethnic classification of the majority and the ethnic self-identification of the minority, which is referred to as racial concordancies, in the relevant literature (Doyle and Kao, 2007). Most investigations show that less people identify with ethnic minorities than that are assigned to these groups by the majority. The size of this gap can depend on factors such as the extent of residential segregation of the minority - with the higher levels of segregation, the correspondence is also higher - or the volume of racial prejudice perceived by the minority - the more they perceive, the more likely that they will hide their ethnic identity (Ladányi and Szelényi, 2001; Csepeli and Simon, 2004).

Ethnic classification by the environment can function as a self-fulfilling prophecy, because the ones that are regarded as Roma by their environment will also be treated as Roma (Ladányi and Szelényi, 1997).

Relations with similar people can be rewarding in many different ways. It is an important source of reinforcement for one’s behaviour and beliefs (Lubbers, 2003). Several same-race friends are needed for social support, especially if they are in a minority position (Quillian, 2003).

Parallel to these findings, already quoted in an earlier part in our theoretical review, from Kiang and his co-authors (2008), students are more likely to explore their ethnic identity in a community where there is a larger proportion of same-ethnic peers. Csepeli and Simon assert that the existence of a Roma environment has a very vehement effect on the identification of Roma individuals. They offer two possible explanations to this phenomenon, by referring to the concepts influence and selection. Regarding the first one, the fact that Roma identity is reinforced daily by the community, members will be strongly affected by it, while the second explanation holds the idea that Roma people who have strong ethnic identities and are interested in maintaining them, will choose to stay in these communities (Csepeli and Simon, 2004). Kende (2005) concludes from the interviews she made with young Roma university students that during the formation of their Roma-intellectual identity, relations with other Roma intellectuals, have a particular importance. Koltai (2011), however, claims that relations with other Roma individuals only partly explains the strength of Romani
identity. According to her results, education and socio-demographic factors can have a stronger effect on the formation of Roma identity.

McFarland and Pals found that even if minority adolescents had the necessary support in school from other minority adolescents, their identity was more likely to be inconsistent than that of majority students (McFarland and Pals, 2005).

Kende (2005) states that the ethnic composition of the school class has a generally high influence on identity formation. Roma identities vary differently between school contexts where classmates are homogenously non-Roma, homogenously Roma or of mixed ethnic backgrounds.

The way the question of race and ethnicity is addressed in the school is mainly influenced by the structure and culture of the school (Decuir-Gunby and Cooper, 2011). In their research conducted with young adolescents, Szabó and Örkény (1997) have found that these students obtain low levels of intercultural knowledge. Most of them hold prejudiced views about Roma people, but they still seem to be more tolerant than adults. Their sentiments towards minority students are only slightly related to their personal experiences. The authors conclude that the deficient intercultural knowledge of 14-15 years old adolescents are some part dependent on their family background, but mainly on the school’s incapability to convey this knowledge appropriately.

Results of the research by McFarland and Pals, concerning the influence of network effects on identity change in the school environment shows that there is a strong relation between network relations and identity development, however, identity formation only slightly influences network change. Identity change is usually motivated by the change of the relations, which is followed by identity inconsistency, that can lead to identity change. The authors argue that individuals yearn for external validation of their self-concepts, therefore they are much likely to approximate their identities to what they perceived to be the expectations. Referring to past theories, McFarland and Pals (2005) claim that density of the network has a particular importance in identity formation. Actors with dense networks of homogenous friends are not as likely to change identities as actors with dense networks of heterogenous friends (actors in bridging positions) (McFarland and Pals, 2005).

Crocetti and her colleagues (2008) argue that adolescents with a stronger ethnic identity exhibit higher self-esteem, therefore they are less inclined to change their ethnic identification for reasons of status enhancements.
The topic of multiple ethnicites was brought into focus during the past few years in minority identity research. In contemporary societies, there are lot of migration and inter-marriages, and both of these phenomena consequently lead to the existence of more and more individuals with multiple ethnicities. In their study, Doyle and Kao examined the identity shifts of mono- and multiracial adolescents. They found that sizeable numbers of both groups changed their self-reported identity to one another in time, but multiracials were overrepresented amongst those who have experienced identity shifts. Multiracial adolescents were not only more likely to change their self-reported identity to monoracial, but also rejected racial labels completely (Doyle and Kao, 2007). Findings of research by Lubbers and colleagues on a Spanish migrant sample, are somewhat parallel with this notion. They assert that as the relational embeddedness in the country of destination increases, ethnicity becomes less salient, and people tend to prefer more generic identifications - for example, European (Lubbers, Molina and McCarty, 2007).

Minority children should possess multiple ethnic identities in order to correspond to the expectations of all the words surrounding them. The formation of their identities can vary in the extent to which they find it hard to move between the borders of their different words - such as family, friends and school. Students who find these borders impenetrable become alienated from either one of these words (Cooper et al., 1998).

The case of multi-ethnic Roma in Hungary is a bit more complicated as we have already referred to it in the section about Roma identity formation in Hungary. Simon argues that Hungary is the only country where Roma people constitute the largest minority, therefore these two identities „are created in opposition to one another” (Simon, 2002, 86.). He concluded that people with double identities have mainly disharmonic identities because they are trying to accommodate these two contradictory identities. In his opinion, there is no distinct group for people who regard themselves as both Roma and Hungarian, because one of these identity elements is always stronger than the other. Simon introduces two possible reasons for obtaining a double identity. It can either be an element of Roma identity to be able to act like a Hungarian in certain situations, or from the other way around, a person who would self-identify as Hungarian, but is labelled as Roma by others within particular contexts (Simon, 2002). Contrarily to this theory, Janky and Kemény are arguing that there is a considerable amount of people in Hungary who obtain this double ethnic identity². What they emphasise is

2 Based on the results of the 1993 national census, they are stating that 56.2% regarded themselves as Hungarian, 21.5% as Roma, 18.2% as both Roma and Hungarian and another 1.1% as other Roma (subgroup).
that most Roma people in Hungary have their Hungarian identity as an important element of their identification (Janky and Kemény, 2003).

Belénesi (2002) introduces another aspect of double ethnic identities in Hungary. She argues that many Roma who, for certain reasons, has lost basic elements of their ethnic identity, and lost contact with the their Roma community, are still not integrated into the majority society. Therefore they are in a state of no ethnic identity.

Hypotheses

Accordingly our first hypothesis is that identity change is an existing phenomenon among Hungarian secondary school students, and there is a connection between self-identification and classification by peers. As the process of identification is relational, the opinion of the environment has an influence on self-reported identity. If the opinion of environment - in this case, the peer group - does not coincide with the perception of the individual, the agent becomes motivated to eliminate this confusion, and might decide to change their self-reported identity. Therefore, we assume that, students who are classified as non-Roma by a significant proportion of their peers are more likely to change their self-reported identity towards majority ethnic identity.

Based on the above mentioned research (Kiang et al., 2008) on the impact of same-ethnic individuals on identity change, we hypothesise that the amount of the minority group within the classroom has an impact on the identification of its members. Minority students are less likely to change their ethnic identity if there is a significant proportion of minority students in the class.

Finally, we claim that it is less likely that adolescents with stronger ethnic identities will shift their self-reported identification in time. Students who identify themselves as Roma and Hungarian at the same time, will be more likely to change their self-reported identity from Roma and Hungarian to non-Roma and vice-versa, than the ones who identify themselves only as Roma. Consequently, our assumption is that the ethnic identity of students who only identify themselves as Roma is stronger.
Data and sample

Our research is based on a subsample (N=23 classes) of a Hungarian network panel study, "Wired into Each Other: Network Dynamics of Adolescents in the Light of Status Competition, School Performance, Exclusion and Integration”. The project is funded by the Hungarian Scientific Research Fund (OTKA) (K/81336) and conducted by the RECENS (Research Center for Educational and Network Studies). This longitudinal research has started in 2010, when participants just started secondary education, and will be finished in 2013. Three out of four waves of data collection has already been completed. Approximately 1300 high school students of 44 classrooms from seven schools nationwide participate in the survey.

Our study is based on the first and the second wave of data collection, for two reasons. The first wave took place in September when students were just brought together, therefore it can be considered as T0. There is only 6 month between the first and second data collection, but more identity shifts took place in this interval than from the second to the third wave. By examining the first two waves we were also able to obtain a larger sample, because from the second to the third wave, lot of Roma students dropped out from the examined schools.

We selected all classes from wave one where there were at least one student whose self-reported ethnicity was Roma or Roma and Hungarian at the same time. As most of our independent variables measure class level characteristics, based on wave one, from this subsample we selected classes where at least 80% of members were present at the data collection in wave one. There were few students (n=13) who changed their self-reported identity from non-Roma to Roma, from wave one to wave two, and belonged to classes where less than 80 % of the students were present at the data collection in wave one, therefore they are also eliminated from our sample. All students of our sample were members of their classes in wave two as well, but we had to exclude one more class from our study, because there were only two Roma students in the first wave and they were not present at the data collection at the second wave. After we have excluded all students, who were not present or have not answered the question concerning their ethnicity at the first or at the second wave. Our final sample consist of 146 students from 23 classes.

Methods
For data analysis, multilevel logistic regression models are used because our participants are clustered in school classes which simple logistic regression models would fail to account for. We measure identification shifts by the comparison of the two waves. We have also made a supplementary analysis using contingency table analyses, to explore the direction of identity shifts between the two waves.

For logistic regression analyses we used the above mentioned smaller sample of 146 students. The dependent variable is the change of the self-reported identity. We measure the change in self-reported identity the following way:

- if respondent identification have shifted towards minority identification over time, - in other words, if they have changed their self-reported identity from Hungarian to Roma and Hungarian at the same time or to Roma, or from Roma and Hungarian at the same time to Roma, - we assigned value 1.
- similarly if respondents identification have shifted towards majority identification over time - in other words, if they have changed their self-reported identity from Roma to Hungarian or Roma and Hungarian at the same time, or from Roma and Hungarian at the same time to Hungarian, - then we have also assigned value 1.
- while if respondents identity remained the same in bot waves, we have assigned value 0.

We have built the model in a stepwise fashion, first including only the effects of the strength of minority identification, then adding the network structural characteristics, the amount of roma students in the class, and finally the ethnic classification by peers.

Our independent variable in Model 1 is the ethnic classification by the peers in wave one. In the questionnaire, all students in the class were asked to denote who is Roma among their classmates in their opinion. With the help of social network analysis, we calculated the number of Roma classifications by classmates for every student in the class. As the focus is on the effect of the ethnic classifications made by the peer group which consist of both the Roma and the non-Roma students, we do not make a difference between these two “groups” based on their self-reported ethnic identities. Even though we examined the average number of nomination from Roma and non-Roma students separately for the whole sample, and our results show that there is a very small difference between them (48% of nominations from Roma and 45% from non-Roma in average). The classification by peers is a linear variable, and it consists of the rate of the number of classifications and the size of the class.
In Model 2 we used the rate of Roma students (their ethnicity is measured based on their own admission) in the class from wave one as the explanatory factor of identification. This decision was based on the fact that there were only six months between the two waves and the amount of Roma students in the class remained more or less stable between the two waves (in each class the amount of Roma students only increased or decreased with one person, and in the only class where 3 persons left, the amount of Roma student is very high, therefore it does not make a significant difference). The rate of Roma students in the class is a linear variable.

The strength of minority ethnic identity is our independent variable in Model 3. The assigned value equals 1 in case the respondent choose Roma in either wave one or wave two, as their ethnicity, while it equals 0 in all other cases (if chose Romand Hungrian in both waves, or Roma and Hungarian in one wave and Hungarian in the other).

We have also included an interaction between the strength of ethnic identity and the classification by peers.

In all of our models, we controlled for the ethnic composition of the neighbourhood, parents highest education and gender. We did not controlled for the possible effect of belonging to a Roma subgroup, because only half of the students in our sample gave an answer to the question concerning their Roma subgroup affiliation.

Data analyses was made in Stata by the help of the xtlogit, random effects logistic regression command. The cluster variable was the schoolclass in all models.

For contingency table analysis, we formulated a sample of students who choose Roma or Roma and Hungarian at the same time as their ethnic identity either in wave one or wave two, and were present in both waves. This sample consists of 230 students from 34 classes. We used the variables of the self-reported identities of the respondents in wave one and in wave to. To indicate their identity, students could choose the options: Hungarian, Roma, Roma and Hungarian at the same time or the category other. We have excluded the category other, from our analyses, and assigned value 1 if the respondent chose Hungarian, value 2 if the respondent chose Roma and Hungarian at the same time and value 3 if the respondent chose Roma, as their ethnic identity.

Table 1 – Descriptives of variables
Table 2 – Descriptives of variables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Values</th>
<th>Frequencies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Romachange</td>
<td>Changed ethnicity between the first and the second wave?</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>0=not changed</td>
<td>112</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1=changed</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identitystrength</td>
<td>The strength of Romani identity.</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>0=Roma and Hungarian</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1=Roma</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neighbourcomp</td>
<td>The ethnic composition of the respondent’s neighborhood.</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>1= mainly non-Roma</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2=mixed</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3=mainly Roma</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fathereducation</td>
<td>The highest level of education of the father (stepfather).</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>1=less than 8 years</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2=8 years</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3=more than 8 years</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>The gender of the respondent.</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>1=Male</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2=Female</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trainingprog</td>
<td>The training program of the respondent’s class.</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>1= High school</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2=Technical school</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3=Vocational school</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Min</th>
<th>Max</th>
<th>Standard deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Romarate1</td>
<td>The rate of Roma students in the class.</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>0,03</td>
<td>0,62</td>
<td>0,18160</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classification</td>
<td>The rate of classmates who classified the respondent as Roma.</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0,71</td>
<td>0,18362</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Results
None of the results of regression analyses were significant - except for some constants and the neighbourhood composition control variable. A possible reason for this is that our sample is very small. We are planning to iterate our analyses with the larger sample used for contingency table analyses, with the allowance that classes where at least 60% of class members were present at the data collection can participate in our study. In the future, we are also planning to start a new data collection in Hungarian elementary schools with a larger Roma subsample.

Table 3 - Logistic regression models

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Model1</th>
<th>Model2</th>
<th>Model3</th>
<th>Model4</th>
<th>Model5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Constant</strong></td>
<td>-21.67</td>
<td>-1.55*</td>
<td>-1.88***</td>
<td>-21.15</td>
<td>-19.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Identity strength</strong></td>
<td>21.22</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Romarate</strong></td>
<td>.66</td>
<td></td>
<td>-1.52</td>
<td></td>
<td>-1.51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Classification</strong></td>
<td>1.80</td>
<td>.10</td>
<td>1.23</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Interic</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>-1.29</td>
<td></td>
<td>-1.21</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Neighbourhood</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>-.74*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gender</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>-.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Fathereduc</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Number of cases</strong></td>
<td>146</td>
<td>146</td>
<td>146</td>
<td>146</td>
<td>127</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P&gt; .05 *</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P&gt; .01 **</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P&gt; .001 ***</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The first model shows that the odds for a person to change their identity is higher for students with stronger ethnic identity than for the ones whose identity is less stronger. From
the results of the second model we conclude that as the rate of roma students in the class are rising the odds for a person to change their self-reported ethnic identity is rising as well. The third model shows a similar tendency, namely that if the rate of ethnic classifications concerning the respondent is rising, the respondent will be more likely to change their identification. We have included an interaction between the classification by peers and identity strength in our fourth model, but it’s effect was not significant. Even though the direction of the effect of romarate on the odds of identity change has changed after we included classification, identity strength and their interaction in the model. When we have included all the control variables in model five the effects of our explanatory variables stayed more or less consistent. Only the variable that measures the ethnic composition of the neighbourhood had a significant effect on identity change.

Table 4 – Contingency table

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Roma 3 values_1w</th>
<th>Roma 3 values_2w</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>non-Roma</td>
<td>Roma</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>non-Roma</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roma</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roma and Hungarian</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>108</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

We examined the correspondance between the self-reported ethnic identities of the respondents in the first and the second wave. Table 4 shows that from the respondent who choose non-Roma as their self-reported identity in the first wave (but possibly had some relation to the Roma ethnic group), 83% choose Roma and Hungarian as their self-reported identity in the second wave. It is also visible from our results that students who choose Roma and Hungarian as their ethnic identity in the first wave were chose the same ethnic category in the second wave at higher rates, 65%, than Roma (27%) or non-Roma (8%). The tendency for students who chose Roma as their self-reported ethnic identity in the first wave is quite similar to the previous one. They were chose Roma as their ethnic identity at higher rates, 75%, compared to student who reported themselves to be Roma and Hungarian at the same time (22%), or non-Roma (3%).
From these results, we can conclude that self-reported identities in the the two waves were more likely to remain stable than to change. It is also visible that student who changed their self-reported ethnic identity were more likely to choose Roma, or Roma and Hungarian at the same time, than non-Roma. Therefore, it appears that the relation to Roma ethnic background is quite strong in our sample and identity fluctuation mainly occurs between the stronger and the less stronge ethnic identity, namely between Roma and Hungarian at the same time and Roma.

Conclusions

In conclusion our first two hypotheses were verified by our results while the third one was not. However due to statistical difficulties our results were not significant, in this section we will outline the possible consequences of the problem of minority identity formation suggested by international and Hungarian authors.

Song argues that minorities do have some possibilities to form their ethnic identity but these can differ across and within groups. In her opinion, the major reason why ethnic identities remained important for many ethnic minority people is that in many situations „they are still subject to racism and reminded of their difference (...) The effect of racialisation from the majority could lead to ethnic absolutism, ethnic groups can impose scripts of behaviour or rigid formulas concerning ethnic authenticity which keeps alive the damaging belief that ethnicity and race shape/determine people’s lives” (Song, 2003, 142.).

Regarding the subsistence of the Roma people, Ladányi and Szelényi (1997) argue that - similarly to other ethnic minorities - the traditions of adaptibility and the consciousness of distinctiveness both play a major role. As Belénesi claims, the future of Roma communities depends crucially on the outcome of the interplay between the efforts to preserve or to adapt their traditions to that of the majority of the society. In her opinion, the richness and fluidity of their culture is an advantage and a disadvantage at the same time (Belénesi, 2002).

Based on her research Kende (2005) argues that it is possible to counter stereotypes and negative contents of Romani identity, but it usually goes side by side with the formation of a new, plural ethnic identity, and social mobility.
Discussions

In future research, the influence of friends on self-reported identity change should be examined in more detail. In this empirical study, we assumed that the opinion of the classmates is the dominant factor, however it is possible that actual friends have a major impact on identity change. It would also be interesting to examine whether numerous cross-ethnic friendships are a determinative factor in self-reported identity change or if numerous same-race friendships help in stabilizing the minority identity.

The role of status in the change of self-reported identity could also be explored in future research. If classmates generally denote low status to ethnicity, it could mean that the main incentive for minority students in identity change is to achieve a higher status in the community.

As we have already mentioned, in Hungary there are different subgroups in the Roma population and their relation to their ethnic identity is different, therefore future research on ethnic identification, that makes a distinction between this group would be very interesting.

If we would have data about the phenotype of the respondents, we would be able to partiate agents whose physical appareance is more similar to the majority society and its possible impact on their ethnic identification.

Some controls for Roma classification could also be introduced to examine if there are certain characteristics that are also typically attributed by the majority to Roma origin, such as the SES of indicated classmates or the ethnic prejudice on the ones that are making the classifications. Concerning ethnic prejudice, it would be also interesting to measure how much prejudice does the respondent encounter and explore, and whether it affects the identity formation of the respondant.

As the stabilization of identity usually occurs during early adulthood, it would be interesting to follow the identity formation of our respondents in the newer waves as well.
References


