

UNIVERSITY OF TARTU
Faculty of Social Sciences
Johan Skytte Institute of Political Studies

Klaudia Lencséssová

**ANALYSIS OF TWO MODELS OF SECONDARY EDUCATION DELIVERY
AND THEIR IMPACT ON ROMA INTEGRATION IN SLOVAKIA**

MA Thesis

Supervisor: Kristina Muhhina, PhD

Co-supervisor: Vassilis Petsinis, PhD

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I have written this Master's Thesis independently. All viewpoints of other authors, literary sources and data from elsewhere used for writing this paper have been referenced.

Klaudia Lencsésová

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ABSTRACT

The submitted research project is focused on the analysis of two models of secondary education delivery and their impact on socio-cultural integration of Roma students in Slovakia. To improve the educational situation of Roma minority in Slovakia, several measures and strategies have been implemented by public authorities. The most current national strategy is based on the establishment of so-called elocated branches of public secondary schools that are detached schools situated near marginalized Roma communities. Their aim is to make an easier access to secondary education for Roma students as they are located in the place of Roma residence. However, along with a publicly-led model of secondary education delivery, several private providers have also decided to improve the educational situation of Roma minority. These private providers have set up private secondary schools, which call for the creation of a more inclusive curriculum and learning process compared to mainstream secondary schools. The main aim of this research is to compare and contrast how these two models of secondary education delivery impact on Roma socio-cultural integration as this aspect has not been analysed yet. The study contributes to fill the research gap in understanding of how two different secondary education delivery models, which have been established with the aim to educate Roma, influence their social and cultural integration within the learning process and a broader social community as well. Additionally, the research findings may have useful applications in other countries facing the similar educational issues related to Roma minority.

Keywords: Roma minority, secondary education, public education providers, private education providers, social integration, cultural integration

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INTRODUCTION

Roma minority belongs to the most vulnerable and disadvantaged ethnic groups in many European countries. Roma are often being subjected to discrimination, social exclusion and stigmatization. The spatial segregation of many Roma settlements aggravates their marginalized position within society and makes it more difficult for them to integrate deeper into the structures of society and establish social ties with the majority group population (Rusnáková and Rochová, 2014; Lášticová and Findor, 2016). This ethnic minority faces numerous issues in various areas of life, such as employment, health care, housing or even education. Although countless policies and strategies have been adopted on the national, regional and local levels, the quality of life and the position of Roma within contemporary European societies can be hardly considered as equal compared to the majority group members.

The research devotes its attention to the one specific area, namely secondary education, within which Roma fall significantly behind and are prone to discrimination and unequal treatment. The study focuses on the case of the Slovak Republic, where Roma constitute the second biggest ethnic minority (Výrost and Martonyik, 2018, p. 3) but despite their numerical strength, their educational issues are still one of the most pressing problems of the Slovak education system. The long-lasting problems related to Roma at the secondary level education in Slovakia can be delineated as follow: (1) a low number of Roma graduates who have completed secondary education or even received upper secondary education (OECD, 2015, p. 7); (2) gender differences as Roma women are less likely to achieve secondary education compared to Roma men due to pervasive stereotypes (UNDP, 2010, p. 96); (3) the creation of ethnic-based and homogeneous schools/classes that limit social contact and interactions between Roma and non-Roma students (OECD, 2019, p. 21) and (4) the inability of the Slovak education system to implement and reflect Roma cultural distinctiveness in the curriculum and learning process (OECD, 2019, p. 20).

Throughout the years, various measures, policies and strategies have been implemented to improve, at a different extent, the educational situation of Roma minority in Slovakia. The most recent publicly-led strategy is based on the establishment of elocated branches of public secondary schools that are set up near marginalized Roma communities. The

logic behind this public policy is to bring secondary education closer to Roma as economic obstacles prevent many of them from traveling and attending a school in a town. However, this publicly-led model has been supplemented with the establishment of several private secondary schools that also aim to educate Roma. Contrary to elocated branches, these private educational institutions are set up in towns within the regions of a high concentration of Roma population. Private secondary schools position themselves in contrast to mainstream secondary schools as they seek to create a more inclusive school environment by incorporating Roma cultural elements, such as language or history (see sections 1.3.2 and 1.3.3, pp. 20-25).

Educational institutions are those entities that may significantly influence socio-cultural integration of non-dominant communities. These two types of integration are one of the most important dimensions of integration because they affect the existence of social and cultural capital of a given non-dominant community. Their degree may have profound implications and it may tell us not only to what extent cultural maintenance of non-dominant communities is allowed but also what kind of contact dominant and non-dominant group members have and how they feel about their social embeddedness (Becker, 1962; Bourdieu, 1986; Lessard-Phillips and Li, 2017). Although both Slovak models of secondary education delivery have been established with the goal to educate Roma, there is a missing knowledge of how exactly these public and private educational institutions impact on socio-cultural integration of Roma. Therefore, the study seeks to answer the following research question of how two models of secondary education delivery – represented by private secondary schools and elocated branches of public secondary schools – do impact on socio-cultural integration of Roma students in Slovakia.

The research is predominantly based on Berry's (1997) fourfold typology of acculturation strategies, which will be applied to Roma minority in the field of education. The typology depicts the relationship between two dimensions, namely cultural maintenance and social contact/participation of non-dominant communities. Based on their absence and/or presence, it is possible to arrive at four acculturation strategies, namely integration, assimilation, separation/segregation and marginalization (Berry, 1997, p. 12). The thesis adopts those two dimensions and transforms them into

the concepts of social and cultural integration. Additionally, the thesis builds on the literature related to decentralization and privatization to show how, or if at all, these two reforms of New Public Management have changed the competencies of secondary schools in Slovakia regarding their educational provision.

The main aim of the thesis is to examine, compare and contrast how these two existing models of secondary education delivery, focused on the education of Roma, impact on their socio-cultural integration. Various studies have confirmed that schools, which are culturally heterogeneous and reflect pluralism of society in the curriculum, score higher on socio-cultural integration of students belonging to a particular non-dominant community (Gurin et al., 2002; Vermeij et al., 2009; Benner and Wang, 2014; Douglass et al., 2014; Nishina et al., 2019). Additionally, it has been argued that as many public educational institutions follow a more assimilationist path to education to maintain the state's integrity and uniformity, private schools are then those educational alternatives that are more likely to reflect the denominational, cultural and ethnic profiles of non-dominant communities (Fairlie and Resch, 2000; The International Bank of Reconstruction and Development, 2001; Farnen, 2004; Wang and Winstead, 2016; Bourget, 2019).

Following these findings, it is assumed that private secondary schools will positively influence socio-cultural integration of Roma students as a result of the incorporation of the classes reflecting Roma cultural identity and the attendance of non-Roma students that is assumed to positively contribute to the establishment of inter-ethnic relations. Contrariwise, the thesis expects that elocated branches will negatively impact on socio-cultural integration of Roma as there are no indicators suggesting that these schools respect Roma cultural distinctiveness in the learning process. Additionally, it is assumed that elocated branches will have an unfavourable impact on social integration of Roma because their location prevents Roma from the creation of social ties with their non-Roma peers. Moreover, as public and private schools in Slovakia do not significantly differ, for example, in the way of how they are financed or even in their competencies over the school curriculum, it is not assumed that these aspects would have any impact on a contrasting degree of Roma socio-cultural integration.

This topic and the focus on Slovakia have been chosen first because of the limited scholarly attention to secondary level education of Roma in Slovakia. Secondly, the study aims to fill the gap in the understanding of how two existing models of secondary education delivery, set up with the aim to educate Roma, impact on their socio-cultural integration. The topic is highly relevant because an analysed problematique has not been examined complexly yet. The findings related to the Slovak case may have a broader applicability and lessons learned for other countries, in which Roma minority faces the similar educational issues.

To achieve triangulation and increase trustworthiness of the main research findings, the study used various data collection methods. The investigator analysed 4 strategic documents, collected 69 questionnaires and conducted 18 in-depth interviews and one participant observation. All qualitative materials were analysed by using qualitative content analysis through the specific technique of qualitative coding, which allows the researcher to assign parts of the qualitative data to the categories, which could be subdivided into subcategories (Saldana, 2013, p. 3).

The thesis is organized into five chapters. The first chapter discusses the educational situation of Roma minority in a more regional context. Then, two existing models of secondary education delivery in Slovakia are elaborated. The second chapter presents New Public Management reforms, namely decentralization and privatization, and how they have influenced competencies of secondary schools regarding their educational provision. The next chapter introduces four acculturation strategies related to the management of inter-ethnic relations. The most pivotal concepts of the study, namely social and cultural integration, are conceptualized and their indicators are clearly delineated as well. The fourth chapter elaborates on the research design and methodology. This chapter explains not only sampling procedures, how the research was conducted but it also includes the limitations of the research. The last chapter presents the collected empirical materials in a systemic way to understand how two models of secondary education delivery impact on socio-cultural integration of Roma students.

1 ROMA AS DISADVANTAGED ETHNIC MINORITY

This chapter aims to first present a general discussion on the educational situation of Roma minority in a more regional context. After elaborating on Roma educational situation within the CEE context, the thesis will move on to describe this situation in Slovakia. Not only will the problems characterizing secondary level education of Roma be outlined but national strategic documents will be analysed as well in order to point to the way of how the Government of the Slovak Republic has intended to address these issues. However, it will be argued that private sector has also been quite active in solving the educational issues concerning Roma minority. Therefore, two models of secondary education delivery¹ – represented by public and private sector providers – will be introduced and discussed. At the end of this chapter, the thesis will clearly outline the main similarities and contrasting features of these two models of secondary education delivery.

1.1 Educational situation of Roma minority in the CEE context

The main goal of this section is to point out that issues, such as the educational discrimination, low level of education, ignoring Roma cultural distinctiveness or even unequal treatment of Roma, are widespread problems taking place in many CEE countries. Despite the fact that the EU has been built on human rights and non-discrimination policies, Roth and Moisa (2011) argue that Roma continue to be the most discriminated ethnic group in the EU (Roth and Moisa, 2011, p. 502). Although the aspiration of the CEE countries to become the EU member states has brought about some changes in the field of education of Roma youth, it has not put an end to discrimination against this ethnic minority and it has also not adequately and successfully addressed all problems related to education of Roma (ibid, pp. 503-504).

To provide some general statistical data applying to the CEE countries, it needs to be mentioned that a very few Roma finished their secondary education. According to the UNDP (2007), only 20-25% of Roma attended secondary schools and only 8% of Roma

¹ Education delivery is understood as referring “. . . to the actors who found and operate a school and whether education is “produced” by public and/or private entities” (Vergari, 2007, p. 18).

reported having completed secondary education or above in the early 2000s (UNDP, 2007; cited in Roth and Moisa, 2011, p. 504). Although the most recent data show that a number of secondary education level graduates increased to 15% in 2011 in the CEE, this number is still alarmingly low (UNDP, 2011). Additionally, early school leaving, poor quality education along with high drop-out rates are among the most pressing problems that countries with a high concentration of Roma have to deal with (Pantea, 2007; European Commission, 2011).

To gain a better insight and understanding of how the CEE countries have tried to solve out the educational problems related to Roma minority, it would be appropriate to mention some empirical cases. For example, Roma living in Romania used to be characterized not only by a low school participation but Romania has been multiple times internationally criticized for school segregation of Roma who have been enrolled in ethnically segregated classes and schools delivering lower quality education compared to mainstream schools, for instance (Roth and Moisa, 2011, p. 505). However, the Romanian Government has implemented certain policies seeking to improve the educational situation and delivery of a solid education for Roma. Based on the positive discrimination principle, Romania has reserved a certain number of spots for Roma at secondary education level as well as at universities (Ram, 2014, p. 21). Additionally, the network of Roma language teachers has been established with the aim to prepare the Romanian education system to provide education in the Roma language (Roma Education Fund, 2007, p. 48).

Similarly to Romania, Hungary has also dealt with Roma education issues throughout the decades. It was especially during the socialist era when Roma were exposed to assimilationist policies and were educated in special schools intended for retarded or mentally ill children (The International Bank of Reconstruction and Development, 2001, p. 9). After the breakdown of Communism, the situation has slightly improved for various reasons. Firstly, the Hungarian 1993 Act on the Rights of National and Ethnic Minorities has recognized ‘Gypsies’ as a native ethnic group subjecting to protection and maintenance of ethnic identity in the form of minority culture and language, for instance. The Hungarian Constitution adopted in 2011 confirmed this right for Roma

minority by stating that certain nationalities and ethnic groups have the right to preserve their identity, to use their minority language and to be educated in it (Ram, 2014, p. 20).

Although the Hungarian Government has tried to implement various affirmative policies that would have improved the educational situation of Roma, it is worth mentioning that its efforts have been also accompanied by the existence of private sector. Since the late 1990s, several private providers have established private secondary schools that “. . . address the unique demands and needs of Roma students which were not being met in the framework of the traditional educational system” (The International Bank of Reconstruction and Development, 2001, p. 14). These schools present an alternative to the mainstream education because they take into account not only special needs of Roma but they also incorporate Roma cultural identity into the learning process. Many of these private secondary schools teach Roma language, history and culture classes, they incorporate Roma cultural values into the extracurricular activities or even provide further educational assistance by helping Roma students to be admitted to the universities. These private secondary schools seek to foster Roma cultural integration and enhance their social inclusion into the majority society (ibid, pp. 14-16).

Many positive discrimination policies have been implemented in the CEE countries to solve the educational issues related to Roma minority. However, there have still occasionally been reported cases related to the illegal educational segregation of Roma students at all levels of education (Rostas and Kostka, 2014, p. 269). This means that there are still considerable limitations in delivering good quality education and ensuring the equal access to education to all students, irrespective of their ethnicity.

Additionally, although many CEE countries admit the right to be educated in one's mother tongue, a very few of them actually foster Roma cultural identity by providing state-sponsored education in the Roma language, for instance. In an overwhelming majority of cases, linguistics heterogeneity within nations is not adequately reflected in the field of education. Despite certain positive educational achievements related to Roma youth, the examples coming from the CEE countries showed us that Roma minority is still significantly subjected to assimilationist practices that, however, undermine its unique cultural identity (New et al., 2017).

1.2 Educational situation of Roma minority in Slovakia

Educational situation of Roma minority in Slovakia is not significantly different from the situation of this ethnic minority in other CEE countries. Although many national strategies and action plans have been proposed and implemented, Roma educational issues still remain not adequately solved. Continuing deadlock over Roma education further deepens their already vulnerable and disadvantaged position within the Slovak society. The members of Roma ethnicity are still significantly prone to social exclusion and experience discrimination and unequal treatment in various fields of social life, including the area of education (Lášticová and Findor, 2016, p. 235). Additionally, their marginalized position in society is aggravated by the spatial and geographical segregation of Roma settlements that prevents them from the establishment of relations with non-Roma members (Rusnáková and Rochová, 2014).

According to the 2011 census, the Slovak Republic is composed of 14 different ethnic groups. Slovaks constitute the majority (80.7%) and they are followed by Hungarians (8.5%) and Roma (2.0%). Remaining ethnic groups do not even exceed one percent (Výrost and Martonyik, 2018, p. 3). Although, according to the official data, Roma are the third biggest ethnic group living in Slovakia, unofficial reports estimate that the number of Roma is much higher – even higher than the number of Hungarians in Slovakia (Interview 1; 24/01/2020). Many Roma do not declare themselves as Roma in the official census but they identify with the Slovak or Hungarian ethnicity instead because they are ashamed. This fact is a consequence of Roma stigmatization, dehumanization and discrimination (Lášticová and Findor, 2016, p. 235).

When it comes to the field of education, namely secondary education, there have been the long-lasting problems catching the attention of political authorities throughout the years. The most pressing problems related to Roma youth at the secondary level education in Slovakia could be defined as follow:

- (1) Leaving the school system without achieving the specific qualification and solid level of education. Based on the data coming from the UNDP (2007), only 13.7% of Roma at the age of 15-29 reported completed secondary education and 19.8% of Roma reported completed secondary education at the age of 30-49

(UNDP, 2007, p. 62). According to the most recent OECD estimates (2015), more than 70% of Roma students have not finished their upper secondary education (OECD, 2015, p. 7) and therefore, they have achieved lower secondary education or only primary education.

- (2) There have been moderate differences between Roma women and men in terms of their secondary education. Roma women have been less likely to achieve secondary level education compared to Roma men. The difference between these two genders was more than 9 percentage points in 2010 (UNDP, 2010, p. 96). These differences may be a result of the way how Roma girls are raised in their families. Unfortunately, there are still opinions, coming from Roma parents, that it is not so important for Roma women to be educated as they should take care of their children and other family relatives (Interview 1; 24/01/2020; Interview 2; 27/01/2020).
- (3) Throughout the years, the Slovak Republic has been domestically and internationally criticized for segregation of Roma students into Roma-only classes and schools. As the OECD (2019) argues, there have been numerous empirical evidences when the Slovak municipalities have established school districts that overlap with the areas inhabited by Roma. Such an action aims to prevent Roma enrolment in predominantly non-Roma schools (OECD, 2019, p. 21). However, as various studies have confirmed, it is the ethnic composition and inclusive school environment that have a positive impact on social integration of students and their capacity and ability to build inter-ethnic relations (Vermeij et al., 2009; Benner and Wang, 2014; Nishina et al., 2019).
- (4) According to the OECD's (2019) findings, the Slovak education system has only very poorly reflected the fact that there are many Roma students whose mother tongue is not the Slovak language. Language barriers in education present a significant obstacle for successful integration. Many Roma students either cannot speak Slovak or they are bi/trilingual, speaking a mixture of the Slovak, Roma or even Hungarian language – but still at a highly insufficient level (OECD, 2019, p. 20). Additionally, the Slovak education system has continuously failed to implement measures, such as the incorporation of Roma

language into the learning process, distribution of textbooks written in Roma or even to train academic and support staff to speak Roma that might potentially help Roma students overcome language barriers characterizing the Slovak education (Gallová-Kriglerová et al., 2012).

The Government of the Slovak Republic has tried to solve and tackle these educational problems at a different extent. Similarly to the CEE countries, these efforts have been accompanied by private sector initiatives, which have also tried to improve many problems, which Roma minority has to face in the field of education. The following section will discuss the efforts of public and private sector to improve the educational situation of Roma minority in Slovakia.

1.3 Public vs. private sector response to the educational situation of Roma minority in Slovakia

As indicated above, this section will discuss public and private sector efforts to tackle the educational problems related to Roma minority at the secondary education level. It will be shown that these efforts have resulted in the establishment of two models of secondary education delivery – represented by private secondary schools and elocated branches of public secondary schools. The section will first analyze various national policies and strategic action plans, in which the establishment of elocated branches of public secondary schools has been proposed. The following subsections will also outline basic and already known characteristics of private secondary schools and elocated branches in order to arrive at the main similarities and differences that define them.

1.3.1 Roma education in the context of strategic documents of the Government of the Slovak Republic

Apart from the valid school law, which governs the field of education, there have been also various strategic documents that analyzed in a more detail the educational situation of Roma at all levels of education in Slovakia. The following paragraphs will mention the most important national strategies that have put forward different measures through which the educational situation of Roma minority should have been improved.

The national strategy adopted in 1998, called *Millennium – National program of training and education in the Slovak Republic for the coming 15 to 20 years*, has highlighted the need to create special programs for education of Roma children coming from marginalized and socially disadvantaged environment (Milénium, 1998, p. 8). However, this national program specified neither what kinds of special programs should be established nor what their characteristics or curricula should be.

Another national strategy, adopted by the Slovak Government in 2008, was *Medium – Term Concept of the Development of the Roma National Minority in the Slovak Republic for the Period of 2008-2013: Solidarity – Integrity – Inclusion*. This strategy introduced officially the idea of so-called elocated branches of public secondary schools that should be located near marginalized Roma communities and help Roma be directly educated in the place of their residence without the need to travel and attend the nearest secondary school in a town. It was mentioned that the process of setting up of elocated branches of public secondary schools should be conducted in a close cooperation with local governments (Strednodobá koncepcia rozvoja rómskej národnostnej menšiny v Slovenskej republike SOLIDARITA – INTEGRITA – INKLÚZIA 2008-2013, p. 10).

The importance of the establishment of elocated branches of public secondary schools has been also emphasized in *Revised National Action Plan of the Decade of Roma Inclusion 2005-2015 for years 2011-2015*, which states that there is a need “to support the establishment and maintenance of remote classes in secondary schools in municipalities with high concentration of SDE [socially disadvantaged environment]/MRC [marginalized Roma communities] members” (Revised National Action Plan of the Decade of Roma Inclusion 2005-2015 for years 2011-2015, p. 8). These remote classes aim to deliver secondary education much easily or even more conveniently as Roma students do not have to travel to the nearest secondary school located in a town because a school ‘travels’ to Roma settlements.

The most recent national strategy, *Strategy of the Slovak Republic for Integration of Roma up to 2020*, puts an emphasis on the very same public policy related to the establishment of elocated branches of public secondary schools located near marginalized Roma communities. The Strategy also highlights the importance of

connectedness of study programs to current needs of the market (Strategy of the Slovak Republic for Integration of Roma up to 2020, 2011, pp. 27, 85-86).

1.3.2 Elocated branches of public secondary schools as a publicly established model of Roma education

The analysis of the national strategies and action plans has shown that the Government of the Slovak Republic has been inclined to the delivery of secondary education to Roma in the form of elocated branches of public secondary schools. The notion of an elocated branch appeared first in the Law No. 596/2003, which defines elocated branches, also known as detached classes or remote classes, of a particular educational institution as “. . . permanently established premises where a regular educational activity takes place in accordance with the educational program of a school or an educational institution of which it forms part” (Paragraph 19, Article 7 of the Law No. 596/2003). This law has given the right to schools and other educational institutions to set up their elocated braches in locations that are different from the location of a parent school or an educational institution establishing such elocated braches.

Although the Law No. 596/2003 introduced the notion of elocated braches, it was the national strategy of the Medium – Term Concept for the Period of 2008-2013 that linked their establishment to the provision of secondary education to Roma living in marginalized Roma communities (Strednodobá koncepcia rozvoja rómskej národnostnej menšiny v Slovenskej republike SOLIDARITA – INTEGRITA – INKLÚZIA 2008-2013, p. 10). The setting up of elocated branches in a very close proximity to marginalized Roma settlements makes access to educational institutions and secondary education easier for Roma.

Therefore, the establishment of elocated branches overlaps significantly with the location of marginalized Roma settlements. The Figure 1 shows the concentration of Roma population across the Slovak villages. The darker the colour is, the higher the concentration of Roma minority is. The three Slovak regions with the highest concentration of Roma, Banská Bystrica Region, Košice Region and Prešov Region, are marked by a black star (see Figure 1 on the next page).

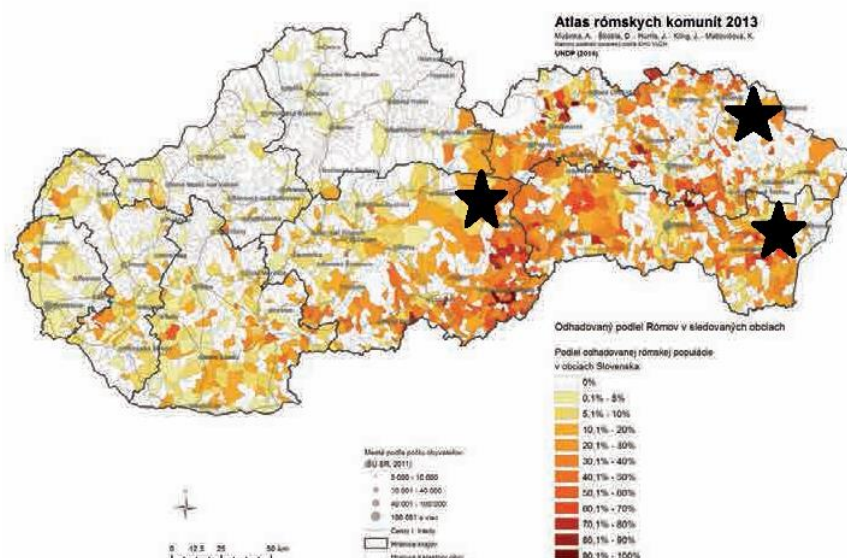


Figure 1: The concentration of Roma minority in Slovakia (Source: Figure adopted from Regionálne centrum Rozvojového programu OSN, 2013, p. 82)

If we look at the list of public secondary schools, which have set up elocated branches, a great number of them is located in the regions that are of a high Roma concentration (Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport of the Slovak Republic; Siet' škôl a školských zariadení Slovenskej republiky; official website). Thus, this observed trend is in compliance with the proposals of the Government of the Slovak Republic and its strategic documents, which called for the creation of elocated branches located near marginalized Roma settlements in order to improve the educational situation of Roma minority. According to the data of the Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic, there are currently 73 elocated branches of public secondary schools and almost 60% of them is located in those Slovak regions that have one of the highest proportion of Roma minority (Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport of the Slovak Republic; Siet' škôl a školských zariadení; official website; see Figure 1 above).

The establishment of elocated branches of public secondary schools near marginalized Roma settlements is quite unusual public policy. In general, secondary schools are established in towns and not in lower levels of governance, such as in villages. Thus, the fact that a secondary school located in a town 'travels' to marginalized Roma communities presents a very specific positive discrimination action through which the

state authorities aim to improve secondary education provision and educational situation of Roma ethnicity (Lajčáková, 2015, pp. 36-37). Elocated branches offer 2-year and 3-year study programs. After the successful completion of a 2-year study program, students will earn lower secondary vocational education, whereas the graduates of a 3-year program will earn secondary vocational education. Gardener, textile and clothing production, practical woman, tailor or even upholsterer are the most common study programs offered by elocated branches (Balážová, 2015, pp. 31, 42; Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport of the Slovak Republic, 2018, pp. 16-17). 2-year study programs are intended only for students who did not finish their primary education or did not finish it successfully. Only after the completion of primary education, students may apply to a 3-year study program if they wish to do so (Balážová, 2015, pp. 31-32).

Lastly, this section aims to provide information on how elocated branches of public secondary schools are financed. In general, schools and other educational institutions are financed through so-called normative financing. The amount of normative, which is necessary for an operational provision of schools and educational institutions, is calculated as the sum of (a) wage normative; (b) heating normative; (c) normative for the educational process and (d) normative for further education of teaching staff (Paragraph 3, Article 7 of the Decree No. 630/2008). However, not all schools and educational institutions are financed equally. The amount of normative financing depends also on the (a) number of students attending particular school or educational institution; the difficulty of (b) personnel and (c) economic provision of the educational process that is carried out by particular school or educational institution (Paragraph 9a of the Law No. 597/2003).

Additionally, the Decree No. 598/2009 of the Slovak Republic classifies schools and educational institutions based on their difficulty related to personnel and economic provision of the educational process (Decree No. 598/2009). The logic behind this classification is that secondary schools, which teach study programs that are based on certain practical or vocational training, receive a higher amount of normative per one student compared to other schools and educational institutions as a result of the difficulty related to personnel and economic provision of such education. The Figure 2

depicts selected categories of secondary schools and the amount of wage normative² that they receive per one student per one academic year (see Figure 2 below).

School category	Wage normative
Secondary grammar schools	1437.04 €
Conservatories of music and dramatic arts	5114.37 €
Secondary vocational schools, 1 st category	1641.68 €
Secondary vocational schools, 5 th category	2171.88 €
Secondary vocational schools, 10 th category	2571.97 €
Secondary vocational schools, 11 th category	2700.57 €
Secondary vocational schools, 12 th category	2600.54 €
Secondary vocational schools, 13 th category	2705.00 €
Secondary vocational schools, 14 th category	2953.00 €
Secondary vocational schools, 15 th category	3274.97 €

Figure 2: Wage normative of different categories of secondary schools received per one student in 2019 (Source: Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport of the Slovak Republic; Normatívy a normatívne príspevky na rok 2019; official website)

Based on the Figure 2, it can be asserted that in 2019 the Government of the Slovak Republic allocated much more wage normative to secondary vocational schools compared to secondary grammar schools, for instance. Additionally, there are quite big differences between secondary vocational schools of the 1st category and secondary vocational schools of the 14th or even 15th category. Most importantly, however, it is worth mentioning that those 2-year and 3-year study programs, which can be studied at elocated branches near marginalized Roma communities, are offered by those secondary schools that belong to the 11th category or above.

² Figure 2 depicts the amount of wage normative because there are the most significant differences among different categories of secondary schools in this type of normative.

1.3.3 Roma educational issues tackled by private sector providers

This subsection will move on to introduce private secondary schools, which have also been set up to provide secondary education to Roma coming from marginalized areas. Similarly to Hungary, for example, several Slovak private providers have decided to establish private secondary schools with the aim to create a more inclusive educational environment for Roma compared to mainstream schools (Rosinský, 2019, pp. 195-196). So far, five such private secondary schools have been established in Slovakia. Similarly to the location of elocated branches, private secondary schools can be found in the three Slovak regions that are of a high concentration of Roma minority, namely Banská Bystrica Region, Košice Region and Prešov Region. Although private secondary schools are established within the regions characterized by a high proportion of Roma minority, compared to elocated branches, private secondary schools are not set up near marginalized Roma communities but they are located in towns (see Figure 1, p. 21).

Although private secondary schools have been set up with the goal to deliver secondary education mainly to Roma students, they are also opened to students of whatever ethnicity and therefore, non-Roma students attend these private secondary schools as well. Additionally, these private schools provide teaching of the Roma language and other classes related to Roma culture and history in order to create a more inclusive environment for Roma and non-Roma students. Having a private status, private secondary schools have been established by private entities, such as NGOs or civic associations led predominantly by Roma representatives. These private educational institutions offer 2-year, 3-year or 4-year study programs, depending on a particular private school. However, a majority of them offer 4-year study programs. Depending on a specialization of a given private school, students are enrolled in study programs focused on general secondary education, music and drama arts, social and special pedagogy or even practical and vocational education. The first private secondary school has started operating since 2005 and it has been followed by the establishment of four other private secondary schools (Interview 2; 27/01/2020; Interview 4; 05/02/2020; Interview 7; 11/02/2020; Interview 9; 21/02/2020).

When it comes to the way of how private secondary schools are financed, it can be argued that financing of private schools is not significantly different from public

schools. As it has been discussed in the previous section, schools and other educational institutions, including private ones, are financed based on normative financing. Public as well as private schools and other educational institutions are classified into categories based on the difficulty of their personnel and economic provision of the educational process (Paragraph 9a of the Law No. 597/2003; Decree No. 598/2009). Therefore, Figure 2 depicting wage normative of different categories of secondary schools received per one student in 2019 is applicable also to private secondary schools. Quite significant differences among different categories of secondary schools, including private ones, can be highlighted once again. Whereas private secondary grammar schools receive wage normative of 1437.04 € per one student per one academic year, private conservatories of music and dramatic arts receive 3.5 times as much (see Figure 2, p. 23).

Although there are no substantial differences between financing of public and private secondary schools, it is worth mentioning that certain dissimilarities could still be identified. Firstly, private secondary schools cannot spend money, coming from normative financing, on lease of assets under a lease contract, capital expenditures and advertisements (Paragraph 6a, Article 3 of the Law No. 597/2003). And secondly, schools and other educational institutions established by private entities have the right to collect money in the form of a tuition fee (Paragraph 1, Article 6 of the Law No. 597/2003).

1.4 Recap: What we know about two models of secondary education delivery to Roma minority in Slovakia

Based on the information provided in the above-mentioned sections, it is possible to delineate the main similarities and differences between two models of secondary education delivery to Roma that are represented, on the one side, by elocated branches of public secondary schools and, on the other side, by private secondary schools. Similar and contrasting features between these two models of secondary education delivery are outlined in the Figure 3 on the next page.

The main similarity between private secondary schools and elocated branches can be found in the target group, on which they are focused. Additionally, certain similarity, however differences as well, can be observed in the financial dimension. Most

importantly, the main differences between these two secondary education delivery models can be noticed in the type of service provider, offered study programs, spatial location, attendance character or even specific features, such as teaching the Roma language or other classes related to Roma cultural identity, which clearly differentiate them.

		ELOCATED BRANCHES OF PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS	PRIVATE SECONDARY SCHOOLS
SIMILARITIES	TARGET GROUP	Roma minority	Roma minority
SIMILARITIES/DIFFERENCES	FINANCING	Normative financing	Normative financing (certain restrictions on finance spending & right to collect money)
DIFFERENCES	SECTOR PROVIDER	Public (established by public secondary schools)	Private (established by Roma representatives/private entities - NGOs and civic associations)
	STUDY PROGRAMS OFFERED	2-year and 3-year study programs	2-year, 3-year but predominantly 4-year study programs (depending on private secondary school)
	SPATIAL LOCATION	Established near marginalized Roma communities	Established in towns
	ATTENDANCE	Attended by Roma students	Attended by Roma and non-Roma students
	SPECIFICITIES	No specificities could have been identified during the preliminary research	Classes of Roma language, Roma culture and history are taught

Figure 3: Similarities and differences between private secondary schools and elocated branches of public secondary schools (see sections 1.3.2 and 1.3.3, pp. 20-25)

The following chapter will address the reforms of New Public Management (NPM) related to the Slovak education system. It will be explained how and to what extent these reforms have influenced the secondary education level as well as competencies of public and private schools to manage and provide education. The second chapter will conclude with the formulation of the research problem.

2 NEW PUBLIC MANAGEMENT AND ITS REFORMS

To provide readers with the most complex insights into the Slovak education system, this chapter will discuss NPM reforms related to the secondary level education. More specifically, the chapter will elaborate on decentralization and privatization and it will be shown how these reforms have impacted on the competencies of public and private schools to deliver secondary education. The discussion on the situation of Roma secondary education delivery provided in the first chapter and the introduction of the reforms of NPM outlined in the paragraphs below will pay the way to the formulation of the research problem, which will be delineated in the last subsection of this chapter.

2.1 Decentralization and privatization within the framework of New Public Management

New Public Management refers to the cluster of ideas, practices and reforms that govern the way of how public policies are implemented and public services are provided. Traditional Public Administration was based on heavily bureaucratic procedures and modes of organization as well as the centrality of the rule of law and set of guidelines governing the implementation of public policies (Osborne, 2010, pp. 2-3). However, since the late 20th century, Traditional Public Administration has started being replaced by NPM as a result of its inefficiency, ineffectiveness or even backwardness to cope up with more complex structures and increasing number of emerging tasks in the field of public policy (Kjær, 2004, pp. 22-24). NPM has been focused much more on a private sector management as well as business approaches and innovations through which it is possible to improve service delivery (Osborne, 2010, pp. 3-4). Kjær (2004) argues that privatization, agencification, competition, decentralization or even citizens' empowerment belong to the most substantial reforms brought by NPM (Kjær, 2004, pp. 26-30). For the purpose of this thesis, a closer look will be given to decentralization and privatization.

2.1.1 Decentralization

When we talk about decentralization, we usually refer to “... the transfer of authority and responsibility for public functions from the central government to subordinate or

quasi-independent government, organizations or the private sector” (Rondinelli, 1992; cited in Ozmen, 2014, p. 415). This means that decentralization seeks to increase the autonomy and responsibilities of local governments and bring public administration closer to citizens. Depending on the objectives of decentralization, Cohen and Peterson (1996) have delineated four different types of decentralization, namely: (a) political, which is characterized by the transfer of decision-making competencies to local governments; (b) administrative, which refers to the reformation of hierarchical and functional distribution of powers between central and local governments, such as municipalities; (c) spatial decentralization aiming to reduce urban concentration by promoting regional development and growth poles and (d) market, which is focused on the production of goods and services by small firms, community cooperatives or even non-governmental organizations (Cohen and Peterson, 1996; cited in Krishnamohan, 2015, pp. 7-8).

It is worth noting that Parker and Kirsten (1995) have highlighted the fact that there can be fiscal and institutional decentralization as well. Institutional decentralization is focused on all of those formal and governmental institutions that carry out the process of decentralization as well as their interactions with institutions at the local level. Contrariwise, fiscal decentralization should be understood as the transfer of financial revenues from the central government and the authority to make expenditure decisions at the local level (Parker and Kirsten, 1995, pp. 244-246).

Similarly to the classical definition of decentralization, educational decentralization refers to the shift of authority and responsibilities from higher to lower levels of government. Thus, this shift goes usually from the Ministry of Education to local governmental municipalities, in which schools are located. For example, educational decentralization may give power and competencies to schools to take decisions over their curriculum, personnel, financing spending and other management tasks related to the provision of education. The proponents of educational decentralization are of the opinion that such a shift will result in a better education quality and delivery because local authorities have better knowledge about local problems and therefore, they may implement more effective and permanent solutions to these issues (Papadopoulou and Yirci, 2013, pp. 12-13).

2.1.2 Privatization

Privatization can also be seen as another reform under the umbrella of NPM, however, some scholars argue that it is actually one specific aspect and accompanying element of decentralization (Rondinelli, 1981; cited in Parker and Kirsten, 1995; pp. 242-243). Privatization has significantly challenged Traditional Public Administration and changed the way of how public services are managed, organized and delivered. Simply put, privatization is defined as the “. . . transferal of public sector enterprises to private ownership” (Kjær, 2004, p. 26). Consequently, this process is also connected with the transfer of power and competencies to the private sector.

However, when we talk about service privatization, as compared to enterprise privatization, it is more appropriate to focus the attention on the service provision and funding rather than on the level of ownership in a strict sense (Verger, 2016, p. 65). This means that services provided by private entities are not directly owned by them but they should be perceived as managed by private providers and therefore, they may be subjected to different funding mechanism or different organizing rules compared to publicly provided services, for instance. Furthermore, it is worth mentioning that although privatization is usually linked to the certain amount of profit, which private providers tend to get, some private entities may work and deliver services based on a voluntary and non-profit basis (Tatar, 1993; cited in Krishnamohan, 2015, p. 419).

In terms of education, Ball and Youdell (2007) have distinguished two aims of educational privatization that are derived from two types of privatization models in education. There can be (1) exogenous privatization that is “. . . the opening up of public education services to private sector participation [usually] on a for-profit basis and using the private sector to design, manage or deliver aspects of public education . . .” (Ball and Youdell, 2007; cited in Verger, 2016, pp. 65-66). Under exogenous privatization model, private service providers are seen as an alternative to public service providers and therefore, it up to the individuals to choose which service provider is better able to satisfy their needs. Contrariwise, the second type of privatization in education is so-called (2) endogenous privatization that is defined as “. . . [the import] of ideas, techniques and practices from the private sector in order to make the public sector more like businesses and more business-like” (ibid). This implies

that public service providers may learn from private sector and they may implement various mechanisms, strategies and measures that are typical of private sector in order to reform public services.

It is worth highlighting that neither decentralization nor privatization results in a complete degree of independence and autonomy. Therefore, educational decentralization and privatization of schools do not imply that schools are allowed to do whatever they want. Contrariwise, they may be limited by higher governmental units, such as the central government represented by the Ministry of Education, which metagovern over the process of education provision. Although schools have certain decentralized competencies or they are established by private entities, in many countries all educational institutions have to follow, for example, the national curriculum and provide education that is in compliance with educational standards as approved by respective state authorities (Griffith, 2000; Pyper, 2015, pp. 13-34).

2.2 Decentralization and privatization in the context of the Slovak secondary education level

This subsection will focus on decentralization and privatization in terms of the Slovak education system in order to arrive at the main competencies, which public and private education providers as well as respective secondary schools have.

In the Slovak Republic, the process of education can be carried out by (a) public; (b) private and (c) religious-based schools. It was the Law No. 171/1990 that enabled non-public providers to establish an educational institution (Law No. 171/1990). The subsequent laws, also as a result of educational decentralization, have been more specific on the matter of who can be a founder of an educational institution. According to the Law No. 596/2003, schools and other school facilities can be established by

(a) municipality³; (b) region; (c) district office located in a region; (d) churches or religious communities that are recognized by the state and (e) another legal entity or natural person (Paragraph 19, Article 2 of the Law No. 596/2003).

The previous subsection has discussed two models of privatization, namely exogenous and endogenous one (Ball and Youndell, 2007; cited in Verger, 2016, pp. 65-66). Within the framework of school privatization in Slovakia, it makes more sense to speak rather of exogenous privatization than endogenous one. Endogenous privatization cannot be completely ruled out, however, as schools may implement certain measures or strategies that are typical of private business sector. But there has been no official national strategy, which would have tried to reform public education system in this way. In Slovakia, private schools are usually established with the aim to offer an alternative to traditional and mainstream schools. Therefore, it can be argued that the Slovak education system operates more based on exogenous privatization model as various types of providers offer their educational services to citizens.

When it comes to the sphere of decentralization, it is argued that administrative, political and fiscal decentralization are the most substantial types of decentralization that have influenced the Slovak secondary education. Furthermore, it can be asserted that administrative and political decentralization are strongly intertwined. Administrative decentralization reforms hierarchical distribution of power and it transfers the responsibility for planning or managing certain public functions from the central government to local authorities. However, this is many times also followed by political decentralization that transfers decision-making competencies to local units and officials (Cohen and Peterson, 1996; cited in Krishnamohan, 2015, pp. 7-8).

The Law No. 596/2003 grants specific rights to regional governments in their relationship towards those public secondary schools, which are established in a region

³ Within the framework of the Slovak territorial division, it needs to be clarified that the word 'municipality' refers to a village municipality or a town municipality. Municipality may establish public kindergartens and public primary schools located in a village or a town. However, secondary schools can be established by a region or a district office located in a region (public secondary schools), churches or religious communities (religious-based schools) or another legal person or natural entity (private secondary schools). It is a respective regional government that acts in relation to public and private secondary schools located in a given region.

where a respective regional government exercises its power. For example, regional governments have not only the right to establish but also administer and close down public secondary schools. Moreover, they have the right to appoint and withdraw the directors of public secondary schools based on the proposal coming from the school board. When it comes to private secondary schools, their establishment, administration and cancellation are in the hands of respective founders (e.g. private persons or private organizations) (Law No. 596/2003; see also the Decree No. 280/1994).

Educational decentralization has given certain competencies to secondary schools as well. All secondary education institutions – public and private ones – must follow the national curriculum, which is drawn up by the Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic and it stipulates how the educational process should be conducted and what aspects (type of classes and their quantity, for instance) it should include. Although the educational process of secondary schools must be in compliance with the national curriculum, schools may go beyond it. If there is such a necessity, the school educational process may reflect the needs of students or the needs of a region (Paragraph 7, Articles 1-10 of the Law No. 245/2008).

This means that secondary schools may determine their own specification of offered study programs or they may even choose the language of instruction. This implies that secondary schools may also teach classes that are not included in the national curriculum if they are able to justify their incorporation into the learning process and school curriculum. For example, this justification may be based on the current market needs, school attendance by students of a particular ethnicity or attendance by disabled students (*ibid*). This autonomy – to go beyond the national curriculum – applies equally to public and private secondary schools.

It is interesting to mention that there is a one specific measure, adopted quite recently, which limits the autonomy of public as well as private secondary schools to fully manage and control their admission process. According to the Law No. 61/2015, regional governments are those entities that make a decision over the maximum number of admitted students to the first grade. This means that public and private secondary schools can admit as many students as it is allowed by a respective regional government in a given academic year. While deciding over the maximum number of admitted

students, regional governments should take into account not only how effective study programs offered by secondary schools are for the labor market but also how schools score in terms of students' performance and achievements (Paragraph 31, Articles 1-6 of the Law No. 61/2015).

However, unofficially and in practice, it is disputed if and to what extent regional governments apply this law equally to public and private secondary schools. Numerous voices could have been heard arguing that regional governments assign a lower number of students to private secondary schools and religious-based schools as well on purpose, while privileging public secondary schools by assigning them a higher number of students. Critics argue that regional governments do not follow the respective law because in many cases it has been proven that private secondary schools had had better students' performance and their study programs had been more attractive as the level of graduates' unemployment was lower but despite these facts they were assigned with a lower number of admitted students compared to public secondary schools whose scores had been worse (TERAZ.SK, 2018; Ogurčáková, 2019).

This issue has been also mentioned by responsible authorities of private secondary schools participating in the research. They have pointed out that a lower number of admitted students results in a lower amount of normative financing. Some respondents have admitted that this law has a certain impact on the school's ability to provide a more integrative and inclusive education to students. As schools have to first spend money on salaries and operational costs, there are financial obstacles to implement more measures, which might positively influence socio-cultural integration of students, for instance (Interview 7; 11/02/2020; Interview 9; 21/02/2020).

Lastly, fiscal decentralization has affected the Slovak secondary education level as well. This reform of NPM has transferred financial resources and the authority to make expenditure decisions from the central government to lower governmental levels and secondary schools themselves. The process of money allocation works in the same way for public as well as private secondary schools. However, there are certain differences in the amount of normative finance that depends, among other things, on the number of students as well as a respective category a particular public or private secondary school falls into. This section is not going to discuss these differences in detail because these

facts have been analyzed in the previous sections (see sections 1.3.2 and 1.3.3, pp. 20-25).

2.3 What we do not know about two models of secondary education delivery to Roma minority in Slovakia: Formulating the research problem

According to Banks (2007), democratic and pluralistic societies should take ethnic, racial or even cultural diversity of their population into consideration and reflect it to all structures, including education – its rules, values and curriculum (Banks, 2007). This, however, calls for a more integrative strategy while managing inter-ethnic diversity as integration respects heterogeneity and cultural maintenance of non-dominant communities and it simultaneously fosters social contact among different cultural groups – compared to other strategies of inter-ethnic diversity management, such as assimilation, separation/segregation or even marginalization (Berry, 1997, pp. 9-11).

However, regarding two existing models of secondary education delivery to Roma minority in Slovakia, it is exactly this conundrum that needs to be analyzed and explained. As a result of missing studies on the researched problematique, it is still not precisely clear how private secondary schools compared to elocated branches of public secondary schools impact on cultural maintenance of Roma students and their social contact and relations with non-Roma members. The thesis will transform these two elements, namely cultural maintenance and social contact/relations of Roma students, into the concept of socio-cultural integration and it will be analyzed how it is affected by two models of secondary education delivery. Although there have been some qualitative studies on elocated branches (Balážová, 2015; Lajčáková, 2015), neither this model nor private model of secondary education delivery have been examined from the perspective of their impact on socio-cultural integration of their target group – which is Roma minority.

As the impact of two models of secondary education delivery on socio-cultural integration of Roma has not been analyzed yet, the thesis aims to fill this gap in the scholarly research. However, there is another reason why it is contributive to scrutinize the impact of the educational institutions and the ways through which they deliver

education on socio-cultural integration of some non-dominant community. Scholars argue that education, its environment and modus operandi have a significant impact on human, social and cultural capital of individuals. This may influence not only the way of how individuals see themselves in a broader social community but it may also determine what relations people have with their fellow citizens (Becker, 1962; Bourdieu, 1986; Lessard-Phillips and Li, 2017).

When it comes to non-dominant communities, such as ethnic minorities, the notion of education and its provision become much more pressing. In this case, the issue of education delivery and the way of how it should be carried out could produce much more difficulties. The arising questions could be as follow. For example, should the national curriculum reflect cultural/linguistics diversity in population? Or should non-dominant communities be rather exposed to assimilate to the norms and culture of the dominant society? Alternatively, should education delivery be carried out in the form of segregation or even marginalization of students belonging to non-dominant communities? There is no universal answer to these questions and the extent to which educational institutions take into account and reflect diversity of society within the learning environment usually depends on national policies or decision made by particular educational providers if they have competencies to modify the process of education delivery.

Numerous empirical studies have confirmed that taking a more integrative and inclusive strategy of education has a positive impact on socio-cultural integration of ethnic minorities. Ethnically diverse schools and classes contribute greater to the emergence of social contact between dominant and non-dominant group members. Interactions of students coming from diverse cultural and ethnical backgrounds improve their relations with members of opposite cultural communities. Additionally, cultural and ethnical heterogeneity within the school environment may eliminate discrimination and prejudices and positively impact the students' feeling of embeddedness not only in the school setting but in a broader social community as well (Gurin et al., 2002; Vermeij et al., 2009; Benner and Wang, 2014; Douglass et al., 2014; Nishina et al., 2019).

Similarly, the incorporation of minorities' culture elements into the curriculum, such as the teaching of minority's language, its culture or history, can be seen as a significant

measure through which cultural integration could be positively affected. The reflection of diversity, which prevails in society, into the curriculum is perceived as the way of respecting and equalizing of diverse communities and their cultural background. Additionally, it can be asserted that it is especially the incorporation of the minority's language into the curriculum that may have substantial cross-linguistic and cross-cultural outcomes. Dominant group as well as non-dominant communities are being exposed to the national and simultaneously also to the minority's language. This could be viewed as a mutual accommodation of various cultural communities living within one state (Jong, 1996; Sieminski and Packer, 1997; Jong and Howard, 2009; Williams, 2013; Lane-Mercier et al., 2018).

Furthermore, when it comes to the minority's language, it is argued that its inclusion into the curriculum could be helpful for minority students to gain a better knowledge of the dominant language if they do not master this language completely properly. This means that students might be explained certain concepts in their mother tongue if they do not know or understand their meaning in the dominant language. However, this can be done only if the teacher can speak dominant as well as minority language. Additionally, the studies have shown that mixed and heterogeneous classes are also a favorable way of how not only language barriers can be overcome but the development of the respect for diverse languages and cultures among ethnically and culturally different students is highly likely to take place as well (Lük and Lukanovič, 2011; Gallová-Kriglerová et al., 2012). Following this rationale, Lük and Lukanovič (2011) argue that “. . . cultural pluralism and pluri-lingualism as two crucial European concepts can be practiced *in vivo*”, when the educational institutions take an integrative and inclusive strategy of education to a particular ethnic minority (Lük and Lukanovič, 2011, p. 165; emphasis in the original).

When we turn to the link between the type of the educational provider and its impact on socio-cultural integration of non-dominant group students, it can be asserted, based on the previous scholarly observations, that private educational providers affect cultural integration more positively compared to public schools. Many countries take an assimilationist strategy regarding education of non-dominant group members that suppresses their cultural identity with the aim to arrive at a linguistic and cultural

homogeneity. This strategy is important from the perspective of the state's integrity and uniformity. Therefore, in many cases, private schools, which are seen as an alternative to public schools, are those entities that reflect greater the denominational, cultural and ethnic profiles of non-dominant communities (Fairlie and Resch, 2000; The International Bank of Reconstruction and Development, 2001; Farnen, 2004; Wang and Winstead, 2016; Bourget, 2019).

However, there is one issue, which needs to be mentioned. Namely, although private schools may reflect cultural diversity to a larger extent compared to public schools, private educational institutions may score lower on social contact between students of the dominant society and non-dominant communities. It follows that while non-dominant group members may intentionally opt for private schools, as they are more likely designed in a way to reflect and respect culture diversity in society, dominant group members may avoid these educational institutions and choose rather those, which offer the mainstream education without any specificity (Fairlie and Resch, 2000; Farnen, 2004; Wang and Winstead, 2016; Bourget, 2019).

In terms of two models of secondary education delivery to Roma minority in Slovakia, represented by private secondary schools and elocated branches of public secondary schools, it has not been researched yet how these educational institutions impact on socio-cultural integration of Roma minority. Consequently, the thesis aims to investigate this missing aspect in delivering secondary education to Roma.

The following chapter will introduce four different strategies or ways through which inter-ethnic relations, such as those between dominant and non-dominant groups, can be managed. All strategies will be clearly conceptualized in order to outline the main differences that characterize them. Additionally, the chapter will pay the special attention to the concept of socio-cultural integration with the aim to arrive at the indicators through which this concept will be analyzed.

3 DIVERSITY IN ACTION: TOWARDS THE MANAGEMENT OF INTER-ETHNIC RELATIONS

The main aim of this chapter is to provide the conceptualization of four different strategies through which inter-ethnic relations can be managed. The thesis will build on the theoretical framework related to acculturation strategies of immigrants that has been elaborated by J. W. Berry (1997), who has delineated four such strategies, namely integration, assimilation, separation/segregation and marginalization. These strategies will be applied to Roma – an ethnic minority in Slovakia – within the field of education. The chapter will first touch upon the notion of acculturation in order to arrive at four different strategies through which inter-ethnic relations can be managed. After that, the thesis will define respective strategies. The chapter will also provide the definition as well as indicators through which socio-cultural integration will be analyzed. To avoid any theoretical inconsistencies, attention will be also given to multiculturalism as this concept usually occurs in a close connection with integration.

3.1 What is acculturation?

To arrive at the most substantial strategies of the management of inter-ethnic relations, there is a need to devote a couple of words to the process of acculturation, which foregoes the application of a particular strategy. Redfield et al. (1936) have defined acculturation as comprehending “. . . those phenomena which result when groups of individuals having different cultures come into continuous first-hand contact with subsequent changes in the original cultural patterns of either or both groups” (Redfield et al., 1936; cited in Berry, 1997, p. 7). This means that acculturation refers to the process through which different cultural groups come into contact with one another.

Berry (1997) argues that in plural societies the individual members as well as cultural groups must deal with the issue of how to acculturate. According to Berry (1997), there are two specific issues that stand out, namely (a) cultural maintenance referring to the degree to which cultural identity and characteristics of cultural groups should be maintained in society and (b) contact and participation referring to the degree to which different cultural groups should be in contact with the members of other cultural groups.

Depending on the degree to which these two issues are addressed, four acculturation strategies can be outlined. These are (1) integration; (2) assimilation; (3) separation/segregation and (4) marginalization (Berry, 1997, p. 9). The Figure 4 below depicts the relationship between these two issues and it presents the four possible strategies that are an outcome of that relationship.

		CULTURAL MAINTENANCE	
		YES	NO
CONTACT AND PARTICIPATION	YES	Integration	Assimilation
	NO	Separation/Segregation	Marginalization

Figure 4: Acculturation strategies (Source: Figure adopted from Berry, 1997, p. 12)

As Figure 4 depicts, integration is related to the positive maintenance of cultural identity of non-dominant members as well as their contact with a dominant group. Similarly, assimilation implies the existence of contact between different cultural groups, however, cultural maintenance is missing. Separation/Segregation supports the fostering of cultural identity of non-dominant groups but there is no contact with dominant group members. Turning to marginalization, neither cultural maintenance nor contact between different cultural groups is held (see Figure 4 above).

Although these strategies point to the way of how different cultural groups come into contact with one another in a broader social community, it is argued that two issues related to acculturation can be applied to the field of education as well. If education is provided to different cultural groups, such as ethnic minorities, it is up to the responsible authorities to decide if – and to what extent – the educational process will reflect diversity that prevails in society. Within the framework of the educational process, it can be analyzed if and how cultural identity and other cultural characteristics of non-dominant group members are fostered and incorporated into the learning environment. Similarly, it is possible to look at the proportion of different non-dominant group members at respective schools. This may tell us a lot about how schools impact on the participation in the relations and mutual contact and its frequency between dominant and non-dominant group members.

3.2 Integration

Under the general understanding, integration means to put together independent parts that would result in the creation of a common and interconnected whole. When integration is taken from the perspective of the relations among different cultural groups, it is understood as a democratic strategy aiming to eliminate differences between these cultural communities to prevent a potential outbreak of the conflict among them. Integration rests on the inclusion of diverse cultural communities, such as ethnic groups, into a dominant cultural community while not discriminating against their specific cultural elements but rather allowing them to preserve them (McGarry and O’Leary, 1993, pp. 16-17; Berry, 1997, p. 9-10).

Berry (1997) is of the opinion that for integration to be successfully pursued, the dominant group must be “. . . open and inclusive in its orientation towards cultural diversity” (Berry, 1991; cited in Berry, 1997, p. 10). Additionally, it is further argued that integration can be carried out in multicultural societies only, in which a set of certain psychological preconditions is in play. These preconditions include, for example, (a) the inclination of society to cultural diversity that is exemplified by the presence of a multicultural ideology; (b) low level of prejudices, such as ethnocentrism, racism or discrimination; (c) the existence of positive mutual attitudes coming from different cultural groups and (d) a sense of attachment to the larger society by dominant as well as non-dominant group members (Kalin and Berry, in press; cited in Berry, 1997, p. 11).

If these preconditions are fulfilled, integration embodies a two-way process within which cultural changes take place in the majority and minority population (Bosswick and Heckmann, 2006, p. 4). This process can be perceived as mutual accommodation of different cultural communities that stands for the acceptance of cultural maintenance and equal participation in society by all individuals coming from diverse cultural backgrounds. This means that, on the one side, non-dominant members adapt to the norms and values of the majority society and, on the other side, the dominant group respects unique needs of all cultural groups living in one territory (Berry, 1997, p. 10-11).

It is worth mentioning that while analysing integration of some non-dominant group, it should be made clear to which type of integration we are referring to. Bosswick and Heckmann (2006) have proposed to classify integration as (1) structural; (2) cultural; (3) social/interactive and (4) identificational one (Bosswick and Heckmann, 2006, pp. 9-11). Other scholars have added also political and legal integration (Entzinger and Biezeveld, 2003, p. 5) or even economic one (Maxwell, 2012, p. 4). As the thesis aims to examine the impact of private secondary schools compared to elocated branches of public secondary schools on socio-cultural integration of Roma students, these two types of integration will be discussed in detail in the following subsections.

3.2.1 Social dimension of integration

For a long time, socio-economic integration of non-dominant groups, such as ethnic minorities, received the most scholarly attention. However, recent decades have shifted a research focus on socio-cultural integration of ethnic minorities as well. Social and cultural integration are strongly interrelated and may have a significant impact on the position of ethnic minorities in society as well as how they are perceived by dominant group members (Gijsberts, 2004, p. 27). If the reference is made to socio-cultural integration of ethnic minorities, it is referred to particular social and cultural components, which integration is composed of.

In general, social integration is understood as referring to “. . . the structure and quantity of social relationships, such as the size and density of networks and the frequency of interaction, but also sometimes to the subjective perception of embeddedness” (Buchwald, 2006, p. 152). It can be argued that social integration has two extreme poles, namely social inclusion and social isolation or even exclusion. Individuals who have richer and denser social ties and more frequent contact with other individuals are of a higher social inclusion in society. Contrariwise, individuals characterized by a lower number of social relationships and contact with other fellow citizens are exposed to social isolation that may even contribute to their social exclusion within society (Schwarzer et al., 1994, p. 687).

Similarly, social integration, taken from the perspective of ethnic minorities, describes the degree, structure and frequency of their relationships and contact with dominant

group members. This type of integration is quite strong especially when inter-ethnic contact is maintained, attitudes among different ethnicities are positive and inter-ethnic relations are of a low degree of aggression and violence (Tubergen, 2020, p. 378). Depending on the context in which social integration of ethnic minorities is analysed, a set of indicators can be delineated. For the purpose of this thesis, the following indicators will check the presence of social integration of Roma students, namely (1) social contact and (2) social embeddedness. Each of these indicators is discussed in the paragraphs below.

Social contact is the most frequent indicator through which social integration of ethnic minorities is analysed. This type of indicator is derived from a so-called social contact theory that refers to the existence of interpersonal contact between individuals from diverse racial, ethnic or even religious communities. This theory was first outlined in Gordon Allport's *The Nature of Prejudice* (1954). His hypothesis assumed that interpersonal contact between members of hostile groups contributes to the reduction of prejudices, it enables making friends across different social groups and it improves intergroup relations (Allport, 1954). Therefore, to examine social contact between different ethnic communities means to examine if and to what extent these groups come into a contact with one another. Positive social contact should eliminate 'us vs. them' mentality and creates a more inclusive 'we' feeling.

When it comes to social embeddedness, this concept can be understood as referring to a general feeling of embeddedness of individuals and their sense of being integrated into or belong to a particular group of people and accepted by this group of people. Simultaneously, social embeddedness points to the feeling of being connected to others and feeling like a member of a particular community (Maslow, 1943; Baumeister and Leary, 1995). Within the context of education, it makes sense to analyse this indicator in connection to students' relations with their teachers, fellow schoolmates as well as to examine students' feelings about the overall school environment (Borgonovi and Pál, 2016; European Commission, 2019).

3.2.2 Cultural dimension of integration

Whereas social integration is mostly related to contact between dominant and non-dominant group members as well as social embeddedness of the latter group, cultural integration refers to the acceptance of norms and values of cultural diversity by members of different cultural communities. This type of integration is associated to cultural norms, habits, language or even religion (Gijssberts, 2004, p. 27). Because integration is understood as a two-way process bringing changes in norms, values and behavior to a dominant group and non-dominant communities as well, the analysis of cultural integration examines the degree to which different cultural communities share these norms and values (Permoser and Rosenberger, 2012, p. 40). This means that some ethnic minorities do not necessarily give up their distinctive culture traits. Contrariwise, they may wish to preserve their language, religion and other cultural elements, however, they may be simultaneously willing to integrate into a dominant society by learning its language, for example (Algan et al., 2012).

Within the framework of this thesis and in the context of education, cultural integration is perceived as “. . . the continuing engagement and evolution of students’ cultural identities in the academic setting and the extent to which academic, social and cultural aspects of student lives are reflected across the educational continuum [and in the learning process]” (Museus et al., 2012; cited in Chun and Evans, 2016, pp. 64-65). It is no exaggeration to say that the knowledge of the national language is *sine qua non* for integration of non-dominant group members and therefore, in order to enhance their integration, the educational institutions provide education mostly in the national language. However, especially in plural societies, cultural integration of non-dominant communities can be carried out in the form of biculturalism and bilingualism. This means that although students must have the knowledge of the dominant language, norms and values, the educational institutions may simultaneously tolerate cultural and linguistic diversity, which is present in society, and reflect it into the learning process (Darder, 1995; Jong, 1996; Ibarraran et al., 2008; Jong and Howard, 2009).

Scholars argue that successful cultural integration of ethnic minorities in the field of education means that students are allowed to maintain their distinctive culture identity, which should be also fostered by the educational institutions within the learning

process. Although students of ethnic minority background are exposed to dominant culture elements, their cultural identity should be also incorporated into the curriculum – for example, by teaching minority language at school. However, this should not be done outside of school hours, as an extracurricular activity, for instance, but cultural identity of ethnic minorities should be reflected during the regular classes attended by students of ethnic minority background as well as students of dominant ethnicity. This should create equality and equal respect of cultural identities of all citizens living within one state. Only in this case, integration embodies its two-way character as changes in norms, values and culture take place in dominant as well as non-dominant communities (Allport, 1954; Tikunoff and Vasquez-Faria, 1982; Slavin, 1985; Phinney, 1992; Ibarra et al., 2008).

Therefore, while analysing cultural integration of Roma, it will be observed if, how and to what extent public and private educational providers foster Roma cultural identity and its incorporation into the learning environment. The focus will be predominantly on Roma language, traditions and other aspects related to Roma cultural identity, such as history, for instance⁴. These cultural elements will serve as indicators of cultural integration.

3.2.3 Integration and multiculturalism

As it has been indicated in the prologue to this chapter, the thesis will briefly discuss the difference between integration and multiculturalism because the interchangeable usage of these two concepts often results in theoretical inconsistencies. In the context of ethnopoltics and strategies of acculturation of different cultural groups, multiculturalism refers to “. . . an accommodative form of integration which would allow group-based racialized, ethnic, cultural, religious identities and practices to be recognized and supported in the public space, rather than require them to be privatized” (Modood, 2007, p. 61). Similarly to integration, multiculturalism also supports the maintenance of diversity and different cultural identities but the way of how to achieve

⁴ Although religion is also a prominent aspect of one's cultural identity through which cultural integration of some non-dominant communities could be analysed, the thesis will not focus on religion of Roma because this ethnic minority does not confess significantly different religion compared to dominant group members.

this goal is slightly different. Whereas integration calls for the creation of common culture, multiculturalism highlights the importance of cultural differences and it supports the existence of special rights for cultural groups based on these differences (ibid).

It means that multiculturalism is based on “. . . ‘emancipation’ for designated ‘ethnic minorities’, but within their own state-supported ethnic infrastructures, including ethnic schools . . .” (Joppke, 2007, p. 5). Multiculturalism stresses on differences, which aimed to be preserved by different cultural communities that define themselves as different and wish to remain as such. However, it is worth mentioning that one prominent criticism of multiculturalism argues that it may actually contribute to separation and deepen the fragmentation of society. Thus, from the critical point of view, a strong concentration on differences may lead to self-separation of diverse cultural communities (Race, 2015). Some scholars even argue that multiculturalism endangers national integration and integrity because it directly undermines the notions of common language, culture and identification (Bosswick and Heckmann, 2006, p. 8).

However, integration is not the only possible strategy of how to manage inter-ethnic relations in a plural society. The management of inter-ethnic relations may be also carried out through assimilation, separation/segregation or marginalization. The thesis turns to these strategies in the following sections.

3.3 Assimilation

Similarly to integration, assimilation is democratic and eliminating strategy of acculturation. However, and contrary to integration, assimilation can be seen as a one-way process because its goal is not only to eliminate differences among different ethnic communities but also to create a single ethnic identity (McGarry and O’Leary, 1993, p. 17). Consequently, assimilation refers to the “. . . ongoing process of absorption into the culture that is perceived as dominant or more desirable . . .” (Murdock, 2016, p. 200). This means that individuals lose their original cultural identity and the adaptation to the dominant culture takes place. When it comes to ethnic identity of individuals, assimilationist policies go much further than integrative ones. Assimilation stands for the merging of ethnic identity either into one already established (usually a dominant

ethnic identity) or into a new one. As a result of this logic, assimilation is often labelled as a so-called melting pot model (McGarry and O’Leary, 1993, p. 17).

Following Berry’s (1997) fourfold typology of acculturation strategies, it can be argued that, similarly to integration, under assimilation a social contact between dominant and non-dominant group members is maintained but cultural maintenance is missing. Non-dominant group members do not preserve their distinctive culture identity either because they do not want to do that or they cannot do that (Berry, 1997, p. 9). Berry (1997) argues that if individuals wish to assimilate then it is appropriate to use the notion of the melting pot. However, if they are forced to assimilate, the notion of a pressure cooker seems to describe the situation better (ibid, p. 10). It is worth mentioning, however, that there is a very thin line between voluntary and forced assimilation. The arising question is to what extent voluntary assimilation can be perceived as voluntary because a certain degree of assimilative force is likely to be present to ensure homogenization of public life (McGarry and O’Leary, 1993, p. 19).

When we turn our attention to the field of education, it can be asserted that those educational institutions, which provide education under assimilationist strategy, do not reflect cultural diversity of society into a learning process. This means that any cultural elements of non-dominant communities are suppressed and their members are being adapted to dominant cultural components. Consequently, non-dominant group students do not have any or only very limited possibilities to preserve their own cultural identity because they have to assimilate to the dominant cultural characteristics, which are also embedded in the school curriculum (Mwaniki et al., 2016; New et al., 2017; New and Kyuchukov, 2017).

3.4 Separation/Segregation

The third strategy of acculturation can embody two types, namely either separation or segregation. Both types are characterized by the non-dominant group’s cultural maintenance and missing contact with dominant group members. However, if non-dominant group members voluntarily wish not to have social contact with dominant group members, we refer to separation. This means that non-dominant communities may separate themselves from a broader society by not interacting with others.

Contrariwise, when dominant group members purposefully try to avoid the contact with non-dominant communities, it is more appropriate to refer to segregation of the latter group (Berry, 1997, pp. 10-11). As it has been discussed in the previous section, separation can be a result of multiculturalism whereby non-dominant communities may self-separate from a broader social community. The emphasis on the preservation of cultural differences, taking place also in public sphere, may create a bridge between different cultural communities, whose social contact with one another may be limited to the lowest possible extent (Bosswick and Heckmann, 2006; Race, 2015).

Similarly, acculturation strategy of segregation is based on the avoidance of social contact between the dominant society and non-dominant group members. However, in this case the dominant society segregates non-dominant communities in order to deny them an access to public services, for instance. Education belongs to the most frequent fields, in which segregation may take place. It is argued that the creation of racially or ethnically-based schools, establishment of schools near or within areas of a high concentration of a certain non-dominant and disadvantaged group, enrolment of minority students in special classes or even providing education of a lower quality to non-dominant group students could be seen as measures that significantly limit social contact between dominant and non-dominant groups. These actions not only eliminate social contact among different cultural communities but they also prevent the establishment of a more inclusive cohabitation of all citizens regardless of their culture, race, ethnicity or religion (Council of Europe, 2017).

3.5 Marginalization

Similarly to separation/segregation, marginalization of certain non-dominant communities can be materialized as a result of two distinct reasons. First, a non-dominant group members may have a very little or no interest at all in the maintenance of their cultural elements. Simultaneously, they may opt for not to have any social contact with a dominant group or other non-dominant communities. Therefore, it could be argued that in this case non-dominant group members marginalize themselves voluntarily. However, it should be taken into account that, under certain circumstances, a particular non-dominant group does not self-marginalize completely voluntarily but

that act is a result of its long-lasting discrimination coming from the dominant society (Berry, 1997, p. 9).

Second, although self-marginalization could be an option too, Berry (1997) is of the opinion that people choose this scenario in a very rare situation and therefore, non-dominant group members are rather marginalized as a result of the combination of forced assimilation and segregation exercised by dominant group members. It follows that non-dominant communities are excluded or even completely rejected by the dominant society (ibid, p. 10). If marginalization is understood as the combination of forced assimilation and segregation then, in the field of education, it implies that non-dominant members are not only forced to adapt to dominant cultural norms and elements, which are also reflected in the curriculum, but their social contact with dominant group members is limited to the lowest possible extent. As it has been argued in the previous section, the social contact between dominant and non-dominant students can be restricted by the creation of racially/ethnically-based schools or purposeful establishment of schools in the areas that are of a high concentration of some non-dominant community, for instance (Council of Europe, 2017).

Consequently, marginalization includes not only social but also physical and psychological barriers to society. It undermines social cohesion and, similarly to separation/segregation, it also eliminates a peaceful co-existence among various cultural communities. Additionally, for those being marginalized, it creates a feeling of exclusion, detachment or even alienation (Rummens and Dei, 2013, pp. 115-136). Consequently, Berry (1997) argues that marginalization as a strategy of acculturation should be avoided to the most possible extent. It has the most negative impact on adaptation of non-dominant group members to society and environment in which they live. Contrariwise, integration has the least negative impact on adaptation of non-dominant communities to society and environment, in which they act and additionally, integration may contribute to the positive cohabitation among different cultural communities within one territory (Berry, 1997, p. 24-25).

The next chapter will be devoted to the research design and methodology. The readers will be introduced to the selection of data collection methods, sampling procedure and the discussion on reliability, validity and research limitations will be also included.

4 RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

This chapter is pivotal for the understanding of how the research was conducted. The chapter will start with a brief summarization of the research problem and research question. While the second subsection of this chapter will discuss the research design, the third subsection will be devoted to the sampling procedures. Then, the thesis will discuss the research methods, which were used during the process of data collection. The last two subsections of this chapter will be related to reliability, validity and limitations of the conducted study.

4.1 Research problem, research question and theoretical assumptions

To reiterate, to analyse socio-cultural integration of a particular non-dominant community is indeed important because it may tell us not only if and to what extent this non-dominant community is a part of society but it may also uncover if and how the dominant society accepts diversity of non-dominant communities in public sphere. To examine socio-cultural integration of non-dominant groups within the framework of education is even much more substantial and pressing because the educational institutions are those entities that are significantly responsible for the formation of human relations. Schools may determine not only the structure but also the frequency and quantity of relations among members of different cultural communities. Additionally, the educational institutions may as well as may not reflect diversity and thus, schools and their educational process may be a notable indicator of how diversity is managed and accepted in the curriculum, for instance (see section 2.3, pp. 34-37).

Within the context of the Slovak education, however, this important knowledge, related to how two models of secondary education delivery impact on socio-cultural integration of Roma students, is missing. No research has been done to scrutinize how these educational institutions, which have been established with the aim to educate Roma, influence their social and cultural integration (see section 2.3, pp. 34-37). Therefore, the research conducted on this problematique will answer the following research question: *How do two models of secondary education delivery – represented by private secondary schools and elocated branches of public secondary schools – impact on socio-cultural integration of Roma students in Slovakia?* Thus, the main aim of the

study is to examine, compare and contrast how these two educational models affect socio-cultural integration of Roma students.

Based on the previous scholarly research as well as known characteristics related to private and public secondary schools (see sections 1.4, pp. 25-26 and 2.3, pp. 34-37), it is assumed that private secondary schools could contribute greater to socio-cultural integration of Roma students. The thesis expects that the incorporation of Roma cultural elements into the curriculum will positively impact on Roma cultural integration and that incorporation will be evaluated positively by Roma students as a measure respecting their cultural distinctiveness. Additionally, spatial location, predetermining private schools to be attended by non-Roma students as well, will positively influence social integration of students by allowing them to establish inter-ethnic friendships.

Contrariwise, it is expected that elocated branches will affect socio-cultural integration of Roma more negatively as a consequence of their seemingly non-integrative approach to education. Based on the preliminary research, there are no indicators pointing to the existence of cultural maintenance of Roma and thus, the thesis assumes that Roma students are required to adopt the Slovak cultural norms. Moreover, it is expected that these educational institutions, located near marginalized Roma settlements, will negatively impact on social integration of Roma as they significantly limit social contact of Roma with the majority members. The thesis assumes that this may lead to the feeling of social detachment of Roma from a broader social community. Additionally, it is not assumed that decentralized competencies (e.g. decision over curriculum) or the way of how public and private schools are financed could have a significant impact on socio-cultural integration of Roma as there are minimal or no differences between private and public schools on these matters (see section 2.2, pp. 30-34).

4.2 Research design

The stated research problem will be analysed within the context of Slovakia. The research will use a so-called multiple case design with embedded/nested units of analysis. Yin (2009) argues that if a study includes multiple cases within which specific subunits are analysed, then the reference is to multiple case design with embedded units

of analysis (Yin, 2009, pp. 53-54). Similarly, Gustafsson (2017) argues that this research design allows the research to carry out an internal analysis related to numerous subunits located within the main and larger case in a given context (Gustafsson, 2017, p. 4). As mentioned, the study took place in Slovakia that can be perceived as the main context of the investigation. However, the research was focused on three Slovak regions, which have the highest concentration of Roma and in which respective schools are located. Thus, while these regions can be seen as cases, respective schools can be taken as embedded/nested units of analysis. The study started in October 2019, when national strategic documents were first analysed, and ended in May 2020, when the last interview was conducted. The research was fully conducted in the Slovak language and materials were translated into English by the author of the thesis.

The selection of the research topic and its sole focus on Slovakia was chosen for various reasons. Firstly, although general issues related to the education of Roma are constantly discussed, the focus on the secondary level education is less frequent and not analysed in the scholarly literature in detail. Secondly, there is a missing understanding of how two existing models of secondary education delivery, established with the aim to educate Roma, impact on their social-cultural integration. These two types of integration are one of the most important ones because they determine to what extent cultural maintenance of non-dominant communities is allowed and what kind of contact or even feeling of embeddedness these members have in relation to the dominant group members and broader social community. Schools are those entities that may significantly influence the degree of socio-cultural integration of some non-dominant community (see section 2.3, pp. 34-37). The analysis of the Slovak case will contribute to a broader understanding of how different sector providers approach to Roma ethnic minority and influence its socio-cultural integration – for example, in comparison with other CEE countries facing similar issues related to the education of Roma.

4.3 Sampling

As the research is the qualitative study, non-probability sampling strategies have been used. In general, non-probability sampling means that the investigator selects only a specific population to investigate a specific research topic or problem (Kumar, 2008, pp. 41-42). When it comes to the experts on Roma minority, academic staff or even

analysed documents these were selected mainly based on purposeful sampling, which means that the respondents or cases are selected purposefully as a result of their information richness and knowledge on the analysed issue (Patton, 2002, p. 230).

To arrive at respective private and public educational institutions, the combination of purposeful, criterion and convenience sampling was used (Patton, 2002, pp. 238, 242). Firstly, the selection of two models of secondary education delivery was governed by purposeful sampling as the focus was not on all mainstream secondary schools but only on those private and public ones, which have been set up with the aim to educate Roma. Simultaneously, the attention was given to those schools, which are located in one of the three Slovak regions inhabited by a high proportion of Roma. Five private secondary schools are located in one of the three regions and a majority of elocated branches is located in these regions as well (see Figure 1, p. 21). Empirical materials were collected on those educational institutions, where the investigator had managed to secure the access to the key participants. As the research nature of the study is rather sensitive, the anonymity of all respondents, educational institutions and their location is maintained.

The data on three private and three public educational institutions were initially collected. However, later on, two public educational institutions have decided to withdraw their participation from the research because of private and confidential reasons. To mitigate the loss of the data, the researcher approached some field experts on Roma minority with the request of help. These provided the researcher with the contact details of two teachers (one who currently works at a particular elocated branch and another one is a former teacher at this type of the educational institution). Additionally, the researcher was given the contact details of two students studying at elocated branches. Three supplementary interviews were conducted – two with the mentioned teachers and one with a student. After this, collected data from respondents reflect the views on four different elocated branches.

When it comes to the questionnaires as well as students' interviews, the research employed convenience sampling as well. The nature of the research does not require formulating any conditions based on which students should have been selected. The questionnaires as well as interviewing questions for students have general content and thus, they are not related to specific students or students attending particular class only.

Therefore, the questionnaires were distributed to all students available during the field research. Similarly, students, willing to participate in the interviewing, were interviewed by the researcher. However, in one case, the investigator did not have a direct access to students. In this case, snowball sampling was used because a former graduate of that school, who was introduced to the researcher through one field expert, provided the personal contact of students currently studying at the school. The investigator then approached these students at an individual basis and asked them to take part in the study.

4.4 Data collection methods and research set-up

The main aim of this section is to provide the readers with the information on what data collection methods were used in the research. Additionally, it will be discussed how the research was carried out and how the data were collected in a real-world setting.

To use several data collection methods is contributive to triangulation of the main findings. The research findings coming from different sources may effectively minimize a potential negative bias (Bowen, 2009, p. 28). Or as Patton (1990) argues, “. . . triangulation helps the researcher guard against the accusation that a study’s findings are simply an artifact of a single method, a single source, or a single investigator’s bias” (Patton, 1990; cited in Bowen, 2009, p. 28). Following this rationale, the thesis used multiple data collection methods in order to corroborate its main findings. These methods are as follow: (a) document analysis; (b) semi-structured in-depth interviews; (c) survey questionnaire and (d) participant observation. The following paragraphs will elaborate on these data collection methods and their applicability in the conducted study.

i. Document analysis

It is argued that document analysis, used in a qualitative study, may help the investigator to “. . . uncover meaning, develop understanding, and discover insights relevant to the research problem” (Merriam, 1988; cited in Bowen, 2009, p. 29). This data collection method was used in the early stages of the research while analysing four national strategic documents related to the educational situation of Roma minority (see subsection 1.3.1, pp. 18-20). The main goal of analysing these documents was to

identify those measures through which the Government of the Slovak Republic has been proposing to improve the educational situation of Roma minority at the secondary level throughout the years.

ii. Semi-structured in-depth interviews

This data collection method is very similar to a conversation that takes place between two individuals. Although the researcher has a certain set of pre-given questions to ask, the respondents are given a good deal of leeway. This means that semi-structured in-depth interviews have a flexible nature and they are characterized by a free-flowing interaction between the investigator and respondents. It is worth mentioning that semi-structured in-depth interviews, which are always based on open-ended questions, allow the investigator to probe for more detailed answers and ask the respondents for further explanation of what they have just said. This is particularly helpful for obtaining more clarity on certain topics or issues (Morris, 2015, pp. 3-4).

The investigator conducted altogether 18 interviews. Whereas a majority of them were face-to-face interviews, some respondents were interviewed via telephone and Skype. The interviews lasted from 20 minutes to more than 2 hours. All participating interviewees can be divided into three broad categories depending on their affiliation. This means that the interviews were conducted with the (1) researchers on Roma minority; (2) academic staff and (3) students (see Appendix 1 displaying the interview details, p. 103). The place, date and time were usually given and stated by the respondents, in some cases, however, the participants were highly flexible in the interview arrangement. The interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed into a written form. The respondents were provided with the consent form including the details of the study (see Appendix 2-3, pp. 104-106).

The investigator carried out three semi-structured in-depth interviews with the Slovak researchers who possess adequate knowledge and expertise on Roma minority in general as well as in the field of education. These respondents were asked not only more general questions related to the educational situation of Roma in Slovakia but they elaborated also on two secondary education delivery models (see Appendix 4, p. 110). The second cluster of the respondents includes academic staff of respective educational

institutions. Altogether 10 interviews were conducted within this category. The bedrock of these interviews should be seen in the provided information on how these schools operate, what study programs they teach and how the curriculum and learning environment reflect Roma identity. This may immediately give us some hint whether the educational institutions approach education delivery to Roma from the perspective of a more integrative strategy or a more assimilationist one, for instance (see Appendix 5, pp. 111-112). The third group of the respondents includes students attending respective educational institutions. Five interviews were conducted within this category. The investigator was particularly interested in students' opinions on the incorporation of the classes reflecting Roma cultural identity, their feeling of attachment to a school or even their relations with fellow schoolmates and teachers (see Appendix 6, p. 113).

iii. Survey questionnaire

The research also used a survey questionnaire, which is applicable when the researcher aims to get more focused results and information coming from a larger sample. The survey questionnaire usually contains the close-ended questions and it offers highly structured and pre-given answers. However, to mitigate this potential bias related to the structured nature of the survey questionnaire, the investigator may use a so-called mixed survey questionnaire, which is composed of open as well as close-ended questions. Questions can be analysed either independently or in some combination. For example, if the study supplements the survey questionnaire with semi-structured in-depth interviews, the qualitative results, coming from these two data collection methods, can be examined in a close connection to each other (Grbich, 2013, pp. 1-38; Terry and Braun, 2017, pp. 15-44).

Students were asked to fill out the respective survey questionnaire consisting of qualitative and quantitative items. 69 questionnaires, filled out by students of private secondary schools, were analysed. The questionnaires were filled out by 29 men and 40 women. The age of students ranged from 15 to 22 years, one respondent was an outlier of 39 years old. Whereas some questions were more general, the remaining ones were designed in a way that should capture the degree of socio-cultural integration of students. For example, the question 9 and 10 are aimed to measure social relations, feeling of embeddedness and belonging of students. These questions have been partially

modified and adopted from the previous studies measuring the same concepts (see Borgonovi and Pál, 2016; European Commission, 2019).

The question 11 and 12 will provide us the information on the structure and character of social contact of students towards Roma as well as non-Roma members. The question 13 and 14 are devoted to the students' opinion on the incorporation of Roma language and other classes reflecting Roma identity. The questionnaire concluded with the question on the students' plans after the graduation – the responses will indicate how and where the students see themselves in a broader social community in the near future (see Appendix 7, pp. 114-121).

The completion of the questionnaire was completely voluntary and without any coercion. By submitting a completed version of the questionnaire, students agreed to participate in the undertaken study. The participation of students below 18 years of age was not conditioned by the parental/guardian permission. According to the valid rules related to the carrying out of the survey questionnaire in Slovakia, parental/guardian permission is not needed when the questionnaire is completely anonymous and does not include any personal data. This information was provided, in the personal email communication, by the National Institute for Education in the Slovak Republic and the Office for Personal Data Protection of the Slovak Republic.

iv. Participant observation

Lastly, the study used participant observation that is described as “the study of people in naturally occurring settings or ‘fields’ . . . in order to collect data in a systematic manner, but without meaning being imposed on them externally” (Brewer, 2003; cited in Hammersley, 2018, p. 4). This means that while conducting participant observation, the researcher documents what is going on in the research field, how people behave, how they engage in various activities or even how individuals interact with one another. The results of participant observation are usually in the form of descriptions (field notes) that have been written by the principal investigator based on his/her personal experiences, which had happened during the fieldwork (Levine et al., 1980; DeWalt and DeWalt, 1998; Hammersley, 2018).

This data collection method was not used as the main method for the collection of data but rather as some supplementary one, which contributed to the research findings. The goal of participant observation was to detect how students interact with one another and also with teachers or even in what kind of environment they are educated. The investigator took part in the class of the Roma language at one private secondary school. During the field observation, the researcher took notes and recorded her feelings, impressions and observations. A written version of the field notes can be found in the Appendix 8 (see Appendix 8, pp. 122-123).

4.5 Methods and techniques of analysis

The qualitative data were analysed through the method of qualitative content analysis. This method describes “. . . the meaning of qualitative material in a systematic way” (Schreier, 2012, p. 1). A specific technique, which was used for the analysis, is a qualitative coding that can be characterized as a ‘conceptual device’ or procedure through which data are organized into specific categories (Schreier, 2012, p. 39). It follows that “a code [can be] a word or short phrase that symbolically assigns a summative, salient, essence-capturing, and/or evocative attributes for a portion of language-based or visual data” (Saldana, 2013, p. 3). Therefore, the logic is that the researcher assigns parts of the qualitative material to the categories, which could be subdivided into subcategories/subcodes.

While analysing, coding and interpreting the qualitative materials, the investigator followed the procedure for the conducting of the qualitative content analysis as it has been proposed by Schreier (2012). The procedure includes the following steps: 1) deciding on the research question; 2) selecting the materials; 3) building a coding frame; 4) dividing the material into unit of coding; 5) trying out the coding frame; 6) evaluating and modifying the coding frame; 7) main analysis and 8) interpreting and presenting the findings (Schreier, 2012, p. 6). It is necessary to point out that coding and the creation of the coding frame can be either data driven (open coding) or concept driven. While concept driven coding is based on the codes, which come from the existing theoretical literature and are pre-given before the act of coding, in data driven coding, the codes are generated and created during the preliminary coding process (Gibbs, 2018, p. 61-62).

The researcher employed both types of coding. The theoretical literature, introduced in the earlier sections, is quite rich and therefore, it has served as an initial ground for the development of the coding frame. However, during the analysis of the qualitative materials, new and additional categories and subcodes have emerged and thus, these have been incorporated into the coding frame as well (see Appendix 9 displaying the coding frame, pp. 124-126). Whereas the qualitative materials (strategic documents, in-depth interviews, qualitative questions in the questionnaire and field notes) were analysed through the qualitative content analysis, the quantitative items, included in the students' questionnaires, will be displayed visually and subsequently evaluated by the researcher.

4.6 Reliability and validity of the research

Reliability and validity are important concepts in any kind of research and therefore, the investigator should take them seriously into account while evaluating the conducted research. In general, reliability refers to the degree of consistency and the extent to which the research findings can be replicated and yielding the same results. It is argued that qualitative studies score lower, compared to quantitative ones, on reliability as qualitative researches can be related to social phenomena, which are hardly replicable. This, however, does not mean that qualitative studies are of a worse quality (Golafshani, 2003, p. 601). For example, Stenbacka (2001) has proposed to perceive the concept of reliability in the qualitative research not from the perspective of the findings replicability but rather as the process of generating understanding (Stenbacka, 2001; cited in Golafshani, 2003, p. 601).

Contrary to reliability, validity evaluates if the data and information obtained through the data collection process are accurate. Many scholars have suggested viewing validity of qualitative studies as trustworthiness that reflects confidence in the research findings (Lincoln and Guba, 1985; Johnson, 1997; Mishler, 2000). There are multiple ways through which it is possible to strengthen validity or trustworthiness of the research – for example, the triangulation strategy is one of them (Golafshani, 2003, pp. 602-603). Following this advice, the research also employed the triangulation strategy because multiple methods of data collection were used. Lincoln and Guba (1985) argue that “[s]ince there can be no validity without reliability, a demonstration of the former

[validity] is sufficient to establish the later [reliability]” (Lincoln and Guba, 1985, p. 316). It follows that the triangulation strategy will not only strengthen validity of the research but it will also improve its reliability. Thus, it can be argued that reliability is a consequence of validity in qualitative studies.

4.7 Limitations of the research

At this place, the author of the study would like to acknowledge the research limitations. Firstly, the research itself cannot produce a generalizable theory. Although to delineate some lessons-learned based on the Slovak case would be possible, the research is predominantly valid and set within the context of the Slovak secondary education delivery. Secondly, under the general understanding, not securing parental/guardian permission regarding the students’ questionnaires could be considered as an ethnical limitation. The author of the study acknowledges this remark, however, the study followed valid regulations of the carrying out of a study in Slovakia. Thirdly, it is argued that convenience sampling, which was used for the selection of the sites and some respondents, is the least desirable sampling strategy because the generalization of the results beyond the given sample is hardly possible. To mitigate this negative bias of convenience sampling, it is recommended to use sample that has diversity – for example, to draw a sample from several different sites (Lunenburg and Irby, 2008, p. 174). This was exactly done by the researcher because a sample was drawn from several different schools.

Fourthly, the researcher acknowledges that the participation withdrawal of two educational subjects resulted in less richer amount of information on public educational institutions, however, supplementary interviews alleviated that fact. Lastly, it is admitted that the survey questionnaire, which includes pre-given and structured responses, is not the most ideal tool of how to measure socio-cultural integration of individuals. To moderate a potentially negative impact on the research findings, the researcher incorporated not only several qualitative questions into the questionnaire but the interviews with students were conducted as well.

The following chapter will present and discuss the results of the empirical analysis aiming to solve the research problem and answer the research question.

5 WHAT THE EMPIRICAL DATA TELL US ABOUT SOCIO-CULTURAL INTEGRATION OF ROMA STUDENTS

This chapter will discuss the findings in relation to the conducted research. The data presented in the following sections will come from the students' questionnaires, interviews with students, academic staff and researchers on Roma minority as well as participant observation carried out by the investigator. Firstly, it will be elaborated on the findings related to cultural integration of Roma students and then, the attention will be given to social integration of Roma attending respective private and public educational institutions.

5.1 Private vs. public sector impact on cultural integration of Roma students

The following subsections will analyse in a more detail how private secondary schools compared to elocated branches impact on cultural integration of Roma students. It will be examined how exactly these two models of secondary education delivery take into account Roma cultural identity and cultural distinctiveness and reflect it in the educational setting. Whereas the first two subsections discuss the impact of private secondary schools on Roma cultural integration, the third and fourth subsections analyse that impact regarding public educational institutions.

5.1.1 Biculturalism in action

All participating private secondary schools teach classes of the Roma language, literature and history. However, these schools cannot be labelled as bilingual schools because students are not exposed to the Slovak and Roma language equally. Instead, classes, which are based on the maintenance of Roma cultural identity, are taught multiple times per week and all other classes are held in the Slovak language. These private schools are attended by approximately 80-90% of students of Roma ethnicity and the remaining percentage is composed of non-Roma students (Interview 4; 05/02/2020; Interview 7; 11/02/2020; Interview 9; 21/02/2020). This heterogeneous

nature regarding the ethnic composition of schools can be clearly observable also from the students' responses on their self-identification because 41 out of 69 students reported belonging to Roma ethnicity, 21 to Slovak, 5 to Hungarian and 2 students identified simultaneously with Slovak and Roma ethnicity (Students' questionnaires).

Contrary to any mainstream secondary schools, these private secondary schools have been established with the aim to provide the opportunity to educate the Roma language and other classes related to Roma cultural identity. According to the respondent of one private school, such educational institution

“helps raise up a young Roma generation that should be proud to be Roma and therefore, to teach them the Roma language and facts about Roma history at school shows them that they are not, as an ethnic minority, meaningless members of the Slovak society and unvalued human beings” (Interview 6; 05/02/2020).

Respondents pointed out that schooling of the Roma language has three important implications. Firstly, it fosters and encourages Roma cultural identity and it creates the environment, in which this identity is respected and mutually tolerated also by non-Roma members. Secondly, it contributes to the maintenance of the Roma language itself as students are taught an officially codified version of this language. And lastly, the knowledge of the Roma language makes the future graduates attractive for the job market. There have been many graduates who had decided either to continue in the education of the Roma language or to use their knowledge in this language and work as social workers for marginalized Roma communities, where speaking Roma is *sine qua non* condition (Interview 5; 05/02/2020; Interview 8; 11/02/2020; Interview 9; 21/02/2020).

Furthermore, it was highlighted that these schools cannot be simply labelled as 'Roma-only' because they are attended also by non-Roma students – this is their most substantial strength. Despite the incorporation of multiple cultural elements of Roma ethnicity into the learning process, the presence of non-Roma students indicate that these are willing to be educated the Roma language and to learn about Roma history. According to the respondents, the Slovak society needs more people who can speak Roma and these private schools offer a unique opportunity for non-Roma to master the Roma language (Interview 5; 05/02/2020; Interview 8; 11/02/2020). Therefore, it is

argued that these private secondary schools are a breed ground for the existence of real biculturalism, within which Roma and non-Roma students are exposed to the language, values, history or even traditions typical of multiple ethnicities. A respective authority of one private school reported that the *“Roma language can be seen as an inclusive element at our school that creates a bridge connecting Roma, non-Roma, Hungarians and Hungarian Roma students”* (Interview 9; 21/02/2020).

It is worth mentioning that the students’ ability to speak Roma and Slovak proficiently is dependent on how they speak at home. Results show that 34 out of 69 students speak the Roma language only at home, whereas 24 use the Slovak language, 8 speak Hungarian and 3 out of 69 students use the combination of Roma and Slovak (Students’ questionnaires). The classes of the Roma language are also structured in a way that should help students overcome potential language barriers either in the Roma or Slovak language. These classes are not only intended to teach students the Roma language but also to ensure that they will master both languages properly (Interview 5; 05/02/2020). This fact was also directly observed by the researcher during her attendance at the Roma language class, where the teacher made herself sure that students are aware of the meaning of particular words or phrases in the Roma as well as Slovak language (Participant observation; 05/02/2020; see Appendix 8, pp. 122-123).

Extremely valuable are also classes of Roma history, where students are taught about life of Roma from the 9th century until the present days. One respondent argued that *“in an overwhelming majority of cases, this is for the first time when students, Roma and non-Roma, get information on historical background regarding Roma minority as these facts are not included in mainstream history classes”* (Interview 5; 05/02/2020). Another respondent expressed their opinion that

“it is a human right to know history of your ancestors . . . during the classes of Roma history, we try to encourage Roma to be proud of their ethnic background by highlighting them that despite Roma disadvantaged position, Roma minority has never given up” (Interview 8; 11/02/2020).

Additionally, it was also mentioned that during these classes students are engaged in mutual discussions sharing their opinions on the most common views regarding Roma and non-Roma members in the Slovak society. *“Discussions between Roma and non-*

Roma students contribute to their understanding that many views, which we currently have in Slovakia, are simply biased and not true” (Interview 8; 11/02/2020). This indicates that students are encouraged to treat all people equally and not to be unfairly prejudiced against a particular ethnic group.

However, it needs to be mentioned that academic staff of these three private secondary schools identified certain problems that limit them either to educate the Roma language more effectively or there are other financial-organizational issues negatively impacting their operational and educational provision. One respondent admitted that the fact that students can speak Roma at different levels at a time of their admission is negatively reflected during the classes of the Roma language. Whereas for some students the Roma language is like a foreign language, others master it already quite well. It was pointed out that

“state assumes that all our students master this language at the very same level . . . all students must be educated in one group because our grant for this class are 3 hours per week taught by one teacher. What we would need is to divide our students into two groups, depending whether they are beginners or have already some knowledge of Roma. However, the state will not pay for this and we also cannot afford it from our own sources” (Interview 9; 21/02/2020).

Additionally, it was highlighted that there is a scarce of the Roma language textbooks. The respondent argued that

“although they are published, there is a need to re-publish them because they are worn out. However, the National institute for education has refused to republish them. Consequently, students can use these books only during the classes, they are not allowed to take them home as we are afraid that they could damage them even more” (Interview 9; 21/02/2020).

As a result of the implementation of the Law No. 61/2015 that allows the regional governments to determine the number of the first-year students admitted to educational institutions, all private secondary schools have a low total number of students. Academic staff argued that this law is not fair and does not apply equally to all educational institutions because, according to their experiences, private schools are usually allowed to admit the lower number of students compared to public schools –

irrespective of the students' performance or the degree of employability (Interview 7; 11/02/2020; Interview 9; 21/02/2020). One respondent lamented that

“the implementation of this law is a pure lobbying . . . they [authorities of regional government] do not take into account what our vision is – that is to say to provide solid secondary education to Roma, to respect their cultural identity in the learning process and to be opened to other interested students as well” (Interview 9; 21/02/2020).

Another respondent confirmed this statement by saying that *“the problem is that we show that Roma children are educable . . . there is some predetermination in Slovakia that Roma belong either to special schools or they are only worthy of lower secondary education – if at all”* (Interview 7; 11/02/2020).

As mentioned in the theoretical part of the thesis, the lower number of students implies the lower amount of normative financing received by schools. Two private schools reported that they do not face any significant issues affecting their operational provision or other activities related to the educational process as a result of financing. These schools collect a tuition fee of 50€ per student per academic year. One private school provides also part-time education for a fee for people who wish to increase their level of education (Interview 4; 05/02/2020; Interview 9; 21/02/2020). Thus, these two schools have multiple stable sources of funding. However, the third private school has much more serious financial difficulties because normative financing does not adequately cover all expenses. Additionally, students of this school do not pay any tuition fee as many of them come from highly economically disadvantaged families. The authority of this school explained that every month

“we are short of approximately 6000€ . . . we need to secure supplementary financing coming usually from various projects, private donors or even charity events . . . it would be more effective if we could spend this money on the educational process rather than on operational provision of school” (Interview 7; 11/02/2020).

Therefore, it is argued that sustainability of financing of three private schools is dependent on the amount and sources of their funding.

5.1.2 Diversity as a driving force of overcoming cultural and linguistic barriers

When it comes to the students' opinions, it is interesting to note that a majority of surveyed respondents expressed similar thoughts on the incorporation of Roma cultural elements within the learning environment. Respondents positively evaluated the fact that the Roma language and classes of Roma history are taught at schools. It was pointed out that, within the educational institutions in Slovakia, there are very few opportunities to learn the Roma language and to know facts about Roma history. Furthermore, it was highlighted that the Roma language should be taken more seriously and it deserves to be taught at schools because Roma minority makes up of a significant proportion of the Slovak population (Students' questionnaires; Interview 14; 05/02/2020; Interview 16; 24/02/2020). To be more specific, one student expressed that *"I think that the incorporation of the Roma language into the curriculum is a good thing because it is a part of our identity . . . I do not think that our language is inferior to the Slovak or Hungarian one"* (Student's questionnaire). Another student mentioned that *"there are different dialects of the Roma language in different Slovak regions . . . I am very happy that we learn codified version of the Roma language, this will help us master our mother tongue at a very professional level"* (Interview 14; 05/02/2020). Additionally, some students also argued that the classes of the Roma language help them to overcome language barriers (Students' questionnaire). On this issue, one student explained that *"before, I did not know the meaning of some Roma words in the Slovak language, now I can speak both languages equally well"* (Student's questionnaire).

Moreover, multiple students admitted that the way of how schools deliver secondary education is very well-balanced. The reference was made to the inclusion of the Slovak and Roma cultural elements. One student reported that

"it would not be very good if all classes were held in the Roma language . . . there is a need to master the Slovak language because it is the official state language but simultaneously it is great that we can also study Roma – language of our minority" (Interview 15; 05/02/2020).

Another student made clear that *“the classes of the Roma language and history were that reason why I decided to apply to this school”* (Student’s questionnaire). Still other student shared the same opinion by arguing that *“I chose this school because of its uniqueness in teaching the Roma language, culture and history”* (Student’s questionnaire). Thus, these responses indicate that the incorporation of Roma cultural elements into the curriculum presents a direct reason why some students decided to apply to a respective private secondary school.

Similarly, students of private schools acknowledged the importance of learning about Roma history. It was argued that history is an indispensable part of culture and as any other members of some ethnicity, they also deserve to know how their ancestors lived and how and why Roma have spread across Europe throughout the centuries. One respondent emphasized that

“it was at this school, I was first exposed to history of Roma minority . . . Roma history is not covered at all in regular history classes, although I think it should be because we are a part of Slovakia and our history is also a part of the Slovak history – Roma minority has been living here for a long time” (Interview 16; 24/02/2020).

Another student explained how beneficial it is that Roma and non-Roma attend the same school, whose curriculum reflects cultural elements of both ethnicities. This student pointed out that

“not only can non-Roma know our history and culture and we can know theirs but students of both ethnic groups will master the Roma and Slovak language – this is good because we are citizens of one state, we should not be separated and unknown to one another” (Interview 15; 05/02/2020).

It is worth turning the attention to non-Roma students as well to uncover their opinions on the inclusion of Roma cultural elements in the curriculum. Similarly to their Roma schoolmates, non-Roma students perceive the established educational biculturalism as beneficial not only for them but also for a whole society. Non-Roma students also pointed out that providing classes of minorities’ language and learning about their history should be axiomatical because these elements are also part of a nation’s cultural heritage (Students’ questionnaires). One respondent argued that *“this school is fantastic*

because it enables us [non-Roma] to learn the Roma language and it helps Roma students improve their Slovak language skills provided that they [Roma] have some gaps in the knowledge of the Slovak language” (Student’s questionnaire). Another non-Roma student mentioned that the classes of Roma history enriched their knowledge *“through learning that Roma minority was also significantly affected by holocaust and genocide. I did not know this before because regular history classes do not teach anything about Roma history”* (Student’s questionnaire).

Interestingly, while some non-Roma students reported that they decided to apply to a respective private school because of its quality and good reputation in the region, a handful of other students directly stated that the provision of classes related to the Roma language and history had motivated them to apply (Students’ questionnaires). A non-Roma student stated that *“I have always wanted to help Roma minority and improve their disadvantaged situation . . . by being able to communicate in the Roma language, there will be no barrier between me and them”* (Student’s questionnaire).

To sum up, the above-mentioned paragraphs indicate that the curriculum of private secondary schools is designed in a way that Roma and non-Roma students are exposed to bicultural education by teaching classes, which reflect cultural identity of multiple ethnicities. Private secondary schools foster Roma cultural maintenance and their curricula and learning process contribute to the mutual sharing of cultural elements typical of different cultural groups.

5.1.3 Weak understanding for Roma cultural maintenance

The research findings have revealed that elocated branches take a different inter-ethnic management strategy regarding Roma cultural maintenance compared to private secondary schools. As confirmed by various respondents, these educational institutions do not take into account Roma cultural distinctiveness. Contrariwise, they can be characterized by cultural assimilation, whereby which Roma students are required to fully assimilate to the Slovak cultural norms. Roma cultural identity is not reflected in the curriculum or learning process in any way and it is occasionally exposed to cultural hiding (Interview 10; 06/02/2020; Interview 11; 06/02/2020; Interview 12; 28/04/2020; Interview 13; 02/05/2020).

As indicated in the official national strategies, the establishment of elocated branches near marginalized Roma communities is perceived as an effective measure through which the number of Roma secondary graduates should be increased. However, because of the location of these educational institutions, it is strongly assumed that they are attended only by Roma students. One respondent argued that *“students may identify as they wish but elocated branches are definitely attended only by Roma students as they are located in areas of an extremely high concentration of this ethnic minority and still, this educational policy is intended for Roma”* (Interview 11; 06/02/2020).

Although these educational institutions are attended only by members of one ethnicity, their cultural identity is not reflected in the curriculum in any way. It was stated that *“I do not undermine cultural identity of any ethnic group but I think that they [Roma] will be better off if they will be educated in the environment reflecting the Slovak cultural norms . . . after all, they live in Slovakia”* (Interview 10; 06/02/2020). Another respondent expressed a very similar opinion by arguing that *“they [Roma] can maintain their cultural identity at home but assimilation in the field of education is better for them . . . it is also beneficial for them from the perspective of a broader integration into the Slovak society”* (Interview 13; 02/05/2020). Additionally, it was asserted that the incorporation of classes reflecting Roma cultural identity would be quite complicated, if not impossible. It was mentioned that

“I can imagine that the classes of Roma traditions or history would be of interest to students but the Roma language . . . that would be much difficult to arrange . . . there is a lack of teachers and moreover, I doubt that there is a gramatically correct version of that language” (Interview 13; 02/05/2020).

On the one side, it needs to be admitted that there is really a handful of qualified teachers, who are eligible to teach the Roma language. To do so, an individual must pass a state examination in the Roma language at the C1 level. The closest city, in which it is possible to take this exam, is Prague (Interview 3; 01/03/2020). This indicates that the Slovak educational system offers no opportunities for individuals to become qualified lecturers in the Roma language. However, on the other side, it needs to be refuted that there is no codified version of the Roma language in Slovakia. Private secondary school teacher, who is also an expert on the Roma language, mentioned that

“the Roma language is fully codified . . . there are no legal barriers for its inclusion into the curriculum, therefore schools are free to decide on its incorporation” (Interview 5; 05/02/2020). Thus, all disputes over literary of the Roma language can be easily challenged.

It is interesting to mention, however, that one respondent expressed a different opinion on the maintenance of Roma cultural identity. It was reported that

“I think that the incorporation of the Roma language into the curriculum would be a very good measure . . . not only because language is a part of cultural identity but I also believe that some quasi-bilingual education might help them [Roma] improve their skills in the Slovak language” (Interview 12; 28/04/2020).

It was further explained that *“some students cannot speak the Slovak language very well . . . we [teachers] cannot speak the Roma language, so if students do not understand somethnig, we have to look for very simple words of how to explain what they are asked to do”* (Interview 12; 28/04/2020). The respondent argued that the Roma language classes could help students overcome their language gaps in the Slovak language as it could be explained to them what the equivalences of certain Roma words or phrases mean in the Slovak language (Interview 12; 28/04/2020).

This defective knowledge of the Slovak language is influenced also by what language students speak at home (Interview 13; 02/05/2020). For students attending elocated branches, the Roma language is their mother tongue. Students’ skills in the Slovak language worsen by their mutual communication in Roma, for instance. It is not abnormal, however, that students prefer to communicate in their mother tongue, when all their classmates master this language and they perceive their proficiency in Roma to be better than in the Slovak language (Interview 10; 06/02/2020). Interestingly, however, it was mentioned that there are no legal or financial restrictions to incorporate classes reflecting Roma cultural identity into the curriculum. It was pointed out that

“as a result of our categorization and the number of students, I assume that our financial budget is quite high . . . I think that we could afford to be more integrative and inclusive and provide classes reflecting Roma identity . . . but as it seems, there is no will to do so” (Interview 12; 28/04/2020).

Furthermore, the study has revealed that some members of academic staff are not tolerant to Roma culture elements. One respondent mentioned that

“I know that for some of my former colleagues it was not very comfortable when Roma students spoke Roma during the breaks or even the classes . . . they felt uncomfortable and potentially also being mocked . . . thus, some of my former colleagues asked students not to speak Roma and tried to persuade them that to speak Slovak would be better for them” (Interview 13; 02/05/2020).

This situation indicates that instead of fostering Roma cultural identity, Roma students are asked to abandon their language in the school environment.

A similar disrespect to Roma cultural elements was shown by another respondent arguing that

“these educational institutions give Roma youth a chance to gain secondary education and have a better life . . . by fixing too much on Roma culture, there is a risk that Roma will be still in a disadvantaged position, economically dependent on state and living in marginalized communities . . .” (Interview 13; 02/05/2020).

Such kind of argumentation demonstrates that there are still opinions perceiving Roma culture as inferior to the Slovak one. There is a biased and incorrect connection of Roma cultural elements to poverty and backwardness. The thesis argues that these views are immensely dangerous and worrying because, in the field of education, such understanding of Roma cultural identity contributes to the tendencies calling for a full-fledged Roma cultural assimilation or even marginalization.

Additionally, one respondent argued that a closer attention should be given to what is taught at elocated branches. The reference was especially to practical woman that is one of the study programs provided by elocated branches. It was pointed out that

“state authorities perceive this program as a good way of how Roma girls can gain practical skills related to taking care of children and family, household management, hygiene basics or even how to cook . . . that is a 2-year study program for students who did not finish their primary education or not finish it successfully, graduates will receive lower secondary vocational education . . . but I have always found this program

problematic because it predetermines gender roles in society” (Interview 12; 28/04/2020).

The thesis argues that Roma girls should not be exposed to such stereotyping education only because their educational performance at primary school was lower. Similarly, a field expert on Roma minority argues that *“study programs, such as practical woman, create a very powerful message in the Slovak society . . . this education predetermines what the role of Roma girls is and how they should be perceived by others”* (Interview 2; 27/01/2020). Another respondent pointed out that *“this program is ultra-stereotypical and produces gender-specific education . . . it is not only vehemently advocated but also excessively financed by state . . . this implies that Slovakia supports delivery of discriminatory and stereotyping education to Roma”* (Interview 3; 01/03/2020). Thus, the incorporation of this study program into the curriculum directly challenges gender equality by assuming that the role of Roma women in family and society is undoubtedly connected to household chores and family members’ care.

5.1.4 Importance of culture

Based on the students’ responses in the interview, it is possible to identify two broad reasons calling for Roma cultural identity maintenance at school. Firstly, respondents highlighted the importance of a symbolic value that the Roma language, history and traditions signify to them. Additionally, it was pointed out that a majority of the educational institutions in Slovakia do not take into account Roma cultural distinctiveness (Interview 17; 06/02/2020; Interview 18; 30/04/2020). On this issue one respondent mentioned that

“Roma culture is largely ignored at schools, although there are many schools attended by a majority of Roma . . . I am of the opinion that the ignorance over the incorporation of Roma cultural elements into the curriculum is not good because it implies that Roma culture is meaningless and inferior . . . a result is that we [Roma] must always adapt to the Slovak norms and culture at schools” (Interview 18; 30/04/2020).

The symbolic value of Roma cultural identity should be perceived as a mean of the manifestation of Roma ethnic allegiances. As the above-mentioned quote indicates, the

ignorance over Roma cultural identity in the school setting might lead to the perceptions of Roma culture as unvalued.

Secondly, student respondents also mentioned that the inclusion of classes reflecting Roma cultural identity would have a practical reason for them. The reference was mainly to the classes of Roma language through which students would like to improve their Slovak language skills. One student argued that *“I can speak Roma very well but I still have some gaps in the Slovak language because at home we do not speak Slovak at all . . . sometimes I cannot match the Roma words to the Slovak ones”* (Interview 17; 06/02/2020). Another student identified the very same justification of why the Roma language should be incorporated into the curriculum. It was stated that

“to attend some bilingual class of the Roma and Slovak language would be great . . . we could learn how to say some Roma phrases in Slovak and vice versa . . . sometimes it takes me a lot of thinking to come up with a correct Slovak word” (Interview 18; 30/04/2020).

Interestingly, this respondent also mentioned a connection between language skills and school performance. It was revealed that

“I have difficulties to complete some exercises, mainly if I do not understand some words . . . as a result, I usually get a worse grade . . . study the Roma and Slovak language simultaneously would maybe help me be fluent in both languages and have better grades” (Interview 18; 30/04/2020).

However, during one interview, after all, a student pointed to absurdity of a potential inclusion of Roma cultural elements into the curriculum. It was reported that some teachers are not very supportive when students speak Roma because they perceive the Slovak language to be more needed for students from the perspective of their economic integration. This respondent explained that

“our teachers do not like the Roma language . . . they are telling us to speak rather Slovak as we will need this language while looking for some job, maybe they [teachers] feel uncomfortable as they cannot understand us but they have to understand that for us [Roma students] the Roma language is more natural” (Interview 18; 30/04/2020).

To reiterate the findings of the last two sections, it can be argued, based on the collected data from participating respondents, that elocated branches do not reflect Roma cultural identity in the curriculum and learning process in any way. These educational institutions deliver education in a way that requires students to adapt to the dominant, Slovak, cultural values. However, students' opinions indicate that some kind of the incorporation of the classes reflecting Roma cultural identity could be contributive. What is more, students reported that the acceptance of Roma cultural elements in the curriculum would have not only a symbolic value but it could be seen as a measure improving their language skills.

5.2 Towards the detection of two contrasting poles of Roma students' social integration

This section will discuss the impact of private secondary schools and elocated branches of public secondary schools on Roma social integration. Firstly, the attention will be given to private secondary schools and the way of how these schools influence social contact between Roma and non-Roma and how they affect social embeddedness of students. The last two subsections will provide the readers with insight into the impact of elocated branches on Roma students' social integration.

5.2.1 School heterogeneity as a contributing factor to positive social contact between Roma and non-Roma students

Private secondary schools are opened to all students irrespective of their ethnicity. Analysed private schools are heterogeneous in their ethnic composition (see section 5.1.1, p. 61), which, according to one respondent, ensures that *“students of different ethnicities are given the opportunity to get to know opposite cultures existing within one society and they are simultaneously able to make friends with members of different ethnic groups”* (Interview 5; 05/02/2020). This means that school ethnic composition may foster or impede the existence of social contact among students belonging to different ethnicities. As private secondary schools are attended by Roma and non-Roma students, social contact between these ethnicities is regular and well-established. Another participant highlighted that *“a priority of every educational institution should be to create ethnically and culturally heterogeneous schools and classes because only*

then students are exposed to mutual cultural, linguistic and social enrichment” (Interview 6; 05/02/2020). Collected research data have revealed that the environment, in which students are educated, contributes to the establishment of positive social contact between Roma and non-Roma members (for example, see Figure 5 below).

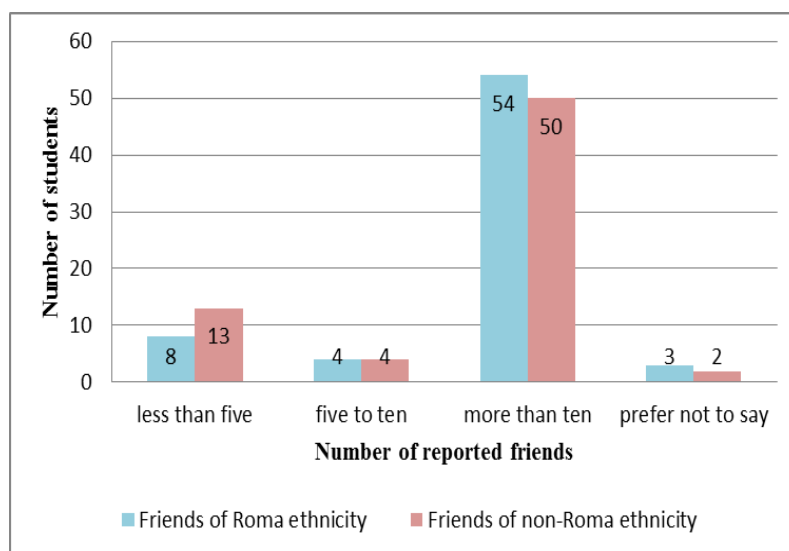


Figure 5: Number of reported friends of Roma and non-Roma ethnicity by students of private secondary schools (Source: Students’ questionnaires)

Figure 5 depicts the number of reported friends of Roma and non-Roma ethnicity by students attending private secondary schools. Based on the data, it can be observed that 54 out of 69 students reported having more than ten friends of Roma ethnicity and 50 out of 69 students reported having more than ten friends of non-Roma ethnicity. Although students were not asked to indicate an exact number of their Roma/non-Roma friends, the data reveal that an almost equal number of students of private secondary schools have as many Roma and non-Roma friends that their number belongs to the same category (more than ten). This indicates that students have quasi-equally established social ties with Roma and non-Roma members (see Figure 5, above). Additionally, because the thesis is focused on social integration of Roma, it makes sense to look into the data from the perspective of this ethnic minority. The collected data point out that 36 out of 41 students, who self-identified as Roma (see section 5.1.1, p. 61), reported having more than ten friends of Roma as well as non-Roma ethnicity (Students’ questionnaires).

The existence of social ties and positive social contact between Roma and non-Roma students was mentioned also by respective students of private secondary schools. One respondent admitted that

“thanks to this school, I made many new friendships with non-Roma students . . . additionally, I think that mixed schools can eliminate prejudices against us, Roma . . . non-Roma can know Roma much better . . . I mean they [non-Roma] can learn that not all Roma are lazy and want to remain uneducated because this is not always true” (Interview 14; 05/02/2020).

Another student pointed to the existence of cultural and social enrichment among Roma and non-Roma students. This respondent argued that

“I think I have as many Roma friends as non-Roma ones . . . this school is based on a multicultural environment as it is attended by Roma and non-Roma as well . . . thanks to this school, I learnt that not all non-Roma have prejudices against Roma . . . I think that we [students] are on very good terms with each other, irrespective of our ethnic origin. I can even mention one interesting fact that is that I sometimes talk to my non-Roma classmates in Roma – by such communication we mutually share our cultural values” (Interview 15; 05/02/2020).

It can be argued that the environment of private secondary schools positively impacts on Roma students relations towards their non-Roma schoolmates.

It is interesting to note that a positively evaluated social contact and the existence of good relations can be also detected among the responses of several non-Roma students that appeared in their questionnaires. For example, one student mentioned that *“I have primarily applied to this school because of my interest in its study programs but also because I have wanted to establish friendships with Roma. I do not regret it, I have many Roma friends now”* (Student’s questionnaire). It was further expressed that *“bicultural environment here creates also an opportunity for non-Roma students to be culturally closer to and come into a regular contact with Roma, this is good because we can know them [Roma] much more”* (Student’s questionnaire). Thus, non-Roma students expressed pretty similar positive stances on social contact with their Roma schoolmates that is positively affected by ethnic heterogeneity and bicultural curriculum of private secondary schools.

However, academic staff of private secondary schools argued that to create an ethnically heterogeneous school is not simply enough if there is a desire to establish positive and good social ties between students of different ethnicities. It was highlighted that schools should constantly foster social contact between students of different ethnicities, for example through different projects or extracurricular activities. A responsible authority of one private school brought to light that social contact between Roma and non-Roma students is deepened by

“their cooperation on various school projects that forces, in a positive sense, students to spend more time together – also after the school hours. You are hardly likely to find this in regular mainstream schools because there, Roma usually sit in back rows and teachers do not even try to engage Roma into collective activities . . . however, we here try to put students together and this leads to the elimination of prejudices and establishment of good and positive relations between Roma and non-Roma” (Interview 9; 21/02/2020).

Academic staff from another private school mentioned that every school year, they try to get some financial grant from the Ministry of Culture of the Slovak Republic to arrange a trip to Auschwitz (Interview 4; 05/02/2020; Interview 6; 05/02/2020). These trips have not only cultural but also social dimension for all students. During these excursions

“students realize, many of them for the first time, that the Holocaust was also committed to Roma and this fact is an inseparable part of Roma history . . . simultaneously, however, these trips make social bonds between Roma and non-Roma stronger as they spend time together also outside the school” (Interview 6; 05/02/2020).

Additionally, it was pointed out that the location of schools significantly contributes to social integration of Roma into a broader social community (Interview 4; 05/02/2020; Interview 8; 11/02/2020). As all participating private schools are located in towns, students, who do not live in a place of the school residence, must either use public transportation or to be accommodated at the dormitory. Figure 6 depicts the students' place of residence (see Figure 6 on the next page).

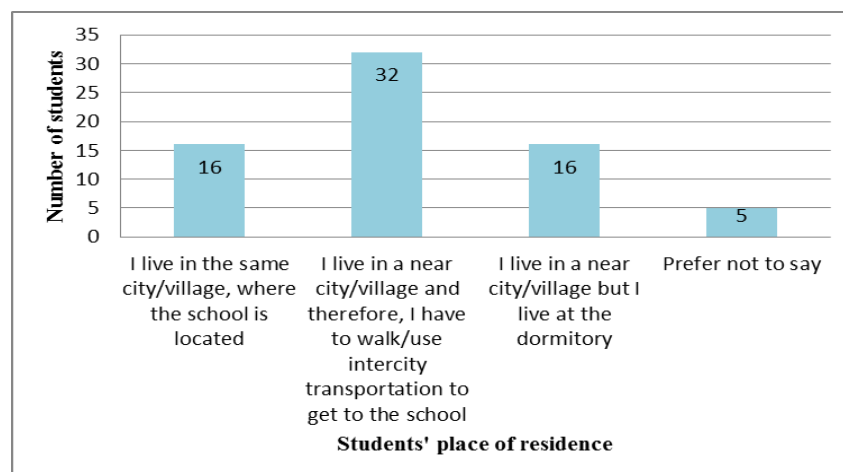


Figure 6: Place of residence of students of private secondary schools (Source: Students' questionnaires)

Figure 6 shows that almost 70% of students attending private secondary schools do not live in a city, where a respective school is located. Contrariwise, they either travel daily to the school or live at the dormitory. A responsible authority of one private school mentioned that

“although it is easier for Roma students to attend schools near marginalized Roma communities, from the perspective of their broader social integration this is not good . . . they [Roma] need to be also in a regular contact with other members of the Slovak society” (Interview 4; 05/02/2020).

The spatial location of private schools creates a great opportunity for Roma students to get in contact with people of opposite ethnicities provided that these students are coming from marginalized Roma settlements. Additionally, a respondent from another private school revealed that

“our students like to be accommodated at the dormitory . . . they can study there without any disturbance and their academic performance is much better . . . many Roma are coming from multigenerational households and this fact sometimes prevents them to study effectively” (Interview 8; 11/02/2020).

Respondents also refuted the arguments claiming that Roma youth coming from marginalized communities does not have any options to study at schools located in towns. Although *“Roma children coming from socially and economically disadvantaged environment have a very low chance and opportunity to be admitted to*

good-quality secondary schools and achieve solid secondary education” (Interview 6; 05/02/2020), all students coming from economically disadvantaged family are eligible to receive a social scholarship. Students may use this scholarship to pay for their travel or accommodation expenses and thus, they can continue in their studies – although, the respondents agreed that the amount of this scholarship could ideally be much higher (Interview 4; 05/02/2020; Interview 7; 11/02/2020; Interview 9; 21/02/2020). However, a field expert, who is well aware of the educational situation of Roma, highlighted that

“many times Roma attending primary schools do not simply know that they would be eligible to receive this scholarship while attending a secondary school in a town because nobody has told them or they are told that this scholarship is only for those, who attend elocated branches. As a result of this, they decide to attend elocated branches and stay in Roma settlement . . . it seems suspicious as if there was some business between primary schools and those schools established near Roma settlements” (Interview 2; 27/01/2020).

The data introduced in this section point out that not only heterogeneous ethnic composition, bicultural educational environment but also spatial location of private schools impact positively on social contact and social ties between Roma and non-Roma students.

5.2.2 Feeling like a member of a community – being accepted as such

As outlined in the theoretical part, the concept of social integration has two dimensions, namely social contact and social embeddedness. The latter reflects to the feeling of being a member of a particular community and being accepted as such (Borgonovi and Pál, 2016; European Commission, 2019). This subsection will discuss social embeddedness of students attending private secondary schools in terms of their feeling of embeddedness in the school environment, broader social community as well as their relations with the fellow schoolmates and teachers. The Figure 7 displays the students’ social embeddedness mainly in terms of the overall school environment (see Figure 7 on the next page).

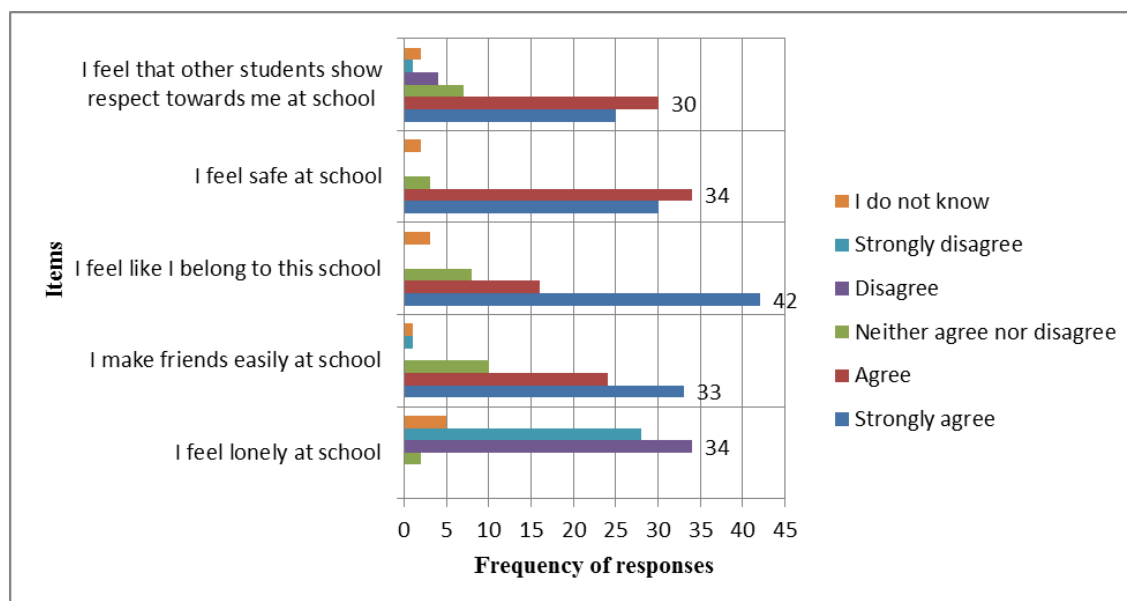


Figure 7: Social embeddedness of students of private secondary schools regarding the school environment (Source: Students’ questionnaires)

The Figure 7 depicts the frequency of responses per each asked item and the displayed numbers indicate the most frequent response in a given item. Based on the data, it can be argued that students feel positively embedded in the overall school environment. 34 out of 69 students reported that they disagree to feel lonely at school. Contrariwise, when it comes to the students’ feeling regarding making friends, sense of belonging, feeling of safety and feeling of respect coming from other students, the most frequent answers are placed either in an ‘agree category’ or ‘strongly agree category’ (Students’ questionnaires).

Academic staff of three private schools agreed that their priority is to create such school environment in which every single student will feel safe, important and having an equal human value to all other students (Interview 4; 05/02/2020; Interview 7; 11/02/2020; Interview 9; 21/02/2020). Qualitative students’ responses have revealed that students feel like a part of the overall school community. One respondent pointed out that

“I feel a strong sense of attachment to this school because of three important things: firstly, the curriculum of this school reflects my Roma ethnic identity; secondly, I have many friends here – Roma and non-Roma as well and lastly, students here are on very good terms with teachers” (Interview 14; 05/02/2020).

Therefore, the incorporation of Roma cultural identity, inter-ethnic friendships and good relations with teachers were mentioned as elements positively contributing to the respondent's social embeddedness.

Another student argued that

“I identify as half Slovak and half Roma and therefore, I really appreciate that this school is attended by Slovaks and Roma as well . . . I have always felt very good here and small size of our school contributes to my feeling of belonging because everyone knows everyone here. At this school, students are very friendly and we spend a lot of time together also outside school” (Interview 16; 24/02/2020).

This friendly atmosphere and good relations among students could be observed also during participant observation at one private school. Students led a discussion among themselves and Roma and non-Roma students sat together. Thus, any ethnic divisions among students were not in evidence (Participant observation; 05/02/2020; see Appendix 8; pp. 122-123).

Students also reported that they feel embedded to the school environment because of teachers and how they treat students. During the interviews, it was mentioned that academic staff is always very helpful and supports students in their studies. Additionally, it was reported that teachers of Roma ethnicity, who teach at private schools as well, are seen as a motivating factor for students. For example, one respondent argued that

“for me, personally, our Roma teachers are role models who motivates me to be well-educated, if they could do it, I can do it too . . . moreover, they are always helpful . . . many of them even provide extra classes if we [students] do not understand something” (Interview 14; 05/02/2020).

Another student expressed a similar sentiment by stating that *“I feel that our teachers are here for us and ready to help . . . I believe that if I approached them with some help request, they would be willing to advice me”* (Interview 15; 05/02/2020). Individual perceptions of students towards their teachers are in agreement with the aggregate responses of students in the questionnaires (see Figure 8 on the next page).

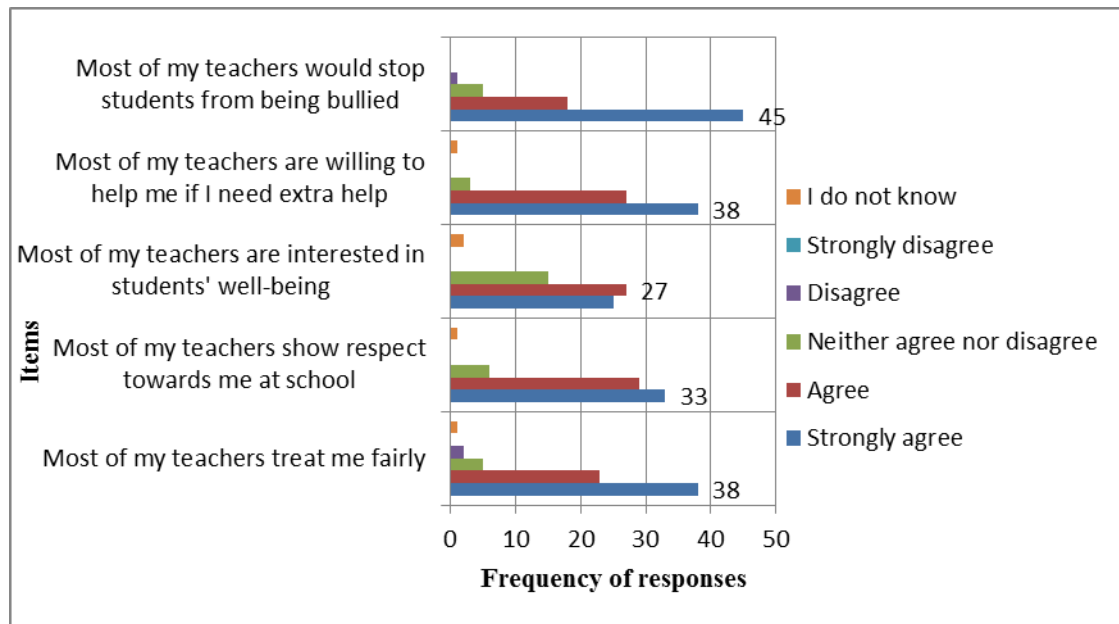


Figure 8: Perceptions of students attending private secondary schools towards their teachers
(Source: Students' questionnaire)

The data show that students are of positive perceptions towards their teachers. In four out of five items, students reported a strong agreement related to the perceptions towards their teachers and in one item (Most of my teachers are interested in students' well-being), the most frequent response was an 'agree' answer (see Figure 8 above). Not only these data but also qualitative students' responses indicate that students perceive their relations with teachers in a positive and harmonic way.

Apart from the students' embeddedness in the educational environment, the research touched also upon their feelings of embeddedness in a broader social community. To investigate this dimension, the researcher was interested in the students' plans after the graduation. Two types of responses can be identified. Students reported that they would like to either continue with the university education or they would like to find some job (Students' questionnaires; Interview 14; 05/02/2020; Interview 15; 05/02/2020; Interview 16; 24/02/2020). For example, one respondent pointed out that *"I would like to study at the university and then to become a teacher with the focus on Roma children. I would like to show them that to be Roma does not mean that you have to be uneducated"* (Student's questionnaire).

Another student argued that

“my friends, who attended this school, told me that they had not had any problems with finding a job – so I will try to find some . . . if I do not succeed, I will maybe apply to the university – after all, my grades are good” (Interview 15; 05/02/2020).

Thus, these responses imply that students are well-prepared and compatible with the idea to further participate in a broader social community after their graduation.

To sum the last two subsections up, it is argued that private secondary schools positively impact on social contact and embeddedness of their students. The data reveal that not only heterogeneous ethnic composition, spatial location but also various schools activities positively influence social contact and ties between Roma and non-Roma students. Moreover, the data point to the existence of positive students' perceptions regarding their feeling of embeddedness in the school environment, broader social community as well as relations with their fellow schoolmates and teachers.

5.2.3 Ethnic homogeneity and its negative impact on social contact

Contrary to private secondary schools, elocated branches do not contribute to the existence of social contact between the majority and minority group members. Their spatial location situates them near marginalized Roma communities. This ensures that these educational institutions are attended only by members of Roma ethnicity, although students may wish to self-identify as non-Roma (Interview 10; 06/02/2020). One respondent clarified that *“elocated branches in the Eastern Slovakia are attended by Roma students only because their establishment is a specific public policy through which it is intended to bring secondary education closer to Roma”* (Interview 3; 01/03/2020). This means that a particular elocated branch established near particular Roma settlement is attended by students living in a given Roma settlement.

The thesis argues that the establishment of elocated branches near marginalized Roma communities is detrimental for social contact among Roma students and their non-Roma peers. For example, one respondent mentioned that *“I have Roma friends only because I have always been surrounded by Roma . . . a school, which I am attending is attended by Roma students only, so actually I have never had the opportunity to make friends*

with non-Roma at school” (Interview 17; 06/02/2020). A similar opinion was expressed by another student claiming that

“elocated branch, which I am currently attending, cannot foster any contact between Roma and non-Roma students because only Roma students attend this school . . . but I would say that we [students] are on good terms with one another as we know each other pretty well” (Interview 18; 30/04/2020).

As argued in the theoretical section, geographical segregation of Roma communities prevents Roma to establish relations with non-Roma members (Rusnáková and Rochová, 2014). The setting up of educational institutions near marginalized Roma settlements worsens this fact even more and impedes the creation of social contact and ties among Roma and non-Roma students.

Although the lack of social contact of Roma youth living in marginalized Roma communities with non-Roma peers is understandable as Roma youth spends its early childhood as well as teenagers years in Roma settlements, the state authorities should prevent this to happen and not support its continuance by the establishment of schools situated near Roma settlements. Additionally, one respondent revealed that

“although I had good grades at primary school to go to good secondary school in the nearest town, I have given preference to elocated branch, although I know that it offers only lower secondary education, because a majority of my friends went here as well” (Interview 18; 30/04/2020).

It is regrettable that Roma youth is not provided counselling assistance while applying to secondary schools, however, on this issue, one field expert mentioned that *“to the best of my knowledge, Roma at primary schools are not even encouraged to apply to a school in a town . . . instead, there are recommended to attend elocated branch in their community”* (Interview 2; 27/01/2020).

Thus, it can be argued that to establish an educational institution near an area inhabited by a particular ethnic minority is quite problematic. A complicated nature of this situation lies in the nonexistence and non-fostering of social contact among students of the majority and minority ethnicity. To make an easier access to secondary education for Roma directly restricted and significantly eliminated their possibility to establish

social contact and ties with non-Roma peers as elocated branches are attended by Roma students only.

5.2.4 Towards an exclusion from a broader social community

The data on social integration brought mixed results because, on the one side, students reported positive stances regarding their relations with fellow schoolmates or perceptions on the school environment but, on the other side, less positive stances were found out regarding students' perceptions towards teachers and their embeddedness into a broader social community (Interview 17; 06/02/2020; Interview 18; 30/04/2020). For example, one student respondent argued that *"I feel good at school because many of my friends are here as well so we can spend time together not only outside school but also during the school hours"* (Interview 18; 30/04/2020).

This fact has been confirmed by one research participant who argued that *"based on my experiences, students attending elocated branches have quite strong attachment to those educational institutions mainly because many of their friends attend that school as well and the school environment is familiar to them through the presence of their friends"* (Interview 12; 28/04/2020). However, the study has revealed that some kind of detachment can be observed regarding the student-teacher relationship. On this issue, one respondent mentioned that

"to establish good and positive student-teacher ties, you need to have some feedback from both participants . . . many Roma students do not care too much about their education because they have different priorities and therefore, the role of a teacher is meaningless at school for them" (Interview 12; 28/04/2020).

Whereas this respondent pointed to the existence of detachment of Roma students towards their teachers as a result of Roma missing interest in education, another research participant highlighted different reasons for a weak student-teacher relationship. This respondent stated that

"my personal experiences allow me to argue that Roma youth does not have strong and good relations with their teachers because of cultural barriers . . . if a teacher cannot speak Roma, there is a low probability that strong social ties will be established between Roma students and a teacher" (Interview 13; 02/05/2020).

Thus, it can be asserted that linguistic barriers influence negatively not only students' ability to comprehend the learning activities (see section 5.1.3, pp. 67-71) but they also create an insurmountable bridge between Roma students and teachers that prevents the establishment of stronger ties between them.

When it comes to the students' responses on this issue, respondents argued that although they are on good terms with their teachers, they do not feel any deeper engagement with them. One respondent argued that *"it always depends on a particular teacher, some are friendlier than others . . . in general, teachers are kind at our school and I would say that they respect students but I would not say that they care too much about our well-being"* (Interview 17; 06/02/2020). Another respondent pointed to the existence of disengagement between students and teachers that could be a consequence of cultural differences between these two groups of individuals. It was asserted that

"I personally do not feel closer ties to my teachers and I think that for them there is also a barrier to get in a more intense touch with students . . . I would appreciate to be taught also by someone from our [Roma] culture or by someone who has some knowledge of the Roma language – I think this could be beneficial also for our academic performance" (Interview 18; 30/04/2020).

It is also worth pointing out that elocated branches established near marginalized Roma settlements do not produce not only social contact between the majority and minority group students (see section 5.2.3, pp. 82-84) but these educational institutions eliminate a possibility for Roma to fully and successfully integrate into a broader social community after the graduation. One researcher argued that

"although we lack reliable statistical data on the level of unemployment of elocated branches graduates, our findings indicate that these graduates are simply not attractive for the labour market or received lower secondary vocational education predetermines them to be paid very little . . . some study programs, such as practical woman, are designed in a way that encourages the graduates rather to stay at home than helping them socially and economically integrate" (Interview 3; 01/03/2020).

This fact has been confirmed by another researcher who stated that *"if elocated branches do not have established some partner ties with employers or students do not attend any excursions or trips, then they [students] are not in contact with the*

majority population” (Interview 1; 24/01/2020). This implies that education provided by elocated branches does not foster social integration of Roma students but, in many cases, it contributes to their social exclusion and marginalization from a broader social life.

Furthermore, one student respondent also mentioned that

“as I have spent all my life in Roma community, surrounded by Roma members, it will be quite hard for me to find some job in a town and to suddenly be in a contact with non-Roma people . . . thus, I would like rather find some job here but I know that it is not possible and to be employed means that I will have to travel” (Interview 18; 30/04/2020).

Elocated branches, which have been established with the aim to make an easier access to secondary education, however, impact negatively on students’ perceptions towards self in the context of a broader social community as they have very little experiences with the life outside of Roma community as well as contact with non-Roma members. By situating educational institutions near areas of a high concentration of some ethnic minority, there is a risk that spatial detachment will also lead to mental detachment from a broader majority society.

CONCLUDING REMARKS AND CONCLUSION

The submitted thesis aimed to analyse how two models of secondary education delivery – represented by private secondary schools and elocated branches of public secondary schools – impact on socio-cultural integration of Roma students in Slovakia. Although both models have been set up with the aim to provide education to Roma minority, their impact on socio-cultural integration of Roma has not been analysed yet under a complex and mutual investigation. The aim of the research was to compare and contrast how these two models differ in their impact on social and cultural integration of Roma students. To analyse the impact of the educational institutions on socio-cultural integration of minority group students is highly relevant because schools are those entities that may significantly determine the degree of both types of integration. Depending on their *modus operandi*, cultural and ethnic composition and the degree of pluralism in the curriculum, schools may either foster or suppress social and cultural integration of some non-dominant community.

To arrive at the main findings, the study used four different data collection methods. The researcher has analyzed four national strategic documents related to Roma minority education, collected 91 questionnaires and conducted 18 in-depth interviews and one participant observation. Collected data were analyzed by using qualitative content analysis, whereby which specific codes and subcodes were assigned to particular qualitative material. Based on the findings introduced and discussed in the previous sections, this thesis argues that two models of secondary education delivery differ significantly in their impact on socio-cultural integration of Roma students. Although both models have been set up with the aim to provide secondary education to Roma minority members, the way of how they take into account Roma cultural maintenance in the learning process and influence social contact and embeddedness of Roma position them at two contrasting spectrums. It is argued that participating private secondary schools deliver secondary education by following an integrative strategy, whereas, based on the collected data, the educational provision at elocated branches is argued to be characterized by educational marginalization.

Analysed private secondary schools respect Roma cultural identity by incorporating the classes of the Roma language and history in the curriculum. Such inclusion fosters and continuously develops Roma cultural identity in the learning process, it contributes to the maintenance of the codified version of the Roma language in society and it also helps produce graduates knowledgeable of that language. Additionally, the learning of the Roma language helps students overcome their language barriers in the Slovak language as students are exposed to the Roma and Slovak language simultaneously. Ethnic and cultural diversity of private secondary schools ensures mutual accommodation of Roma and non-Roma cultural elements and overcoming cultural and linguistic barriers among students (see sections 5.1.1 and 5.1.2, pp. 61-67).

Moreover, their spatial location in the Slovak towns impacts positively on social contact between Roma and non-Roma students. The existence of this contact has been positively evaluated also by students of respective private schools who have labelled it as beneficial from the perspective of the establishment of cross-cultural friendships that leads to the intercultural enrichment and elimination of prejudices. The school environment of analysed private schools positively influences also the students' feeling of embeddedness not only in a school community but also in a broader social community. It is argued that analysed private secondary schools have a favourable effect on social integration of Roma students as a result of the existence of social contact between the majority and minority group members as well as Roma feeling of integration into the school's structures, where they feel valued and respected. Consequently, private schools contribute positively to social inclusion of Roma students in the school environment and a broader social community as well (see sections 5.2.1 and 5.2.2, pp. 73-82).

Responsible authorities of private secondary schools have identified certain problems that restrict them to incorporate such measures that would result in even deeper integration of Roma and non-Roma students. The issues, such as financial shortage, inability to decide over the number of admitted students, inability to offer the Roma language classes reflecting language levels of students or even the lack of the Roma language textbooks, have a negative impact on more effective, integrative and inclusive education for students attending these private schools (see sections 5.1.1 and 5.1.2, pp.

61-67). Despite these drawbacks, examined private secondary schools offer bicultural education within which Roma and Slovak cultural elements are mutually fostered and shared by students.

Contrary to private secondary schools, the collected data on elocated branches have shown that these educational institutions do not foster the maintenance of Roma cultural identity in the curriculum and learning process. From the perspective of cultural maintenance, these schools can be characterized by cultural assimilation or even marginalization, whereby which Roma students adapt to the Slovak cultural norms as the elements of Roma culture are not reflected in the educational setting. However, student respondents admitted that the incorporation of Roma cultural elements would show not only respect towards Roma minority but it might also have some favourable impact on their academic performance, which is worsen by their inability to master the Slovak language proficiently. It has been revealed that although these educational institutions are attended by Roma students only, they do not cultivate Roma cultural identity in the educational process but Roma should adapt to the Slovak cultural norms that are presented as more beneficial (see sections 5.1.3 and 5.1.4, pp. 67-73).

The geographical location of elocated branches situates them near marginalized Roma settlements. However, this fact directly eliminates a possibility for the existence of social contact and ties between the majority and minority group members. Thus, spatial marginalization of elocated branches contributes to social marginalization of Roma students from their non-Roma peers. This has profound implications on Roma feeling of embeddedness in a broader social community that shows their clear detachment and exclusion from the majority society. Although the issue of none or very low education of Roma is well-known in Slovakia, elocated branches continue to offer study programs with a problematic level of employability. Instead of helping Roma become economically better off, the graduates of these educational institutions will earn only lower secondary vocational education that will not make them more attractive for the labour market. Furthermore, although the Strategy of the Slovak Republic for Integration of Roma up to 2020 (2011, p. 16) admits that Roma women are more likely to have lower education compared to Roma men, public authorities do not take adequate measures to mitigate this negative fact. Instead, elocated branches offer an ultra-

stereotyping study program of practical woman that teaches how to be a good housewife and directly predetermines what the role of Roma girls should be (see sections 5.2.3 and 5.3.3, pp. 82-86).

Based on the collected facts, the thesis argues that elocated branches produce educational marginalization because they not only ignore Roma cultural distinctiveness but they also do not foster any social contact between Roma and non-Roma students and moreover, they impact negatively on social embeddedness of Roma students in a broader social community. Although these educational institutions have been set up to make an access to secondary education much easier for Roma, their location and specificities of the educational provision are not helping Roma be socially and culturally integrated. This publicly supported model worsens the position of Roma minority and contributes to its social and cultural marginalization in Slovakia.

The study contributed to the emergence of new knowledge on the impact of two models of secondary education delivery on social and cultural integration of students of Roma ethnicity. Furthermore, the case of Slovakia provides deeper knowledge on how different sector providers approach to the education of Roma minority, how they respect its cultural distinctiveness and how they try to integrate Roma into a broader social community. These findings could have also further applicability in other countries, which face similar issues related to the education of Roma minority.

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- Interview 11. (06/02/2020). Interview with academic staff of elocated branch I.
- Interview 12. (28/04/2020). Interview with academic staff of elocated branch II.
- Interview 13. (02/05/2020). Interview with former academic staff of elocated branch III.
- Interview 14. (05/02/2020). Interview with a student of private secondary school I.
- Interview 15. (05/02/2020). Interview with a student of private secondary school I.
- Interview 16. (24/02/2020). Interview with a student of private secondary school III.
- Interview 17. (06/02/2020). Interview with a student of elocated branch I.
- Interview 18. (30/04/2020). Interview with a student of elocated branch IV.
- Interview 2. (27/01/2020). Interview with a researcher on Roma minority.
- Interview 3. (01/03/2020). Interview with a researcher on Roma minority.

Interview 4. (05/02/2020). Interview with academic staff of private secondary school I.

Interview 5. (05/02/2020). Interview with academic staff of private secondary school I.

Interview 6. (05/02/2020). Interview with academic staff of private secondary school I.

Interview 7. (11/02/2020). Interview with academic staff of private secondary school II.

Interview 8. (11/02/2020). Interview with academic staff of private secondary school II.

Interview 9. (21/02/2020). Interview with academic staff of private secondary school III.

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Appendix 1: Interview details

Interview number	Respondent	Type	Date	Duration
<i>Interview 1</i>	Researcher	Face-to-face	24/01/2020	1h 08min
<i>Interview 2</i>	Researcher	Face-to-face	27/01/2020	56 min
<i>Interview 3</i>	Researcher	Telephone	01/03/2020	45 min
<i>Interview 4</i>	Academic staff (private secondary school I)	Face-to-face	05/02/2020	59 min
<i>Interview 5</i>	Academic staff (private secondary school I)	Face-to-face	05/02/2020	30 min
<i>Interview 6</i>	Academic staff (private secondary school I)	Face-to-face	05/02/2020	45 min
<i>Interview 7</i>	Academic staff (private secondary school II)	Face-to-face	11/02/2020	1h 10 min
<i>Interview 8</i>	Academic staff (private secondary school II)	Face-to-face	11/02/2020	1 h
<i>Interview 9</i>	Academic staff (private secondary school III)	Face-to-face	21/02/2020	2 h 10 min
<i>Interview 10</i>	Academic staff (elocated branch I)	Telephone	06/02/2020	30 min
<i>Interview 11</i>	Academic staff (elocated branch I)	Face-to-face	06/02/2020	45 min
<i>Interview 12</i>	Academic staff (elocated branch II)	Telephone	28/04/2020	45 min
<i>Interview 13</i>	Former academic staff (elocated branch III)	Skype	02/05/2020	50 min
<i>Interview 14</i>	Student (private secondary school I)	Face-to-face	05/02/2020	20 min
<i>Interview 15</i>	Student (private secondary school I)	Face-to-face	05/02/2020	20 min
<i>Interview 16</i>	Student (private secondary school III)	Telephone	24/02/2020	30 min
<i>Interview 17</i>	Student (elocated branch I)	Face-to-face	06/02/2020	35 min
<i>Interview 18</i>	Student (elocated branch IV)	Telephone	30/04/2020	30 min

Appendix 2: Consent form



UNIVERSITY OF TARTU
Johan Skytte Institute of
Political Studies

CONSENT FORM

“Analysis of two models of secondary education delivery and their impact on Roma integration in Slovakia”

Dear Sir or Madam,

You are being invited to participate in the research project “Analysis of two models of secondary education delivery and their impact on Roma integration in Slovakia”. The research is carried out by the second year master degree student Klaudia Lencséssová from Johan Skytte Institute of Political Studies of the University of Tartu as a part of her Master’s Thesis. You have been selected to participate in this study because you possess knowledge about the topic of this study that may significantly contribute to the research findings. The information provided in this form is to help you decide whether you would like to take part in this study. If you have any questions, please, contact the researcher at or by phone

Aim and implications of the research: The main aim of this research is to compare and contrast two models of secondary education delivery – carried out by private and public service providers – and assess their impact on Roma integration in Slovakia. In order to solve the long-lasting problems related to Roma secondary education, the Government of the Slovak Republic has decided to establish so-called elocated branches of public secondary schools located near marginalized Roma communities. The main aim of these elocated branches of public secondary schools is to make easier access for Roma to secondary level education that would also increase a number of secondary-level graduates. Along with this state initiative, however, several private providers have decided to establish private secondary schools that are focused also on educational

provision to Roma students coming from marginalized Roma settlements. The question explored in this research is: How do two models of secondary education delivery – represented by private secondary schools and elocated branches of public secondary schools – impact on socio-cultural integration of Roma students in Slovakia? The main goal of this study is to compare and contrast elocated branches of public secondary schools to private secondary schools and analyse how they influence socio-cultural integration of Roma students in Slovakia.

Procedures of the research: Should you agree to participate, it will take approximately 60 minutes of your time to be interviewed by the researcher from the University of Tartu. During the interview you will be asked to answer questions about education of Roma students at the secondary education level in Slovakia. The interview will be audio-recorded to ensure that the researcher has an accurate record of the discussion. If you prefer not to be audio-recorded, please, let the researcher know. Audio recording will be destroyed after the interview has been transcribed into a written form. The researcher will ensure protection of personal data and secure processing and storage of the gathered empirical material as outlined below.

Anonymity and confidentiality of personal data: Adequate and reasonable measures will be taken to protect the privacy of respondents and confidentiality of information provided by them. Respondents remain anonymous and it will not be possible to link respondents' answers to their identity. The interview is anonymous and data obtained through the interview will be used only for the purpose of the Master's Thesis. The direct quotes of the respondents' answers may be used in the thesis but they will not be linked to the respondents' identity. The participants' identifiers (name, email address, telephone number, etc.) will not be maintained in association with the research data, and will only be known to the researcher. The only person who will have the access to the audio file and the transcription of the interview is the principal researcher from the University of Tartu and any other person or agency required by law. Audio recording and transcripts will be destroyed after the completion of the analysis.

Possible risks and benefits for participants: The research involves minimal risk to participants. Adequate steps will be taken to protect the privacy and confidentiality of

respondents who remain anonymous and their responses will not be linked to their identity. Participants are free to withdraw from the research at any time and may skip a question if they feel uncomfortable to give an answer. You are not expected to directly benefit from participating in this research except for insight you might gain through answering the interview questions. If you are interested in obtaining a summary of research findings, please, let the researcher know.

Rights of research participants: You can choose not to participate in this study or withdraw your participation at any time during or after the research begins. Refusing to be in this research or deciding to discontinue participation will not affect your relationship with the researcher or the University of Tartu. Should you encounter problems as a direct result of being in this research, please, contact the researcher listed at the end of this consent form.

Informed consent: You are freely making a decision whether to participate in this research study. Agreeing to the interview means that you have read and understood this consent form, you have had your questions answered, and you have decided to be a part of the research study. If you have any other questions before or during the study, you are free to talk to or contact the researcher. You will be given a copy of this document for your own records.

Researcher: Klaudia Lencséssová

Signature:

Place and Date:

Respondent:

Signature:

Place and Date:

Appendix 3: Student consent form



UNIVERSITY OF TARTU
Johan Skytte Institute of
Political Studies

STUDENT CONSENT FORM

“Analysis of two models of secondary education delivery and their impact on Roma integration in Slovakia”

Dear Sir or Madam,

You are being invited to participate in the research project “Analysis of two models of secondary education delivery and their impact on Roma integration in Slovakia.” The research is carried out by the second year master degree student Klaudia Lencséssová from Johan Skytte Institute of Political Studies of the University of Tartu as a part of her Master’s Thesis. You have been asked to participate in this study because you possess knowledge about the topic of this study that may significantly contribute to the research findings. The information provided in this form is to help you decide whether you would like to take part in this study. If you have any questions, please, contact the researcher at or by phone

Aim and implications of the research: The main aim of this research is to compare and contrast two models of secondary education delivery – carried out by private and public service providers – and assess their impact on Roma integration in Slovakia. In order to solve the long-lasting problems related to Roma secondary education, the Government of the Slovak Republic has decided to establish so-called elocated branches of public secondary schools located near marginalized Roma communities. The main aim of these elocated branches of public secondary schools is to make easier access for Roma to secondary level education that would also increase a number of secondary-

level graduates. Along with this state initiative, however, several private providers have decided to establish private secondary schools that are focused also on educational provision to Roma students coming from marginalized Roma settlements. The question explored in this research is: How do two models of secondary education delivery – represented by private secondary schools and elocated branches of public secondary schools – impact on socio-cultural integration of Roma students in Slovakia? The main goal of this study is to compare and contrast elocated branches of public secondary schools to private secondary schools and analyse how they influence socio-cultural integration of Roma students in Slovakia.

Procedures of the research: Should you agree to participate, it will take approximately 30 minutes of your time to be interviewed by the researcher from the University of Tartu. During the interview you will be asked to answer questions related to your assessment of the school environment and how this environment fosters your cultural identity as well as influences your feeling of embeddedness into a broader social community. The interview will be audio-recorded to ensure that the researcher has an accurate record of the discussion. If you prefer not to be audio-recorded, please, let the researcher know. Audio recording will be destroyed after the interview has been transcribed into a written form. The researcher will ensure protection of personal data and secure processing and storage of the gathered empirical material as outlined below.

Anonymity and confidentiality of personal data: Adequate and reasonable measures will be taken to protect the privacy of respondents and confidentiality of information provided by them. Respondents remain anonymous and it will not be possible to link respondents' answers to their identity. The interview is anonymous and data obtained through the interview will be used only for the purpose of the Master's Thesis. The direct quotes of the respondents' answers may be used in the thesis but they will not be linked to the respondents' identity. The participants' identifiers (name, email address, telephone number, etc.) will not be maintained in association with the research data, and will only be known to the researcher. The only person who will have the access to the audio file and the transcription of the interview is the principal researcher from the

University of Tartu and any other person or agency required by law. Audio recording and transcripts will be destroyed after the completion of the analysis.

Possible risks and benefits for participants: The research involves minimal risk to participants. Adequate steps will be taken to protect the privacy and confidentiality of respondents who remain anonymous and their responses will not be linked to their identity. Participants are free to withdraw from the research at any time and may skip a question if they feel uncomfortable to give an answer. You are not expected to directly benefit from participating in this research except for insight you might gain through answering the interview questions. If you are interested in obtaining a summary of research findings, please, let the researcher know.

Rights of research participants: You can choose not to participate in this study or withdraw your participation at any time during or after the research begins. Refusing to be in this research or deciding to discontinue participation will not affect your relationship with the researcher or the University of Tartu. Should you encounter problems as a direct result of being in this research, please, contact the researcher listed at the end of this consent form.

Informed consent: You are freely making a decision whether to participate in this research study. Agreeing to the interview means that you have read and understood this consent form, you have had your questions answered, and you have decided to be a part of the research study. If you have any other questions before or during the study, you are free to talk to or contact the researcher. You will be given a copy of this document for your own records.

Researcher: Klaudia Lencséssová

Signature:

Place and Date:

Student signature:

Place and Date:

Appendix 4: Interviewing questions for researchers on Roma minority

- 1) How would you assess the situation related to the education of Roma minority in Slovakia, in general? And how would you assess the situation related to the education of Roma minority at the secondary education level in Slovakia?
- 2) Based on your knowledge, have there been any specific changes, such as legal changes or changes in public policy, which have significantly improved or worsened the educational situation of Roma minority in Slovakia?
- 3) In your opinion, what are the most significant constraining factors that prevent Roma minority from obtaining the secondary education and assessing the secondary educational institutions?
- 4) In order to increase the number of Roma secondary education level graduates, the Government of the Slovak Republic has initiated a strategy related to the establishment of elocated branches of public secondary schools that are located near marginalized Roma communities. How would you assess this strategy and the role of elocated branches in education of Roma students?
- 5) Along with elocated branches of public secondary schools, several private providers have decided to set up private secondary schools with the focus to educate Roma students coming from marginalized Roma communities. Based on your knowledge, how would you evaluate their working approach to educate Roma students?
- 6) If integration is understood as a process within which minorities maintain important elements of their original culture as well as become an integral part of a broader society, then based on your knowledge, how do elocated branches located near Roma communities and private secondary schools impact on integration of Roma students?
- 7) How would you assess financing of elocated branches of public secondary schools compared to private secondary schools?
- 8) What would be, in your opinion, an optimal model of education of Roma minority at the secondary education level?

Appendix 5: Interviewing questions for academic staff

- 1) How would you, as a person working in academia, assess the situation of Roma minority in terms of their education? More specifically, how would you assess the situation at the secondary education level? Have there been any changes that would have improved or worsen the educational situation of Roma minority in Slovakia?
- 2) In your opinion, what are the most significant constraining factors that prevent Roma minority from obtaining the secondary education and assessing the secondary education institutions?
- 3) To be more specific about this educational institution, could you tell me some basic characteristics about this educational institution? When was the institution established and why? What is the total number of students attending this institution? What is the approximate percentage of Roma students attending this institution? What study programs can be studied at this educational institution?
- 4) What is the goal of this educational institution? How is this goal attained? What are the specific tools, instruments, programs that help to attain the goal of this educational institution?
- 5) Are there any specific ways (courses, programs, projects, extracurricular activities) through which Roma cultural identity is maintained and fostered? (IF YES) Why has this educational institution decided to maintain and foster Roma cultural identity in a school environment? (IF NO) Why does not this educational institution maintain and foster Roma cultural identity in a school environment?
- 6) Teachers are central to the quality of education. Academic staff can be a key motivating factor for students' attendance and performance. Could you tell me how and on what basis teachers are selected? Is their professional proficiency sufficient to teach at the institution attended by an overwhelming number of Roma?

- 7) Based on your knowledge, how would you assess educational performance of Roma students in terms of the course failure, repetition rate and/or dropout rate?
- 8) Turning to the field of finance, could you tell me what the funding sources of this educational institution are?
- 9) Could you tell me to what extent normative support, receiving by your school from the state budget, covers the operational costs of the school?
- 10) Could you tell me if this educational institution receives some kind of non-governmental financial funds to supplement normative financing?
- 11) Could you tell me if and to what extent the way of how this educational institution is financed creates any uncertainty in terms of the sustainability of the school's operation and/or the autonomy to design the school's programs and curriculum?
- 12) What would be, in your opinion, an optimal model of education of Roma minority at the secondary education level?

Appendix 6: Interviewing questions for students

- 1) Could you tell me why you have decided to study at this school?
- 2) Could you tell me how you like studying at this school?
- 3) How would you evaluate the relationship with your teachers? How would you evaluate the relationship with your fellow classmates?
- 4) Could you tell me what your opinion is about the incorporation of Roma language classes and/or classes related to Roma history, culture and/or traditions into the learning process?
- 5) How would you evaluate your ability to speak the Roma compared to the Slovak language?
- 6) In your opinion, how will the school, where you are currently studying, or the study program, which you are currently studying, contribute to your future life and/or career? What are your plans after the graduation?

Appendix 7: Questionnaire to students

Questionnaire to students

Dear students,

my name is Klaudia Lencséssová. I am the second year master degree student at the University of Tartu, Estonia. As a part of my study, I am conducting a research related to the analysis of two models of secondary education delivery and their impact on Roma integration in Slovakia. I have made this questionnaire to understand how the type of an educational service provider impacts on integration of Roma students. The data in this questionnaire will be anonymous and will be used only for the analysis, which is a part of my thesis. Individual responses are kept confidential and will be used predominantly in aggregated form. Direct quotes of your written responses may be used in the thesis but it will not be possible to link them to your identity. **Therefore, please, do not write your name and surname on this sheet.**

By submitting a completed version of this questionnaire you are consenting to the following:

- I agree to participate in the research project being carried out by Klaudia Lencséssová
- This agreement has been given voluntarily and without coercion
- I have been given full information about the study and how the questionnaire's results are going to be used
- I have read and understood the information provided above

If you have any other questions during or after the study, you are free to contact me at

1. What is your gender? (choose the correct answer)
<input type="checkbox"/> Male
<input type="checkbox"/> Female
<input type="checkbox"/> Prefer not to say
<input type="checkbox"/> Other

2. How old are you?
Please, write your age here:

3. Where do you live? (choose the correct answer)
<input type="checkbox"/> I live in the same city/village, where the school is located
<input type="checkbox"/> I live in a near city/village and therefore, I have to walk/use intercity transportation to get to the school
<input type="checkbox"/> I live in a near city/village but I live at the dormitory
<input type="checkbox"/> Prefer not to say
<input type="checkbox"/> Other (please, specify):

4. With which ethnic group do you most identify? (choose the correct answer)
<input type="checkbox"/> Slovak
<input type="checkbox"/> Hungarian
<input type="checkbox"/> Roma
<input type="checkbox"/> Prefer not to say
<input type="checkbox"/> Other (please, specify):

5. In what language do you speak at home most of the time? (choose the correct answer)
<input type="checkbox"/> Slovak
<input type="checkbox"/> Hungarian
<input type="checkbox"/> Roma
<input type="checkbox"/> Prefer not to say
<input type="checkbox"/> Other (please, specify):

6. Why have you decided to study at this school?
Please, write your answer here:

7. What study program do you study at this school?
Please, write your answer here:

8. During your studies at this school, have you failed some course? (choose the correct answer)
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes
<input type="checkbox"/> No
<input type="checkbox"/> Prefer not to say

9. Think about your teachers. To what extent do you agree with the following statements? (Label the answers with “X”)						
	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE	I DO NOT KNOW
Most of my teachers treat me fairly						
Most of my teachers show respect towards me at school						
Most of my teachers are interested in students’ well-being						
Most of my teachers are willing to help me if I need extra help						
Most of my teachers would stop students from being bullied						

10. Think about your school. To what extent do you agree with the following statements? (Label the answers with “X”)						
	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE	I DO NOT KNOW
I feel lonely at school						
I make friends easily at school						
I feel like I belong to this school						
I feel safe at school						
I feel that other students show respect towards me at school						

11. Think about your friends. Approximately, how many of your friends <u>are of Roma</u> ethnicity? (choose the correct answer)
<input type="checkbox"/> Less than five
<input type="checkbox"/> Five to ten
<input type="checkbox"/> More than ten
<input type="checkbox"/> Prefer not to say

12. Think about your friends once again. Approximately, how many of your friends <u>are of non-Roma</u> ethnicity? (choose the correct answer)
<input type="checkbox"/> Less than five
<input type="checkbox"/> Five to ten
<input type="checkbox"/> More than ten
<input type="checkbox"/> Prefer not to say

13. What is your opinion about learning Roma language at school?
Please, write your answer here:

14. In your opinion, do you think that it is important to incorporate classes related to Roma traditions and/or history into the learning process? If yes, why? If not, why not?
Please, write your answer here:

15. What are your plans after the graduation?

Please, write your answer here:

THANK YOU FOR FILLING OUT THE QUESTIONNAIRE!

Appendix 8: Field notes

Private secondary school I (Class of the Roma language; 05/02/2020; 11:15-12:00)

Sensory impressions:

- School is situated in a tranquil area closed to the city centre
- School is equipped with standard furnishing and room, where the Roma language class takes place, has a modern touch screen board
- Walls are full of posters and projects made by students
- Students are well-organized and prepared for the class to start
- In a class, there is peaceful atmosphere among students
- Roma and non-Roma students are not separated → they sit at the same desk together and lead a mutual discussion

Observed details:

- Class is related to the Roma language and its grammar, the language of instruction is Roma, however, the teacher translates her sentences immediately to the Slovak language as well; class is held by Roma teacher
- Students are given specific instructions along with a working sheet in the Roma language and they have a couple of minutes to fill it out independently
- Teacher explained to me that those students whose mother tongue is not Roma are also given a small 'crib sheet', which includes the most common words and phrases written in the Slovak as well as Roma language
- During the exercise, the teacher approaches each student at an individual basis and asks if everything is clear and understandable
- A few students asked the teacher to explain grammatical specificities of the given text

- After the completion of the exercise, students discuss how they filled out the working sheet
- A majority of students is quite active; those who are less engaged with the class exercise are approached by the teacher to share their responses
- Conversation is held in Roma language, however, the teacher translates more difficult or potentially problematic words/phrases from the Roma to the Slovak language to ensure that students know their meaning in both languages

Appendix 9: Coding frame

CODE	SUB-CODE LABEL	DESCRIPTION	QUOTE EXAMPLE	NO. OF CODED SEGMENTS
Social integration	Positive social contact	Refers to the existence of a positively evaluated social contact between Roma and non-Roma group members	<i>“thanks to this school, I made many new friendships with non-Roma students . . . additionally, I think that mixed schools can eliminate prejudices against us, Roma”</i>	21
	Social embeddedness	Refers to the feeling of being connected to others, feeling like a member of a particular community and respected by this community	<i>“I feel a strong sense of attachment to this school because of three important things: firstly, the curriculum of this school reflects my Roma ethnic identity . . .”</i>	18
	Social inclusion	Characterized by the ability and opportunity of Roma students to become a part of a broader social community	<i>“although our aim was to set up a school reflecting Roma cultural elements, our ethnically heterogeneous composition leads us to remind students that all of them, irrespective of their ethnicity, are equally valued”</i>	12
	Inter-ethnic interactions	Refers to the existence of interactions between/among various ethnic groups that positively contributes to their social contact	<i>“their cooperation on various school projects that forces, in a positive sense, students to spend more time together . . .”</i>	10
	Negative social contact	Refers to a negatively evaluated social contact or its non-existence between Roma and non-Roma group members	<i>“I have Roma friends only because I have always been surrounded by Roma . . . a school, which I am attending is attended by Roma students only . . .”</i>	15
	Social detachment	Refers to the existence of low levels of social contact, ties and interactions among the majority and minority group members	<i>“. . . if a teacher cannot speak Roma, there is a low probability that strong social ties will be established between Roma students and a teacher”</i>	9

	Social exclusion/marginalization	Characterized by the existence of constraining factors preventing Roma students to fully become a part of a broader social community; Characterized by the missing or low level of social contact between Roma and non-Roma	<i>“ . . . some study programs, such as practical woman, are designed in a way that encourages the graduates rather to stay at home than helping them socially and economically integrate”</i>	27
Cultural integration	Biculturalism	Refers to the presence of integrating cultural values, rules and norms from two different cultures (e.g. Roma and non-Roma)	<i>“bicultural environment here creates also an opportunity for non-Roma students to be culturally closer to and come into a regular contact with Roma, this is good because we can know they [Roma] much more”</i>	35
	Maintenance of cultural identity	Refers to the allowance to maintain the students' cultural identity in the academic setting and to reflect cultural diversity in the curriculum and learning environment	<i>“I think that the incorporation of the Roma language into the curriculum is a good thing because it is a part of our identity”</i>	27
	Linguistic pluralism	Refers to the existence of language diversity among various ethnic and cultural groups of individuals	<i>“before, I did not know the meaning of some Roma words in the Slovak language . . . now, I can speak both languages equally well”</i>	14
Educational assimilation	Cultural assimilation	Characterized by the missing cultural maintenance related to non-dominant group members	<i>“ . . . I am of the opinion that the ignorance over the incorporation of Roma cultural elements into the curriculum is not good because it implies that Roma culture is meaningless and inferior . . . a result is that we [Roma] must always adapt to the Slovak norms and culture at schools”</i>	21
Educational marginalization	Cultural marginalization	Characterized by the missing cultural maintenance related to non-dominant group members	<i>“ . . . thus, some of my former colleagues asked students not to speak Roma and tried to persuade them that to speak Slovak would be better for them”</i>	21
Gender stereotyping	-	Characterized by the existence of study programs and other educational activities that	<i>“study programs, such as practical woman, create a very powerful message in the Slovak society . . . this</i>	7

education		support the preservation of gender specific roles of men and women in society	<i>education predetermines what the role of Roma girls is and how they should be perceived by others</i>	
Secondary education delivery	Public sector model	Describes the publicly established model of secondary education delivery to Roma minority	<i>“to support the establishment and maintenance of remote classes in secondary schools in municipalities with high concentration of SDE [socially disadvantaged environment]/MRC [marginalized Roma communities] members”</i>	3
	Private sector model	Describes the model of secondary education delivery to Roma minority established by private sector providers	<i>“helps raise up a young Roma generation that should be proud to be Roma and therefore, to teach them the Roma language and facts about Roma history at school shows them that they are not, as an ethnic minority, meaningless members of the Slovak society and unvalued human beings”</i>	5
Barriers in education	Financial barriers	Refers to the existence of any financial barriers that prevent the educational institutions provide more effective/integrative secondary education	<i>“we are short of approximately 6000€ . . . we need to secure supplementary financing coming usually from various projects, private donors or even charity events . . .”</i>	3
	Linguistic barriers	Refers to the existence of linguistic barriers influencing the students’ ability to learn and comprehend	<i>“I have difficulties to complete some exercises, mainly if I do not understand some words . . . as a result, I usually get a worse grade . . .”</i>	12
	Administrative-technical barriers	Refers to the existence of any administrative-technical barriers that prevent the educational institutions provide more effective/integrative secondary education	<i>“although they [Roma language textbooks] are published, there is a need to re-publish them because they are worn out. However, the National institute for education has refused to republish them”</i>	5

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