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## Civic Engagement of Christian Women in Pakistan

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### *Abstract*

In Pakistan, which is an ideological state, the minority issue is sociological, as well as legal at the same time. Christians are the largest religious minority in Pakistan, but at all levels are facing discrimination, i.e. in socioeconomic, as well as politico-legal sphere. They are considered as a second-class citizen by masses. While the women who belong to this minority group are facing double discrimination, firstly as a woman, and then as a Christian. Interview schedule was used to collect data from the respective respondents. It is an exploratory research which was conducted in Essa Nagri (Karachi), which is one of the oldest residential areas of the city, and represents one of the largest population of Christian minority in Pakistan, i.e. around 40,000 people reside in Essa Nagri. The entire respective population comprises of poor and lower middle class, as most of the population works as sweepers, housemaids, laborers in KMC, and sellers.

**Keywords:** civic engagement, socioeconomic conditions, minority, Christian women, case studies, Pakistan.

### 1. Introduction

According to Arnold M. Rose, “A group is a minority group if it is the object of prejudice and discrimination from the dominant groups, and if the members think of themselves as minority” (as quoted in Merton & Nisbet, 1961: 326).

Massive migration between India and Pakistan took place in 1947. Groups from both countries moved to and from (Stump, 2008), but many stayed where they belonged (Svensson, 2013). It included Muslims in India, as well as Christians and Hindus in Pakistan (Chan, Haines & Lee, 2014). These are the people who are patriots, as Christians and Hindus chose Pakistan when they had the choice. It is now Pakistan’s moral responsibility to respect and work for their welfare (Afzal & Husain, 1974).

Pakistan has been a part of a multicultural, as well as multi-ethnic Subcontinent. But, now as a minority, they have been invisible (Gopal, 1994). Pakistan’s official ideology highly regards its Muslim subjects as compared to minorities (Chitkara, 1996; 1997). As being an Islamic republic, Pakistan deployed socioeconomic aspects encompassing inequality against minorities (*Hinduism in Pakistan*, 2010). The Constitution of 1973 became discriminatory, as it patronized majorities as being the only valid faith. Minorities like Christians cannot hold any publicly influential administrative as well as major posts (Chitkara, 1997).

Pakistan is an Islamic country and the second state in the world after Israel, that came into existence on the justification and basis of religion. According to last census, which was held in 2017, it is a country of approximately 212 million inhabitants, near to 97% are Muslims. The other 3% are minorities comprising of different religions. There are mainly seven minorities in Pakistan: (1) Ahmadi, (2) Buddhist, (3) Christian, (4) Hindu, (5) Parsi, (6) Sikh, and (7) Schedule castes.

- Pakistani Christian women are striving against socioeconomic and politico-legal oppression.
- Forced religious conversions of Pakistani Christian women is common.
- Exclusion of Christian women from development plans also exists in Pakistan.
- Lack of opportunities in the democratic participation.
- Non-availability of religious as well as modern education.
- Deprivation of health facilities for Christian women is prevalent in Pakistan.

### 1.1 *Research objectives*

- (1) To find out the civic engagement of Christian women in Pakistan.
- (2) To find out the socioeconomic discrimination with Christian women in Pakistan.
- (3) To find out the reasons behind Christian women's poor socioeconomic conditions in Pakistan.

### 1.2 *Background of the study*

According to the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom (2018), Pakistan is in the list of blacklist countries, where religious minorities face violence as well as discriminatory behavior. While, the Government of Pakistan has termed this decision as “unilateral and politically motivated” (*The New York Times*, 2018).

The social and political leadership of Christian community in Pakistan is not much influential and sometimes even self-centered. In normal people's view, Christians are considered as aliens, who might have connections and affiliations with “unfriendly” countries, like the USA and West.

In the case of Pakistan, it is evident that there is a strong need for effective leadership on social grounds for the development of Christian community, especially females. The Christians of Pakistan must be considered loyal and they should enjoy all social as well as economic benefits as compared to their Muslim counterparts. Thus, their civic engagement could enhance the respective development process in Pakistan.

### 1.3 *Focus of the article*

This research is based on the sociological perspective regarding the civic engagement and socioeconomic challenges of Christian women in Pakistan. Direct as well as indirect efforts have been made in Pakistan to limit the role of minorities. It seems that the majority (Muslims) does not want to give power to the minorities (Christians), in terms of socioeconomic development, especially to Pakistani Christian women.

### 1.4 *Research questions*

- (1) What is the socioeconomic condition of Christian women in Pakistan?
- (2) What are the major problems of Christian minority in Pakistan?
- (3) What are the general perceptions of Christian women in Pakistan regarding their socioeconomic conditions?

### 1.5 *Justification of the study*

This research will provide a new vision for emphasis on the ground realities along with the reasons behind Christian women's poor socioeconomic conditions as well as discrimination based on religion in Pakistan. This information can help to lay down the foundation for primary as well as secondary preventive strategies for the improvement of the respective vulnerable group of women.

### 2. Research methodology

This study focuses on the civic engagement of Christian women in Pakistan. To this end, qualitative research methodology by using five case studies was adopted. Essa Nagri (Karachi), which is the biggest settlement of Christians in Pakistan after Lahore was chosen for this research. This research discusses, explains, and interprets the determinants behind the civic engagement of Christian women in Pakistan and combines the factors incorporated with the causes, patterns, and nature of their weak socioeconomic conditions. That is the very reason, it is explanatory in its very nature.

### 3. Discussion

#### 3.1 *Christians in Pakistan*

According to the Government of Pakistan's Provisional Summary Results of 6<sup>th</sup> Population and Housing Census – 2017, Pakistan Bureau of Statistics, the Christian community of Pakistan is 1.59% of the total population. Christians comprise of 1.1% of rural population and 2.59% of urban population of Pakistan.

#### 3.2 *Christians in Karachi*

Karachi has the second largest number of Christians after Lahore in Pakistan. Unfortunately, no official records are available. Christian activists estimate this figure to be around 0.8 million (Rehman, 2017). While, the leader of the Protestant church (Sindh), Bishop Sadiq Daniel, claimed that there are about one million Christians in Karachi (Craig, 2015).

Enlisted are the biggest settlements (number wise) of Christians in Karachi: (1) Essa Nagri, (2) Manzoor Colony, (3) Akhtar Colony, (4) Azam Basti, (5) Pahar Ganj, (6) Khuda Ki Basti, (7) Ittehad Town, (8) Michael Town, (9) Christian Town, (10) Mariam Colony, (11) Saddar, (12) Father's Colony, and (13) Grax Colony.

There are 110 churches in Karachi and all of them have sizeable congregations (*The News International*, 2017). More than 90% of Christians in Karachi speak Punjabi. Most of the Christians migrated to Karachi in 1965 from Kasur, Sialkot, as well Narowal districts of province Punjab (Craig, 2015).

Mainly, Christians in Punjab before migrating to Karachi were involved in the agrarian sector. Now, in Karachi they work in municipality, industries, education sectors, as well as health sectors (Craig, 2015). In Karachi, which is a cosmopolitan city of more than 14.9 million inhabitants, the total population of Christian community is 2.42% (Hasan & Mohib, 2009).

The Christian community is so assimilated within the culture of Pakistan that it is difficult to recognize them as Christians (Curtis & Mullick, 2009). In the past, the Muslims and Christians showed respect for each other's religious places. But, with the passage of time, the situation has changed (Sabri, 1994).

In the past, Christian community was well-off and had good businesses and jobs. Now, they have become poor and a clear majority is even living below the poverty line. Most of the Christians are engaged in sanitary work in different government sectors and private institutions.

The Christian women in Essa Nagri, Karachi's Christian neighborhood, has a Christian population of over 40,000 (Agenzia Fides, 2014). Christian women are more vulnerable to the prevailing socioeconomic structure. Thus, the leading trends of discrimination in the society have hindered Christian women to actively participate in the development process.

Christians at all levels are unfortunately facing discrimination. They live as a second-class citizen in Pakistan. While, the women who belong to this minority group are facing double discrimination, firstly as a woman, and then as a Christian.

#### 4. Case studies

##### 4.1 *A nurse*

Ms. Sara is a 25-year lady. She has completed her Intermediate (12<sup>th</sup> standard) education as a private (external) candidate along with a nursing diploma. She lives with her parents and belongs from the middle class. She represents the middle class and educated family.

She is engaged in her own community and is going to get married soon. She said that, they can't marry out of their community, but there are no such restrictions on girls' education and other social activities. She received full support from her family and community members during her education, but she lost interest in education after completing her Intermediate and nursing diploma.

She shared that, "During my entire educational experience, I never faced any discriminatory behavior from my Muslim fellows, as they were always very humble towards me and other non-Muslims students. But, I do remember the behavior of one of my class teacher. She was our Islamic Studies teacher, and taught ethics to the non-Muslim students. She was quite rude during the teaching and sometimes gave us severe punishment, even just for the nominal mistakes. She always uses to grade us with very low marks in the class tests".

She also shared, "I guess no religion teaches us discrimination and injustice. It all depends on people's perception and the unawareness about their very own religion". She further added that, "If the Christian community in Pakistan really wants to improve their daily lives, they have to educate their women as much as possible. Because, education is the only key to develop the Christian community in Pakistan".

As far as women remain uneducated and unaware, the real process of prosperity and development couldn't be started in any community, especially in the context of Essa Nagri (Karachi), where every girl and boy need education and awareness regarding the constructive social changes that are prevalent globally.

##### 4.2 *A retired KMC employee*

Mrs. Alina Yusuf is a 62-years-old widow and a retired KMC worker. She has worked 27 years as a laborer in the Engineering Department of KMC. She had nine children, out of which two passed away, while three boys and four girls survived. She lives in a small two room house with her family.

After her retirement, her elder son was adjusted in the seat vacated by her, while her other children are jobless. All her daughters have been married. She shared that, her house is very old and damaged; therefore, the KMC authorities have issued her a notice to vacate the house



immediately, as it can lead to any serious incident, but she is still living there, because she doesn't have any other option.

She added, as in KMC department most of the employees at lower level jobs, such as sweepers, laborers, and other small jobs are non-Muslims. They are working without any health care facility or other benefits. But, still they are not getting their salaries, which have been the cause for dropout of many children from the schools, especially girls. Because, parents can only afford to pay their sons fee, because it is a traditional thinking that boys will be the bread earner for their family in future, while the girls will settle down in other's house after their marriage.

She further said that, for decades her community has been living in the same condition. She doesn't feel any positive change among the people of the respective community. In fact, young boys and girls of the area are getting more and more vulnerable each day due to lack of awareness, education, access to information, and media's influence. Therefore, their general interest is towards watching movies, smoking, drinking, and flirting with the girls.

She also highlighted the issue of early marriages of girls in the respective community. She continued, "Due to the indecisive local environment girls get married between the ages of 16 to 22 years, and become mother in early age, so they could not play their vital role in any socioeconomic activities for the community, which is an unfortunate scenario."

#### *4.3 A Case of early marriage*

Mrs. Javeria is an 18-years-old girl and got married when she was only 15 years. She has a two-year-old daughter, and is a simple housewife living with her in-laws. Her husband, Mr. Yasir, is 26 years old and works in a garment factory as a laborer.

Mrs. Javeria has studied till 5<sup>th</sup> standard, because of the cultural constraints and traditional oppression. Her family was highly male dominated, and the general opinion regarding girls' education is that, girls have to settle down with their in-laws after marriage, so there is no such need to invest in their education.

She also shared that, around three years ago, four girls of her community, i.e. Catholic, eloped with the boys from the other sect, i.e. Protestant, as simply they could not marry out of their sect because of the established norms. The respective girls belonged to Catholic sect of Christianity, which is comparatively more religious than Protestants in Pakistan. Their living style and culture is also different, as the males from the Protestant sect use to drink, smoke, and are also involved in domestic violence.

She added that, "Seven months ago, a girl took poison and died, because their parents did not agree for their inter-sect marriages. She was also from my sect and was only 17-years-old". She also revealed that, two years ago a girl named Nazia from Essa Nagri also converted into Islam and married to a Muslim boy. She never returned, as nobody knows where she is or what has happened with her, whether she is even alive or not. After this incident, her parents left this area and migrated to Canada because of the defamation.

She explained that, because of all such incidents, her community members have decided to marry off their daughters as early as possible, which she thinks is one of the obstacles in the prospective development of Christian females in Pakistan. She is one of the various examples of this dilemma, while she was not ready for the marriage at the age of 15 and even wanted to continue her education at the school, but she never got permission for it and later she was forced to marry.

She also shared that her husband is very loving and caring, but her father-in-law is quite strict regarding the old traditional values and religious observance. She is only permitted to go outside with her husband and mother-in-law. She is not allowed to wear pant shirt, and can

only wear “Shlawar Qamez” (Pakistani traditional dress), as her father in-law doesn’t allow it. She also covers her face in front of her father-in-law and brothers-in-law. She expressed that in her community there are various restrictions and limitations regarding the social activities of the women. All important matters are decided by men, and as a result the women are living in a miserable condition in Pakistan.

#### *4.4 A housemaid*

Mrs. Sonia is a 32-year-old lady and a housewife searching for the job. She is married to Mr. David, a Karachi Water and Sewerage Board (KWSB) worker. She had four children, a girl and three boys, but one of her son died just after a few months of the birth. She is living in a one room house, which has only a bed, TV, and few crockery items.

She studied till middle (5<sup>th</sup> standard), and left school after her mother’s death. She got married when she was 17 years old. After her marriage, she has worked temporarily as a sweeper in Ibn-e-Sina Hospital, and several houses. Currently, she is unemployed and searching for a new job.

She said, “My husband is not getting his salary for the last two months, therefore we had to take out our children from the school. There is only one school in our area, which has the capacity to accommodate only 70 to 80 students, because of the existing faculty of five teachers. All these teachers come from different areas of the city and the educational quality of this school is not satisfactory, because no government official has visited this school since long. Teacher absenteeism, lack of interest, discipline, damaged furniture, and unfurnished classrooms are the major issues of this school”.

She added that, she is very fond to send her daughters to the school and that’s why she is looking for a job. It’s very difficult to get a permanent job, and she always have been appointed for a very short term (i.e. three to four months) until the employer could get a better employee. Most of the people are reluctant to appoint a Christian at their houses for the domestic work.

She also shared that, while she was working as a housemaid, her salary was PKR 5,000 (approximately US\$ 36) per month for washing clothes, dusting, mopping, etc. as people don’t prefer her to clean their plates and dishes, and her cup, plate, and glass were kept separate.

#### *4.5 A housewife*

Mrs. Danial is a 45-year-old housewife and belongs to Christian community. She lives in a small house which consists of two rooms, with her husband and three children (two girls and a boy). She belongs to an indigenous family of the city, because her ancestors have been living in Essa Nagri even before the partition of the Subcontinent.

The husband of Mrs. Danial, Mr. Danial Saleem is the only bread earner of the family. He works in Karachi Municipal Corporation (KMC) as a sanitary worker. Mrs. Danial’s only son has studied till matriculation (10<sup>th</sup> standard), and her two daughters have completed only primary (5<sup>th</sup> standard) education.

She doesn’t have enough financial resources to support their further studies, but she is willing to send at least her son to college and even to the university for higher education. So, they could get better employment opportunities and not end up in working as a sanitary worker or performing other less prestigious jobs.

She said that, when she was young, she was not allowed to attend the school from her elders, and still in her family girls’ education is not supported by the male members. She has worked hard to get permission to send her daughters to school, but now it’s very difficult to acquire

permission to send them to college and university. Because, the social dynamics of the respective locality are insalubrious. Vagabonds pass amusing remarks on girls and eve-teasing is very common.

She added that, in the last three years, some girls of her community scuttled with the local boys and later got married to them, therefore education is not encouraged in her community, especially for girls. Moreover, criminal activities are also one of the various hurdles in girls' education and their employment.

She explained that the male dominance and lack of awareness among the masses are the main hurdles in the development of the women in her community. She said, "I am a witness of my whole life's personal experience. I have never faced any kind of discriminatory behavior from the Muslim community, and they never treated me as a lower citizen on the basis of my religion".

She also shared that, "There is an urgent need for the awareness program for both of the sexes, and we need to engage youth in constructive activities, so they can get busy in their own activities and girls may feel free to step outside their houses. This way they can acquire education and play their effective role in the society for the development of Pakistan".

#### 5. Analysis of case studies

The respondents have very small accommodations and are usually engaged in lower level jobs, such as sweepers and laborers, working without any health care facility or other benefits. They also complained about low salaries and the high unemployment rate. The majority of the people are reluctant to appoint a Christian at their houses for the domestic work, as they don't prefer them to clean their plates and dishes, even the utensils for Christian workers are kept separate.

Low education of both the sexes, especially females is a serious problem as the respondents have a firm believe that education is the only key to develop their community. High school dropout ratio and the presence of a single school in the vicinity, along with teacher absenteeism, lack of interest, damaged furniture, and unfurnished classrooms are the major obstacles in this sphere.

The respective respondents also shared that some girls eloped with the local boys and later got married to them as simply they could not marry out of their caste because of the established norms. Because of this aspect, there have also been several suicide attempts.

The respondents also complained about the abundance of vagabonds as well as eve-teasing along with other criminal activities at the community level, i.e. drugs usage and alcohol consumption. Moreover, early marriages, large families, male dominance, and lack of awareness are the hindrances in the civic engagement and socioeconomic development of Christian community in Pakistan.

#### 6. Conclusions

There are few middle-class Christians in professional fields. As, it is difficult for them to join Government institutions and especially the Armed Forces in Pakistan. While, the Christian elite class enjoys good relations with the majority, but there is still non-availability of religious education and training centers for the Christian community across Pakistan.

Essa Nagri, Karachi, represents the largest population of Christian community in Pakistan, and it is one of the oldest localities in the city. Pakistani Christian women are striving

against problems, like political and social oppression, gender and religious discrimination, forced conversions, exclusion from development plans, lack of opportunities in the democratic participation, as well as non-availability of religious education.

The community members of Essa Nagri are completely deprived of health facilities, as there is no dispensary, maternity center, and other community health care centers. Most of the community members, and especially the females have only access to only three governmental hospitals of Karachi which are in devastating conditions. They can consult with private doctors if they can afford it. While, a few people of this area can really afford private doctors. The education sector is also in a devastating scenario, as there is only one government school in Essa Nagri.

The streets in the colony are almost damaged and broken. Open manholes can be seen everywhere, and the people are living below the poverty line, i.e. without any basic facilities, such as access to clean drinking water, proper sanitation system, frequent power failures, etc. The past as well as the existing government has not played its role effectively, and Christian women are experiencing a very tough time.

## 7. Recommendations

(1) The Government of Pakistan must take constructive initiatives regarding the upheaval of women of minorities.

(2) Christian politicians, religious leaders, and scholars must strive for the socioeconomic development of the masses.

(3) The media should represent the important role of Christian minority in Pakistan's development.

(4) The media should highlight the problems faced by Christian women in Pakistan.

(5) Full participation of minorities to be ensured in all spheres of life, as they should be provided with equal opportunities.

(6) The Christian community must try to establish their own education, medical, and other developmental institutions with the help of government, philanthropists, and professional donors.

(7) NGOs and civil society groups should raise awareness about the women's sociocultural as well as religious norms, along with the rights accorded by the Constitution of Pakistan.

(8) Christian women's due share in family property must also be ensured, so that their socioeconomic status is enhanced.

(9) Forced conversions and child marriages along with forced marriages should be dealt strongly by the Government of Pakistan.

(10) Education for minorities, especially for females should be ensured by the government.

(11) The minority quota should be raised in government jobs, and extra seats should be allocated for the women of the minorities.

(12) Unfortunately, the behavior of some Muslims towards the Christian minority is not appreciable. Religious scholars must play their vital role in guiding them to abstain from any hatred or prejudice.

(13) Safety equipment to be provided to protect Christian women from occupational hazards.

(14) Wages should be increased to ensure a prosperous life for Christian women in Pakistan.

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# Practical Use and Regenerative Role of Theories of Intercultural Pedagogy in Educating Disadvantaged (Minority) Students

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## *Abstract*

In this essay the possibilities for the practical application of Hungarian intercultural pedagogy are analyzed showing the reflective practice of cultural anthropology. In Hungary a unitedly accepted model of intercultural pedagogy does not exist and the process of its creation is also full of obstacles. Forming the right method means interfering the everyday life of school communities and the knowledge of the usual working process in the school educational system is also assumed. A long, problem-driven research using anthropological methods (participant observation, action research) is needed to examine the group dynamics of children with a different cultural background within the same school by intercultural pedagogy. The culture of the school itself is also one of the venues of social environment but to be able to get to know the students' point of view concerning their own school we will need several qualitative social examinations in the near future. Teachers working in the Hungarian educational system have not been able to prepare for educating disadvantaged students and ethnically/culturally heterogeneous classes yet. My essay is trying to refer to the educational transformations which have been totally altered because social tensions are immediately represented in schools. The school community reflects our social system. Without realizing it schools are not able to form a certain relationship with children. They have to see children not only as members of a particular family unit, but children also have to be seen in their global social relationship which is not neutral concerning the explanations of social and educational events.

*Keywords:* intercultural pedagogy, cultural anthropology, anthropological pedagogy.

## 1. Introduction

In Hungary, school integration has not been able to decrease social, sociocultural and ethnic differences in public education. The continual and consecutive desegregation efforts have only been realized in a formal way. Educational policies and practices of institutionalized integration have not been able to get past the basic level of theoretical, scientific discourse. The theoretical lack of proof regarding the issue entails that there has not developed a critical reflection, an objective educational policy approach that is both adaptive and problem-oriented. This does not mean that in the period after the regime change there were no preferential political solutions intent to eliminate social inequalities – the hiatus on the issue is the consequence of the incomplete social-educational-political discourse that still cannot answer the question of how to

do away with social and ethnic differences in the school. To put it more precisely: what tools are needed to ensure equal treatment in school integration in such a way that it may point beyond the structural confines of equal opportunities and the physical methods of access to schooling?<sup>1</sup> Scientific pedagogical discourse constantly reflect on this question. In response to the outcomes of relevant scientific research, pedagogical experts claim that school integration efforts have mostly halted or been left unfinished, since in the long run they did not result in a change of perspective for teachers, for education *per se*; that is, regarding its relations with disadvantaged (or minority) children, the social role and responsibility of the school has hardly changed.

The way the present paper addresses the issue of disadvantaged children living in deep poverty, socio-culturally different and culturally other, signals a wish to echo the scientific discourse between cultural anthropology and various social science theories; it is also an operative description that may regenerate (or transform) pedagogical theory and practice. The concept of intercultural pedagogy and the use thereof in pedagogical discourse is not adequately clarified. For this reason, the paper intends to be a gap-filler: to clarify the concept of intercultural pedagogy and attempt to reconsider it with the help of a holistic approach and interdisciplinarity of cultural anthropology, striving to avoid being purely descriptive and speculative<sup>2</sup>. Due limited space and research being in its initial stage, the paper does not – cannot – undertake the historical description of anthropological pedagogy; nor does it include the empirical verification of theoretical hypotheses. A substantial part of international theoretical literature asserts that the difficulty of applying intercultural pedagogy lies in the compatibility of theory and practice, and this may be one of the reasons why, in the long run, it has not been able to become a unified, general educational concept (in Western Europe either). On the other hand, accounts summarizing the pedagogical goal of intercultural education exhaustively reveal that the major goal of intercultural education today – likely to be responsible for its success – is to undertake the task of cultural transmission in an innovative way, both in terms of its dimension and versatility (Reich, 2008: 68).

## 2. Intercultural pedagogy adapted to practice

Intercultural pedagogy has been greatly affected by the cultural anthropology approach. This paper deals with pedagogical anthropology as a call for discussion, a theoretical

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<sup>1</sup> For a more detailed discussion of the issue see Forray and Varga (2014).

<sup>2</sup> For the purposes of this paper, it is important to briefly deal with the scientific concept of cultural anthropology, as a complementary explanation to the essence of the holistic approach – to reconsider how it correlates with didactics; how, in a strict sense, it intends to affect the specific areas of pedagogy, especially intercultural pedagogy. This means that the need for interdisciplinarity derives naturally from the history of anthropology. As András Bán, Gábor Biczó and József Kotics (2005) contend, it is well known that the applied knowledge of social science resulted in the emergence of an independent, highly respected profession in Western societies. The social and cultural processes of transformation in Hungary today demand the involvement of professionals with an interdisciplinary, directly applicable practical knowledge of social science who are capable of taking a stand in the various areas of social life in a way that is competent and that facilitates the opinions of decision makers, and who can react to conflicts and social crises in a creative way. Intrinsic and direct information is a vital element of accurate knowledge needed for practical decisions. This approach has an accentuated role in the investigation of the sociocultural phenomena of our times, since the traditional framework of lifestyles and values has been dismantled. The complex plurality of lifestyles and life strategies, emerging as a result of this process, requires a comprehensive approach. Due to its holistic and comparative approach, its cultural relativism and position as a participant-observer, the anthropological perspective can transmit knowledge about changes in our society (such as joining the European Union, globalisation, processes of migration and assimilation, the emergence of the information society, and expectations of the social equalisation of chances), which may contribute to successfully dealing with issues requiring social action (cf. Bán, Biczó & Kotics, 2005: 35-36).



reflection which seeks to find pedagogical arguments and answers to the interrelationships of culture and education, as well as the causes of social inequalities. Inasmuch as we accept that intercultural pedagogy is, ultimately, a cultural transmission, then it is timely to raise awareness of the fact that cultural diversity is not a problem – it is present; its processes have a deep impact and necessitate new discourse and agreement on social coexistence. The proper recognition of social reality demands such capacities from students that need to be taught, developed, and also, if necessary, supplemented or emended. Hans H. Reich's analysis of intercultural education (2008: 66-69) excellently outlines the chances of intercultural pedagogy in the future. Proceeding from criticism on intercultural pedagogy, Reich takes account of the difficulties of the approach and can thus revindicate the role of intercultural education (which flourished in Western Europe for a long time) as an 'emergency warden'. The regenerative role of intercultural pedagogy in educating disadvantaged (minority) students can only be successful if we interpret education as a phenomenon in social interaction (cf. Alcalde, 2008: 18). This definition by José Eugenio Abajo Alcalde derives from the basic assumption that education is ultimately a process and an interpersonal activity. Conducting participant observation, Alcalde investigated the schooling of Roma (*gitani*) children in Aranda de Duero (Castile, Spain) from this perspective. The description of his subject of research is consistent with the issue raised by this paper: he emphasizes the importance of taking into account the global social context and model (domestic groups, school types, relations between schools and various social groups, the social stage of everyday life, interactions between persons and groups, etc.) when conducting research on the schooling of Roma children. In short, Alcalde interprets the global social context as a structure that has a major impact on all other phenomena, and he claims this to be generally valid (18).

Extrapolating this train of thought to the educational situation of disadvantaged (Roma) students (with regard to the social/educational interactions of Roma people in Hungary), it may be stated that the practical goal of theories of intercultural pedagogy is to undertake the additional social and pedagogical work of interpreting social and school integration not only as a minority problem, but as a social issue strongly affecting the majority as well (!), the basis of common social life. To make this a reality, a social and cultural development or even transformation (interwoven with strong political will) must take place. In several parts of Western Europe, we may witness a process in which accumulating social disadvantages are decreased by joint social and political will. These processes are characteristically supplemented by a disciplinary endeavor, in which social scientists (in most cases social anthropologists)<sup>3</sup>, offer a relevant empirical action research that can have a direct impact on social processes, an educational policy alternative that clearly reveals the needs and shortcomings of the social-educational process

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<sup>3</sup> Foyer Regional Integration Centre in Brussels, led by social anthropologist Johan Leman. For decades the institution has offered alternative education and training for various ethnic and cultural minority groups and members, and worked to ensure their social and school integration. Through diverse training programs, Foyer facilitates the school reintegration of young immigrants (men and women alike) via career guidance support. Sanctioned by the government of Brussels since 1985, the Foyer Centre provides vocational training for young immigrants (in the fields of wood working, construction and electrical energy). In many cases, the children of immigrant families are unfairly expelled from school or they feel that they cannot continue their studies, so Foyer has professional study programs at its Vocational Training Centre, operating with a group of advisors, and with legal assistance, thereby facilitating school integration and success. In the near future, Hungary will also increasingly experience a flow of immigrants into the country. In the meantime a strongly predictable increase in the Roma population, the shift of social levels and factors towards more extreme directions, and the growing number of disadvantaged Roma children in vocational training will more or less result in the same social-educational situation that we are witnessing in Western Europe at present. Foyer Regional Integration Centre displays a number of similarities with the *Világsátor Project* of Roma Cultural Centre in Miskolc. This project was abruptly stopped, even though it could have ensured a kind of professional workshop that would have enabled the social forum of pedagogical anthropology and intercultural education to evolve. For Foyer's professional study program see [www.foyer.be](http://www.foyer.be).

through the research methods of pedagogical anthropology (comparativism) (cf. Pampanini, 2010).

Each culture is mixed, each is changing and adapting to its environmental conditions. If we regard the plurality of cultures as existing, we are bound to accept that the cultural identity of a certain person or group is not incompatible with the identity of another culture. People are entitled to get to know another culture, that is, no-one can question an open human attitude, empathy that denotes a curiosity concerning anything culturally other – in our case, a respect for cultural differences (Alcalde, 2008: 290). The methodology of recognizing cultural differences has to be taught to students, as suppressing the difference between school culture and the culture of one's home may cause significant tension in the life of a school. Cultural encounters are taking place in the school as an institution and as a place of institutionalized (secondary) socialization (unless the school does not select or segregate) more and more frequently in Hungary (to a greater degree in some regions) as well.

We can only get rid of our ethnocentric attitude through conscious learning, in a self-reflective manner, with self-criticism. We generally tend to see and interpret our surroundings through the lens of our own culture. In the world of the school this means that, due to the difference between the school and the culture of the students' family/home, teachers do not recognize the students' abilities and intentions. Such a bifocal pedagogical lens – metaphorically speaking – can easily lead to a situation in which the teachers' educational or disciplinary method is incomprehensible and impossible for such students (Delpit, 2007: 29).

In his analysis Reich asserts that the notion of intercultural education wishes to establish mutual respect for different cultures based fundamentally on moral arguments, and for this very reason it urges the reform of the curriculum, valid on various levels of education. The goal or requirement that it sets is the need for the cultural canon – transmitted by education – to reflect not only majority high culture but minority and subcultures as well, and for the school to allow, what is more, encourage the self-representation of these minorities (Reich, 2008: 69).

The communicational strategies of Hungarian public education should strive to build a bridge between official culture and the other cultures. Intercultural education should enter scientific thinking, since its greatest merit is making us aware of how important and relevant the issue is. The rules for social co-existence in Hungary should be urgently reconsidered. In essence, intercultural education is the alarm-bell that calls us to new ways of thinking about, and civilized opportunities of acting for, cultural and social diversity and differences through public education. In this dialogue of power the political responsibility of the program exists and remains (Reich, 2008: 69).

Recent theoretical literature – and primarily international and Hungarian pedagogy specialists with multidisciplinary expertise – sees a greater methodological opportunity in intercultural education today, and believes that multicultural education needs to be complemented by emphasizing the teachers' role as transmitters of culture. More specifically, in pursuance of intercultural competence, teachers have to reconsider their pedagogical activity (cf. K. Nagy) and take in part in the development of children's cultural identity, in the formation of individual cultural identity<sup>4</sup>. We are hoping for reform, for the transformation of our pedagogical culture with the help of an intercultural competence toolkit which – beyond and besides a top-down integration policy – enables students and teachers to mutually accept each other's social and cultural reality and to develop their own methods of integration along the lines of student diversity, relying on their own school experiences and aided by teacher-student communication.

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<sup>4</sup> For a more elaborate account of this issue see Szerepi (2005: 129).

### 3. Towards the quality reform of teacher training – the present and future perspectives of intercultural pedagogy

The lack of intercultural pedagogy in multicultural societies, such as Hungary, may cause a pathological condition – claims Cecilia Tusa (2009), referring to József Zsolnai. Following on Tusa's reasoning, we may assert that this pathological condition in the teaching-educational process means a diversion from constructive work, heading in a negative direction. From this aspect of the interpretation of intercultural pedagogy, we may say that such a pathology does not take into account the globalization of 21<sup>st</sup>-century societies and the resulting recent pedagogical challenges of a united Europe (Tusa, 2009). Defining a system of objectives and tasks for intercultural education, the International Conference on Education (ICE), organized by UNESCO in 1992, was the first to react to the new pedagogical challenges uniformly affecting Europe (Majzik, 1995: 79). The conference papers all dealt with the issue of intercultural education and defined teachers' tasks in this context. The conference material was determined by the working papers prepared in advance by IIEP UNESCO (International Institute for Education Planning) in Paris, and concentrated on intercultural and multicultural concepts with the aim of understanding the nature of intercultural interaction and of outlining the possibilities of co-existence in multicultural societies. The terms education and culture were brought closer together, and the essays shed light on the pedagogical fact that education contributes to cultural development, but the main question was how this can be done (Majzik, 1995: 80). The editor of the conference proceedings, Dubbeldam, analyzed more than a hundred definitions of culture that were disclosed to UNESCO member states in the conference's preparatory material. According to the definitions, the conference agreed that in its widest sense, culture may now be said to be the whole complex of distinctive spiritual, material, intellectual and emotional features that characterize a society or social group. It includes not only the arts and letters, but also modes of life, the fundamental rights of the human being, value systems, traditions and beliefs that it is culture that gives man the ability to reflect upon himself. It is culture that makes us specifically human, rational beings, endowed with a critical judgment and a sense of moral commitment. It is through culture that we discern values and make choices. It is through culture that man expresses himself, becomes aware of himself, and recognizes his incompleteness, questions his own achievements, seeks untiringly for new meanings and creates works through which he transcends his limitations (UNESCO, 1982).

On the basis of the quotation perhaps it is discernible that 21<sup>st</sup>-century pedagogical challenges – in Hungary as much as in unified and globalizing Europe – induce an interdisciplinary attitude and theoretical viewpoints such as pluridisciplinarity and transdisciplinarity<sup>5</sup>. Accordingly, the relationship between various disciplines and subdisciplines should be mutual and systematic, but in some cases it might as well be contradictory. More specifically, the link between social sciences and the humanities should be recognized as soon as possible, since the most crucial and acute problems of our “global village”<sup>6</sup> (first and foremost poverty and ignorance) cannot even be approached without such attitudes.

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<sup>5</sup> These concepts are interpreted as follows: interdisciplinarity – a cooperation between various disciplines regarding complex problems which can only be dealt with and through the combination of different approaches; pluridisciplinarity – the juxtaposition of disciplines, assuming a more or less strong mutual relationship among them; transdisciplinarity – refers to a general axiomatic system or a theory (assuming a conceptual, or leastwise harmonious unity) which colligates a whole group of disciplines (such as totality, mutual relationship, change or contradiction) (Majzik, 1995: 88).

<sup>6</sup> Ernő Kunt (1994) deploys McLuhan's concept of the “global village” in interpreting globalisation from the perspective of cultural anthropology. In Kunt's view, our age is increasingly characterised by an information network with multiple links between the continents, which reacts as sensitively and effectively to events happening in the most varied and geographically remote areas, and creates international and global correlations as fast as the human nervous system responds to any stimulus in or affecting the body – immediately and with comprehensive evaluation. As Kunt notes, the developers, operators, maintainers,

The presenters of the ICE Conference covered the historical aspects of both formal and informal education and defined their agents of cultural transmission. Based on these theses, the essence of promoting intercultural education was concentrated in the pedagogical thought that interaction needs to be established between students and different cultural groups in multiethnic societies. Intercultural education has to point beyond the mere transmittance of knowledge, and where there is no opportunity to do so, different cultures and lifestyles need to be brought closer to students with the help of project-based methods (Majzik, 1995: 81).

This paper perceives the present and future perspective of intercultural pedagogy to lie in the task of shifting the right of cultural transmission to intercultural pedagogy (education). Through the mutual interests of multicultural education and intercultural pedagogy, such a cultural transmission joins two disciplines: pedagogy and cultural studies (cf. Tusa, 2009).

In the case of linking the mutual interests of multicultural education and intercultural pedagogy, this paper does not touch upon the semantic deconstruction of the historical traditions and cultural definitions involved in the interpretation of these concepts. The use of the concepts of multicultural and intercultural education varies by country and within Hungarian scientific discourse as well, resulting in different interpretations. In Hungary it was Judit Torgyik who wrote several detailed and professional studies and books about multicultural education – this paper adapts all the factors of the process of multicultural education<sup>7</sup> as described by Torgyik. In the context of our topic, the most relevant issue is to grasp the essential terminological differences between multicultural education and intercultural pedagogy. From this perspective there may still remain some uncertainties, but if we provide a combined and comparative description of multicultural and intercultural education, then—as recent international and Hungarian theoretical literature reveal—the discrepancies/differences between the components become visible in the competence areas. In reference to a methodological work published by an Irish school, Sándor Szerepi differentiates between multicultural and intercultural societies: the former means the co-existence of different cultures without any interaction, while the latter denotes an intensive relationship between cultures living side by side and the mutual process of recognition, experience and cultural enrichment as a result of this interaction (2005: 129). Cecília Tusa (2009) refers to and cites Mrs. László Majzik, Ildikó Mihály, István Aranyosi, Zoltán Kovács and Erzsébet Cs. Czachesz in revealing how the use of the concepts ‘intercultural’ and ‘multicultural’ is inconsistent and divergent in Hungarian theoretical literature.

In the context of this paper, intercultural pedagogy is a kind of microscope that relates to the issue of social and cultural equality through the lens of the world of the school. It explains what cultural lens is needed for teachers to compensate for practices of social discrimination, how the deficit-defying viewpoint of unnoticed and unrecognized identities and cultural affiliations may be put into practice in the school and how it can be planted in teachers’ minds. Ethnic interactions and the resulting differences surely gather in the school, owing to newer and newer

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participants and recipients of these international information networks have formed a global society with increasingly salient peculiarities – a global society which creates and rapidly develops a worldwide global culture besides, beyond and even in the face of traditional national cultures. In a certain respect and to a certain extent, the world has shrunk and appears to be as transparent as a village is to a peasant living there. In Kunt’s words, social science education at the millennium should provide sufficient preparation and sensitivity for university graduates to be capable of recognising and understanding the society and culture of what McLuhan termed a “global village” – or at least to be aware of its existence, while working in their own specific fields.

<sup>7</sup> For experts and (prospective) teachers Judit Torgyik’s book on multicultural education (2005) is a must-read. It is a “gap-filler” study which provides an exact investigation of the historical aspects and methodological issues of multicultural education as a pedagogical subdiscipline, and focuses on the Roma communities of 21<sup>st</sup>-century Europe (East-Central Europe, Eastern Europe and the Balkans), exploring their education potential.

generations, generating conflict and disadvantage. The primary goal of the school is, however, to provide a *locus* for secondary socialization – regardless of cultural and ethnic origin – which facilitates social integration (as far as possible in an equal manner).

Intercultural pedagogy can convey this openness, a mutual and equivalent strategy for socialization, and it holds the possibility of successfully adopting the approach of equal treatment in the school by using the most effective method: calling teachers' attention to the need for learning to reflect on their own behavior, to direct their reflection beyond teachers' and students' behavior to the social processes of knowledge building, to base their cultural reflections on the fact that school children mirror society, the *locus* of primary socialization (including the family as a micro social institution). Racist, xenophobic attitudes shall not be allowed/ tolerated in the school – instead, new techniques, which help manage cultural and ethnic conflicts deriving from social discourse and practice outside of the school, have to be designed and implemented through the project method and co-operation (cf. Feischmidt & Vidra, 2011: 57-60).

Intercultural pedagogy provides us the possibility of increased attention to (the quality of) ethnic interactions, primarily adapting the research methods and theoretical framework of cultural anthropology, and, within it also of social anthropology. The scope of the present paper shall be expanded in the near future by the hypothesis that the discursive practice of intercultural pedagogy needs to bear in mind the essential difference between etic and emic positions as established in cultural anthropology research traditions. This means that the practice of intercultural pedagogy can only be adequate – that, is emic – if it teaches the representatives of different cultures how to identify with/relate to and mutually immerse in each other's culture. Along the lines of intercultural thinking, we may create a kind of anthropological pedagogy that teaches us not to equate the respective concepts of culture and ethnic identity, not to view culture as a synonym for identity politics, but to define it as the essence of an ethnic community/group (cf. Turner, 1997: 109). This way we may avoid drawing a socio-cultural dividing line between majority and minority – if we do draw this line, we find ourselves in an etic position, observing the cultural other from outside, through our own cultural lens.

#### 4. The perspectives of pedagogical anthropology and intercultural pedagogy in educating disadvantaged (Roma) students

Essentially, multicultural education encourages us to be patient with minorities within a majority society; the solutions it proposes are primarily concerned with the educational and teaching tasks of the school. Intercultural pedagogy does not refuse to deal with conflicts deriving from social co-habitation at the level of the school (i.e. institutionally). From this point of view it not only proposes that cultural diversity and difference are generated in relation to ethnicity, but also adds that they are historically variable and dependent on social goals. One of the most vital thesis of intercultural pedagogy is that cultural difference, as well as personal and group identity, are not merely cultural attributes but objective social habits correlating with social goals (cf. Lesznyák & Czachesz, 1998: 7-9).

Let us return to the primary issue of the perspectives of intercultural pedagogy in educating disadvantaged (Roma) students here. In his study on innovative educational efforts, Péter Bogdán (2012) investigates the education of disadvantaged Roma students in Hungary and reveals the basic problems concerning their education. First of all, he notes that the currently valid methodology, requirements and teaching methods used by the Hungarian education system demand a minimum socialization and financial level from Roma children that most of them cannot meet, and thus they fail at school, become private students – that is, they fall through the safety net of the educational system. Furthermore, Bogdán asserts that since the regime change in 1989, only those Roma children could become successful who, for various reasons, could reach the above mentioned socialisation and financial level. Bogdán also mentions the success of applying

alternative pedagogical methods as opposed to traditional education. He believes alternative methods to be more efficient since they are personality-centered and properly deal with social problems<sup>8</sup>.

Bogdán's findings signal a recognition that practice-oriented intercultural pedagogy can only be truly successful if it equips itself with alternative pedagogical trends, and it is most efficient where, compared to the threshold of traditional schools, there is no minimum socialization and financial level. Bogdán finds that alternative pedagogies decrease social disadvantages, not only in the case of Roma children, but also in that of poor, non-Roma students, as alternative pedagogy and intercultural pedagogy are not ethnic remedies, but possible tools.

Henceforward, drawing on Sándor Szerepi's thesis, the paper shares the view that Western European and American models of intercultural and multicultural educational cannot be uniformly adapted, as the situation of Roma people in Central and Eastern Europe differs fundamentally from that of both Western European immigrants and historical minorities. The most vital elements here are the Roma population's deformed/fragmented social structure and their poor living conditions, which complement, or are rather substantiated by, differing socialisation processes rendering integration into majority society significantly difficult (Szerepi, 2005: 130).

We may borrow the (basic) hypotheses of several such research studies<sup>9</sup> available at the moment, but each is unique, with a specific space and time segment. Therefore the main characteristic of relevant research using quantitative and qualitative methods is that each case refers to a wider environment, and the hypotheses may be adapted to a more comprehensive social context as well<sup>10</sup>.

##### 5. Instead of an afterword

The concept of intercultural education is – theoretically – well-elaborated in international and Hungarian theoretical literature, but the dissonance between theory and practice is not eliminated in a descriptive way. I do not regard the practical usage and description of the theories of intercultural pedagogy (as conceived in this paper) as closed – in order to avoid obscurity, further investigation of the issue requires the application of empirical research methods.

For the purposes of the TÁMOP 4.1.2-B.2-13/1-2013-2015 project entitled “Cooperation for the Regeneration of Teacher Training in Northern Hungary,” it is highly essential that the concept of intercultural pedagogy become more well-known in Hungarian pedagogical

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<sup>8</sup> As a practicing secondary school teacher I share Péter Bogdán's view. As I see it, alternative methods and methods of reform pedagogy are more effective in educating disadvantaged students (as is the case with any other school, class or age group). It must be noted, though, that in my practical experience sometimes alternative methods can only slightly reduce latent prejudice in the classroom, and can hardly do away with it entirely.

<sup>9</sup> We must mention the EDUMIGROM research project in particular (for more details see [www.edumigrom.eu](http://www.edumigrom.eu)), which, in the case of Hungary, examined schools' attitudes to minority integration, de- and re-segregation. For a more elaborate account of the project see Feischmidt and Vidra (2011: 57-95).

<sup>10</sup> Enikő Vincze and Hajnalka Harbula of the Hungarian EDUMIGROM research team conducted research on the Roma in Romania and Transylvania. Their findings demonstrate the comparativity of Roma people's social exclusion. The political and societal will to improve the educational situation of Roma communities in Romania corresponds to political efforts in Hungary. In accordance with the objectives of the “Cooperation for the Regeneration of Teacher Training in Northern Hungary” TÁMOP project and as a result of their similar concepts of research, a working relationship has been built with some members of the Romanian EDUMIGROM research team. See Vincze and Harbula (2011).

thinking<sup>11</sup>. Since there is no classic model of intercultural pedagogy, the path towards producing such a model in Hungary appears to be fairly long. Creating the method involves interfering with the life of the communities in question, and presupposes an insight into the daily life of the institutional system of school. Hungarian Roma communities are quite heterogeneous in terms of their cultural and socio-economic patterns. We need problem-oriented research conducted with long-term anthropological methods (particularly participant observation) so that intercultural pedagogy can examine the group dynamics of school children having different cultural origins. This requires mapping the social networks of students groups and measuring the neighborhood interactions and socio-cultural relations of members and children of the observed minority community, and then the collocation of this data with the school performance of the children of that group.

It is the outcomes of the preventive research studies outlined above that should provide the foundation for the practice-oriented pedagogical work based on which the competence areas of intercultural pedagogy could be defined for each target group<sup>12</sup>. The presence of disadvantaged Roma students in the school network in Northern Hungary is divergent. At international and national levels, intercultural education is most developed and practical in crèche and primary school education<sup>13</sup>, while in secondary schools there is hardly any space for intercultural education, and the teachers' relevant competences at this level show the greatest deficiencies. Intercultural pedagogy should be present at all levels of education and training. Teachers in the public education system could not yet prepare – even in a methodological sense – to receive disadvantaged Roma students and ethnically/culturally heterogeneous classes. In this respect, most secondary grammar schools show selectivity; practice-oriented intercultural education in these institutions can only gain ground by external (nationally or locally initiated) educational governance (since the number of disadvantaged Roma students is the lowest in these schools). Certain school types and the socio-cultural backgrounds of their students may divert the direction of the gains made by intercultural pedagogy in secondary schools.

The Roma/Gypsies Research Centre of René Descartes University completed a multi-volume study in 1984-85 and made recommendations for educating European Roma. Besides listing a great number of educational issues, the study emphasized that the measures taken in the

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<sup>11</sup> Alcalde's book on Roma children in the school – the most important experimental study of pedagogical anthropology – describes how he consulted with the Association of Teachers of Roma people (well-functioning in Spanish public education) to test his hypotheses (2008: 15). Setting up a similar association in Hungary through official consultations is highly essential.

<sup>12</sup> I shall summarize the fundamental guiding principles of intercultural education based on the professional program of the International Conference on Education. According to ICE, teachers should be more sensitive to students' needs, interaction should take place in the process of education in accordance with each student's culture; teachers should be able to link what is prescribed and what is intended to be taught, and should tailor these to the requirements of students with different cultural backgrounds; teachers play a primary role in transmitting and developing culture, since intercultural pedagogy equates education and cultural transmission; teachers should be attentive to their own cultural roles and it is highly important that they transmit their own attitudes, opinions and values when needed, and that they express objective criticism on current social and political issues; regardless of how restricted teachers are in institutional terms, they should strive to and actually use informal education, following the required ethical rules when developing personal relationships with students; it is crucial that in the process of education teachers place cooperative learning methods in the foreground, urge the cultural development of local communities and encourage students to do the same, as well as facilitate the educational potentials of local collectives; intercultural pedagogy states that the most essential space for social relationships is the school, including the level of a classroom and groups of learners in a class as well, and that teachers should be able to recognize and handle all of this (Majzik, 1995: 88).

<sup>13</sup> See Judit Torgyik's (2008) book on multicultural practices, among a long list of similar methodological initiatives and volumes.

name of establishing intercultural education open the way for a pedagogical practice that pays attention to each and every culture in the school and builds on the abilities and knowledge of each and every student. These changes may facilitate the school in adjusting to Roma children's needs (Liégeois, 2002: 16).

This paper has investigated a well-known yet also expanded educational program, and, more specifically, endeavored to (re-)integrate its theoretical background. We hope our analysis may give a more acceptable answer to the new educational transformations in Hungary. The school as a society mirrors our social structure; consequently, social tensions may also rise in the school and result in conflict and misunderstanding. Certainly intercultural pedagogy cannot evolve where intercultural politics does not gain ground (Liégeois, 2002: 16). In the absence of such a gain, the schools cannot set as an objective a kind of relationship with the students which requires them to reflect on the fact that a child is not only the member of a family but also a representative of a culture – children need to be recognized and seen in a global socio-political relationship which is not neutral from the aspect of explanations to social and educational phenomena. This statement does not wish to support the theory of social determinism, but aims at avoiding segregative contexts. This is the only way we can point out the direction we have to take to solve the problem. To overcome the schooling problem of disadvantaged children (and their families), beside social assistance programs, intercultural relationships based on equality and disadvantage-compensation are also needed (Alcalde, 2008: 287-97).

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