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## Developmental Programmes in Local Communities

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*“Thinking that someone else will come here to solve problems around Gypsies, is wrong.”*

### Abstract

This article analyses the impact of developmental programmes on social integration in two Hungarian small towns. It studies changing patterns of social integration in two settlements sharing similar endowments, with respect to a middle-sized Roma population living in segregated neighbourhoods. Drawing on recent studies in economic sociology, social integration is used as a proxy for socio-economic development and explained by differences in the transformation of local institutions. Divergences in institutional change influence the innovation capacity of communities and institutional change distributes authority among a variety of local and central state, non-state, for-profit and non-profit actors providing space for their association and forming the basis of an integrated local community. The main aim of the study is mapping the factors and mechanisms that shape and generate institutional change in support of social cohesion and development. Our cases explore that in the absence of such institutions, public goods are more likely to be appropriated by incumbents, which hinders the evolution of innovative solutions to socio-economic problems and weakens the developmental capacities of communities.

*Keywords:* developmental programmes, embedded developmental model, executive model, institutional models, local communities, social integration.

## *Introduction*

This article compares two middle-sized towns' developmental trajectory based on social integration. It studies changing patterns of social integration in two settlements (Nádas and Rónakeresztes) sharing similar endowments, with respect to a middle-sized Roma population living in segregated neighbourhoods. The remainder of the paper is structured as follows. The next section takes stock of actors and stakeholders of local development and provides an overview of the institutional models of developmental change and social integration. Then we explore different mobilisation strategies of economic, social and cultural capital within the developmental networks. In the last section we investigate the cases of the community house in Nádas and the Sure Start House in Rónakeresztes as examples to explore the implementation of developmental projects. The concluding section discusses the developmental process of Nádas and Rónakeresztes on the continuum between the models of embedded and executive development.

## *Institutional models of developmental change and social integration: theoretical foundations*

### *The enabling state*

International experience of the past two decades has indicated that the efficiency of development programmes financed by transnational organisations (OECD, EU, World Bank) cannot be ensured either by exclusively top-down or bottom-up solutions. In the first case, development projects aiming to achieve social change fail to be sustainable due to the lack of embeddedness, while in the second case failure is due to the lack of involvement of local institutions in the development projects. Bottom-up initiatives financed by international development funds are necessary but not sufficient factors of long-term sustainability of local development. In the absence of the cooperation of local state and non-state actors to bring about institutional change, bottom-up initiatives last until the budget ends (Bruszt and Vedres, 2013; Evans, 1995).

Nevertheless, national and transnational actors can enable and encourage local actors from the top-down to bring about bottom-up networks to use developmental resources more effectively (Evans, 1995; Trigilia 2001). This can be done by setting conditions of and preferences about the institutional structure and resource mobilisation opportunities of developmental networks. Such framework conditions can influence the evolution and character of developmental networks. According to Paraskevopoulos

*Top-down initiatives based on hierarchical (clientelistic), intergovernmental networks cannot constitute a viable basis for the long-standing processes of social capital-building and crossing the public-private divide (Paraskevopoulos, 2001: 20).*

Successful implementation of development projects induced by external actors<sup>1</sup> depends on the formation of local developmental agency. Local development agency is about the capacity/skills of local actors to define and solve developmental gridlocks through the association of diverse actors<sup>2</sup>. Local development agency can be studied in three interrelated dimensions: associating, resource mobilising and politicising. In this context, associating means the extent to which local developmental networks are based on the association of diverse local actors. Resource mobilising is the capacity of these local actors to mobilise various types of resources (financial, human, social capital) for developmental purposes, while politicising means their capacity to define and represent local socio-economic problems causing developmental gridlocks at the local level, higher levels of the state and even at the transnational level (Bruszt and Vedres, 2013).

The embeddedness of the development model relying on both external and endogenous resources, based on the association of diverse actors is guaranteed at multiple levels: it is accommodated to the coherent system of local resources and institutional, geographic and social characteristics, while feeds itself into external (regional, domestic, global) institutional and market channels. The success of local development thus partly depends on institutional change generated by the external framework that can increase developmental capacities of local actors to bring about autonomous developmental coalitions among diverse actors. Through such networks local development actors may mobilise diverse resources for developmental purposes and represent their own developmental priorities across various levels of the developmental state (Evans, 1995; Bruszt and Vedres, 2013).

### *Local power relations*

Development is about who can have a say and what counts in developmental planning, in defining developmental goals and priorities; hence development policy ultimately addresses the issue of distribution of resources and authority (Bruszt, 2007). In the field power occurs when enduring structured constraints restrict and/or facilitate the choices, the actions and ultimately influence the autonomy of groups of actors (Lukes, 2005; Scott, 2001; Knight-Farrell, 2003). This can happen in direct and indirect ways. An example of the direct reshaping of power relations among actors would be when institutions are introduced to restrict certain actors in accessing resources. It is more frequent, however, to reshape power relations indirectly: to raise the institutional capacities of a group of actors (providing them with new/separate routes for resource mobilisation) without restricting the actions of others (but without raising their resource mobilisation capacities to the same extent). Such asymmetrical empowering takes place without direct coercion, nevertheless it generates hierarchical relations as it increases the ability of one group of actors to demand concessions from

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<sup>1</sup> These can be transnational developmental organisations, such as the EU, OECD, World Bank, or domestic actors, such as the National Development Fund and/or bottom-up organisations not embedded in local societies.

<sup>2</sup> About the concept of local development agency see Bruszt and Vedres (2013).

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others without making any in return, thus they can change the rules of cooperation) (Farrell and Knight, 2003; Greif and Laitlin, 2004).

As opposed to Western European models, in Hungary – similar to other post-socialist countries – the general weakness of civil society elevated local governments to play a dominant role in local development. Their willingness to cooperate with local non-state actors, however, has gradually decreased since the end of the 1990s due to the diminishing support of the institutional framework of regional and local development policy to encourage institutional experimentation and the formation of win-win alliances of diverse local actors (Keller, 2011). Asymmetries in power relations between local governments and local non-state actors were less visible in the early 1990s<sup>3</sup> as regulations did not favour any particular local actor; hence local governments were rather encouraged to cooperate with non-state actors in developmental planning and the distribution of developmental resources and goods. Towards the millennium, however, the European Commission redefined its principles governing accession by changing its priorities within regional policy from political to financial accountability. This ultimately gave central states the prerogative to control regional policy making, the distribution of resources and implementation (Bruszt, 2007; Keller, 2011). The new institutional framework of regional policy provided privileges in financial assistance and interest representation for local governmental partnerships without offering non-government actors similar mandates. This implied a relatively balanced relationship between local governments and civil actors that had been built on a mutual desire for efficiency gains to solve local socio-economic problems, and instead generated asymmetrical bargaining positions between the two sectors (Bruszt, 2007; Keller, 2011).

#### *Local interpretative frames: the role of social entrepreneurs*

However, actors in privileged power positions can decide whether to create frames for *heterarchies* or to use more coercive forms of power to press for coordination solutions distributionally more advantageous for them. In case they decide not to use privileges offered them by the institutional framework and instead of hierarchies they support association, these actors can strengthen other local actors' aspirations to bring about interpretative frames of a trustful community.

These interpretative frames about development are prepared by *socially skilled entrepreneurs*, who can find ways to get disparate groups to cooperate even if external conditions rather encourage hierarchical relations among local actors (Fligstein, 2001). They achieve this by putting themselves into the position of others and frame stories about local development and external conditions in a way that appeals to a variety of local actors. Socially skilled entrepreneurs juggle with several roles in the community that enable them to build bridges across groups with diverse preferences. These common (compromised/collective) identities that are produced during mediation can generate entirely new interpretative frames that can turn previous constraints into opportunities of alternative paths.

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<sup>3</sup> Due to the weakness of civil society in post-socialist states, a truly balanced configuration of power never existed between non-governmental and governmental actors.

All in all, it is up to social entrepreneurs to decide how to make use of their privileges or disadvantages. Socially skilled entrepreneurs in the field, however, always aim to accommodate diverse interests and preferences of heterogeneous actors via association (Crouch, 2005; Sabel, 1994; Bruszt, 2002; Grabher, 2005; Grabher and Stark, 1997). Thus, the diverse association of heterogeneous interests comes about through a benevolent cacophony (Bruszt, 2002). The accommodation of diverse interests and preferences through the distribution of authority in decision-making can create alternative pathways for communities to mobilise and sustain resources. The concertation of internal heterogeneity thus can increase the adaptive capacities of the community even in a changing institutional environment.

### ***Addressing local development - the analytical framework***

The analysis of variation in the outcome of development projects on segregated settlements relies on four dimensions: the role of local opinion leaders (social entrepreneurs), the coordination mechanisms and network-building strategies of local associations, their resource mobilisation strategies and their politicising capacity. Coordination mechanisms and network-building strategies encompass both *the scope and the mode of association*: while the first covers the kind of sectors, social groups participating in (or alternatively exclude from) the definition of developmental goals and means, the mode of association describes the way these associations take decisions about the goals and means of development. Associations can be *hierarchical-centralised* that distribute authority in decision-making unevenly, based on formal rules (for instance, if non-state actors or Roma representatives do not have veto power, thus requesting their opinion could be a mere formality). Alternatively, associations can be *heterarchic-integrated* where decision-making rights about developmental goals and means are distributed more or less equally among heterogeneous actors in the association. Resource mobilisation strategies can range from single-issue, unsustainable resource mobilisation to continuous mobilisation and concertation of various resources for the sake of social developmental purposes. Finally, politicising in this context means the interpretative framework for development: the way developmental gridlocks and developmental goals are defined at the local level and across various state levels.

These dimensions outline two basic models of the way externally funded development projects can affect the integration of marginalised groups at the local level. Developmental cases can be located and move along the continuum of two models depending on changes in institutions affecting any of the four dimensions. The developmental trajectories, defined by a series of developmental cases/projects thus can move between a socially embedded institutional structure that also distributes authority to marginalised groups and induces social change towards a long-term capacity-expansion of the marginalised population, and a hierarchical institutional framework based on clientelism and rent-seeking that distributes authority unevenly among local stakeholders and increases the marginalisation of groups already adrift in society (see *Table 1*).

Table 1: Institutional models of developmental change and social integration

Dimensions	Executive model	Embedded developmental model
<b>Opinion leader, Social entrepreneur</b>	Executive attitude: does not take up conflicts of social change (does not have a vision, thinks in hierarchies, his/her goal is to maximise votes)	Socially skilled entrepreneur: His/her vision is social change (can also measure the necessary scale of change) that he/she achieves through brokering, the technique of bricolage and common identity building
<b>Coordination mechanisms, network building</b>	based on hierarchies, feudalistic relations, asymmetrical power relations, appropriation of power ordering, execution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• more or less symmetrical power relations</li> <li>• heterarchic relations</li> <li>• dialogue, consultation</li> </ul>
<b>Resource mobilisation</b>	single, parallel projects without synergies accumulation of resources based on formalities without a developmental framework (vision of social change is missing) accumulation and recombination of social capital is missing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• continuous synergistic projects embedded in a local developmental framework</li> <li>• resource mobilisation for the sake of change</li> <li>• accumulation and recombination of social capital during the development process</li> </ul>
<b>Developmental framework (politicising)</b>	implementation of project follows formalities of tendering rules	implementation of project is based on a developmental vision, embedded in local circumstances

In Hungary local developmental projects over the past years have primarily been financed by large-budget EU-funded programmes<sup>4</sup>. The majority of these EU funds are colour-blind focusing on the reduction of socio-economic disadvantages, rather than the direct integration of ethnic minorities. Nevertheless, additional spatially targeted funding, such as the Chance for Children Programme (Gyerekesély) discussed in this paper, has been available for towns – like Nádás – situated in regions socio-economically lagging behind (Most Disadvantaged Microregions – LHH)<sup>5</sup>. Rónakeresztes, on the other hand, is not located in a region eligible for these funds, and only had access to funding designed to fight poverty and spatial exclusion. During our field work<sup>6</sup> we conducted interviews with local decision makers and actors

<sup>4</sup> For more on the same subject, see Teller (2012).

<sup>5</sup> The most disadvantaged regions delimited on the basis of economic and social indicators by government decree with dedicated funding for development.

<sup>6</sup> This article is based on the comparative research project “*Faces and Causes of Marginalization of the Roma in Local Settings*” coordinated by CEU CPS between 2012-2014 with the contribution of Katalin Fehér, Szilvia Rézműves, Gyöngyi Schwarz, Dezső Szegedi, Annamária Uzzoli, Monika Mária Váradi, Zsuzsa Vidra, and Tünde Virág. The research studied faces of marginalisation in 20 Hungarian settlements in four disadvantaged regions relying on semi-structured interviews with local stakeholders, document analyses of local developmental programmes and desktop analysis of quantitative data.

contributing to the projects. Direct observation of the operation of projects enabled us to form an impression of how these projects are implemented in settlements.

### *Coordination mechanisms: networking and interpretative frames*

Local social circumstances, such as the willingness of community leaders and local institutions to take up conflicts of social change are important factors in analysing the impact of development projects. This section maps out the way local public actors manage conflicts induced by the changing social status of the marginalised Roma and the process of accommodating diverse local views about the goals and means of development.

#### *The role of local opinion leaders as committed social entrepreneurs in Nádás*

In the small town of Nádás, situated in North-East Hungary, a local social entrepreneur, well embedded in local society, took up these conflicts and initiated the establishment of institutions of associations between majority and Roma groups. Earlier local experiences supported this approach of social integration as over the last two decades of state socialism Roma representatives were already present in the municipal council (in addition to the shared workplaces and social places).

It is noteworthy that today social and spatial boundaries in Nádás rather lie between the Hungarian-speaking Romungro and the Vlach Roma groups (and much less along the classical line of polarisation between the majority and the Roma population). Traditionally, the two Roma groups never maintained social relations in Nádás: the Romungros have been living in a segregated settlement, while the Vlach Roma progressed more in social and economic integration. Interethnic marriages between Romungros and Vlach Roma have been rare, while the number of marriages between Romungros and the non-Roma population has been increasing.

The current mayor, elected a decade ago, deliberately began to build a network of experts and professionals working for Roma integration and facilitated the transformation of the local institutions to enhance social cohesion. He appointed a new leadership and staff in the new integrated institutions - Family and Childcare Services, Roma Minority Self-Government (RMSG), educational institutions - and initiated additional development programmes. His commitment to organising coalitions can be seen in his willingness to form a developmental team and work together in close cooperation with the head of the local Social Centre in the implementation of local development projects. Both actors are deeply embedded in local society and recognised by diverse local social groups. Their reputation and the diversity of social roles adopted by the mayor (his family is part of the majority society's local elite, and besides being mayor he is a presbyter of the Protestant community) supported them in their efforts to integrate conflicting local interests under the umbrella of one developmental concept. The frame of "municipal level community development" as a strategy is cautiously positioned between the concepts of social change and the maintenance of status quo.

*"Thinking that someone else will come here to solve problems around Gypsies, is wrong. If we do not help them to get into positions and we cannot achieve that they*

*bring their children neat and not infested with lice to the kindergarten or to school, they will not do that. We have to solve this issue by ourselves.” (Mayor)*

The president of the Roma Minority Self-Government (RMSG) is unavoidable in the life of the Roma living in the settlement, the local government and the majority society. Although his political position has been stable for years, his local acceptance and reputation has been controversial among the Roma and non-Roma population. Due to his political position he could influence the recruitment of local participants in public work programmes as well as the distribution of emergency welfare assistance. Moreover, as a building contractor he could offer jobs to Roma men, though he did not become the partner of local government in development projects for Roma integration.

The establishment of the Minority Office in cooperation with the RMSG was an important step in the emancipatory and developmental endeavours of the town's leadership. The Minority Office, whose function is supplementary to the RMSG, is located in the area used by the majority population. The staff of the Minority Office, two high-school graduate young Roma with good communication skills, help people in need: they write requests for them, prepare tax returns, record applications for public work and help to submit requests for utility providers. In the first years positions in the Minority Office were exclusively held by Vlach Roma but nowadays Romungros can also be recruited, due to the impact of local developments for social integration and emancipatory policies. One of the most important elements of these policies is to make the local Roma youth visible, supporting thus the creation of a local Roma elite and encouraging their studies. As the non-Roma majority recognised local Roma people in a different role from that of the 'settlement Gypsies', recruitment of the Roma in local decision-making was accepted by the majority.

Adél, a Vlach Roma woman, who had begun her carrier as a cleaning lady in the neighbouring town's hospital at the age of 20, has become a crucial actor in integration programmes in Nádás. From the hospital she moved to work at the Minority Office of Nádás, then at the Family Support Service. During this time she received her high school diploma and a college degree. Her carrier was facilitated by the mayor and the head of the Social Centre of Nádás, who treated her on equal terms as a partner. After the successful application of the local government to the Social Renewal Operational Programme (SROP) Adél was appointed the head and the Vlach Roma woman's leadership in integration projects has served as positive example for the local Roma population: an increasing number of local Vlachs and Romungros perceived education more important than earlier and an increasing number of them recommenced their (adult) education.

The mayor played an active role in the creation of a developmental coalition between the local social sector and Roma experts. For more than a decade, he has been pursuing the policy of distributed authority in Roma integration, which enabled the alignment of Roma professional elite. Education remained, however, the most vulnerable area of local social integration policy. The present educational situation is the outcome of a deliberate de-segregational and integrational experiment that the current mayor began to promote. Prior to his election, a selection mechanism between parallel classes had served the local status quo. After the mayor's arrival in office an Integrated Pedagogical System had been introduced, which abolished

segregation and established Roma and non-Roma mixed classes. In a year or two, a number of non-Roma parents began to enrol their children in the neighbouring village's school which was in need of students. That is, the transformation of the local institutional system and its integrational implications were hindered by an "escape route" for non-Roma parents offered by an institution external to local circumstances. *"This story is especially painful because we are making lots of efforts to integrate."* (Mayor)

On the other hand, social integration in the local kindergarten proved to be successful even without an optional "escape route".

#### *Lack of local expertise and missing committed social entrepreneur in Rónakeresztes*

The Roma population in Rónakeresztes, a small Hungarian town in the Great Plains, is between 1800-2000 inhabitants. This comprises less than ten percent of the town's population. Roma families apart from some rare exceptions live at the edge of the city in one block. This so-called "Gypsy town" is separated from other parts of the town by a sharp and clear boundary. In the last decades the urban policy of the town has aimed at the invisibility of the poor and their problems in "Gypsy town" for the majority society. As a result, public spaces and institutions were restricted for residents of "Gypsy town", and the control over the neighbourhood was transferred to the RMSG's representatives.

The settlement of "Gypsy town" is not an integral part of the town properly, neither of its mental image. The mayor does not perceive segregation: in her opinion there is no segregated school in the town and Roma children are not in a disadvantageous position because of differences in the quality of education among schools. The appearance of a Church school, however, and a parallel institutional system for Roma and poor people, paves the way for "escape routes" for non-Roma middle-class and some Roma children away from public education, while the majority of Roma children are left behind in public schools. The leadership of Rónakeresztes indeed supports this residential segregation: local elite members do not consider spatial separation as a problem.

*"The central part of the town may be regarded wealthy. There are no neglected areas of the town. Roma families also live in houses, not necessarily in settlements."* (Official of the Developmental Office)

Apart from a weak RMSG there are no Roma NGOs or expert organisations that could represent the interests of the poor and Roma people and act as partner organisations of the local government in the planning of development projects. Although the mayor considers the relationship with the RMSG good, RMSG representatives have a different interpretation: they are not involved in meaningful decision-making processes, their opinion is not welcomed and the declaration of their consent is used only as a compulsory element of tendering. The local leadership perceives the RMSG's head as a mediator and contact person between the decision-makers and the local Roma population without ensuring the RMSG decision-making rights. The effect of this asymmetric, hierarchic relationship on developmental

projects is that representative opinions and different critiques of the Roma are not channelled into the process of developmental planning.

According to the leader of the Developmental Office, the planning process of integration programmes is based on regular meetings with minority and civil society representatives and fulfils all formal requirements. The specific local expertise about Roma integration projects is missing and there is an obvious lack of dialogue between the different actors: from planning throughout implementation tasks are delegated and executed only by the local administrative staff.

To sum up, the two cases of Nádás and Rónakeresztes clearly represent different local developmental policy trajectories, and developmental efforts for social integration have become embedded in local social networks only in Nádás. In this town developmental projects have been implemented as part of the vision and developmental framework of “municipal level community development”. Due to the committed leadership and especially the mayor, various forms of institutional change have been implemented over the years that aim at increasing the capacities of the Roma minority: the Minority Office, the Social Centre that associate various types of local actors (non-roma, Vlach Roma, Romungro Roma) are prime examples of it. As a result of the mayor’s efforts to organise cross-sectoral coalitions the local developmental team comprises representatives of diverse organisations (education, RMSG, Support Service, local government, the Minority Office, the Social Centre) and the distribution of authority is relatively balanced.

On the other hand, in Rónakeresztes institutional transformation did not facilitate social integration. Project generation and implementation here is managed by a project office within the local government whose goal is to implement projects by administrative standards. The developmental framework in Rónakeresztes is about the suppression of the visibility of segregation, poverty and social marginalisation. Only local non-Roma middle class representatives can participate meaningfully in the generation and planning of social integration projects, and local Roma organisations are contacted merely to comply with administrative requirements of EU tendering. As a result, representatives of marginalised groups can neither participate in setting up the local developmental goals, nor do they have veto rights in decision-making. Accordingly, the local government of Rónakeresztes defines local development goals and means based on the perception and interest articulated by representatives of the local middle class.

### *Resource mobilisation strategies*

By resource mobilisation strategies we do not only mean the acquisition of developmental resources but the mobilisation of social and cultural capital that can be obtained through the application and reinvestment of these resources. As a general experience that also stands for the towns under analysis, the developmental projects for social and spatial integration only represent a fraction of the total accumulated developmental funds. Significantly greater amount of developmental funds are spent on the renovation of central areas and on health and public education institutions, as well as on the construction of public utilities and roads. The resource mobilisation strategies of towns prioritise the development of the whole settlement and the creation

and renewal of public spaces and renovation of institutions primarily used by the majority society. For town leaderships it is highly important that all social groups receive their share in developmental resources according to their social weight. This means that the indirect aim of the developments is to earn the satisfaction of the majority of voters and to maintain leaders' legitimacy.

There are important regional differences regarding access to resources for alleviation of poverty and fight against exclusion. Nádás is situated in one of the "Most Disadvantaged Regions" thus it has wider access to locally targeted special resources as well. On the other hand, Rónakeresztes had only access to anti-poverty and exclusion standard funds, such as the Complex Settlement Programme, the Sure Start Project and the Social Urban Rehabilitations Programme.

Even though **Nádás** is committed to the integration of Roma, in some cases the interest of the majority society is considered more important by local decision makers. The town's Integrated Urban Development Strategy identified five different segregated neighbourhoods all of which, based on the selection criteria of the call of the Social Urban Rehabilitation Programme, could be designated as a target area. The town leadership, however, decided to select a neighbourhood close to the centre instead of other clearly segregated and impoverished areas. "*Our concept was that we find an area not far from the centre, thus the development can be realised in one block. This area is interesting because it is situated between two well developing neighbourhoods, the centre and the area of the Protestant church.*" (Mayor) The case suggests that the developmental project - circumventing the local Roma actors - was used to regenerate and widen a central area between two symbolically important spaces of the majority.

Roma integration projects took place gradually, initiated by different actors. The Hungarian NGO, Autónia Foundation, played a major role in project generation and empowering the local minority. Their project generating activity aimed to develop capacities for a subsequent bottom-up and socially embedded development. This initiation was strengthened by the social network created through the Foundation's trainings and the emancipatory policies of the local government. As a result of these external efforts, an NGO was founded by local Vlach Roma women, and they could implement numerous minority programmes with the support and financing of other NGOs and corporate social responsibility programmes. Their first big Social Renewal Operational Programme (SROP) application was not successful, but the second one submitted with the help of an external professional company won the tender. Their heavy reliance on external help shows that even highly supported bottom-up organisation NGOs suffer from the lack of capacity and expertise of developmental professionals. This can create developmental gridlocks as newly founded Roma organisations have low chances of winning tenders without external input, while consulting firms not embedded in local society are less motivated to provide qualitative expertise.

On the other hand the local government was a top-down initiator in several local integrational project in which they combined different kinds of funding in various project cycles to create, maintain and enlarge two community houses in the settlement. The first community house was created with the above mentioned SROP funding in the central area of the town. The second one is located at the edge of the

Romungros' segregated neighbourhood and was first financed by the Chance for Children programme led by the local small regional association. At the end of the grant it was taken over by the newly won tender of the Complex Settlement Programme. This programme also contributed to the maintenance of the first community house but with different social functions. While these various funds apply different approaches, the local government combined them to maintain the continuity of the integrational activity without major differences in the practice of implementation methods, along their general developmental framework.

In Nádás, Adél was appointed as expert manager of the Complex Settlement Programme. Even though her professional competence is unquestionable, some in the town's leadership and in local society have been critical about her rapid upward social mobility: "*a Gipsy cannot be the leader of a project of hundreds of millions.*" The fragile new position of the Roma community and the empowered developmental elite could be seen after the completion of our field research. During a short follow-up research it could also be seen that central community space servicing the Roma integration programme started to be used to host civil organisations representing the majority society. In general, the integration of Roma and non-Roma organisations in a common space could be seen as success. However, in Nádás the former manager of the house and the kitchen workers - all ethnic Roma - were laid off and replaced by a non-Roma new staff. A local non-Roma woman became the manager of the house who is employed by a different project funding. The community centre, the old peasant house located in the town centre thus became the locality of symbolic struggles over urban spaces.

In Rónakeresztes, local leadership refuses to face the concentration of social and ethnic problems in the peripheral, segregated neighbourhood. Over the years, the local government's developmental vision focused on the renewal of the centre and public institutions used by the majority. Developmental resources have been used for infrastructural investments such as building and renovating roads, buildings in the centre, while the segregated neighbourhood has only seen a fraction of the town's developmental efforts. Development projects in this neighbourhood have been those that the town's Integrated Urban Developmental Strategy required - a Complex Settlement Programme and a Social Urban Rehabilitation Programme - for future funding eligibility. In addition, the implementation of the Sure Start House has taken place with the specific goal of social integration. All in all, the town formally fulfilled its social integration commitments made in the Strategy but the general rejection of local social and ethnic problems in the segregated neighbourhood prevents the potential for social change.<sup>7</sup>

Relations between the local government and the RMSG - the only representative of Roma interests- is quite asymmetrical. Roma representation has been reduced to handle problems within the Roma community. This approach supports the local social status quo, which has been about the maintenance of hierarchical relations between the Roma and non-Roma population. Even EU funds with

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<sup>7</sup> The disregard of the social problems rooted in the social and ethnic tensions leaves room for the spread of "simplistic" and "obvious" answers offered by far-right ideology. In the autumn of 2014 the far-right party, Jobbik won the local election in Rónakeresztes.

requirements to advance the integration of segregated neighbourhoods were unable to change this state of equilibrium as representatives of the local Roma population were involved in developmental planning and implementation without mandates for decision-making and veto rights, purely serving administrative purposes of signing documents. This mechanism further enhanced existing hierarchies of the local status quo.

The analysis of resource mobilisation strategies provides illustration of two divergent developmental strategies. In Nádas, interconnected and synergistic projects have been accommodated to an overall developmental framework and helped the coming about of new integrated institutions (minority office, community house, Roma programme leader's status). As a result of these projects, the human and social capital of the Roma developmental leadership has increased and the Roma community's living conditions as well as their relationship to majority society have improved. In Rónakeresztes, on the other hand, in the absence of an independent developmental team and prior developmental projects promoting social integration, the resources of the ongoing project are used within existing administrative mechanisms of the local government.

### *Implementation and developmental trajectory*

This section analyses the implementation of two projects aiming at social integration. It focuses on who (which organisations), in what ways and to what degree participated in the coming about of the project on the ground. Special attention is paid to the degree and kind of participation of Roma representatives in projects whose target group is the local Roma community and, which aim at enhancing their emancipation through developments in social integration. The functions of the different community houses are very similar, even though they are defined and detailed differently in every programme: they host services and offer programmes that shape and empower the community. The Sure Start house also delivers similar functions, although it particularly targets families with small children within the community of the segregated neighbourhood.

In Nádas's settlement a newly purchased house was renovated at the edge of the town to function as a community house (the second one in the settlement). Residents of the settlement regularly pass by the house on their way to the town centre. Social and developmental professionals have a daily contact with residents of the settlement. The project manager had formerly worked for a foster home in a neighbouring town for five years, so she knew almost every family in the settlement. The house has two Romungro employees, both from the settlement which was an important aspect in their selection.<sup>8</sup> Due to the project leader and her colleagues, social experts are not perceived by the poor Roma families of the settlement as authorities but as support. The leadership of the town supports the house financially

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<sup>8</sup> One of them is now studying for her final high school examinations, the other is attending college. Their work schedule is flexibly adjusted to their studies and their educational activity is supported at every level.

as well as symbolically. The mayor and the Protestant reverend attended the opening ceremony of the house and since then they have visited the house weekly.<sup>9</sup> One of the most important community-shaping activities of the house is volunteer work. Since public work can only absorb a limited number of people, it is challenging for many people to provide annual documentation on 30 days of declared employment mandatory for social assistance. As a solution, the unemployed can sign a contract with the family care service about volunteer work in the community house. They get the garden and the house organised, plant flowers etc. “*We do not have a cleaner, a guardian, or a maintainer, but these are all provided by the volunteers. Thus we do not have the problem that somebody is working for money, and the other is for free.*” In one part of the backyard a kitchen garden has been created and the produces are cooked in the kitchen of the community house. This kind of operation requires almost non-stop opening hours. Officially the house is open from 8 AM to 6 PM, and to 4 PM on Saturdays. But on winter evenings when people stayed to watch TV and to chat only to save heating costs, the leaders decided to remain open at local convenience. Although voluntary work to cover the 30 days of mandatory public work is rooted in a structural constraint, it provided an opportunity for social workers to get in touch with many families living in extreme poverty that had been reserved until then and also with the retired non-Roma residents of the neighbourhood. These people have become active members of the community house since then.

The community house has a profound knowledge of relations and problems of local Roma families; hence services defined in the project application are always adapted to local needs. This happened in the case of the highly debated washing and bathing service provision, which had caused great antipathy and indignation among the residents of the settlement: “*we know how to wash, what do they think of us?*” Therefore, the leaders of the house have bought a traditional rotary pulsator washer and a spin-dryer that can be borrowed and used at home for free. This eases the everyday housework for the women who have formerly washed the clothes by hand. At the same time, they do not have to bring their poverty-stricken clothes to a community space exposed to the public gaze. Flexible adaptation of strict mandatory hygiene services drawn up in the project application, to local needs allowed the programme to be meaningful in the life of the residents – in contrast to the never used washing machines in Rónakeresztes. Another example of the flexible adaptation was specified in the project tender proposing to include the community house into the warning system of the Child Care Services. According to this questionable but local decision social workers can oblige the family to use the services of the community house for the sake of the child.<sup>10</sup> A similarly questionable decision was that to transfer

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<sup>9</sup> The Protestant reverend holds a Bible class for children, while the mayor participates in the weekly community talks. In one of these events he offered to plough over the fields for free and then residents of the settlement can cultivate theirs with the tools lent by the house for free. During our spring field trip people arrived every ten minutes at the community house, bringing back a hoe or borrowing some tools. The majority of the gardens were cultivated and afterwards many home-made fences were erected to protect the plants.

<sup>10</sup> The strongest aversion against the children living in the settlement expressed by Roma and non-Roma parents alike is that they come to the kindergarten/school with a neglected appearance. After this coercive measure feedback indicated positive changes in this issue in many families.

the customer services of the family care services to the community house. The premises of the family care services are located on the other side of the town, thus the relocation made services more accessible for the local population, although from the professional point of view it qualifies as segregated service provision.

The Sure Start programme was launched in 2009 in Rónakeresztes. The community house is in the neighbourhood of the segregated part of the Catholic school, situated at the utmost parts of the settlement. As a result it is in an uncomfortable walking distance for a mother with small children from the poorest areas of the settlement. All in all, the Sure Start house is located in a mixed Roma and non-Roma neighbourhood, close to a stigmatised institution, which defines its positions at the symbolic level and explains its stigmatisation in the eyes of the town's residents.

Initially a former public worker had become the manager of the house, but she soon left for maternity leave. It was the task of the present manager to find the suitable successor but teachers with advanced professional carrier paths were not keen to work for the Sure Start House. As a result she herself has been appointed as the manager, because as a retired teacher she was also motivated to be employed. She is well embedded in local public life, she enjoys the confidence of the mayor and as the elected local territorial representative she cares about the residents of the settlement.

The Sure Start programme is based on the inclusion of Roma as employees in order to enhance the embedded operation of the community house. One of the three employees of the Sure Start house in Rónakeresztes is the president of the local RMSG. Due to his character, his presence strengthens authoritarian practices rather than trust-building. *"They fear him because he is a leader in the public work program and he can say that you don't come to work tomorrow."* (Manager of the Sure Start house) This situation depicts local circumstances; the way the authoritarian male leader of the RMSG becomes the "Roma colleague" in the community house mostly frequented by women. His role can be understood as the community's watchdog. His gatekeeper position in all the programs targeting the poor and Roma population (public work, different social projects) legitimates and enhances the strongly hierarchical system in which the poor Roma cannot directly connect to local institutions (parallel institutional system).

The other Roma employee of the Sure Start house is a young woman with a university degree, who formerly had worked in the employment centre, in the Family Care Centre and in other projects. Nevertheless, she has never been employed in a permanent position, because *"they don't like if a Roma is overqualified"*. She is very devoted to the question of Roma integration just as her father who had been member of the RMSG for years. Thus she can really identify herself with the aims of the program and the role of a support staff.

The Sure Start house has made several efforts to reach its target group, the poorest families and to make programs attractive for them. Besides giving out leaflets and make appearance at different events, the Roma employee and the district nurses personally visited and informed habitants. However, visits by the Roma colleague were perceived by residents as authority as they mixed her position with the Family and Child Care Services' workers. They feared that deficiencies about the household will be apparent to her and there will be consequences. This confirms that in an

institutional system based on hierarchies and exclusion feeds mistrust, cooperation and symmetrical partnerships are unfamiliar for every actor. There are no institutional mechanisms for the local community to participate in the work of the Sure Start house as it primarily is linked to personal relations of the leader. Older residents of the neighbouring streets sometimes get involved and help in the programs, but people living in the settlement do not appear as volunteers.

Programmes are organised in line with tendering requirements. Some mandatory services such as laundry opportunities are not used by the locals. According to the manager, poor families are ashamed to bring their clothes to public places, even though it would help them to save money. In spite of recognising this problem, local authorities in Rónakeresztes have been unable to find a convenient solution. In this settlement, authorities have not been able to mobilise the poorest Roma families to participate in the activities of the community house. According to the official programme of the community house, it aims to address disadvantaged families living in the segregated area of the town. In practice, however, the house is open to all disadvantaged families. As result, the target group of services offered by the community house has shifted to lower-middle class families that are unable to pay for services at a market price.<sup>11</sup> In addition, the daily schedule of Roma families does not match the strict opening hours of the house; when it is open, women are engaged with housework. Offering one-two hours of warm shelter a day and some food is not a solution for those living in extreme poverty because they have to ensure a livelihood in the remaining time as well.

The case of the Sure Start house in Rónakeresztes implies that people participating in the implementation of the programme do not address long-term integrational aims and visions. While the leader of the house is working to fulfil the requirements of the project, the RMSG representative appears in an authoritarian role in the local setting. Only their young Roma colleague contemplates integrational opportunities from the point of view of settlement residents. While the house considers it important to reach the poorest, it could not adapt to local circumstances in a flexible manner. In this way the house, instead of pursuing an inclusive strategy, only follows an administrative routine and thus reproduces existing hierarchical relations.

The operation of Nádas' second community house provides the example of the embedded developmental model, which is based on horizontal equal relations. This model adopts and accommodates the institutional system to local needs within the framework of the programme, integrating external local resources if necessary. The employees who come from the settlement enhance the daily operation and communication, their presence also strengthens the legitimacy of the community house in the settlement. Partnership relations are questioned continuously in this model as well, for example in the case of the Sure Start house's participation in the child care warning system. But exactly those employees who are working for

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<sup>11</sup> According to the manager of the Sure Start House being disadvantaged is not only a financial question. A young woman can also be reckoned as disadvantaged if she arrives by car, but has no family help in the childcare and if she is left alone with her questions.

integration and who are familiar with the local balances of power are able to guide the project in accordance with the original aims.

## *Conclusions*

This paper intended to answer why and how similar developmental projects serving social integration can bring different outcomes in the examples of two Hungarian towns. The analysis mapped out the social context that embedded the developmental framework of programs in the two cases. Studying the implementation of social integration projects, the paper has examined networks, coordination mechanisms and resource mobilisation strategies that provide developmental capacities for the town.

The case studies support the hypothesis that social change and development are the outcome of institutional change that associates heterogeneous interests and distributes authority more or less equally among representative actors. The two cases assume different positions along a continuum, whose two endpoints are the socially embedded and inclusive developmental model that distributes authority more or less evenly, and on the other hand, a hierarchical institutional framework that excludes marginalised groups from developmental associations, mobilisation and decision-making. The developmental trajectory of Nádás has been characterised by a move away from a more or less embedded developmental model towards more hierarchical institutional solutions that began to expropriate achievements of earlier initiatives of social cohesion and shared public goods for the majority society. The developmental trajectory of Rónakeresztes has been stagnating towards the endpoint of the executive model with highly selective developmental networks and the lack of distributed authority in developmental decision-making, strengthening the marginalisation of the Roma minority in local society.

Our empirical findings confirmed expectations that the developmental regime coordinated by the central state can influence characteristics of local developmental networks by either supporting or hindering the distribution of developmental rights evenly among a diversity of local stakeholders. In Rónakeresztes the exclusionary mechanisms of the domestic institutional system were not mitigated by local initiatives for an institutional system that would distribute developmental mandates more evenly among disadvantaged social groups, which led to the strengthening of divisions between the local majority and marginalised groups. In this town, there has been not a single opinion leader who would undertake to disrupt the social status quo within the local community hence the lack of social integration remains invisible. In Nádás, however, the mayor, acting as a socially skilled entrepreneur managed to build local developmental agency, which mitigated the exclusionary mechanisms of the external institutional system for a number of years. During this time, taking the inclusion of poor Roma families as a priority of local policy-making, he took a leading role in supporting the emancipation of Roma and mediating between the local majority and the divided Romungro and Vlach Roma groups.

Mediation was part of the daily operation of developmental associations, as different interests and goals unfolded during the planning and implementation of projects. The association of different local stakeholders (the local government, the

Protestant Church, more privileged Vlach Roma, less emancipated Romungros) throughout various projects, led to the evolution of trust-based relations among social groups with heterogeneous interests and preferences (middle class versus the Roma; Romungros versus Vlach Roma). The mayor supported – and often initiated – those projects that provided synergies in the coming about of integrated institutions, such as the minority office, the community house and the Roma programme leader's status. These provided space for active participation and developmental decision-making for representatives of marginalised groups. In Rónakeresztes, on the other hand, in the absence of an independent developmental team and prior developmental projects promoting social integration, the resources of the Sure Start House were used within the administrative sphere of the local government. As a result, in Rónakeresztes developmental networks have been selective for decades, leaving the local RMSG an exclusively administrative role to sign tendering documents. Project planning and implementation has been carried out by managers and social workers representing the local middle class. As result, the definition of public good has tilted towards representing the interests of the local middle class that eventually expropriated the project originally organised to represent the interests of families in poverty (the Sure Start House for marginalised families).

The role that external framework conditions can play in the evolution and transformation of local developmental institutions is well illustrated by the shift from a more or less embedded developmental model in Nádás's earlier developmental history, towards more hierarchical institutional solutions during the follow-up research. Divergence from the original programme requirements in Rónakeresztes, and the gradual exclusion of Roma from the management and use of the community house in Nádás was due to the lack of an overall policy environment that would promote developmental accountability across state levels and sideways towards all representative social groups at the local level. In the absence of monitoring project implementation based on objectively and clearly defined benchmarks and rules for developmental policy-making that distribute authority across state levels, it is hardly possible to resist the local majority's pressure for exclusive representation. Short-term project cycles, where external funding ends before social change could be consolidated also make development programmes on social integration vulnerable to local social pressure as municipalities that take over project financing find it hard to disrupt a local status quo in which they are also embedded. Even though with the appearance of exclusionary practices, developmental achievements of previous projects came to be questioned lately in Nádás, social and human capital accumulated through them are still important achievements of the town's development model, with a potential for re-mobilisation at any time.

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