

Thematic Article



Social effects triggered by the expansion of higher education in Romania¹

Hungarian Educational Research Journal
2017, Vol. 7(1) 76–93
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<http://herj.lib.unideb.hu>
Debrecen University Press

Valer Veres²



DOI: 10.14413/herj.2017.01.06.

Abstract

The recent expansion of higher education in Romania triggered significant social changes in the composition of the country's student population. Despite the presumption of merit-based admission, prior to 1990 the student body was mostly urban, the massive expansion of university places starting in the early 1990s opened the doors to higher education to a wider category of people. Additionally, certain policies were introduced to increase the access of minorities to higher education. This paper analyzes the characteristics of the student population in terms of gender, place of primary residence (urban/rural) and ethnicity, and it looks at whether the expansion of education contributed to the decrease in structural inequalities between the ethnic Hungarian and Roma minorities and the ethnic Romanian majority population.

Keywords: expansion of higher education, Romania, access and equity, Hungarian, Roma minority, educational attainment

¹ This study was elaborated with the support of the Bolyai Janos Research Scholarship offered by the Hungarian Academy of Sciences.

² Babes-Bolyai University, Cluj (Romania), Email address: veresval@yahoo.com

Recommended citation format: Veres, V. (2017). Social effects triggered by the expansion of higher education in Romania. *Hungarian Educational Research Journal*, 7(1), 76-93, DOI: 10.14413/herj.2017.01.06.

Introduction

Among young Romanians an expansion marked by the significant rise in the number of those attending middle and higher education institutions has triggered changes. These changes affect young Romanians in general, including young people from Transylvania, who are also being admitted to educational levels beyond general education. However, the circumstances for these changes are determined by the social effects entailed by the regime change.

The empirical foundation of our research is represented by the 2002 and 2011 census data and student surveys from Romania. Moreover, in the analysis of the number of students we have used the official and published statistics of the National Institute of Statistics from Bucharest, as well as the data from the Ministry of Education. Our research proceeds from the fact that historically the evolution of educational chances was guided by three main principles: inherited “merit”, and the principles of equality and equity.

Inherited merit was characteristic to the first period of being admitted to a higher education institution. It represented inherited merits which were at the basis of admission to higher education institutions, but these merits depended on social circumstances. Thus, whether that person was lucky enough to be born into a favorable social environment or position. The position of upper class, urban, (white) men was the most advantageous, seasoned with local variations (see Roemer 1998, Clancy et al 2007.139).

The second period started in the middle of the 20th century, when the obstacles which impeded women, ethnic and racial minorities, and those with more disadvantaged social origins from being admitted to higher education institutions were gradually removed in the name of equality.

Although higher education started to become mass education, social inequalities were being reproduced within the structure of higher education, which was differentiated according to institution type and scientific field. Now in the third phase, the principles of equity and equal opportunities have become norms guiding admission to universities during the last two decades (Clancy et al 2007.138). A more intense mass-production of higher education also began, at a different pace, during this third phase.

Our main research questions in this paper are the following:

How did the educational level change as a result of the extension of higher education, especially the percentage of higher education institution graduates between 2002 and 2011?

How does the expansion of education prevail in the completion of social justice and in decreasing/eliminating ethnic-linguistic inequalities?

Which are the main factors of inequality in higher education in the context of Roma and Hungarian minorities from Romania?

What are the structural factors impeding the “catching-up” of minorities with the Romanian majority?

The literature about educational inequalities provides the framework for understanding the Romanian situation. Bourdieu stated that students with more valuable social and cultural capital fare better than the other students with a lower social and cultural background. The social reproduction describes adequately how ethnicity/race and class influence the transmission of educational equalities (Bourdieu 1977, 1990, see also Boudon 1974).

Blossfeld and Shavit (1993) point out that mass education is inherently unequal. Consequently, the differences in educational attainment persist between children from different social strata.

The factors which mediate the intergenerational transmission of educational opportunity inequality between strata are now well understood and include economic and cultural capital, significant others' role, and the availability of educated models in the social network of the children. However, they conclude that persistent inequality is valid in a weaker version (Blossfeld & Shavit 1993).

In order to answer our research questions we shall first clarify certain concepts and situations. In minority situations, when analyzing the topic of education, not only is proportionate participation at different educational levels important, but also the language of education. In the sense of Papp's typology, one could talk about education in mother tongue. This is the case if the members of a national minority receive education in their mother tongue and if that education comprises all levels of schooling. (Papp 2011: 5)

In Romania, there is a relatively extended minority language education system, especially in Hungarian, but not in all fields, neither in a professional, nor in a geographical sense. At the level of primary, general, and high-school education a relatively extended educational network is functioning. This is especially true in counties where the conditions are given, primarily due to the reason of headcount. In order to aid the equality of chances to education in Hungarian and other minority languages, the Romanian state grants a higher quota, at the level of higher education per student receiving education in Hungarian, for multicultural and multilingual universities. The number of which is currently 3.

Furthermore, the second most numerous national minority, the Roma do not speak their original language, but they speak Romanian, and to a smaller proportion Hungarian. Therefore, in their case the issue is more to increase their chances of continuing education and to eliminate segregation. In this respect the Romanian government grants separate places for Roma students at the level of university education, which are distributed among

different universities from the country. Thus, Roma students do not compete with majority students for admission to these places.

Data and methodology

The empirical foundation of our research is the Romanian census data from the years 2002 and 2011, and other educational statistics from TEMPO online database of the National Institute of Statistics from Bucharest, which have been published, as well as the data of the Ministry of Education. Moreover, we used, to a small extent, a representative online survey among students in Cluj-Napoca, carried out during the summer of 2015 by the Sociology and Social Work Faculty of Babes-Bolyai University and Mathias Corvinus Collegium. The sample is made up of approximately 10% of the students, following a representative distribution according to the faculties and nationality. In our research, we applied online data registration, based on the internal registries and mailing lists of the Faculties, so more than 90% of the students received a request via e-mail to fill out the 10-minute online questionnaire. Our sample contains 3732 valid cases and the representative, weighted, and analyzed sample is of 3237 persons.

We have performed the empirical analysis by means of the following methods:

In the first part, where we analyzed the question of the expansion of higher education in Romania, we used the following indicator: the ratio of students enrolled in tertiary education, per 10.000 inhabitants, during the period from 1995 – 2013 and based on the TEMPO online database of the National Institute of Statistics from Bucharest. Then, based on the same database, we analyzed – by means of correlation with two variables – the distribution of the population enrolled in some form of education and the total population according to gender, locality type, and ethno-nationality.

In the second part of our study, we analyzed the chances of primary, general and high-school pupils of being admitted to university in Romania by means of odds ratios. Then we compared the calculated indicators according to gender, type of locality, and ethno-nationality.

After that, based on the sociological survey data we analyzed the social background of pupils in 2015 by means of two-variable analyses (Crosstabs, t-test) and the Chi-squared test, especially adhering to the variables used before, such as gender, locality type, the father's educational level, and ethno-nationality.

The empirical analysis of the study contains bivariate and multivariate associations, indicators, and odds-ratios for comparisons between gender, type of residence and ethnicity, and their impact on access to higher education, from different levels (elementary, gymnasium, high school).

Main results

The expansion of higher education in Romania

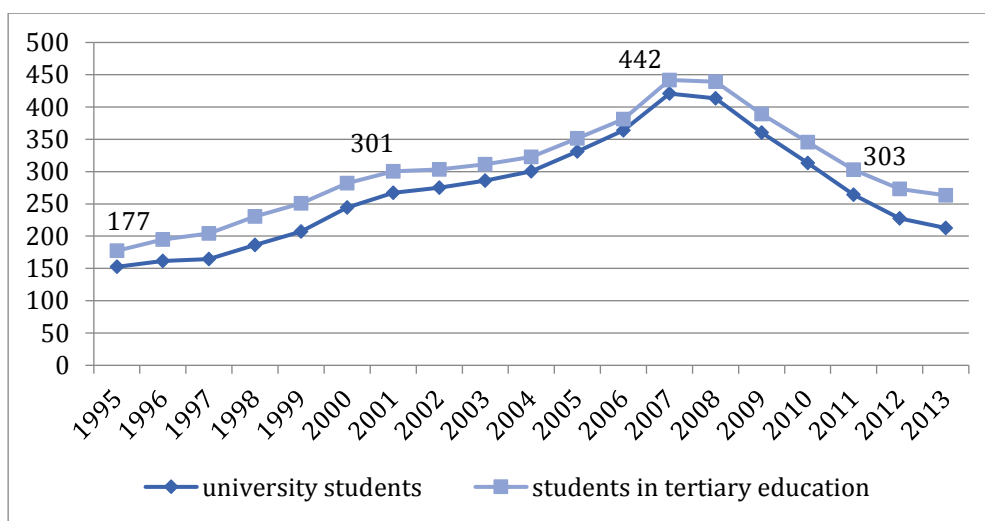
In Romania, the expansion of education has triggered significant changes in the composition of the population according to educational levels and in relation to the emergence of the principle of equity. We analyze this phenomenon according to three aspects: age, status of residence and gender. We analyze these aspects by comparing the total population and the Hungarian population in Romania, also comparing with other minority populations from Romania.

The expansion of education influences the degree of employment among young people. Thus, it plays a crucial role in transforming the structure of the entire society. Already at the beginning of the 1990s, graduating high school had become a reality for most young people completing compulsory general education, which was 8 classes back then. Consequently, beginning with the educational reform from 2000, a significant part of those graduating high school could continue their education in higher education institutions. In part, this forecasts the conditions of the process to the formation of the middle class based on the experience of Hungary (Kolosi, 2000, Gabor 1993).

Kozma Tamas (2010) shows that both the Hungarian or international expansion processes are continuous in higher education, as other research points out too (Craig 1981; Meyer et al 1992, Clancy et al 2007).

However, by the end of 2000, the expansion of higher education had slowed down in Romania, according to the flow data of Ministry of Education (INS 2016). The number of students per 10 000 inhabitants increased from 150 to 442 between 1995 and 2007, and decreased in few years later to 303 in 2011. A similar phenomenon was noticed in Hungary by Kozma, a few years earlier when the number of the students per 10 000 inhabitants increased from 100 to 420 between 1990 and 2006. Following this, it started to decrease annually, mostly because of a decrease of students in distance education and “evening”-education programs, yet the number of regular students did not decrease. (Kozma 2010) In the Romanian case, the decrease of the student population after 2008 also happened because of a decrease in the number of students enrolled in private, non-performant universities (Spiru Haret U. phenomenon).

Figure 1. The ratio of students enrolled on tertiary education, per 10.000 inhabitants, Romania, 1995 – 2013.



Source: Romanian Census data, 2011 (INS, 2013a)

According to the census data, compared to the earlier ten-year period (1992-2001) when the expansion of higher education was 127% at the national level and 114% for the Hungarian population, between 2002 and 2011 the expansion of the number of university students enrolled was only 15%, both among the total population of the country and the Hungarian population. One of the main reasons was the decrease in the school-aged population, which also gradually affected the universities. The number of high school students had increased among the age group population and the number of high school graduates had also significantly increased.

Based on the analysis of chances to continue education, it may be demonstrated that the principle of equity did not prevail in all respects by 2011. Ethnic inequalities in higher education from a Hungarian-Romanian perspective (and especially from a Roma-Romanian perspective) have subsisted. Even by 2011 ethnic Hungarians had smaller chances of attending universities according to both gender and locality type, this is also shown by Papp (2008.217) and Csata et al. (2010) for 2002. Men (boys) from urban areas are the most disadvantaged. This may be related to the fact that higher education in technical and agrarian fields – which is mostly chosen by men – is not available in Hungarian within the state education system of Romania (except for a few technical specialties, which function in Hungarian at Sapientia University and Babes-Bolyai University).

Analyzing the ethno-national composition of the population enrolled in some form of education between 1992 and 2011, we noticed that the total proportion of 6,28% of Hungarian students had exceeded the 5,8% age group proportion (6-20 years old), but there is a great difference between the situation at different educational levels. By 2002, young ethnic Hungarian people who were 2 to 6 years old in 1992, were the general school age to be attending university by 2011 and their proportion was around 5,5-5,7% at the national level. (see Veres 2015.83). In 1992, the proportion of ethnic Hungarian students

studying at higher educational institutions was 5,2%, which was below the 6,1% proportion of young Hungarian people among the 20-24-year-old age group. Yet, if in 2002 we also take into consideration students from Transylvania studying at higher education institutions from Hungary, the Hungarian students are then closer to the national age group proportion. Moreover, while the proportion of Roma children enrolled in elementary schools increased from 2,2% to 6,8% between 1992 and 2011, at the level of higher education their proportion remained insignificant (0,11 and 0,2, see table 1).

Table 1. The proportion of enrolled students by educational level and ethnicity, Romania, 1992-2011

Level	Ethnicity				
1992	Romanian	Hungarian	Roma	Other	
Enrolled total	91,09	6,28	1,35	1,28	
University	93,28	5,18	0,11	1,43	
Post-secondary	91,15	7,7	0,12	1,03	
High school	91,68	6,88	0,29	1,15	
Vocational	91,88	6,49	0,58	1,05	
8 classes	90,83	6,33	1,56	1,28	
Elementary (4)	90,37	5,98	2,28	1,37	
Level	Ethnicity				
2002	Romanian	Hungarian	Roma and other		
Enrolled total	90,9	5,5	3,6		
University	93,3	4,9 (5,4*)	1,8		
Post-secondary	90,4	8,7	0,9		
High school	92,9	5,5	1,5		
Vocational	91,5	6,1	2,3		
8 classes	90,2	5,5	4,4		
Elementary (4)	88,9	5,6	5,5		
Level	Ethnicity				
2011	Romanian	Hungarian	Roma	Other	Unknown (no data)
Enrolled total	89.1	5.7	3.9	1.3	8.8
University	92.7	5.2	0.2	1.8	6.5
Post-secondary	90.6	7.4	1.1	0.9	7.1
High school	90.2	5.8	2.9	1.1	7.0
Vocational	87.1	7.7	3.8	1.4	15.3
8 classes	87.7	5.8	5.4	1.1	10.3
Elementary (4)	86.2	5.9	6.8	1.1	11.2

Sources: The results of the 1992 census (INS: 1994). The results of the 2002 census (INS: 2004). The results of the 2011 census (INS: 2013b). Percentages result from the author's own calculations.

**Corrected data with the official number of 3090 students studying in Hungary

**Rates are tailored to the population enrolled in education of known ethnic origin.

As we observed, the proportion of Hungarians, on different educational levels, within the population enrolled in some form of education is more or less the same as the age group proportion of Hungarians. The state higher education in the Hungarian language is only granted at science universities, in the field of arts and medical education, but not in the field of technical or agronomical education. Private higher educational institutions (Sapientia University, Partium Christian University) have only initiated instruction in Hungarian in a limited number of technical fields, while they offer instruction in Hungarian in several scientific fields which have already been covered by state higher education. Irrespective of these peculiarities, in 2011 the proportion of those studying in Hungarian had increased as compared to 2002. (see table 2)

Table 2. The number and the proportion of ethnic Hungarian enrolled population from Romania by teaching language, in higher education 2002, 2011

Level	Teaching language	Number	%	Out of national level (%)
2002				
Post-secondary	Hungarian	2001	39.4	8.7
	Romanian	3082	60.6	
University	Hungarian	9268	33.7	4.9
	Romanian	18254	59.6	
	Hungary2	3090	6.7	(+0.5)
Total		89764	100.0	
2011				
Post-secondary	Hungarian	1382	24.6	7.4
	Romanian	4240	75.4	
University	Hungarian	12195	38.4	5.2
	Romanian	19535	61.6	
	Hungary2	3005		(+0,4)
Total		173496	100%	5.7

Sources: Romanian Censuses from 2002 and 2011 (INS 2004, 2013b), Registries from Romanian Ministry of Education and Research See: Tempo online: insse.ro (2015)

*Romanian citizens who learn in Hungary.

Obs. 1 The figures of the students who learnt in Romanian languages was obtained from comparing the date of censuses with Ministry registries. (See Murvai, 2002)

2. Romanian citizens who learn in Hungary. See: Papp 2010.23.

The differential increase of higher education level according social structure

While the population with higher education increased significantly in Romania, the percentage of ethnic Hungarian young people, studying at universities also increased. Their percentage among university students enrolled in Romania has risen from 4,9% in 2002 to 5,2% in 2011. However, this is still lower than the percentage of the 20-24-years-old population, which is approximately 6%. In case of the Roma minority, the percentage of the persons with a university degree remained under 1%.

Slightly generalizing, Papp stated that in the case of ethnic Hungarians in 2002, the educational level of the 10-year-old and older Hungarian population from Romania, as a rule, the proportion of Hungarians was lower at lower educational levels than at the level of higher education (Papp 2008: 217). This statement generally kept its validity even in 2011, when the proportion of higher education graduates among the 10-year-old or older Hungarian population was only 10,2%, therefore more than 4% lower than the total population of the country.

Table 3. The highest level of education of the population over 10 years old, according to residence type and ethnicity

Population	University	Post-secondary	High school	Vocational	8 classes	Elementary (4 classes)	No school	Total
Total	14.4	3.2	24.4	13.9	27.0	14.2	3.0	100
Romanian	14.8	3.3	24.7	14.3	26.6	13.8	2.5	100
Hungarian	10.2	3.3	27.0	15.9	30.5	11.0	2.1	100
Roma	0.7	0.2	4.9	4.2	35.7	34.2	20.2	100
Urban								
Total	22.4	4.6	30.3	13.2	19.0	8.5	1.9	100
Romanian	23.4	4.8	30.9	13.5	18.1	7.9	1.4	100
Hungarian	15.3	4.8	32.5	15.2	23.1	7.6	1.4	100
Roma	1.3	0.4	7.7	5.2	35.2	31.2	19.1	100
Rural								
Total	4.7	1.5	17.2	14.7	36.6	20.9	4.3	100
Romanian	4.8	1.6	17.5	15.2	36.4	20.8	3.7	100
Hungarian	4.7	1.7	21.0	16.6	38.6	14.7	2.8	100
Roma	0.3	0.1	3.2	3.5	36.0	36.0	20.9	100

Source: Veres (2015 and INS: 2013b)

According to the 2011 census, 3,2% of the Romanian population holds post-secondary and foremen's vocational educational degrees, 3,3% of both Romanians and Hungarians. Almost one-third of the total population holds a high-school degree. This proportion is similar for Romanians (24,7%), while the proportion of those holding a high-school degree is 2,5% higher among Hungarians (27%).

We can notice that the educational level of the Roma population is far worse than that of Romanians or Hungarians. Only 0,7% hold higher educational degrees, 4,9% a high-school diploma and 34% are only primary school graduates, while 20, 2% have not attended school and they are functionally or actually illiterate (see table 2).

There are certain peculiarities according to genders: firstly, as compared to the situation from 2002, the situation had changed by 2011 – by then, women had higher educational levels. Therefore, at the national level the proportion of university graduates among women was 15%, while this proportion was 14,4% among men. This was also reflected in the case of Hungarians from Romania: the proportion of university graduates was 9,8% among men and 10,6% among women. As for post-secondary and high-school graduates the proportion of men and women was similar, while the proportion of vocational school graduates typically remained predominant among men (see table 2).

The opportunities on accessing to higher education

Based on odds ratios about the opportunities to accessing higher education in Romania, the Hungarian male population from urban areas is lagging as far as continuing education is concerned.

Table 4. Odds ratios for the accession in higher education from different levels of education, according to ethnicity and gender, 2011

Ethnicity	High school	8 classes	4 classes
Total	0.75	0.77	0.78
Romanian	0.77	0.85	0.88
Hungarian	0.67	0.72	0.72
Roma	0.06	0.04	0.03
Other	1.30	1.32	1.33
Men			
Total	0.70	0.71	0.72
Romanian	0.72	0.78	0.82
Hungarian	0.60	0.64	0.65
Roma	0.06	0.03	0.03
Other	1.44	1.45	1.45
Women			
Total	0.80	0.84	0.85
Romanian	0.83	0.92	0.95
Hungarian	0.74	0.80	0.80
Roma	0.07	0.04	0.03
Other	1.15	1.17	1.20

Source: A 2011. Romanian census (INS: 2013b).

Therefore, the expansion of education was only successful to a small extent in decreasing structural inequalities between the ethnic-Hungarian and the ethnic-Romanian population in the field of higher education between 2002-2011. Yet, by the end of this period, the disadvantages of Hungarians did not cumulate as compared to those of rural Romanians who were otherwise at a great disadvantage as far as opportunities are concerned. However, analyses from 2015 concerning university students shows that the expansion also reached young people from rural areas. Consequently, a significant percentage of these young people have been admitted to universities from Cluj-Napoca. In this respect, the trend is similar for young Hungarians (Veres & Papp 2015).

Table 5. Odds ratios for the accession in higher education from different levels of education according to ethnicity, gender and type of residence, 2011

	Urban			Rural		
	High school	8 classes	4 classes	High school	8 classes	4 classes
Total						
Total	1.22	1.41	1.40	0.25	0.23	0.24
Romanian	1.27	1.58	1.61	0.26	0.25	0.26
Hungarian	1.11	1.29	1.30	0.28	0.28	0.28
Roma	0.11	0.07	0.06	0.03	0.02	0.01
Other	2.62	2.94	2.98	0.27	0.25	0.26
Men						
Total	1.15	1.32	1.31	0.22	0.20	0.21
Romanian	1.19	1.48	1.52	0.22	0.21	0.23
Hungarian	1.01	1.18	1.20	0.23	0.23	0.23
Roma	0.11	0.07	0.06	0.03	0.02	0.01
Other	2.90	3.24	3.25	0.26	0.25	0.25
Women						
Total	1.30	1.51	1.49	0.28	0.27	0.28
Romanian	1.35	1.69	1.71	0.29	0.28	0.30
Hungarian	1.21	1.40	1.42	0.33	0.34	0.34
Roma	0.12	0.08	0.06	0.03	0.02	0.01
Other	2.32	2.61	2.68	0.27	0.26	0.27

Source: A 2011. Romanian census (INS: 2013b).

In our research, we tried to answer the following question: how does the expansion of education prevail in the completion of social justice and in decreasing/eliminating inequalities?

Based on the analysis of odds ratios for accession in higher education between 2002 and 2011, it may be demonstrated that the principle of equity did not prevail in all respects in 2002 nor in 2011. Ethnic inequalities in higher education from a Hungarian-Romanian perspective, and especially from a Roma-Romanian perspective have subsisted. Furthermore, Hungarians have smaller chances of attending universities in comparison to the Romanian majority, a disadvantage that even in 2011 was also influenced by gender and residence type, and as shown by Papp (2008:217) and Csata et al. (2010) was also the case for 2002. Moreover, we tried to identify the main factors of inequality in the context of Roma and Hungarian minorities from Romania. Finally, we attempted to identify the structural factors impeding the “catching-up” of minorities with the Romanian majority.

In the case of the Roma minority, the main problem regarding the chances to access in higher education is the historically cumulated disadvantages. Therefore, Roma children are disadvantaged in a social structure perspective, especially because of the parents' educational level, which is much lower than the average population's. Since most of the Roma minority are in an underclass social position (see Sandu 2005), the structural disadvantages, for which the majority of this community are in serious deprivation, include the following aspects: housing, employment status/unemployed, material/financial situation, they are sometimes segregated from majority population, and thus, they cannot access public services (see Rat, Tobias & Veres 2015). The other aspect that influences the school attendance of the Roma children in a negative way is a

low educational aspiration. In a recent research, carried out in local Roma communities from Transylvania³, we found that only 17% of the adult Roma parents would like that their children attend university in the future, while in the average Romanian population this percentage is more than 50%.

In the case of Hungarians, we can identify historical disadvantages in access to education. During the Communist period, especially after 1975, the access to high school and university level education in the mother tongue was gradually restricted (see Bugajski 1995: 200; Gallagher 1999). Consequently, now we can observe a structural disadvantage in the highest level of education among the adult population, those who are the nowadays parents of school aged children. Based on odds ratios (table 5), we can see that Hungarian ethnics men (boys) from urban areas are the most disadvantaged compared to the Romanian majority. This may be related to the fact that higher education in technical and agrarian fields – which is mostly chosen by men – is not available in Hungarian within the state education system of Romania (except for a few exceptions). Importantly, the rural population is very disadvantaged in access to higher education, disrespect of ethnicity, with an odds ratio of around 0,20-0,25, while for the urban population the values are over 1.

Through trying to identify the structural factors impeding the “catching-up” of the Hungarian minority with the Romanian majority, we can say that the percentage of young Hungarian people studying at universities has also increased. Their percentage among university students enrolled in Romania has risen from 4,9% in 2002 to 5,2% in 2011. Yet, this is still lower than the percentage of the 20-24 years-old population of approximately 6%. Based on the odds ratios, we can conclude that, especially the Hungarian male population from urban areas, is lagging as far as continuing education is concerned. Besides the existing social-demographic reasons and the reasons related to the type and the size of the residence/ locality, this could also be explained by the fact that in Transylvania the biggest deficiencies are in relation to continuing education in technical fields that are rather preferred by men. As for the chances of admission to higher education institutions, on average Hungarians from Romania are at a 10-15% disadvantage as compared to the majority population, differentiated by the gender and the type of residence.

Special characteristics of university students' social background

Based on the questionnaire survey carried out among university students, we analyzed the social background of students attending university in Cluj-Napoca, especially at Babeş-Bolyai University (BBU), the university with the highest number of students in the

³ The project entitled: *United Networks: Integrated initiatives for the social inclusion of marginalized communities*, code PEH 100, contract 05/H/SEE/30.04.2015, a joint project of the Caritas Alba Iulia – Social Services non-governmental organization, the Babeş-Bolyai University and the County Offices for Child Protection and Social Services from Mureş, Harghita and Covasna.

country. Our analysis was particularly attentive to gender, the type of locality of origin, and the two most important nationalities. Almost one third of the students, 31,3% come from villages (according to the question they spent their childhood – until they were 6-5 years old – in a village). A bigger part of students coming from urban areas (42,4%) come from small towns and the rest come from municipalities (26,3%). This composition differs to a great extent from the distribution according to type of locality of the 19-24 years-old population. At the national level, based on census data, the chances of young people living in rural areas of being admitted to a university are surprisingly low compared to the data recorded by universities from Cluj-Napoca. In 2011, only 16% of university students came from rural areas, which was way behind the 41% of the 20-24 years-old population living in rural areas (Veres 2015: 77).

There is an approximately 2/3 majority of women at the universities from Cluj-Napoca. Almost 3/4 of students study at the undergraduate level, and 1/4 at the master's level. The proportion of Hungarian students studying at a master's level is slightly lower as compared to the Romanian students, at least at the same university (Table 6).

There is a significant correlation between the nationality of students and the type of locality: 36,2% of Hungarian students and only 29,6% of Romanian students come from rural areas. This difference does not come from the composition of the peer group anymore, but it may be attributed to the fact that they can study at smaller universities from the country in most areas (Alba Iulia, Sibiu, Brasov, Oradea). A smaller percentage of Romanian students get to study in Cluj-Napoca as compared to Hungarian students who have a unique offer, primarily from BBU, from the point of view of studying in their mother tongue. The offer of universities with Hungarian language education also includes a number of smaller universities in other cities (Sapientia Hungarian University from Transylvania, Partium Christian University in Oradea). However, many basic degree courses may still be attended only at Cluj-Napoca, and at BBU (natural sciences and exact sciences, except information technology)⁴ (see Table 1). We have already noticed this special characteristic in a student survey carried out in 2006. (Veres 2007a, b).

⁴ The fact that the majority of basic degree courses are sufficient in one location for the Hungarian community, is another question. The majority of specializations offered in several locations are confronted with a small number of students within the offer of Hungarian language university education.

Table 6. The composition of students according to ethno-nationality and locality type (N=3157)

	Ethnonationality*		Total
	Romanian	Hungarian	
Gender			
Men	33.7%	35.3%	34.1%
Women	66.3%	64.7%	65.9%
Residence type			
Rural	29.6%	36.2%	31.3%
Towns	43.8%	38.3%	42.4%
Cities (county capitals)	26.6%	25.5%	26.3%
Level of studies			
BA	73.7%	77.3%	74.6%
MA	26.1%	22.1%	25.1%
PhD	0.2%	0.6%	0.3%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

*The association is significant (Chi-square) on $p < 0,05$ level.

Source: Students survey form Cluj-Napoca, 2015 (BBU-Faculty of Sociology and SW, Matthias Corvinus Collegium and HAS-MTA TK.)

Analyzing the educational level of the students' parents, we observe that the phenomenon of school reproduction significantly prevails. While the proportion of university graduates within the total population is about 15%, 31-34% of students' parents are university graduates, and 39% of their mothers and 33,5% of their fathers are high-school graduates. The proportion of parents with a general school education is only 3,6-4% according to our study, while more than 40% of the adult population from Romania has only graduated general school or a lower level school (see Veres 2015. 73, INS 2013). Thus, by analyzing the education level of students' parents, we may observe that the proportion of university graduates is about 30% for both ethno-nationalities, but it is almost 4% higher for Romanian mothers, while the proportion of high-school graduate Hungarian mothers is 13% higher than that of Romanian mothers (see table 7).

Table 7. The distribution of students according to the parents' level of education and ethno-nationality (% , N=3157)

	Ethnicity	Highest level of education						Total
		4 classes	8 classes	Vocational	High school	Baccalaureate	Higher education	
Father	Romanian	1,0%	4,3%	15,3%	7,8%	36,1%	35,6%	100%
	Hungarian	0,5%	3,8%	13,5%	1,3%	49,1%	31,9%	100%
	Total	0,9%	4,2%	14,9%	6,1%	39,3%	34,6%	100%
Mother	Romanian	0,8%	4,1%	24,7%	6,4%	32,3%	31,8%	100%
	Hungarian	0,4%	2,3%	24,4%	6,4%	37,1%	29,4%	100%
	Total	0,7%	3,6%	24,6%	6,4%	33,5%	31,2%	100%

**The association is significant (Chi-square) on $p < 0,01$ level.

Source: Students survey form Cluj-Napoca, 2015 (BBU-Faculty of Sociology and SW, Matthias Corvinus Collegium and HAS-MTA TK).

Furthermore, by analyzing the distribution according to the father's occupation, we may observe that the proportion of children of occupational groups from the so-called middle and upper class is significantly higher as compared to their distribution according to the total population. For example, the proportion of leaders/managers is 9,8%, while according to the 2011 census data their proportion within the economically active population is 2,6% and less within ethnic Hungarians, at only 2% (Veres 2015,120). The

children of entrepreneurs and individual entrepreneurs are also overrepresented, but the children of intellectual non-physical workers and physical workers are proportionately represented among students as compared to the total population. The children of individual farmers, unemployed persons and other deprived categories, who make up a significant part of the adult population above 40 years of age, are significantly underrepresented, while they are hardly represented by a few percent among the students' parents (see table 8).

Table 8. The distribution of the students according to father's occupational status and ethnicity (% , N=3156)

Father's occupational status **	Ethnicity		Total
	Romanian	Hungarian	
Leaders, managers	9,8%	9,8%	9,8%
Entrepreneurs	4,0%	5,8%	4,4%
Intellectual occupations	3,2%	6,9%	4,2%
small entrepreneurs	7,6%	8,0%	7,7%
Clerks, office workers	8,0%	5,6%	7,4%
Non-manual workers (commercial or insurance agents, salesmen)	14,7%	7,2%	12,8%
Manual workers	21,8%	32,6%	24,5%
Farmers	3,3%	6,1%	4,0%
Pensioners	13,3%	8,3%	12,1%
Unemployed	1,9%	1,6%	1,8%
House workers /housewives	0,8%	0,1%	0,6%
Other	0%	1,3%	0,3%
Dead	0%	5,3%	1,3%
No answers	11,6%	1,4%	9,1%
Total	100%	100%	100%

**The association is significant (Chi-square) at $p < 0,01$ level.

Source: Students survey form Cluj-Napoca, 2015 (BBU-Faculty of Sociology and SW, Matthias Corvinus Collegium and HAS-MTA TK)

Conclusions

The decrease in inequalities is explained by the expansion of education as a structural levelling off. As a result, the chances of children with less educated parents of being admitted to higher education institutions are primarily those that may increase. This is due to the fact that the earlier stage of the expansion offered the opportunity of admission to higher education institutions to all the children whose parents' educational level was higher, and a further expansion of higher education, for demographic reasons, could only be reached by admitting young people with lower educational backgrounds (Shavit-Blossfeld 1993, Shavit et al.2007).

Besides the existing social-demographic reasons and the reasons related to the structure of localities, the disadvantages could also be explained by the fact that in Transylvania the biggest deficiencies are those related to continuing education in the technical fields preferred by men. As for the chances of admission to higher education institutions, on average Hungarians from Romania are at a 10-15% disadvantage as compared to the majority population, as according to genders and the type of residence. Among the provincial/rural population, Hungarians do not significantly lag among higher education

graduates, but generally a very small part of the rural population, only 5% are university graduates. This does not even reach one third of the percentage of university graduates among the urban population.

Therefore, between 2002 and 2011, the expansion of education has only been able to decrease the structural inequalities between the Hungarian population and the Romanian population to a small degree at the level of higher education. However, by the end of this period the disadvantages characteristic to Hungarians among the rural population, otherwise at a great disadvantage, are not cumulated as compared to those of the Roma population. Research from 2015 concerning university students indicates that this expansion has also reached young people from rural areas who have been accepted to universities from Cluj-Napoca to a significant proportion and this trend has also become characteristic among young Hungarian people (Veres – Papp 2015).

In the case of the Roma minority, since 2000, but at a national level only after 2011 when the new Law of Education was adopted, Romania experienced a “transition to idea of equality”. Consequently, it resulted in two important national programs for education: The *After schools*, where the school integration of Roma and non-Roma children can be improved, and *Second Chance* program, which gives the opportunity for adults to finish their basic schooling, and to continue with vocational or high school education. The results are not yet visible, but it is an important start. This can be an opportunity to increase the number of young Roma in higher education, in a long-term perspective, now the high school level can be a target. As for the chances of members of the Roma community to be admitted to universities, we could assert that despite many incentive measures, equality of chances in education has only slightly improved after 2002. However, the percentage of university graduates among Roma is still below 1%, which is 15 times lower than the national average.

The present research can be developed in the future, with a similar structure, and related to the intensions and chances of advancement between the different levels of higher education (BA/BSc – MA/MSc – PhD).

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