

Theses of Doctoral (PhD) Dissertation

“AUTONOMY AND COMPLIANCE”

**MAIN DIRECTIONS AND CHANCES OF SOCIALIZATION IN
PRIMARY SCHOOL**

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I. The aims of the dissertation, overview of the topic

My doctoral research focuses on the reproduction of society how to reproduce our relationships, values and rules presenting through the dimensions of primary school discipline and rule tracking. How do and how should the teachers discipline in the primary schools in Hungary to meet the expectations of values and norms of our society. In the life of a student, experiences at school are likely some of the most influential to his socialization, value system and behaviour pattern development. Because of that, it's really important that we recognize how are their rule following manners shaped, how are they disciplined in school, and what are the impacts of these regulations on the attitudes and norms that they learn, which all will form a guidance in their social activities.

It is important to explore what kind of citizens are grown up by the old or the current pedagogical methods from the today's fellowships and how they are shaped to the democratically recruitments of 21st of century.

The aim of the research was to create a hypothetical model that would allow teachers to be classified into three types. The model was tested during the research.

The question, accompanying my researches all the way is how school educates compliant citizens or those being contrary to the regulations, challenge or able to modify them. The researches of school disciplines, compliance and regulations are the best opportunities to be able to give an answer on this where, in the past few years the control was strengthened in the Hungarian education system much better than the common thinking and creation of rules.

The right values are not transmitted with simple curricular teaching and learning, instead with everyday interactions amongst the school members. Current studies shows that these interactions are damaged and the social differences between students are transformed to cultural differences. In elementary schools the grades and the knowledge are in a goal- instrument relationship, which means, learning for the students now is just an equipment to

reach the goal, the good grade, because of this, the love of learning, the curiosity in childhood and the liberty of being young is disappearing from the school system. All of this is influenced by the hidden curriculum, and the students with advantages gain more and those who start with disadvantage fall back even more inside of the institution. (Csepeli 1975; Ferge 1974, 1976, 1984, 2000; 2012; Andor 1980, 1981; Ladányi - Csanádi 1983; Szabó 1988).

The hidden curriculum it's an outcome of the relations and connection systems inside of school. To learn how to belong to a school community or reject these techniques are usually defined by students socially and sub culturally coded reactions (Willis 1977). The student success or failure in school depends on how he/she is able to adapt to the school's, the educator's implicit curriculum (Woods 1980). It shows the significance of the hidden curriculum that after decades we don't remember the syllabus, instead the school atmosphere, the communication between the characters, the teachers' personality; the hidden curriculum. This is the memory what remains from school and its educational results. The methods of conflict management and different interest enforcements techniques are stored in the mind of the students, and these will be useful in their future life (Ligeti 2006). The teachers doesn't educate just knowledge, but attitudes, behaviour samples as well.

Just a democratically working institution is able to successfully socialize their students onto a democratic behaviour, to maintain an effective value communication, the written down and spoken policy has to be applied in practical approach as well which does not come true in all cases. The students learn, to no effect, how democracy works if they don't experience it inside the school's walls. It is learned vainly to be tolerant with each other if the school system segregates the Gypsy or minority students (Ligeti 2000a). It's important for the society that the students are taught in the mirror of the labour market expectations, that they leave with an ambitious knowledge and cultural mobility, but this is really what happens in education institutions? How much the teacher

of our days is able to shape democratic individuals, and how the hidden or open contrasts are handled by them?

In addition to school responsibilities, students will hardly have time to go to other hobbies, entertainment, cinema, theatre, tours, family-friendly events, read books they want, and to be children. In contrast, the respect and freedom of the children are at the heart of many schools. There is an alternative school, one that calls itself a traditional curriculum, but what actually happens within the walls of the school is not the one described on the websites, nor on the open days, but in everyday life. How a problem is handled, how the children are introduced into the mysteries of the learning, and as what they are helped on the difficulties to get. Are they helping, enabling students to discover new things, get to know the unknown, or formulate expectations and leave them alone? It is the main question of the research how the educators affect the village-primary schools in the dimensions examined by me. This hidden and almost mysterious area is not receiving enough attention today among Hungarian researchers, although the importance of the school and the teachers in the functioning of society is indisputable.

The research was geographically carried out in a region in the Northern Great Plain region, and within the typical micro-region of Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg, in the Vásárosnamény micro-region, which both the literature and the lay public call both a disadvantaged micro-region.

The research was presented along the under mentioned dimensions.

1; Citizenship education, student participation. The subject of the study was the willingness and activity of students to attend school events and programs, according to teachers, and how the teachers want to influence this. The lessons are the ways of expressing students' opinions, the decision and the discussion. The possible reasons behind the passivity.

2; Student Government. In this dimension, the organizational framework, function and role of the student government in the life of the school were

revealed. How to select the members and the activities carried out by the student governments.

3; School house rule. The content, significance and function of the house rule in the school according to the teachers. The manner of creating this school document, his actualisation, his modification and his frequency, participants in these processes. Ways to ensure publicity of the house rule. Teachers' Attitude to the house rule.

4; School conflicts. In this dimension, I have attempted to find out the conflicts between school citizens, looking for the causes of conflicts and the methods used to solve them.

5; Discipline, whip and carrot. The tools of teachers to discipline, punishment and rewards, and the means by which teachers respond to the different norms, deviant student behaviours in order to maintain the routine of school life.

II. Overview of methods

In order to answer the research questions, I applied a qualitative methodology. I made several half-structured interviews with 36 primary school teachers in rural villages and 4 other people who live in the villages of the selected micro-region and children specialists.

The interviewees were not selected by probability sampling, but with the help of the snowball method: from acquaintances, circle of friends and a subregion primary school provided to continuously expand of the list of asked individuals. I did not aim for representativeness when I selected the sample. The expectation toward the interviewees was that they had to teach at one of the Vásárosnamény subregion rural primary schools in the last three months, or they've been teachers there but retired in the last five year.¹ Another condition about collecting the sample was, that man and woman, elementary and high school teachers to be represented in an identical proportion, so I can process diverse opinions equally.

The sub region rural schools are usually financed by the church (66,67 % , ten out of fifteen school), so I also search this ratio, five of the schools I attended were ecclesiastical maintained school (out of eight).

The interviews took one hour to three hours to finish. All interviews were preceded by a few minutes of informal conversation, the research topic almost always came up during this, I tried to give a formal answer and mention a general theme, I said that I was studying the school's inner atmosphere, how a teacher lives an everyday life. In all cases, they were satisfied with that much.

Then I asked if he or she was currently working as a head teacher, and according to the answer, I changed the interview questions. The semi-structured nature of the interview allowed me to leave them some space to tell a short story, but they did not change the conversation significantly except in a few cases.

Every time I told them that there are no wrong answers, I am curious about their individual opinions, the answer is voluntary and anonymous. Before the interview, we discussed the issue of anonymity, and I told them that if I publish details from the interview, I will only refer to it with a serial number.

I also informed them about the data in interview records, as well as, that any name or town name will be replaced of a fiction one, to prevent identification. The personal interviews were recorded with a dictaphone, for that I got permission in every case. In the online interviews, I used an online voice recording program.

The schools where the interviewed teachers work are sorted on a very wide scale, both in terms of maintainer, ethnic composition and learning results. Among the primary schools of the teachers included in the sample, there were schools with different maintenance, in three settlements there was a central (state) school and in five settlements there was a church-maintained school. In three settlements the Baptist Church of Hungary (Magyarországi Baptista

Egyház), and in two settlements, the school was run by the Evangelical Brotherhood of Hungary (Magyarországi Evangéliumi Testvérközösség).

There are teachers who taught at so called elite schools of the sub region, where the students produce the best academic results year after year, and they are regular winners of different competitions. Several teachers have mentioned that almost all of these students go to one of the strongest high schools in the county for further education. The proportion of Roma students here is around 10-15%, according to teachers' estimates. There were teachers who worked in the lowest prestigious school in the area, where the proportion of Roma students was estimated at 90-100%. Among these two extreme schools were the other primary schools.

The oldest teacher was retired five years ago after 40 years of teaching, the youngest worked as a teacher for only 3 months at the time of the interview. Churches and non-ecclesiastical schools did not have different characteristics in any field.

The aim of the research was to get in contact with the same number of male and female educators and make interviews. My goal has failed. I interviewed eight men and twenty-eight female teachers. This shows the fact that the teacher industry in the sub region has a very significant difference in genders. Half of the teachers have their residence in other settlements than their workplace, and they have to commute every day between towns. In most cases they have to travel to the neighbouring town, which means a few kilometres. Many are using the school bus, they are also assigned to the "bus service", so children are not on the bus without supervision.

The teachers who were interviewed had an average of 22 years of pedagogical career and their average age was 48 years. Based on the research in the sub region of Vásárosnamény we can witness, not only the feminization but the aging of the pedagogical profession. The youngest interviewer was 21 years old

and the oldest was 69 years old. I arranged the 36 respondents in three age groups.

One quarter of the respondents were younger than 39 years of age, six of them were older than 60 at the time of the answer. Most of the teachers, 21 of the 36 teachers, were 40 and 59 in 2017.

III. Enumerating findings in the form of thesis

In the following, I present the list of thesis results. I think, it is important to emphasize that due to the qualitative interview nature of this research, generalization was not the goal, instead it was the detailed knowledge.

My first hypothesis is, that there is significant difference between disciplinary methods among teachers, and these behavioural patterns can be divided into three types, was partly confirmed. In reality, we can separate three types of teachers as well, but not on every dimension, and not in every case was three of them; in many places only the tradition-driven and internally guided pedagogical characters can be observed.

It was outlined the traditional, the inside, and the outside control of teacher's policy towards the house rules; two discipline situations (hustle and bustle, rebelling during the lesson and brawl situations); as well as the dimension of space organization along the arrangement of the benches and seating. Two types of characters can be separated along the dimensions of decision, debate, and expression; the choice of student municipality members; solving two discipline situations (smoking student and state-run Roma boy situations) and disciplined class sub dimensions: one is guided by traditions and the other is internal-driven; In the case of the intermediate type, the characteristics of the externally directed teacher, did not appear in these cases, or it was not so dominant, couldn't form a completely separate group.

According to the second hypothesis, that says that character traits are present in pure types, and they are well separable from each other and typical not

mixing, has not been verified. The individual's set of behaviours is so complex that there has been a high degree of gradation in different dimensions. Levels appeared in authoritarianism, acceptance, and rejection. Some types of teachers get through some certain levels and forms of regulation, others don't.

I wasn't able to assign teachers to character types, but separate their behaviour along different dimensions. Sometimes the teacher tried to solve conflicts internally, democratically, but he/she still had a traditional attitude towards the student government. For this reason, the character of a teacher has also appeared in of all three types, combining those characteristics.

According to the third hypothesis, that older educators are tradition-led, and young educators teach at school in a way that is better suited to the needs of the age of the child, and more likely internally guided, was not been confirmed either. This hypothesis could have confirmed the hope for the future of our school system, if the younger generations of teachers take over the place of the elder educators, because the group of educators is getting younger over the years, they could replace the tradition orientation with internal orientation. It is not possible to identify one or another type of teacher based on demographic data. This also indicates that teacher training has still not recognized the needs of the present, the teachers are still taught by tradition at universities, presumably older, traditionally guided teachers. Like age, the gender it didn't determine the three character types.

The fourth hypothesis was confirmed by the research data. The results of the research show that in the investigated dimensions, the traditions-oriented pedagogical traits are more dominant in elementary schools. Typically, younger educators don't teach and educate in the school from the inner-controlled point of view. Among the young teachers, the orientation of traditions, the desire for the Prussian education system and the exclusivity of frontal education were outlined, as forty of their counterparts on the field.

Although the qualitative nature of the research does not make the numbers and percentages relevant, but the attributes of tradition-based guidance could be discovered by each teacher along certain dimensions. Traditional teachers in rural elementary schools do not communicate their democratic culture with their ways of working, still do not have a democratic attitude towards the house rule, the student government, the conflicts and the creation and resolution of all these are not done in a democratic way. They are unable to encourage students to participate actively and apply a thoughtful democratic discipline strategy.

The assumption of the fifth hypothesis was confirmed. Traditionally guided teachers do not motivate students to participate actively in school attendance, to make decisions, to argue, to express their opinions, to actively run the student government. Due to the fact that this character is more dominant, most of the children are used as a model. It is also true for such educators and their students that they are not active at school events and are reluctant to take part in the running of the student government, not guided by their own motivation, considered as a burden for every school initiative.

The sixth hypothesis was confirmed by the research data. School house rule mean for out-of-school teachers a description of school obligations, penalties, and prohibitions, while not applying this school rule set in accordance with democratic conditions, although they are often not applied at all.

According to the seventh hypothesis, the democratic way of conflict management and discipline depends only on the democratic orientation and depends on its internal orientation of each teacher, as the framework and process of democratic conflict resolution are not fixed in school documents. This hypothesis has also been confirmed.

According to the eighth hypothesis, discipline and punishment are not separated by tradition-led teachers, the disciplinary and punitive instruments they use are blurred, in many cases the lack of discipline, in case of conflict, they will be punished immediately regardless of the extent of the violation.

The ninth hypothesis that I assumed that the concept of a disciplined class is the ideal class for traditions and outside-directed teachers, where they can keep a lesson quietly, bypasses, without questions, partly confirmed, namely at this dimension, I was unable to separate the outside-directed teacher character. For traditionally guided teachers, the concept of a disciplined class was really the ideal class, which meant an imaginary class where students sit quietly for a 45-minute lesson, where they only ask if the teacher has given permission.

The tenth hypothesis was confirmed. In terms of spatial organization, the arrangement for frontal education is dominant, setting up and adhering to a rigorous sessions in school classrooms, whereas they are preferred by educators guided by majority traditions and from outside, in everyday school life.

According to the research, a teacher guided by traditions and from outside chooses to follow the rules. An internally guided teacher will regularly review the rules. The constantly experimenting teacher, the internally guided teacher, disappears from the schools. Maybe he or she is giving up because he or she doesn't get recognition and encouragement. He or she will retire from the innovativeness of his mind, and he or she will slowly become a law-enforcement, executive teacher. The orientation from the inside is replaced by outside or tradition-driven.

The school does not provide the knowledge to succeed in a democratic institutional system, to build a democratic political culture. The school gives only theoretical knowledge. It does not serve to acquire a democratic political culture. The operation of student governments, parental workplaces on paper, or a teacher in the classroom that acts as a demo democracy, and the process of unlawfully creating, publishing and modifying policies.



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List of publications related to the dissertation

Hungarian book chapters (2)

1. **Kósa, R. D.:** Iskolával kapcsolatos szülői elvárások Kárpátalján.
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Hungarian scientific articles in Hungarian journals (2)

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