

# Racialisation rules: The effect of educational upward mobility on habitus

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**Abstract:** This paper explores the subjective experiences of education-driven upward mobility among first-in-family majority and minority (Roma) graduates in Hungary. The central question is how social ascension through educational mobility and the concomitant movement between different social worlds influence the habitus. Under what conditions does the habitus become destabilised as a result of upward mobility?

The paper benefits from the empirical results of a 3-year study during which our research team has conducted 153 life history interviews with first-generation graduates in Hungary. The inclusion criteria for the sample of our study was that respondents had to complete college or university despite none of their parents have had a university degree. We identified the most important factors that contribute to the destabilisation of the habitus, either temporary or permanent. We examined the social and geographical range of our respondents' education-driven mobility; the speed and the destination of their mobility (field of occupation); their belonging to the majority or a minority group; and the mobility aspirations of their family of origin (or the lack thereof). We explore the effect of these factors through an intersectional lens. We demonstrate that the unique combination and intersection of these factors greatly affect the subjective experience of mobility. However, some biographical conditions and contingencies also play a role in the outcome of upward mobility. According to our results, the dislocation of habitus is a particularly common experience for our Roma interviewees, at least at some stage of their mobility trajectory. This is because they have to carry the psychic burden of race in a society where institutional racism is permeated in many areas of everyday life and the question of loyalty to their group of origin is more complicated for them.

**Keywords:** social mobility, habitus, Bourdieu, higher education, race, ethnicity, class, Roma, upward mobility.

## Introduction

In a neoliberal context embedded in various social fields, public dialogue about social mobility in many countries is dominated by the myth of meritocracy, using a neoliberal vocabulary of aspiration, ambition, and choice and viewing mobility as an

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individual project of self-advancement by moving up in the social hierarchy (Lawler–Payne 2018). In this discourse social mobility is the new panacea against wider historic and social ills, and the answer to increased classed and racialised inequalities. This paper, however, challenges this widespread public and political discourse by systematically analysing the personal experiences of social mobility, and asking how education-driven upward mobility works from the individual’s perspective in a context where social inequalities are rising and social mobility has been declining (Huszár et al. 2020), and where institutional racism against the country’s biggest and most discriminated and stigmatised minority group, the Roma has long been widespread (Neményi–Szalai 2005, Szalai 2014, Kóczé 2020, Bogdán 2018, Máté 2015). To put it another way, we are interested in the outcomes of social mobility achieved through educational mobility, with reference to the subjective wellbeing of those who changed class and how this travelling up the social strata affected their habitus.

In the following, we outline and systematically analyse the personal experiences of upward social mobility attained by high academic achievement of first-in-family college graduates from Roma and non-Roma Hungarian families. In Hungary, there is a huge ethnic gap in educational attainment between the majority, non-Roma Hungarian and the Roma. According to the results of the 2011 census, while 17.0 per cent of the total population above 15 years old possess a university degree, only 1.2 per cent of the Roma have graduated from a higher education institution<sup>3</sup>. The scholarly jargon calls these Roma ‘resilient students’ (Ceglédi 2012, Máté 2015, Patakfalvy–Czirják et al. 2018) emphasising their achievement despite stalled mobility and decreased fluidity in post-socialist Hungary (Zolnay 2016, Róbert 2019, Szelényi–Tóth 2019), and against all social stressors, that is, structural hindrances, be it institutional racism, poverty of their family of origin, or in some cases the counter-ideology or “oppositional culture” (Fordham–Ogbu 1986) of their community of origin that de-values formal educational attainment.

The article will proceed in four stages. Firstly, it begins by critically reviewing the theoretical framework in which we embed our empirical findings. Then it moves on to describe the setting of our study, its design and methodology, next the research background is presented. Finally, by close examination of the self-narratives of our majority non-Roma and minority Roma graduate interviewees, we show how social ascension through educational mobility and the concomitant movement between different social worlds influence their habitus. Our main question is under what conditions the habitus becomes dislocated or destabilised as a result of social mobility?

## 1. Theoretical background

There has been considerable debate in the literature on whether upward mobility has a detrimental and disruptive or a positive effect on the wellbeing of individuals

3 The used census data: [http://www.ksh.hu/nepszamlalas/tablak\\_iskolazottsag](http://www.ksh.hu/nepszamlalas/tablak_iskolazottsag), [http://www.ksh.hu/nepszamlalas/tablak\\_nemzetiseg](http://www.ksh.hu/nepszamlalas/tablak_nemzetiseg)

and their social relations. In other words, the question is whether upwardly mobile individuals pay a price for their social ascension and whether it is a smooth process without emotional costs.

According to the dissociative thesis of Sorokin (1959) the upward mobility process is stressful because leaving the milieu of background origin where individuals feel most comfortable can lead to feelings of exclusion, loneliness and isolation. Other scholars (e.g. Goldthorpe et al 1987, Marshall–Firth 1999) disagree, claiming that upward mobility is not associated with negative consequences on the well-being of individuals.

The Bourdieusian concept of habitus offers a helpful heuristic device for scholars of social mobility to understand why upward mobility may become a painful and stressful process that can result in the isolation of individuals from both their class of origin and that of their destination class. We do not have the space to discuss in detail the concept of habitus here (for an overview see Swartz 1997, Reay 2004, Maton 2008), but we would like to highlight some aspects which are important to our analysis.

Bourdieu writes, ‘the conditionings associated with a particular class of conditions of existence produce *habitus*, systems of durable, transposable dispositions, structured structures predisposed to function as structuring structures’ (Bourdieu 1990: 53). Later Bourdieu provides this definition of the habitus: ‘a system of *dispositions*, that is of permanent manners of being, seeing, acting and thinking, or a system of long-lasting (rather than permanent) schemes or schemata or structures of perception, conception and action’ (Bourdieu 2016: 43).

He further highlights that ‘dispositions are long-lasting: they tend to perpetuate, to reproduce themselves, but they are not eternal’ (Bourdieu 2016: 45). Dispositions may be changed by new experiences, education or training (Bourdieu 2016).

On the one hand, the habitus – as a ‘structuring structure’- structures how individuals perceive the social world and act in it (King 2000, Yang 2013). On the other hand, the dispositions derive from early socialization experiences when the internalization of objective structures (one’s social position) occurs. Therefore, habitus is a ‘structured structure’ (Swartz 1997).

Against the common misinterpretation, habitus is neither fate nor destiny. Bourdieu underlines that ‘the vicious circle of structure producing habitus which reproduces structure *ad infinitum* is a product of commentators’ (Bourdieu 2016: 45). First, this closed circle is a specific case where the objective conditions in which the habitus was created and the objective conditions in which it operates are similar to each other. Secondly, the habitus is not a principle of repetition (Bourdieu 2016). The habitus has a generative capacity: ‘it is a structured principle of invention, similar to a generative grammar able to produce an infinite number of new sentences according to determinate patterns and within determinate limits’ (Bourdieu 2016: 46). That is, habitus creates innovations and improvisations within certain limits

(Bourdieu 2016). Finally, according to Bourdieu ‘in all the cases where dispositions encounter conditions (including fields) different from those in which they were constructed and assembled, there is a *dialectical confrontation* between habitus, as structured structure, and objective structures’ (Bourdieu 2016: 46). That is, habitus – as a structuring structure – shapes the objective structures according to its own structure while it is restructured, modified – as a structured structure – by the objective structure (Bourdieu 2016). Thus, Bourdieu argues that habitus changes continuously in rapidly changing societies, but this change is limited by the original structure of the habitus (Bourdieu 2016).

Bourdieu emphasises that habitus is the product of one’s history (Bourdieu 1990b). Besides a persons’ individual history, the entire collective history of the persons’ family and class constitutes the habitus (Reay 2004). Bourdieu distinguishes between individual habitus and class habitus. The latter ‘...could be regarded as a subjective but non-individual system of internalised structures, common schemes of perception, conception and action...’ (Bourdieu 1990: 60). Those who belong to the same social class have similar habitus, but not exactly the same because of the particular position within the social class and the singularity of the persons’ social trajectory (Bourdieu 1990).

The individual’s habitus works with the fewest problems if its environment is the most similar to the conditions in which it was produced (Fáber 2018): ‘...when habitus encounters a social world of which it is the product, it is like a “fish in water”: it does not feel the weight of the water, and it takes the world about itself for granted... the world encompasses me (*me comprend*) but I comprehend it (*je le comprends*) precisely *because* it comprises me. It is because this world has produced me, because it has produced the categories of thought that I apply to it, that it appears to me as self-evident’ (Bourdieu–Wacquant 1992: 127). However, in the case of large-scale social changes and (long-range) social mobility, a mismatch arises between the individual’s primary habitus and the habitus required in the new field (Friedman 2016). In other words, a hysteresis<sup>4</sup> occurs according to Bourdieu when ‘...dispositions function out of phase and practices are objectively ill-adapted to the present conditions because they are objectively adjusted to the conditions that no longer obtain’ (Bourdieu 1990: 62.) That is, a gap is created between changing field conditions and habitus. This hysteresis – the dislocation of the habitus – may lead to the double isolation of mobile individuals from both their origin and destination class, which often has profound psychic consequences. Bourdieu argues that the misalignment of habitus and field could create a painfully fragmented self, a habitus *clivé*<sup>5</sup> (Friedman 2016): ‘Such experiences tend to produce a habitus divided against itself, in constant

4 The term is used in physics to describe a retardation of an effect when the forces acting upon a body are changed. <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/hysteresis>

5 The literature uses several synonymies of Bourdieu’s (1999) divided habitus or habitus *clivé*, such as ‘emotional costs of mobility’ (Reay, 2005), habitus dislocation (Christodoulou – Spyridakis 2016) or ‘splitting of the self’ (Lahire 2011). For a summary see Naudet (2018: 7-10).

negotiation with itself and with its ambivalence, and therefore doomed to a kind of duplication, to a double perception of self, to successive allegiances and multiple identities' (Bourdieu et al. 1999: 511).

Similarly, Naudet (2018) raises the point that large-scale social mobility may result in a divided habitus. According to him, upwardly mobile individuals experience tension because they face two, contradictory constraints: (1) avoiding the feeling of betrayal of their community of origin (the issue of loyalty) and at the same time (2) minimal acculturation to the new group (the issue of acculturation). The latter is needed since mobility is not possible without a minimal mastery over the strategies of action and perception that are accepted in the new group. These two constraints are contradictory, for example, attachment to the background of origin and acculturation to the new group are contradictory as they involve different ways of speaking, behaving, or thinking.

Acute reflexivity can occur when a misalignment arises between habitus and field. As Naudet (2018: 20) explains it, access to this reflexivity "would be partially facilitated by the between-two-classes position, in which people experiencing social mobility find themselves, and which places them in a situation of discrepancy with regard to the world of common sense of their background of origin as well as the attained social group". When someone is forced into a new space then they will not only notice what is novel there but it creates a new lens to look at where they came from (Ingram–Abrahams 2016). As Bourdieu writes: 'It is likely that those who are 'in their right place' in the social world can abandon and entrust themselves more, and more completely to their dispositions (that is the 'ease' of the well-born) than those who occupy awkward positions, such as the parvenus and the declasses; and the latter are more likely to bring to consciousness that which, for others is taken for granted, because they are forced to keep watch on themselves and consciously correct the 'first movements' of a habitus that generates inappropriate or misplaced behaviours.' (Bourdieu 2000: 163; cited by Ingram–Abrahams 2016: 145)

Bourdieu did not elaborate the concept of divided habitus thoroughly since he believed that its occurrence is rare (Friedman 2016). However, several empirical studies (e.g. Reay 2002, Friedman 2016, Naudet 2018) highlight that the divided habitus is more common than believed by Bourdieu.

Although Bourdieu does not apply the habitus concept to the analysis of racial and ethnic disadvantages, several authors (e.g. Reay 2004, Bonilla–Silva et al. 2006, Sallaz 2010) have extended his concept by introducing a racialised or ethnicised habitus. Richards (2020) criticises the Bourdieusian analysis of capital, habitus and field because it focuses exclusively on class differences while forgetting the discussion of race and racism and the intersectionality of class and race. According to Richards (2020), Bourdieu's cultural capital theory has a white-centred, class-based master narrative that legitimises and perpetuates 'the assumption that racial differences are secondary manifestations of class-based structures' (Richards 2020:

2). Richards claims that race-conscious studies within the cultural capital framework should apply multidimensional analysis, which recognizes race and class and their intersectional effect.

Whiteness scholars define racism not as individual race prejudice but as encompassing economic, political, social and cultural structures, actions and beliefs that systematize and perpetuate an unequal distribution of privileges, resources and power between white people and people of colour (DiAngelo 2011, Yosso 2005). This unequal distribution benefits whites and disadvantages people of colour overall as a group.

For Whiteness scholars, the term 'Whiteness' and 'white' is not to describe a discrete entity (for example, skin colour alone) but to signify a constellation of social processes and practices. It delineates a location of unearned structural advantage, and race privilege (DiAngelo 2011). In this sense, Whiteness as an analytical notion, refers to the specific dimensions of racism that serve to elevate White people over people of colour. Therefore, whiteness refers to a set of social, political and cultural practices that are historically produced and shaped. These practices are usually unmarked and unnamed and are inseparable from systems of injustice (for Hungary see Kovai 2017, Horvath 2012). They are intrinsically linked to the dynamic relations of domination (DiAngelo 2011).

For the purpose of our study, an important insight of Whiteness studies is that white people are taught to see themselves as individuals rather than as part of a racially socialised group (DiAngelo 2011). In this sense whiteness is unracialised identity. This frees white people from the psychic burden of race in a racialised society (DiAngelo 2011).

Although Whiteness studies were born in the U.S. society, their structural approach makes the concept of Whiteness a heuristic analytical tool in the context of Romany Studies too (Kóczé 2020). We can argue, that although previous scholars did not use this particular term in their analysis of the reasons behind Roma's multidimensional disadvantages in Hungarian society, they indeed followed the same line of thinking when they shed light on the social process of an 'ethnic ceiling' (Szalai 2018), or "ethnic penalty", be it in the education sector (Szalai 2018), or on the labour market.

Apart from the above thesis of the Whiteness studies, we find it unavoidable to use the insights of the theory of intersectionality to interpret our empirical findings. Scholars exploring the process of social mobility argue that in the context of changing class an intersectional lens is crucial (Friedman-Laurison 2020, Lawler-Payne 2018, Payne 2018, for Hungary, see Kóczé-Popa 2009, Kóczé 2010, just to mention a few). There is a bunch of academic studies documenting the distinctiveness and particular difficulty of upward mobility for women and members of racial-ethnic minority groups (Skeggs 1997, Neckerman et al. 1999). These studies vividly demonstrate how class origin 'haunts' (Morrin 2016) and casts a long

shadow over people's lives (Skeggs 1997, Friedman 2016, Ingram–Abrahams 2016). As does gender and race. However, class, gender and race (along with many other aspects of social divisions) do not operate as separate and mutually exclusive axes of inequality. They almost always work together and produce a qualitatively new, intersectional position in the social system of domination. This is basically the key insight of the theory of intersectionality. The term was coined by Crenshaw (1991) and later further developed by black feminists (Collins 1993) to draw attention to the complex interplay between gender, class and race.

Roma academics and non-Roma activists and scholars of Romany Studies also found this term useful to describe the aggravating effect of the intersecting inequalities and structural discriminations that the Roma have to face in their everyday lives (Kóczé–Popa 2009, Vincze 2012, Brooks 2012). Due to the racial domination of white people in both North American and Hungarian societies, there is a tendency in academic scholarship to compare the intersecting inequalities of Roma people to those of black Americans.

However, there are many advocates for a majority-inclusive approach. They argue that by involving not only minority but also majority groups in intersectional analysis (Christensen–Jensen 2012), we can shed light on intra-group differences and inter-group commonalities. With this comparative approach, we can protect ourselves from the danger of exoticising and 'othering' the minority group studied. Our research project follows this line of thinking.

## 2. Background

### 2.1. *Research setting: The situation of Roma in Hungary*

The Roma is the largest and most discriminated ethno-racial minority in Hungary<sup>6</sup>. They are concentrated in the economically disadvantaged areas of the country (Vajda–Dupcsik 2008, Péntes et al. 2018). Roma are the primary victims of the post-socialist regime change (Kertesi 1995, Kertesi 2000, Vajda–Dupcsik 2008). Their disadvantages have significantly increased with regard to unemployment, to the lack of access to education of good quality, poor living and health conditions, and shorter life expectancy since 1989. Their residential and housing conditions have improved, but their segregation has intensified in the last decades (Vajda–Dupcsik 2008, Teller 2020). Furthermore, Roma are exposed to a variety of forms of prejudice and discrimination in Hungary (Csepeli et al. 1998, Simonovits–Szalai 2013, Feischmidt et al. 2013, Farkas 2014). After the regime change, the willingness to discriminate and exclude Roma was strengthened (Fábián–Erős 1996, Szombati 2018) which was a taboo before 1989 (Tomka 1991). The open prejudice decreased in

<sup>6</sup> Based on the Census of 2011, the Hungarian Roma population counts 315,000. Different methodological approaches estimate the size of the Roma population in different numbers. According to the estimation of Péntes et al. (2018) the Roma population was 876,000 in 2010–13, while the estimation of TÁRKI was 650,000 heads in 2012 (Bernát 2014).

the 1990s and stagnated at the beginning of the 2000s, but after the economic crisis in 2009, xenophobia and anti-Roma attitudes increased again (Keresztes-Takács et al. 2016).

One of the main reasons for the social exclusion of the Roma population from the formal labour market in Hungary is their very low level of education. According to the latest Census in 2011, 58% of Roma over the age of 15 completed at most primary school, while 23% of them did not complete primary school. 13% of the Roma population graduated from a secondary level vocational school where they do not receive A-level certificates, while only 5% of them completed high school with A-level credentials (Matriculation). Only 1% of them graduated in higher education (Bernát 2014). The school failures of Roma children partly due to their school segregation and the practice of sending them to special classes and schools without good reason where the quality of education is low (Bernát 2014, Kertesi–Kézdi 2016).

There is a relatively small body of literature that is concerned with the education-driven upward mobility of Roma in Hungary. Most of this literature focuses on young people who are still participating in higher education (for example Forray 2004, 2014, Kende 2005; 2005, 2007; Bokrétás et al. 2007; Békés 2011, Ceglédi 2012, 2017, Lukács J. 2018). Only a few studies concerned with the process of upward mobility after university years and its outcomes (Székelyi et al. 2005, Torkos 2005, Tóth 2008, 2014, Kóczé 2010, Szabóné 2012, Óhidy 2013, 2016, Máté 2014, 2015). More recent attention has focused on the psychological and emotional costs of social mobility which is caused by difficulties of acculturation to the new social group and separation from the family and the group of origin. (Mendi 1999, Szabóné 2012, Durst et al. 2014, Máté 2015, Lukács J.–Dávid 2019, Nyírő–Durst 2018, Bereményi–Durst 2021, Durst–Bereményi 2021). Our study contributes to this thread of the literature.

## 2.2. Research methodology and study sample

The empirical base of this paper derives from 153 in-depth life interviews. The interviews were conducted in the framework of the research project entitled *Social mobility and ethnicity: Trajectories, outcomes and hidden costs of mobility*<sup>7</sup> that analyses the personal experiences of those upwardly mobile individuals who are the first in their families to graduate from college or university. In this project, in-depth life course interviews were conducted with a total of 153 first-in-family graduates, in the period between 2018 and 2021. Among the respondents, there were both majority (non-Roma) and minority (Roma) interviewees, the latter of which consisted of those who self-identified as Roma. The research used several channels to recruit

7 K-125 497 OTKA project entitled 'Social Mobility and Ethnicity: Trajectories, Outcomes and Hidden Costs of Mobility', supported by a Hungarian Academy of Science (NKFIH) research grant. The following researchers contributed to the research project: Ábel Bereményi, Péter Bogdán, Julianna Boros, Fanni Dés, Margit Feischmidt, Ernő Kállai, and Attila Papp Z. We would like to thank our interviewees to share their personal experiences with us which made this research possible.



participants: from a snowball sampling method, through public advertisements in social media, to an online survey.

In terms of age, interviewees of this study ranged from 23 to 66 years old. 91 interviewees were female, and 62 were male. 51 of them were non-Roma, while 102 were Roma. The sample included participants both from urban and rural locations in Hungary.

The 153 interviews were conducted by our research team of 14 members (5 men and 9 women), whose ages ranged from 25 to 52. Four of the team members are Roma. The diversity of the interviewers contributed to the avoidance of one-way bias when collecting the interview data.

The duration of the interviews was between one and a half and two and a half hours. We described the topic and aim of the research and all other important information about the research (e.g. voluntary participation, anonymity) before the interviews. In this paper, we use pseudonyms for our interviewees, and for the settlements where they come from. In addition, we use broad categories to describe the major jobs, and workplaces of our interviewees to protect their anonymity.

The interviews consisted of two parts: the first part was the narrative section, while the second part was a semi-structured interview. The latter section covered the following main topics: family background, educational attainment, career path, intimate relationships and children, family relationships and friends, self-characterisation (identity), life satisfaction, and success.

The language of the interviews was Hungarian, and all interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed. We developed a codebook based on our theoretical questions and interview guide and some additional categories were also created based on the empirical material of interviews. We coded the interviews by using the qualitative data analysis and research software, ATLAS.ti 8. This software made it possible to analyse this large number of interviews and to compare and create subgroups of our interviewees on the basis of any given code.

Costa et al. (2017) argue that tracing the subjective trajectories of individuals – for example by using biographical interviews – is an appropriate research technique to ‘capture’ habitus. ‘There are limitations to life history and narrative methods, but they allow at least a partial understanding of the operation of habitus, in people’s life outcomes, in their attitudes, values, and opinions, their possessions and daily practices, and in the narratives, they construct in the research moment.’ (Mallman 2018: 28)

In our study, habitus can be identified when it is reflected in the fact that tension (*habitus clivé*) arises because the individual feels:

- That they are not fitting into a new field (Nowicka 2015)
- That they do not fit into their old field anymore
- That fitting to his/her old and new field at the same time is problematic
- That his/her old and new field’s rules contradict each other or conflict with each other.

When an individual's habitus is 'well-formed', adapted to the field, owns a 'feel for the game' in that field, then their habitus is not reflexive and the person is like 'a fish in water' (Bourdieu 1977). However, habitus becomes reflexive when someone enters a new field whose rules are unknown to them. Bourdieu writes about physical and social 'clumsiness' in a new social context, and that individuals need to learn to 'fit in' by inhabiting a consciousness of awkwardness. Therefore we can capture habitus when interviewees feel that they do not fit in or do not understand the 'rules of the game' or their practices seem anachronistic (Nowicka 2015). Furthermore, habitus can be discerned when interviewees speak about not fitting into their old field anymore because of adapting to their new field, when they feel that belonging to two contradictory fields at the same time leads to tensions as the two worlds collide with each other. These cases also lead to greater reflexivity. That is, habitus can be captured when individuals experience and reflect on their habitus *clivé*.

Bourdieu writes: "narratives about the most 'personal' difficulties, the apparently most strictly subjective tensions and contradictions, frequently articulate the deepest structures of the social world and their contradictions" (Bourdieu 1999: 511). This paper aims to highlight how the imprints of social inequalities and racial discrimination that have long proliferated in Hungarian society appear as emotional or psychic costs of upward mobility in the discourses of those struggling with habitus *clivé*. Our study examines and focuses on the role of some characteristics (factors) of the mobility trajectory on experiencing (or not) a mismatch between habitus and field.

### 3. Discussion and results

#### 3.1. *The effect of the different characteristics of the mobility trajectory*

Our research results show that education-driven upward mobility is not necessarily associated with habitus *clivé* (Friedman 2016, Christodoulou–Spyridakis 2016). The mutability of the habitus – the formation of habitus *clivé* – depends on certain characteristics of the *mobility trajectory* (Friedman 2016). By the characteristics of mobility trajectory, we refer to (1) the range<sup>8</sup> and (2) speed<sup>9</sup> of social mobility, (3) the direction and destination (measured by occupational class) of movement through social space, (4) the person's ethnicity/ racialised minority group (see Friedman 2016), (5) the range of geographical mobility<sup>10</sup>, and (6) the aspirations of their family of origin. (See Yosso 2005 on the role of aspirational capital of

8 This study regards the range of the mobility as long as the respondents 'parents had only completed primary school, at most. On the contrary, if any of the parents has a higher qualification beyond primary school then the mobility path is considered short-range.

9 We consider a mobility trajectory characterised as high speed when the upwardly mobile person has a mobility with a linear, uninterrupted educational path, and it is low speed when there are interruptions in the educational path (e.g. the upwardly mobile person does not attend a university immediately after completing high school but skip a few years).

10 We consider a mobility trajectory geographically long ranged if the upwardly mobile person spent her childhood in a rural settlement and attained a job and therefore began to live in a big city (typically in the capital, Budapest). On the other hand, we call a mobility path geographically short ranged when there is small or no difference in between the status of the settlement of origin and of the destination of the upwardly mobile individual.

parents or background community in high educational achievement among people of colour). The unique combination and the intersecting effect of these factors significantly influence the subjective experience of mobility, but of course, some individual factors (e.g. personality, contingency such as biographical events) are also decisive. Each factor has a different weight in each narrative. However, one needs to emphasise the role of (racialised) minority status: we found that the dislocation of habitus is a frequent experience among Roma interviewees. We speak about the Roma's racialised minority status in Hungary (Kóczé 2020) in the same way that scholars speak about the discrimination of the diverse category of 'people of colour' (Yosso 2005). That is, when people (of colour) face severe injustice in power relations, and also encounter prejudice and discrimination as a group for reasons of race alone.

The upward mobility experience caused serious emotional strain for some of our interviewees. They speak about this tension (that is, habitus clivé) in phrases such as: "schizophrenic life", "living between two worlds", "having two lives", "not belonging to anywhere". Conversely, other interviewees narratives, describe a more or less psychologically smooth journey. Some of our interviewees only experienced habitus clivé at a particular stage in their lives while others reported that it accompanied their whole career path. One of our interviewees, Levente (majority, 25, child protection specialist) described this tension as follows:

'The bad thing is that I am far away from the academic world (...), but I am already far away from my old friends and family as well, so I'm there in something, I cannot behave and talk like a proletarian ('proli'), but I can't find my place in the academic environment either.' (Levente, 25)

In the following section, we discuss separately the identified factors that influence the subjective experience of upward mobility.

### 3.1.1. Racialised minority status

Our results show that our majority interviewees' educational mobility typically does not cause habitus dislocation. This is not in line with the results of some other studies (Friedman 2016, Naudet 2018), that found that long-range social mobility typically causes dislocation between habitus and field. One of the explanations of this discrepancy can be the fact that they only examined those who have working-class backgrounds and moved to the elite sector (by working in high prestigious jobs) while our sample is not restricted to the elites.

Contrary to our majority respondents, almost all Roma interviewees, with a few exceptions, have experienced a misalignment between their habitus and the field of origin or/and destination. We found that belonging to a racialised minority group has a significant effect on the emotional/psychological price of mobility. Many of the Roma respondents experienced habitus clivé, that is, the feeling of being located somewhere in-between (*lebegés állapota*, in: Mendi, 1999; see Nyíró–Durst 2018). For example, István (43, Roma, communication expert), who has a long-range mobility

trajectory, moved from a large town of a county to Budapest and works in the field of communication in the business sector, spoke about his isolation from both the ‘Gypsy and Hungarian world’:

“... when I started university and moved to Budapest I thought that my problem of not belonging anywhere would go away. See, my childhood friends who were Roma dropped out of school when they were fourteen. As for me, I was still going to secondary school back then, carrying my drawings, schoolbag and all. For them I was not Gypsy enough anymore, so to speak. And at school, I was still not Hungarian enough. There they knew I was a Gypsy. I have always been proud of that, and it is one of the things that has been very important to me. However, it caused me a lot of suffering.” (István, 43)

Anna (38, Roma, equality expert), who has had a short-range mobility path both in an educational and geographical sense, also experienced the feeling of not belonging anywhere:

“...if they went anti-Gypsy, I had to raise my voice. After the third Gypsy joke, I usually told people to stop (...). That topic will come up at times, and then I’ve got to bring arguments for and against, and defend Roma people (...). At the same time, we [college-educated Roma] stand out of the Roma crowd because we don’t speak Romani, we don’t even look like them – after all, we don’t have such a bad life, we live well, we’re educated...Therefore in both groups, we’re still very different from the rest. This makes matters a bit more complex I think.” (Anna, 38)

As stated above, our results show that minority status has a central importance in mobility experience (see Naudet 2018). Several upwardly mobile Roma interviewees feel or felt at some point in their path that they are not accepted or that they are even rejected by the majority society while at the same time they are detached from their community of origin.

This is because (racialised) minority middle-class (college graduated) people have a distinctive problem (Neckerman et al. 1999). On the one hand, the frequent experience of discrimination and stigmatisation prevent many of them from feeling that they fit into their new field. Apart from a few exceptions, all Roma interviewees reported painful experiences of prejudice and discrimination. During their mobility trajectory, they often encountered the situation of ‘being the only Roma’ in their schools or at their workplace that can be emotionally difficult. The exposure to prejudice and discrimination prevents interviewees from being able or willing to adapt to the new field and contribute to their feeling of being located somewhere in-between. As they explain:

“It is always weird when I get into a non-Gypsy community where I am the only Gypsy, and sometimes I get into communities where there are only Gypsies. Of course, I feel better in a community where there are only Gypsies, but you have to learn and get used to the situation where you are seen a bit like a stranger, an odd one out (‘csodabogár’) by non-Gypsies, or you are treated like a mannequin in a shop window.” (Elizabet, 32)

“I was very humiliated, it was partly due to being a young intern, but I started to realise after one and a half years that unfortunately, it is not just about that. It was also about my origin. The Gypsies were exterminated in front of me, they were desecrated. And really, other students could do everything, and I could not do anything (...) and it hurt a lot and I was accused of stealing and being expelled from the locker room. (...) even the cleaning lady humiliated me.” (Ágnes, 30)

On the other hand, the question of loyalty to the group of origin is more complicated for Roma interviewees than for the majority respondents, because it arises in the intersection of class and race/ethnicity while for the majority this question is formulated only in terms of class. Upwardly mobile majority respondents leave their class while mobile Roma interviewees leave to a certain extent their class and have to deal with the challenge of identity and belonging to their race/ethnicity.

Many respondents feel that following their upward mobility, the Roma community<sup>11</sup> in a broader or narrower sense or their family of origin challenges their identity as Roma, while others question their belonging to the ‘Roma community’. That is, several interviewees reported that their loyalty was questioned by others (or by themselves). Our respondents reflexively highlight that their behaviour, appearance, value system, speech or lifestyle distanced them from those of their family or background community during their mobility path that can be a source of pain or conflict because it raises the issue of loyalty. The Roma interviewees mentioned the painful moments when their Roma acquaintances and/or family members told them they are no longer Roma, that they have ‘become a Hungarian’ (elmagyarosodott) (Nyíró–Durst 2018) because of their changed way of speaking, dress style, worldview or value system, that is, because of their habitus (partially) adapted to their new field. Katalin (36), for example, explains the feeling of unease and exclusion:

“My family was happy when I got into college. Even my brothers told me what an achievement it was. But for that same reason, they also excluded me somehow because they thought I had become an educated Hungarian gadje. And this is still the situation today.” (Katalin, 36)

11 This study uses the expression ‘Roma community’ because the interviewees also use this term. It sometimes refers to their narrower community of origin while others use it as a generic term.

This divergence from the family, that is the adaptation to the destination group, often leads to internal self-doubt or conflict with the family or community of origin. This conflict is especially aggravated for Roma women, many of whom have to negotiate the traditionally expected gender roles with their community of origin (Pantea 2015). This double or multiplied burden (Kóczé–Popa 2009) of being a Roma woman sharply illustrates the intersectional effect of race and gender on the price of upward mobility. As they explain that their life path is divergent from that of their friends or relatives:

“They [the family] asked me why I am not married yet, when will they have grandchild, they told me you should rather get married and have children. And you know, [at that stage of my life], it was not in my mind to get married and have children. There were many such conflicts.” (Tímea, 36)

“...on my way, as I proceeded, I went home several times and saw my friend who already has three kids, I saw them playing and I was thinking, oh my God, I am here at the age of thirty, I really do not have a chance to have a child yet, I am always looking for someone who would be good to raise a child with, who would be realistic. And she is much happier than I am, it is true that they are very poor, but she is much happier.” (Réka, 37)

“During college, the process of distancing from my family already started. (...) It is already another way of being for you that you continue to study. For example, my cousin, the same age as me, has already earned a lot, and this causes a distancing. That is, you are distanced from your family. You have not gotten anywhere in your life yet.” (Valéria, 30)

It is important to note that most of our respondents reported that they have a strong Roma identity and they are proud to be Roma and they feel solidarity towards Roma people. However, at the same time, several interviewees recounted their pain that they do not feel accepted by the ‘Roma community’ in a narrower or broader sense.

The central importance of the issue of loyalty is shown by the fact that many interviewees reported a sense of responsibility towards the ‘Roma community’ (Kóczé 2010, Durst et al. 2016, Nyírő–Durst 2018). Unlike their white majority counterparts, who are taught to think of themselves as individuals, Roma interviewees often see themselves as part of a racially socialised group (see also DiAngelo 2011 for white Americans). To offer some of the several examples, let us present Elizabet’s (32) thoughts:

„Now I know it for sure that my responsibility is way bigger than the one I would have if I wasn’t Roma. As a Roma woman, no matter if I serve the Roma or the non-Roma community, I always have to stand up for the people. Because, even if I

don't want it, I am considered a Roma woman and a Roma expert... a great burden on the shoulder". (Elizabet, 32)

However, as the quote above shows, this responsibility is important but at the same time, it is a burden as well. Several interviewees feel that this responsibility and solidarity is indirectly expected from them by the Roma intellectuals and by the pro-Roma support programmes (Nyíró – Durst 2018, Boros et al. 2021, this volume). Therefore, those, who do not want to live up to this expectation, and chose a general (not racially directed) career path, struggle with a feeling of divided loyalty. While those, who have a racially directed career work in positions that are emotionally difficult and therefore requires great individual effort and which are vulnerable and offer lower wages and opportunities (Nyíró–Durst 2018).

In sum, Roma interviewees much more often experienced habitus clivé than the majority respondents. The process of acculturation is more difficult and complicated for upwardly mobile Roma because of prejudice and discrimination against Roma. In other words, the interaction and connection with the new environment are more problematic for Roma people because of their stigmatised situation. The issue of loyalty is also a more complex question for Roma interviewees because it appears in the intersection of class and race/ethnicity as well while for the upwardly mobile majority interviewees whose identity is a non-racialised identity, this question emerges only in terms of class. That is, our results also highlight that there is a difficult intersection between class mobility and changing ethno-racial identity (see Friedman 2016). The acculturation to the new group in a prejudiced and discriminatory environment and remaining loyal to the group of origin at the same time creates a particular and complex tension for upwardly mobile Roma.

### 3.1.2. *The range of social mobility*

The range of mobility also influences the subjective experience of mobility (Friedman 2016). Our research defined the range of mobility in terms of the educational attainment of the interviewee compared to that of their parents': if the parents have completed at most primary school then the interviewee regarded as long-range socially mobile, if the parents have a higher education than primary school then the interviewee is regarded as short-range upwardly mobile. Those interviewees who underwent long-range social mobility are more likely to experience habitus clivé compared to those who realised short-range movement.

### 3.1.3. *The range of geographical mobility*

We found that mobility in a geographical sense also affects the individuals' experience of social mobility. Those who lived in the same settlement since birth or moved back to where they lived as children are less likely to experience dislocation

while those who undergo long-range mobility in a geographical sense (those who move from villages to Budapest or from Hungary to abroad) are more likely to feel it.

#### 3.1.4. *Aspirational capital of the family of origin*

Those interviewees whose family of origin was ambitious, that is, they had mobility aspirations or had a positive attitude towards mobility and saw education as the most important vehicle for it, usually had fewer conflicts with their family, which makes their mobility trajectory emotionally smoother. Many interviewees reported that their parents (or one of them) wanted to study further, but they had no opportunity, so they fulfil their parents' unfulfilled dreams. The upward mobility of our interviewees is often the result of a multigenerational family project. That is, we found that aspirational capital: the parent's dreams, hopes and high aspirations for their children's future in case of difficult circumstances is a resource (Yosso 2005) that in most cases promotes a smooth upward mobility trajectory.

#### 3.1.5. *Speed of mobility*

We also found that those whose mobility trajectory is slow and gradual are less likely to experience habitus dislocation even if they travelled through long social distances (see Friedman 2016, Bereményi – Durst 2021, this volume). As one of our study participants who came from a very poor family from a small village, yet made it to the top of the capital's film industry, put it, he “didn't have to fear of tripping over (*megbotlok*) as I didn't have to jump high stairs. I was lucky, by coincidence, to get to a top urban primary school from my village school at Year 3, and since then my rising as someone who is talented at writing, was steady and gradual”. (Béla, 43, majority, screenwriter).

Those interviewees, who progressed in small steps and gradually in their educational or professional careers, typically did not experience misalignment between their habitus and the field of their destination. For example, such a small step as getting a high school diploma from a secondary vocational school (*szakközépiskola*) or in an evening school, followed by getting a university or a college degree in a distant learning programme correspondence course. On the contrary, sudden and large steps are more likely to cause a hysteresis effect between habitus and field such as attending an elite grammar school or a highly prestigious major course at a top university. In some cases, our interviewees consciously slowed down the speed of their upward mobility in order to gain time to adapt to the new field (see Bereményi–Durst 2021, this volume).

Our results show that the practice of past mobility or immobility of the family of origin also influences whether the upwardly mobile person experiences habitus dislocation or not. It is easier to negotiate multiple identities for those whose families of origin have also achieved some level of social ascension. In these cases, the interviewee's mobility trajectory is the continuation of the family's upward



mobility path. That is, the speed of mobility is important in an intergenerational sense as well. For example, several interviewees mentioned that their family was the first in their community who moved out from the Gypsy settlement (*'cigánytelep'*) to the village, which was a huge step of the family's mobility trajectory. Others reported that their parents or grandparents were the first in the village who possessed a high school diploma.

### 3.1.6. *Destination and attained occupational field of mobility*

Finally, we found that moving toward the quadrant of social space and field of occupation dominated and operated by (white middle-class) cultural capital, is more likely to cause habitus *clivé* than moving toward the economically dominant quadrant of the social space (see Friedman 2016). Those who arrive at occupations where dominant white middle-class cultural capital is required to get on, and who did not acquire the symbolic mastery of it (Friedman–Laurison 2020) in their family of origin or through primary socialisation, are more likely to experience a mismatch between their habitus and attained field. Echoing the work of scholars analysing personal experiences of upward social mobility (Lawler 1999, Skeggs 1997, Friedman 2016), many of our interviewees coming from (formally) low-educated families, reflected on the emotional distress they felt by their deficit of this dominant cultural capital (such as language style, taste, etiquette on formal work events, and dressing code). Their embodied experiences of these subtle cultural distinctions among social classes contributed to their feeling of insecurity, not fitting in, and hitting barriers to get on and succeed in their profession.

In sum, habituses travelling long distance socially and geographically at a fast speed, moving towards the quadrant of the social space dominated and operated by white middle-class cultural capital, and originating from Roma families with low levels of aspirational capital are more likely to experience habitus *clivé*.

## 3.2. *The intersecting effect of individual factors and the minority, majority mobility trajectories*

According to our results, the unique combination and intersecting effect of the six factors presented above greatly influence the subjective experience of mobility. In the following section, we present four cases to demonstrate that it is not the individual factors themselves, but a particular set of factors and the intersecting new position their combination creates, is what is decisive in terms of our respondents' mobility experience. We introduce two common or typical cases: a narrative of a 'minority mobility trajectory' (Durst–Bereményi 2021) of a Roma interviewee who experienced habitus *clivé* and a narrative of a 'majority mobility trajectory' of a non-Roma majority respondent whose mobility trajectory was without psychological costs. We also explore two rare or atypical cases: a story of a Roma participant of

our research project who had a smooth mobility path; and a discourse of a majority respondent who described a painful 'emotional price'. As mentioned earlier, among the six identified factors or conditions, the most important one is the person's belonging to the majority society or to a racialised minority group, however other factors may override this as we will see from the two rare or atypical examples.

To offer one out of several cases for a 'majority mobility trajectory' without habitus dislocation, let us discuss Éva's mobility path. Éva (56, majority, nurse) comes from a very small village, her parents did not complete elementary school and were agricultural workers in a cooperative farm (*termelőszövetkezet*). During the summer school holidays, Éva had to work in the cooperative. Her father did not want her to go to a secondary school. Instead, he preferred her getting a job because the family needed financial support but finally he allowed her to continue studying. After graduating from high school, she worked in a hospital for a few years and then enrolled in nursing training at a university. Now she is a senior nurse in a hospital in Budapest and performs a great variety of professional activities (e.g. book publishing, charitable foundation management), so she feels quite successful and honoured. Despite travelling a long distance both geographically and socially at high speed, Éva as many majority respondents, did not report 'moments of hysteresis' but her trajectory was psychologically smooth according to her narrative. We argue that it is partly because she chose an occupational field in the quadrant of social space which is not dominated and operated by the middle-class cultural capital. As a nurse, she does not suffer from the lack of the dominant white middle-class cultural capital of her family of origin.

To provide one of the many cases where a Roma interviewees' upward mobility trajectory is psychologically and emotionally painful, let us introduce Bettina's (43) narrative. She grew up in a Gypsy settlement in a small village, her parents did not complete primary school. Her family was not ambitious, but she had an inner drive to read and study since her childhood. She attended an elite high school in her local area which she did not like because she could not fit in. She recalls the unease in this environment; that she did not want to invite her parents to the leavers' ball because of their low education and their visible minority status. Her upward mobility trajectory was gradual: after completing high school she did not start university immediately, but she began to work as an unqualified teacher (*'képesítés nélküli tanár'*) in Budapest. After a few years of working, she applied to a university to study teacher training and later she also completed two other majors. She used to work for several pro-Roma NGOs. She is currently working on her PhD and a researcher in a white-dominated academic institute. During her upward mobility trajectory, she felt that she distanced herself from her family. According to her narrative, the question of her belonging was a central problem of her life for a long time. She reported that she is still struggling with an inferiority complex, and she is insecure in herself. In sum, coming from a Roma family with low aspirational capital, travelling a long-range

mobility path socially and geographically and moving to the culturally dominant quadrant of the social space have all contributed to Bettina's experience of habitus dislocation.

After these two common, typical cases, let us turn to the rare, atypical mobility trajectories. As mentioned earlier, most of our majority interviewees did not experience a mismatch between their habitus and field. However, a few of our majority respondents described their upward mobility path as emotionally and psychologically difficult. For example, let us introduce Klára's (45) case. She was born in a small village. None of her parents completed primary school, her father worked as a driver, her mother was a hard-working seamstress. She performed well at the local primary school, therefore she moved to a bigger city to study at a good quality high school. She was admitted to a university in that city to study economics right after high school, and then she continued to study in a doctoral programme. During the years of the PhD program, her first two children were born, so she had to interrupt her studies. Klára became a university lecturer after completing her PhD, but she did not feel at home in the academic world. She suffered from impostor syndrome as she was unable to believe that she is 'good enough' to work there:

"I was scared of them [our colleagues]. Yeah. Then it came to me again that I'd always been scared of not being good enough, not being able to behave and react well, that my skills are not adequate, that I'm not prepared, not working hard enough, so I've always been scared and lived in constant stress, I've never been self-confident and I've never felt safe (...) Take etiquette for instance, at parties I've never really grasped who should introduce whom, what's the protocol for shaking hands, and I've never known where to stand and what to do, not even how to dress up. I read a book on such customs once, but it was a waste of time - I couldn't remember anything, I felt I wouldn't be able to use it in a real-life social situation anyway." (Klára, 45)

In her case 'the emotional imprint of this dislocation was felt through (...) an internal self-doubt' (Friedman 2016: 140):

"... I constantly had an inferiority feeling, oh, oh, don't turn out, others don't notice that I don't belong here, I'm not good enough. (...) One of the reasons, for example, was English, that I'm not good enough, I'm definitely not good enough in English, but not necessarily in other things either, I cannot reach this level anymore, somehow I went too far, it didn't work for me anymore, the university degree was okay, but it [teaching at a university] was a too large step for me." (Klára, 45)

Finally, she quit her job and has been at home with her children for years now. When she was asked about why she applied for the interview, she said that she was interested in the reasons for her giving up her academic carrier and believed that she climbed too high on the social ladder and she felt as a ‘fish out of water’, so she had to leave her job in order to decrease the effects of the hysteresis. (see Friedman 2016, Mallman 2018, Bereményi – Durst 2021, this volume):

“...I’ve been thinking about the reasons why I quit my job - it’s unusual, and my mind keeps reeling on the causes of why that happened, and one of them was that it felt really hard to live with it, that is, taking such a giant step, that it eventually brought me to a halt. (...) I didn’t feel comfortable working as an assistant professor, I didn’t feel at home anymore, I felt I didn’t belong there, and I was no longer certain about doing my stuff right, and in general, I started doubting that my knowledge was adequate (...) I don’t remember having any such problems as a university student, I didn’t have any doubts about belonging, taking steps, or knowing what I knew. Back then it wasn’t an issue”. (Klára, 45)

When she was asked to briefly describe herself, she said:

“The main problem in my present situation is that I can’t find my place in society – in my family, I can, yes, I’m a mother, I’m a wife, but in society, I can’t”. (Klára, 45)

That is, the effects of hysteresis still influence her life even years after quitting her career.

In sum, most of our majority interviewees had a smooth mobility path but a few of them experienced *habitus clivé*. In Klára’s case, the unique combination and intersecting effect of the examined factors contributed to her painful mobility experience: she travelled through a long-range mobility path at a fast speed, described her family as not really aspiring and supportive, and as one lacking the type of middle-class cultural capital that was needed in her attained class to get on. The lack of this middle-class cultural capital brought from home together with her fast and long-range social ascension and her travelling to that part of the social space (academic sphere) where cultural capital is the dominant resource to succeed resulted in her difficulties.

To introduce one of the few, atypical examples for mobility trajectory of a Roma respondent without *habitus clivé*, let us discuss Róbert’s (43) case. His mother was a factory worker, his father was a brigade leader in the construction industry, later he became an entrepreneur. The whole family worked in the second economy in order to generate extra income. He was born in the Gypsy settlement of a small village and went to the local primary school there, and then he attended a high school in a nearby town. Immediately after graduation, he was admitted to a university in Budapest where he studied to be an engineer.

Róbert offers a narrative about hard-working and very ambitious parents and grandparents who managed to move out from a Gypsy settlement to the village and to provide financial security for the family. He believes that his family made upward mobility possible for him in two senses: on the one hand, by creating the material conditions, on the other hand, by encouraging him to study. Furthermore, he describes that further education at university was his father's unfulfilled wish.

As Róbert explains the great ascension on the social ladder was achieved by his parents and grandparents and not by him:

“Well, there I was, three years old, and people would ask me what I wanted to be, and I'd tell them I wanted to be an engineer (...) now a three-year-old doesn't have any clear-cut ideas of his own and usually echoes what he's told or programmed to. My parents programmed me to want to become an engineer, practically that's how I grew up. And it tells a lot about what a leap I took, and how much my parents helped me. All I reached is down to my parents, and my parents' parents. I come from a family, I come from an environment where the importance of education was understood early (...) I only had to study, that's all. I didn't take such big steps. It was my parents, they took giant steps, coming from great poverty, and my mother's parents and my father's parents managed to create a decent existence, they rose from that deep poverty. My father could build on those foundations, he had a jumping board. And then, me, I could grow up like an average gadjo [non-Gypsy] kid, I had my own room, I had food, I had everything, see? (Róbert, 43)

He describes that his progress was due to his family's attitude towards studying:

“...I started out from a home where I was given the opportunity to study, that's what I got from my parents, even from my illiterate grandmother, and they gave it to me exactly because they saw the disadvantages of having no education. They knew I had to study” (Róbert, 43)

Róbert reported that he did not have any problems with living in two worlds:

“...Gypsies haven't outcast me. Ever. No matter what, high school or university, whenever I was home in Maros I went down to the disco with my Gypsy relatives and friends all the same and met chicks. We sat in a run-down Trabant, and when it broke down a Hungarian kid pushed the car, see? (...) I was on very, very good terms with the Hungarian kids in Maros, too, and they looked up to me. I was kind of like a role model even to gadjo kids. So I've never had this issue, like, that I had to choose between two worlds. Never. Not for a second. At secondary

school, I made a lot of friends, but I also kept my Gypsy and Hungarian childhood friends.” (Róbert, 43)

Despite travelling a long distance educationally and geographically at a fast pace, Róbert’s mobility trajectory is the continuation of his family’s progress. We could say that his mobility trajectory is part of a multi-generational family upward mobility project and that his career track meets with his family’s expectations and aspirations which may have contributed to his emotionally smooth path. In sum, Róbert’s case is rare since most of our Roma respondents reported that they experienced (at least in a short period of their life) a mismatch between their habitus and field, but he described he never experienced habitus dislocation in his life. As he highlights this was due to the fact that his grandparents and parents climbed high on the social ladder and he only had to take a small step further. That is, Róbert describes that his mostly smooth upward mobility process is due to an intergenerational aspiration capital in his family: to his grandparents’ and parents’ efforts and aspirations to ascend from poverty. Furthermore, as an engineer, he did not have to struggle with the lack of middle-class cultural capital because it is not the dominant resource needed to succeed in that sphere.

## Summary

Our study demonstrated that upward mobility does not necessarily lead to habitus *clivé*. Instead, certain characteristics of the mobility trajectory make the emergence of habitus *clivé* more likely.

We found that the subjective experience of education-driven social ascension is influenced by the upwardly mobile individual’s range of social mobility, the speed, the destination of mobility and the direction of movement through social space, and also, by one’s ethno-racial belonging, the range of geographical mobility, and the aspirational capital of one’s family of origin. The combination and the intersectional effect of these factors are decisive on the personal experience of mobility, and some individual factors (e.g. personality, contingency such as biographical events) also play an important role.

One of our main findings is that those interviewees who belong to the Roma minority are more likely to experience habitus *clivé* than the majority participants of our study. That is, belonging to a racialised, stigmatised and discriminated minority group has a significant influence on the subjective experience of upward mobility. This is because both the issue of loyalty and acculturation is more complicated in their case compared to the majority respondents. The acculturation to the new group is more difficult and complicated for upwardly mobile Roma because of prejudice and discrimination against Roma. The question of loyalty is also a more complex question for Roma respondents because it appears in the intersection of class and race/ethnicity as well while for the majority interviewees this issue emerges only

in terms of class. Many Roma interviewees reported that their Roma identity was challenged by others (or by themselves) after their upward mobility. Furthermore, several Roma respondents described their feeling of responsibility towards their community which was a psychological burden as well. That is, the acculturation to the new group in a hostile (prejudiced and discriminatory) environment and remaining loyal to the group of origin at the same time results in a specific and highly complex tension in the narratives of upwardly mobile Roma.

However, as it was demonstrated, other factors may override the effect of belonging to the majority society or to the Roma minority. That is, there are some Roma respondents who had a psychologically and emotionally smooth mobility trajectory and a few majority interviewees who, on the contrary, experienced habitus clivé. For example, we presented the case of Róbert, who is Roma, however, his mobility trajectory was smooth because his path was not a deviation from his family's journey and in his field of work (engineer) the lack of middle-class cultural capital was not a problem, and it did not hinder his adaptation to his new field.

Although Bourdieu highlights that habitus may change, he acknowledges that these cases are rare and temporary. Our results also suggest that habitus may be subject to change (see e.g. Friedman 2016) when someone enters a new field, in our case when upward mobility is achieved.

The psychological price of social mobility, especially among racialised minority people reflect, however, that even when primary habitus changes, the inequality of starting positions cannot be eliminated by upward mobility through education. Our research shed light on the fact that the social inequalities of the starting positions should be decreased in order to diminish the emotional cost of mobility (Dés 2021, this volume).

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