



DO ROMA FAMILIES FACE DISCRIMINATION IN CHILDCARE ACCESS?

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PROJECT BACKGROUND

- Correspondence test of access to childcare
- Part of a broader project involving 9 countries and 4 ethnic minorities
- Testing focused on Roma in Hu, Cz, Es
- Consortium of 9 countries, 10 partners (Vrije Universiteit Brussel, Univerzita Karlova, DeZIM Institut, BI, UCD (lead), UU (WP2 lead), UvA, CSIC, Université de Lausanne, University of Oxford)
- Funded by Horizon project Equalstrength „From one closed door to another” <https://equalstrength.eu/>

A historical map of Budapest, Hungary, showing various districts and landmarks. The word 'MOTIVATION' is overlaid in large white letters on the left side of the map.

MOTIVATION

- anecdotal evidence and legal disputes of discrimination against Roma in many domains, very little empirical evidence
- access to childcare improves school performance especially for children of low-status parents
- and also supports maternal employment
- both contribute to reducing poverty

- earlier evidence in HU finds discrimination in response rate and „tone” of the response
 - Csomor et al (2021) CT asking municipalities for information on childcare and other services
 - Scharle and Erőss (2023) CT asking primary schools for information about applying to first grade

CONTRIBUTION TO LITERATURE

- Limited evidence on discrimination in childcare
Bourabain, et al (2020) no gap in response rate, cf
Hermes et al. (2024) for migrant parents in Germany
- Or in access to primary school
Olsen (2020) in Denmark, De Lafuente (2021) in Spain, Scharle
and Erős (2022) in Hungary
- Growing evidence for Roma in other domains in Hu, Cz
labour market (Bartos et al., 2016), rental housing (Váradi et
al., 2023; Bartos et al., 2016), **local government administration**
(Csomor et al., 2021; Simonovits et al., 2022), **unemployment
insurance** (Mikula and Montag, 2023), and ridesharing services
(Simonovits et al., 2023), sports clubs (Takács et al. 2024)
- No evidence on how disadvantages may accumulate

A historical map of Budapest, Hungary, showing various districts and landmarks. The map is in a sepia tone and includes labels for areas like 'Szechenyi térség', 'Anyaiföld', 'Szechenyi térség', and 'Palota legelő'.

HYPOTHESES

- Roma parents are discriminated
- status signals may reduce discrimination
- regional variation in discrimination for historical/cultural reasons
- low capacity may increase discrimination
- scope for discrimination is relatively large:
 - nurseries have high autonomy in regulating entry
 - anti-discrimination regulation is in place but enforcement is very weak
 - demand for childcare likely exceeds supply in most localities – variation due to national regulations and recent investment in new childcare facilities esp in Hu,Es

E-MAIL EXAMPLE AND TREATMENTS

Subject

Bölcsődei helyvel kapcsolatos kérdés

Body

```
<p>Kedves Bölcsődevezető!</p>
<p>
  R/nR name
  P gender
  C gender
  A nevem Kiss Gergő, és arról szeretnék érdeklődni, hogy van-e Önöknél férőhely, mert a feleségemmel és a kisfiunkkal hamarosan a környékre
  költözünk. Nemrég előléptettek, ami határozatlan idejű szerződést jelent. Már találtunk egy lakást is.
</p>
  employment
  housing
<p>
  Most próbálunk bölcsődét találni a kisfiunk számára. Ha lehetséges, 2024 őszétől kezdenénk, amikor betölti a 2 évet.
</p>
<p>
  Van még szabad férőhelyük? Ha van várólistájuk, mennyi időt kellene várnunk?
</p>
<p>
  Előre is köszönöm a válaszát!
</p>

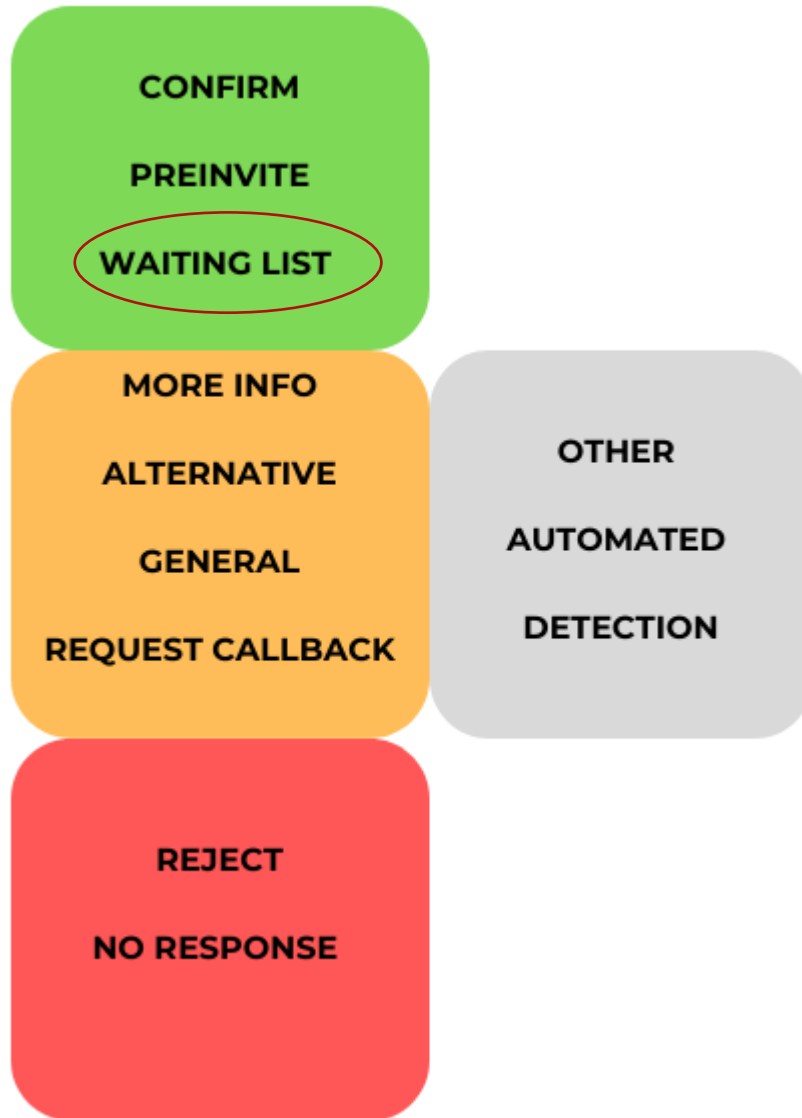
<p>
  Üdvözlettel:
</p>

<p>
  Kiss Gergő
</p>
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SETUP OF THE EXPERIMENT

- Emails sent to publicly available email address of nurseries *around* the Spring application deadline, asking about availability/waiting list for child to be aged 2 in September. Polite withdrawal sent to responding nurseries.
- Unpaired design
- Data collection: Spring of 2024
- Sample: all childcare institutions with an email address
- Context:
 - enrolment of children aged 0-2 high in Spain (49%), low in Hungary (14%) and the Czech Republic (7%)
 - ES: public and private nurseries, recent increase in capacity, rules give priority to disadvantaged children
 - Cz and HU: most nurseries are maintained by local municipality, deadlines and application conditions vary

RESPONSE CATEGORIES



- Responses may be ambiguous
 - two or more conflicting elements
 - context-dependent meaning
- Three broad categories: yes, no, neutral
- 3 rounds of coding (in Hu):
 - 2nd round – blind
 - 3rd round – checking conflicting codes
- 3 options for defining positive response
 - a) confirm
 - b) confirm+preinvite
 - c) confirm+preinvite+waiting list

RESULTS

	Pooled (ES ref.)	CZ	ES	HU
Panel A. Any response				
Roma	-0.011 (0.019)	-0.029 (0.032)	0.003 (0.028)	-0.016 (0.027)
Constant (Majority mean)	0.420*** (0.042)	0.672*** (0.038)	0.227*** (0.057)	0.784*** (0.034)
Panel B. Confirmation				
Roma	-0.034*** (0.012)	-0.028 (0.021)	-0.016 (0.017)	-0.056** (0.023)
Constant (Majority mean)	0.025 (0.031)	0.081*** (0.025)	0.064*** (0.024)	0.161*** (0.030)
Panel C. Positive response				
Roma	-0.043** (0.017)	-0.066** (0.029)	-0.023 (0.028)	-0.043 (0.029)
Constant (Majority mean)	0.193*** (0.043)	0.229*** (0.035)	0.159*** (0.039)	0.364*** (0.037)
Panel D. Rejection				
Roma	0.036** (0.017)	0.063** (0.032)	0.017 (0.030)	0.035 (0.028)
Constant (Majority mean)	0.661*** (0.044)	0.686*** (0.038)	0.782*** (0.042)	0.277*** (0.036)
Observations	2,845	813	933	1,099

RESULTS: STATUS SIGNALS FOR ROMA PARENTS

	Pooled (ES ref.)	CZ	ES	HU
Panel A. Any response				
Employment success	0.058* (0.031)	0.035 (0.065)	0.115* (0.063)	0.031 (0.052)
Housing success	0.020 (0.034)	0.099 (0.061)	0.009 (0.050)	-0.032 (0.067)
Employment × Housing	-0.029 (0.042)	-0.051 (0.087)	-0.043 (0.079)	-0.002 (0.080)
Panel D. Rejection				
Employment success	-0.073** (0.031)	-0.098* (0.058)	-0.109* (0.061)	-0.028 (0.061)
Housing success	-0.029 (0.037)	-0.127** (0.055)	0.014 (0.043)	0.016 (0.072)
Employment × Housing	0.012 (0.044)	0.100 (0.084)	0.014 (0.073)	-0.051 (0.089)
Observations	1,407	407	446	554

RESULTS: LACK OF CAPACITY

	Pooled (ES ref.)	CZ	ES	HU
Panel C. Positive response				
Roma	-0.043** (0.017)	-0.066** (0.029)	-0.023 (0.028)	-0.043 (0.029)
Demand (z)	-0.024** (0.012)	-0.046** (0.021)	0.024 (0.019)	-0.052** (0.021)
Roma × Demand	-0.002 (0.017)	0.019 (0.029)	-0.033 (0.028)	0.015 (0.029)
Observations	2,845	813	933	1,099

CONCLUSIONS

- Roma parents face discrimination in access to childcare
 - pronounced in CZ and HU, not in ES
- Even among middle-class applicants
 - additional signals of status do not reduce ethnic disparities
- Higher local demand does not amplify ethnic inequalities
- Using several outcome variables: context-specific

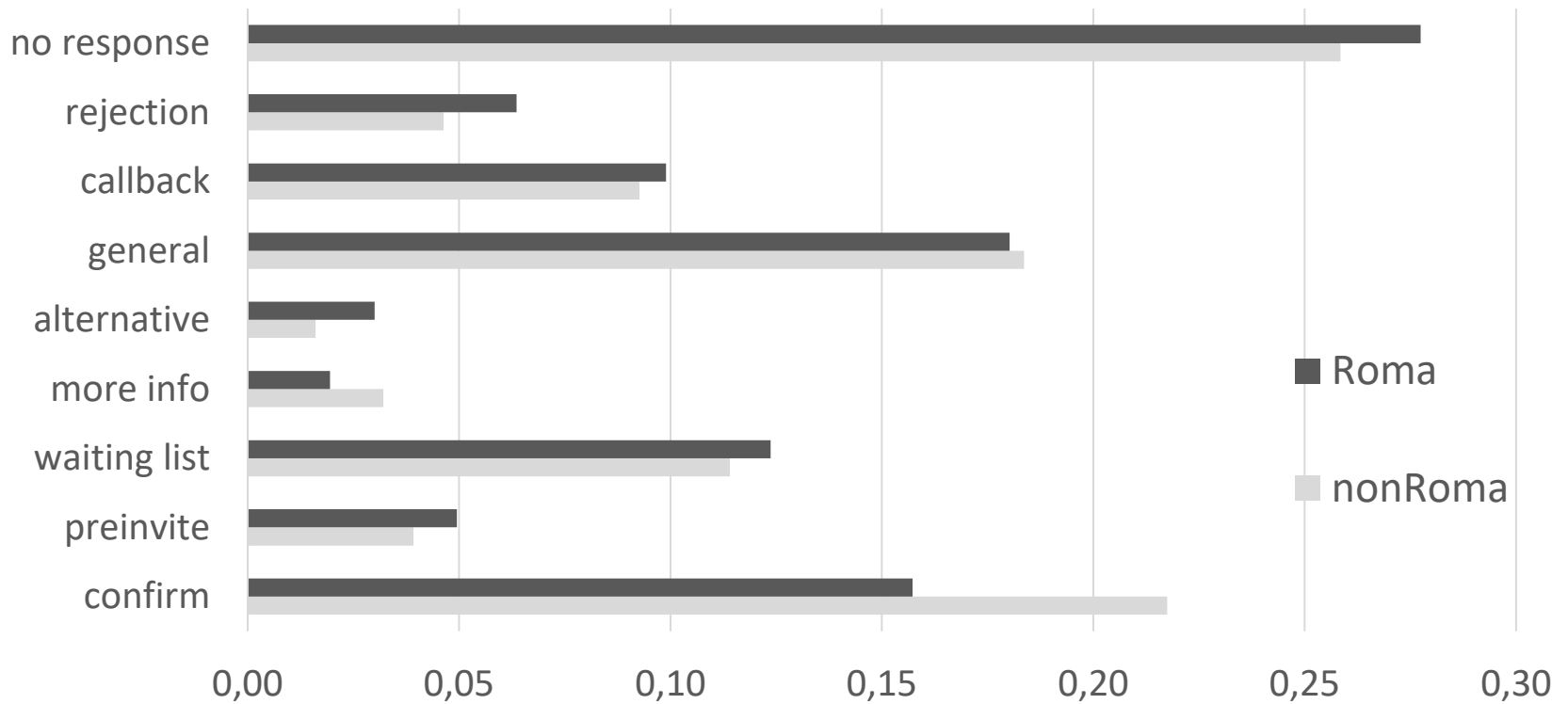
What next?

- > role of entitlement rules
- > increasing childcare capacity



Thank you for your attention.

RAW SHARE OF RESPONSES, HU %



Overall response rate: 73%

BUDAPEST SUBSAMPLE

N and % of responses

	non R bp	Roma bp	Bp only	%
confirm	4	3	7	0.05
preinvite	14	15	29	0.20
waiting list	3	1	4	0.03
more info	0	1	1	0.01
alternative	1	2	3	0.02
general	19	27	46	0.32
callback	9	7	16	0.11
rejection	2	3	5	0.04
no response	13	18	31	0.22
other	0	0	0	0.00
automated	0	0	0	0.00
total	65	77	142	1.00
response rate	0.80	0.77	0.78	

A historical map of Hungary, showing various regions and cities. The map is in a sepia tone and includes labels for places like 'Szechenytelep', 'Palota legelő', and 'Angyalpöld'.

NEXT STEPS FOR HU

Social status not tested, only middle-class applicants

Finish pooled Cz, Es, Hu paper

Explore country-specific issues for Hungary

- (1) regional variation in discrimination
- (2) variation by type of institution (municipal vs other nurseries)
- (3) additional signals of discrimination (tone, justification, reference to work requirement)

Are certain conditions mentioned more often to Roma applicants?

- mother (and/or father) having a job
- family being registered residents in the area