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# The role of the teacher in the educational achievement of Roma children

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This paper discusses the role of the teacher as the one who has the most profound influence on school mobility. My analysis draws attention to the teacher, who can facilitate the performance of Roma children at school by fostering a positive attitude toward learning, encouraging positive relationships, and thereby supporting the overall social mobility of this disadvantaged minority group. The research underlying this particular study consists of analyses of the life stories of Roma individuals who hold or about to obtain university degrees and have been particularly successful in the mobility channel of the education system by the standards of the Roma community. I point to the social factors that help or hinder the progress of the individual. In the analysis, particular attention was paid to the microsocial relationships affecting the school performance of Roma students as well as to the question of secondary socialisation.

*Keywords:* teacher role, socialisation, social capital, cultural capital, weak ties, educational mobility, romology, qualitative methods

## Introduction

According to researchers, one of the key obstacles to the *social integration* of the Roma minority in Hungary is the low level of schooling attainment exhibited in the Roma population (Kemény & Havas, 1996; Liskó, 2003; Székelyi et al., 2005). Since the 1989 political transition from state socialism to democracy, the gap between the schooling attainment of Roma versus non-Roma children has grown wider. Nowadays, this gap appears in continued studies in secondary education. It is therefore particularly important to study the life story of young Roma people who have been able to take advantage of school mobility and are on the way towards social integration. By analysing successful life stories, we can also comprehend what underlying factors bring about the school failures affecting the majority of Roma students.

The background of this study is a qualitative research in which I examined the successful action strategies related to the school mobility of Roma individuals with the help of fieldwork conducted in different regions of Hungary. With the application of *narrative interview technique* (Elekes, 2015, 2018), I analysed the life histories of young Roma individuals who have or are on the way to

holding tertiary-level degrees. It is furthermore important to mention that the selected participants openly express their personal affiliation with the Roma community, come from exclusively Roma families, and have been successful in the mobility channel of education by the standards of Roma society.

By learning about the diverse life stories that characterise modern societies, narrative interview research helps to explore society in all its complexity. The narrative interview analysis is based on *hermeneutic case reconstruction*, a technique that allows for the investigation of very complex social and psychic structures (Rosenthal, 1995). The analytical aspect of narrative life stories aims at identifying the typical patterns that emerge in different narratives relating the path to success. The aim of the analysis is to reconstruct the segments of the relationship between the individual and society, thereby revealing the diverse relationship between the individual and the social world (Kovács & Vajda, 2002).

The study seeks to examine *school mobility* from the perspective of the interacting relationship between individuals and society. Within this connection, we emphasise the determinative importance of the teacher whose role entails the ability to influence the *aspiration level* of young people, their school performance, continued studies, *the system of micro-social relations* with the peer group and, as a consequence, the social integration of the student.

### **Educational indicators in Hungary's Roma community**

The Roma minority comprises Hungary's most populous ethnic minority. Almost completely uneducated before 1945 (Kemény et al., 2004), four-fifths of Roma youth were shown to have completed primary school during the post-1945 era. Yet it cannot be denied that this 'achievement' frequently entailed several years of delay and a lack of adequate knowledge on the part of graduates, while one-fifth never completed primary school at all. A representative study conducted in 1971 by István Kemény showed that 73-74% of young people remained practically completely illiterate despite the increase in the level of education of Roma youth (Kemény & Havas, 1996, p. 354). Already at this time, the study additionally pointed out that, as the distance between the educational attainment of Roma versus non-Roma children increased, the risk grew 'that the difference in educational attainment would become an ethnic feature and promote the formation of a colored minority' (Kemény et al, 2004, p. 78). Unfortunately, this prophecy has come true. During the 1970s and 1980s, the gap between the educational level of the majority versus the Roma population increased further and has remained so ever since.

Today this inequality appears most saliently when Roma students attempt to continue their studies in secondary schools. A very small proportion of Roma students have been able to gain admission to secondary schools while the drop-out ratio is very high among Roma youth (Liskó, 2003). (It should also be mentioned that all eighth-grade students in Hungary must take a national entrance exam in order to attend secondary school.) In the 1970s, 1.5% of Roma young people completed secondary school. This rate was 2%

in the 1980s, 3% in the 1990s and 5% in the 2000s (Kemény et al, 2004, p. 90). The results of research conducted in 1993 demonstrated that the prospects for attending further education have improved as more and more Roma young people (51%) continue their education after completing primary school. It must be stated, however, that most of these young people learn a trade at a vocational school while noticeably fewer young Roma people apply to a secondary school compared to young people from the majority society (Havas et al., 2002). When examining data collected during the 1990 and 2001 national census by the Hungarian Central Statistical Office (KSH), it can be seen that developments in educational attainment differ significantly for the Roma population in comparison to the non-Roma population (Hablicsek, 2007). Statistics from the 1990 and 2001 census prove that the Roma population displays an increase in primary education and vocational training in contrast to the non-Roma population, where the acquisition of secondary education and a higher proportion of tertiary education can be observed.

According to data from the Hungarian Central Statistical Office, there is still a tendency that Roma students do not succeed in secondary education after obtaining basic education. The proportion of Roma possessing no more than basic education is over 80% in all age groups, a factor that foretells weak labor market potential in the future (Hablicsek, 2007). Regarding educational attainment, territorial differences within Hungary also display vastly divergent trends. In terms of both primary and secondary school, Budapest's Roma community has the best indicators for completion of education. However, these data are only exceptionally good values as regards the Roma population; they are still worse than the capital's population of the capital, meaning that even this community lags behind the national level. Due to the fact that previous efforts to *integrate rural society* have remained unsuccessful, the statistics are even worse for the rural Roma population (cf. Bognár, 2009, 2010b).

When examining the education indicators of the Roma population, it can be seen that the proportion of Roma young people completing secondary school increased steadily in the 2000s, but decreased from 34.0% to 24.2% between 2013 and 2017 (a 10% decrease), while for non-Roma this same indicator remained unchanged (Bernát, 2018). Unfortunately, the figures for Roma young people in higher education are not high: slightly more than 1% of Roma youth attend a college or university while it remains uncertain how many will complete their studies with a degree.

### **The task of the teacher and the school in the process of social integration**

As a result of demographic trends, Roma children are increasingly present in public education, a circumstance that imposes an additional workload on teachers who find it difficult to cope with this complicated situation. In order to teach Roma children successfully, educators should know whom they are teaching and the problems these children face daily. However, teachers have very little knowledge about the economically, socially, and culturally

*heterogeneous composition of Hungarian Roma*. They are unfamiliar with Roma culture while the differences between *ethnic and poverty culture* are often blurred: understanding these traits could help to interpret students' behaviour in many cases. This lack of knowledge surrounding Roma culture also hinders the establishment of relationships with Roma parents because teachers at times misinterpret the family's motivation for schooling.

However, in order to realise the school mobility of Roma children and thus their social integration, the teacher should not only be aware of Roma culture but also make an effort to get to know the children together with their families. Ideally, the teacher should be in constant communication with the families. Thus, the school system should not only take the child into account but also his/her family when admitting a child of compulsory school age. With the child's school integration, the family should also be integrated into school life. This is especially difficult when the family itself is in a *deprived life situation*, e.g. unemployed, and/or deviant behaviour is present in the family. This means that the teacher faces the task of integration, a process society could not solve at the *macro level*, therefore its effects appear at the *micro level*. In many cases, the teacher has to deal with the financial and mental difficulties caused by unemployment and the deprivations that result from the family's disadvantaged position, a circumstance that becomes increasingly visible in the classroom day to day in the child's behaviour.

This situation naturally imposes another task and a different type of role on teachers, as a result of which the teacher's personality must be more strongly present in school life. Overwhelmingly occupied by women, the field of Hungarian education finds it difficult to cope with this extra role, one that suddenly requires them to become aides, *mental health professionals*, and thus exposes them to the danger of *burnout*.

Theoretically committed to *knowledge transfer, personality development, transfer of norms and values, and the social integration of the younger generation*, the school system's ability to fulfil these basic functions poses an increasing challenge for teachers. Unfortunately, institutional systems that support teachers (e.g., the school district's Pedagogical Education Centre, where specialists test children for learning disorders, provide psychological help, etc.) are slow to respond to the challenges faced by teachers. The Hungarian school system's failure to achieve accountable education is becoming increasingly apparent, a fact reflected in the results of deteriorating PISA surveys (Csapó et al., 2018). It can be stated that schools merely mediate the national system of requirements for knowledge acquisition and are less and less able to pass genuine knowledge on. Meanwhile, teacher autonomy in areas such as grading, assessment, and administration is decreasing. In the end, teachers find it impossible to bridge the gaps in knowledge levels that originate from social inequalities.

It is well known fact that one of the most important components of *social status* is educational attainment, an element that fundamentally impacts the risk of poverty. Hungary's rural population is most at risk for impoverishment. Based on statistical indicators, the proportion of people living in poverty or exclusion

is increasing in the settlement hierarchy (Bernát & Gábos, 2018), another factor that vastly affects Hungarian Romas. The European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) conducted a research project containing the Second European Union Minorities and Discrimination Survey (EU-MIDIS II). Based on this survey, 75% of Roma in Hungary live in income poverty (Bernát, 2018). However, it is important to emphasise that this is by no means the worst indicator of the situation of Hungarian Roma in Europe as this result can even be said to be better than that found in other surveyed countries.

Overall, it must be stated that the cornerstone of social integration for the Roma is an increase in educational attainment, a process that should go hand in hand with prolonging school life, that is, helping children stay in school and improving the quality of education. Unfortunately, between 2013 and 2017 the *indicators of early school leaving* (Bernát, 2018) reveal that Roma students are seven times more likely to drop out than non-Roma students. Nor is this phenomenon independent from the government decision that lowered the *compulsory school age* from 18 to 16 years.

### **Weaknesses in the Hungarian school system**

Sociological research conducted before the millennium has already underscored the weaknesses in the Hungarian school system. At this time it was proven that the Hungarian school system effectively *perpetuates social positions*, thus hindering the school mobility of lower social groups. A number of mobility studies examining school inequalities in Hungary (Bukodi, 2000; Róbert, 2001) have furthermore confirmed Bourdieu's theory of *cultural capital* (Bourdieu, 1978a). These studies highlight the fact that in the cultural relationship between the individual's origins and schooling attainment *cultural capital* is a more dominant intermediating variable than is economic capital. It is important to mention that according to *Bourdieu's capital theory*, the amount of cultural capital even determines one's strategies governing his investment in studies and education, thereby creating a special habitus comprising the relation of the given social class to school-gained knowledge as well as its inclination toward actual use of school services (Bourdieu, 1978a). Therefore, Bourdieu's theory also regards *cognitive factors* as hard *structuring factors*, considering them as manifestations of *reconversion strategies* (Bourdieu, 1978b). In light of this theory, the main task of the Hungarian school system is to motivate Roma children to participate in school more effectively in order to successfully integrate them socially. This could be helped by introducing innovative pedagogical methodologies or activating the reserves inherent in secondary socialisation, when the school could aid Roma students' social integration. However, the process of segregation that is increasingly observed among domestic schools does not support the above factors. Like the lower social strata that Roma increasingly occupy in Hungary, the educational institutions attended by Roma are becoming increasingly isolated or even permanently detached from the education system.

One of the important conclusions connected to the school segregation research results gathered by Havas and Liskó (2004) is that the parental



decisions made in the school selection process are exerting a growing impact on Hungarian primary schools. (In Hungary, it is not compulsory for a child to attend the school that is within the residential district. Theoretically speaking, Hungarian parents can choose a school anywhere in the country: in practice, this 'freedom of choice' has compounded the issue of school segregation.) When parents deliberately avoid sending their children to a school that has a large number of Roma students, a significant proportion of Roma pupils become concentrated into a specific group of schools. In other words, the segregation of Roma pupils at school is also a consequence of school selection (Havas & Liskó, 2005). The previous research results attained by István Kemény and his research group also confirm this phenomenon while adding that the number of schools that can be classified as ethnic and social ghettos has increased as a result of school selection and negative social processes, such as factory closures, unemployment, the declining demand for uneducated labour, etc. It must be mentioned, however, that these 'ghetto' schools are also attended by children from non-Roma poor families. Havas, Kemény and Liskó's (2000) research study (which also extended to intra-school selection) states that segregation also occurs within schools. In such cases, children of higher social status are provided a higher standard of education in certain classes. This type of a class generally includes families in the best social position as well as some Roma children who display a higher level of integration or come from families that are more integrated. While this class is being taught, another class is created for less integrated Roma children and those children from uneducated, non-Roma families who possess low status and income level (Havas et al., 2002).

Upon examining the qualification data of teachers, researchers have found that the more frequently a teacher discriminates against Roma students and the worse students' sense of well-being is at school, the more unprepared the teacher is, both professionally and pedagogically (Havas & Liskó, 2005). In these schools, teachers explain the low school performance of Roma students with short-cut responses that blame the socio-cultural environment of Roma families. That is, these educators are unaware of the fact that children's learning motivation is influenced by the relationship between the child and the teacher. By referring to this type of an excuse, teachers are ridding themselves of the responsibility that primary school should play in socially integrating Roma via the provision of remedial courses, extra support, etc. To compound the situation further, when students fail to catch up despite the use of special curricula and methods, the student is released from the obligation of attending school regularly. According to Havas and Liskó (2005), this procedure is twice as common among Roma students as it is among non-Roma students. Based on the 2018 data of the Social Report, this trend has further deteriorated, with indicators measuring school *dropout rates* between 2013 and 2017 showing (BERNÁT, 2018) that Roma students are seven times more likely to drop out than non-Roma students are. It is easy to see that in the social environment presented above, it is becoming increasingly difficult to develop a system of successful secondary socialisation conditions that could improve the increased school mobility data of Roma children.

## The significance of the teacher's personality in secondary socialisation

In the following sections of this study, we seek to argue the importance of *secondary socialisation*, which has been highlighted by the identity perspectives presented in the 'successful' narratives analysed throughout the course of our research.

Primary socialisation takes place through deeply emotional communication, through communication with the parents, predominantly with the mother, the '*significant other*' (Mead, 1973). By the end of the process, the individual's perspective, value system, semantics, and ideology have formed. The process of secondary socialisation is based on *primary socialisation* (Berger & Luckmann, 1998, p. 183) and in the majority of cases there is little ability to modify it. In its institutionalised form, secondary socialisation takes place in the education system; in a non-institutionalised form, socialisation may be linked to the peer group and/or the mass media (Bognár, 2010a). Accordingly, there is a chance of altering the *socio-cultural patterns of primary socialisation* and encouraging successful Roma mobility where the features and perspective of the developing personality is shaped by an emotional content similar to that of primary socialisation. This is why those teachers tend to produce results who can develop emotional relationships with their pupils wherein they turn into 'significant others' who can influence the social and personal identity of primary socialisation. If the relationship between the teacher and the student is formalised and anonymous, it is a lot easier to brush aside and eliminate the responsibility of secondary socialisation when, for instance, the student leaves school (Berger & Luckmann, 1998, p. 198).

The 'traditional' role of teacher (which renders the child a passive receiver and is preoccupied with order building) formalises the relationship between student and teacher. This pedagogical role provides little opportunity for the relationship to be filled with emotion and for the teacher to become a 'significant other'. In other words, successful secondary socialisation – at which time the 'traditional' role of the teacher appears in strengthened form in the Hungarian education system – does not help. This 'traditional' relationship is characterised by excessive control, the strong structuring of children's time, and the exclusion of natural impulses. The primary function of the 'traditional' teacher type is to prescribe the child's thought process and render him or her a passive receiver, a condition that can only be achieved via very strong disciplinary methods. This kind of atmosphere precludes spontaneity and creativity, aspects that should be paramount in the teaching of Roma children for successful secondary socialisation. In other words, in the lower grades of primary school, a reform pedagogical approach that puts creativity, spontaneity, and a creative approach to the transfer of knowledge in the forefront while simultaneously providing students with positive reinforcement. Ideally, this approach also takes into account the characteristics of Roma ethnic culture, knowledge that can help the teaching process.

It has to be highlighted that the reality of secondary socialisation – in this case, the school – is an 'artificial' reality. Even if only due to its secondary nature, school is less deeply rooted in awareness, i.e., it is easy to uproot. The 'confidential' atmosphere created by the teacher may, however, change this when it evokes the

‘confidential’ world of primary socialisation, thereby alluring the child to turn his ‘attention from the natural objects’ to these ‘artificial’ ones (Berger & Luckmann, 1998, p. 200). In other words, the key to success in secondary socialisation can lie in building a relationship of trust, an element formulated today by *reform pedagogy*. Reform pedagogy is an approach that emphasises the importance of personality education and getting to know the child and presupposes a different quality of pedagogical role, according to which the teacher must be present in the teaching process in a ‘creative way’, with his or her whole personality.

The narratives of the Roma interviewees who participated in the research also prove the above findings. For Roma interviewees, school as a channel of mobility is particularly crucial, as most families have little economic or relational capital that could be used during social uplift. For Roma youth, a frustration-free encounter with school and a successful school career are therefore particularly important. The narratives show that the majority of successful Roma in the research were neither discriminated against in primary school nor by teachers, who helped them catch up, and smoothed out their further school careers.

*Right from the first grade on, up to the eighth my average grade was between 4.5 and 5.0 all along. Er... it was he, my form teacher himself who suggested that I should go on to study in a secondary school providing a GCSE, well, that was something indeed, back in those days. Aah ... primarily among Gypsies as it was back in 1979. (Interview 2)*

*On top, on top, on top of the fact that the school I liked very much. I went to a small village school, there were ten of us to a class, when the flu came there were only four of us, so this was a little “funny” (giggling), it was pretty funny at times but it was good. So to me the school was, I came to realise, the family. So ... I escaped to it, by the way, so for me, well, that was the very reason why I could study. (Interview 1)*

In the interviewees’ narratives there always appears a teacher in primary or secondary school who encourages, helps, and advises the interviewee on his or her continued studies. In addition, several of the narratives include NGOs involved in Roma programmes, who open up new perspectives and also help with counselling and positive reinforcement, not only during further education, but also during higher education. That is, one necessary element is for the teacher to demonstrate a supportive, understanding attitude in the teaching process itself, thereby creating an atmosphere of trust between the teacher and the student that can make the transfer of ‘artificial knowledge’ natural. The other necessary element is for the pedagogical role to be supplemented by a *mental health helper*. This kind of support is especially urgent for *disadvantaged and cumulatively disadvantaged children*, who are full of different types of (emotional, economic) insecurities due to family conditions. However, if the teacher does not help the child develop positively in the classroom, the child may lose his/her motivation to learn or fall into a community that hinders his/her successful school career. Consequently, another key aspect of Roma integration is the pattern of *individual networks* and the values they convey.



## The significance of the teacher's personality in shaping the micro-social relations system of students of Roma origin

Analyses of *networks of relationships* are increasingly drawing attention to the fact that individuals live embedded in networks of relationships (e.g., family, schoolmates, colleagues at work, neighbours, people one spends one's spare time with, etc.) that turn into *social facts* throughout the course of daily life (Angelusz & Tardos, 1991). According to the results of international studies conducted in the field of individual-focused networks, the *pattern and quality of relationships* affect the individual's position, behaviour (Coleman, 1988), *social mobility* (LIN, 1997, 2001), and school performance (Hoffer et al., 1985; Stanton-Salazar & Dornbusch, 1995; Carbonaro, 1998).

Quantitative analyses prepared among Hungarian ecclesiastical secondary school students point to correlations between *social capital* and *school performance* and the intention to continue learning (Fényes & Pusztai, 2004). In addition to cultural capital, this research highlights the importance of social capital, the role of *strong and weak links* between school achievement, and the intention to continue learning. It also points out that the resources inherent to this system support the learning intentions of disadvantaged students.

Judit Lannert's (2018) recent research confirms previously observed research findings based on PISA results. Her research points out that 'student composition in schools has a greater impact on student performance than a student's individual family background' (Lannert, 2018, p. 11). In the Hungarian school system, student composition is determined by school selection, a process by means of which students become more and more homogenised, meaning that students from similar social groups attend the same school. Consequently, the social groups who have been 'left behind' also attend other schools or types of schools, with the long-term consequence of increasing distance between *social strata*. The end result is an increasingly less open society.

The mobility perspectives found in the different life stories increasingly highlighted the role of *Granovetter's weak and strong ties* (1991) as well as their perspectives determining courses of lives. According to Granovetter (1991), the strength of relationships is determined by the time, emotions, and intimacy invested in them. *Weak ties* can bridge large social distances and are crucial from the aspect of mobility. Close friendly or closed family relationships – i.e., *strong ties* – are not suitable for the channelling of external information. Individuals with few *weak ties* are therefore at a disadvantage because they remain excluded from the flow of information as they are isolated within a cocoon of *strong ties*. Their isolation thus keeps them in a disadvantaged situation, even when they wish to change their social position. The interviewees in the research mentioned this aspect as follows:

*Sometimes it's your own family which is your main burden, so I can tell they are my worst critics. And, well, the trouble is, they never praise you, never. Strangers do, but my family never does. I don't know what else to say... There's a lot of bad things. A difficult childhood. It was very difficult.* (Interview 4)

*My foster parents did not like it, by the way. And when they did not like that I was studying, they never sat down besides me to hold my hand. Me, never! So I am dead serious when I tell you that they never asked me questions to check what I had learned... Never, ever! You understand? They never ever asked me about my grades or anything else. And yet, I was still a good student. Indeed. And I was thus happy about it. And it was as though I felt envy. And I did feel envy indeed. I am sure I trained well. (Interview 1)*

*So they were workfolks. And so though they did not impede my studying but when I told them, shortly before the secondary final examinations, that I would like to go on studying, then they did ask me how much more I want to study. But without any ill feeling. But then the main thing was that after the final exams I worked in my trade. (Interview 2)*

Analyses of the fieldwork and the life stories of young Roma people interviews additionally demonstrate that the school relationships with the peer group of the majority society are crucial for school mobility and social integration.

*Well then... I didn't even think about it at that time that I was in an A class. That is to say there were a Class A and a Class B. Almost everyone I knew was in Class B. Well, I'd get to know those who were in Class A too, later. Because they weren't ... so I was a Roma alone. Well, now then... how it was at that time... what the decision was based on by the teachers, I don't know. But, sure, most of the children were good students, they were prepared, so it wasn't cool not to learn, not to prepare. Hmm... I have no very negative experience whatsoever. So as far as I know, what they were... or what they used to be ... in school. (Interview 2)*

The previous two excerpts were taken from an interview with a disadvantaged man of *Vlach Roma* descent who lives in a *Roma settlement*, did not attend kindergarten, and coped with school challenges with the help of his teacher. The interviewee learned how to study, endure the monotony of the learning process, and experienced that the work invested in learning leads to success. Thanks to his teacher's contribution, his secondary socialisation was successful, and his classmates accepted him into Class A as the only Roma, with many *heterogeneous weak ties* to the peer group. In his life story, primary school was directly followed by secondary school and graduation, but in the absence of family support, he was only admitted to university decades later.

## Summary

The research results providing the background of the study confirm the hypothesis that the academic performance of Roma ethnic youth is inseparable from *the students' micro-social relationship system*.

The findings also indicate that *upwards mobility* processes are not random phenomena. The life stories reveal that they are related to a number of social facts and sociological dimensions. The mobility processes were found to have

been equally affected by *macro and micro factors*. A look at the most important micro factors reveals that the mobility processes could not have taken place without successful secondary socialisation in which the ‘artificial reality’ of internalised knowledge is confirmed by means of pedagogy.

From the narratives that were collected and analysed in the course of our research, it becomes clear that, for Roma who graduate, school appears as an integration space where social integration begins. One of the key elements in successful school mobility is successful secondary socialisation, a process that demands an active teacher role. The importance of the integrative role of the teacher is demonstrated by the fact that other channels of secondary socialisation (e.g., mass media) cannot fulfil this role and in many cases reinforces *socio-cultural disadvantages* (Angelusz & Tardos, 2005). Aiding a child’s successful secondary socialisation not only requires the strong presence of the teacher’s personality, but also the development of a creative and facilitator approach that does not allow for impersonality or a ‘policeman role’ on the part of the teacher. Another important aspect of successful school mobility is the significant role played by micro-social relationship systems, i.e., the weak bonds that the students develop not only with the adult (teacher) but also with the peer group. *Weak ties to adult society* help students make better learning decisions through counselling and information sharing. *Weak ties to the peer group* help the individual integrate into society. Meanwhile, the mobility of young people with these types of relationships is less stressful. In addition, the significance of macro-factors, such as institutional regulations, scholarship schemes, and civic and church initiatives, must also be mentioned as underlying elements that create the conditions for successful school mobility.

The results of the present research confirm the enhanced importance of the school institution and the pedagogical task, both of which influence the school performance of the Roma students and, at the same time, their social integration. Attention is drawn to the fact that the future of lower social groups, including the future of the Roma children, is decided in primary school due to the lack of economic and social capital. This reality justifies the reform of the Hungarian school system and the establishment of well-equipped schools where highly qualified teachers would positively shape all students’ attitudes towards socially relevant knowledge by devoting all their energies to children.

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