

**SOCIAL DETERMINATION AND PREJUDICE:
THE CHALLENGES OF INTEGRATION FOR PEOPLE OF ROMA ORIGIN**

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Abstract

In this study, the determinative effects of prejudice-based disadvantage factors frequently emphasised in relation to Roma living in Hungary are analysed. For this purpose, the individual life stories of protagonists appearing in documentary films produced in the AntRom Filmműhely (University of Debrecen), as well as the analysis of community processes observed in various local societies, are utilised. The aforementioned disadvantage factors (e.g. ethnic origin, gender, family and socio-cultural background, education, labour-market status, housing) are understood to shape, both individually and collectively, the expectations and future opportunities of the individuals concerned. The aim of the study is to make visible how, and under what conditions, a life different from the “expected” can be realised.

Keywords: disadvantage, intersectionality, documentaries

Discipline: Ethnology

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Absztrakt**A TÁRSADALMI MEGHATÁROZOTTSÁG ÉS AZ ELŐÍTÉLETEK: A ROMA SZÁRMAZÁSÚAK INTEGRÁCIÓS KIHÍVÁSAI**

A tanulmány a hazánkban élő romákkal szemben gyakran megfogalmazott, előítéleteken alapuló hátránytényezők determinációs hatásának elemzésével foglalkozik. Ehhez az AntRom Filmműhelyben készült dokumentumfilmek néhány főhőisének egyéni sors történetét és egy-egy lokális társadalom közösség-folyamatainak elemzésére kerül sor. A nevezett hátránytényezők (pl. az etnikai származás, nem, családi és szociokulturális háttér, iskolázottság, munkaerő-piaci státusz, lakhatás) külön-külön és együttesen is determinálják az érintettek jövőjével és lehetőségeivel kapcsolatos várakozásokat. A tanulmány célja láthatóvá tenni, hogy miként lehetséges és milyen feltételek mentén az „elvárttól” eltérő élet.

Kulcsszavak: hátrányos helyzet, interszekcionalitás, dokumentumfilmek

Diszciplína: néprajz

Introduction

Since the system change in Hungary, most academic writings that address issues related to the social situation of the Roma have approached the topic from the perspectives of education, employment conditions, and the closely associated sub-topics of deprivation, segregation, and isolation. In addition, the authors often rely on the approach that examines how the stereotypes operate in the discrimination against the Roma. These are important dimensions of the thinking about ethnicity, and I do not accentuate that these circumstances have to be ignored. In this study, I would only like to draw attention to the fact that understanding the social situation of the Roma communities in Hungary is the precondition for any practical approach aimed at reducing the stereotypes and the discrimination based on them. In connection with this, the study begins with a brief outline of a life situation, and the readers are invited to reflect to the questions internally that may arise in the meantime.

Imagine a young woman in her early thirties who is married, has a beautiful young daughter and, besides these, who works. She found her place in her profession, in her case, she made a reliable existence for her family with her degree as a

kindergarten teacher. She met her husband at a young age, just after turning 20, and after their marriage (during the second half of their twenties), they bought a house in need of renovation in a small town using their savings. They created the financial background consciously, the young woman worked in a night shift during her university studies in order to cover her expenditure and spare money for her early career years. Besides work, they spent all their free time renovating their place of residence, and once it was completed, they started a family. Their daughter was born into a well-arranged home. After reaching preschool age, both are “going to” the kindergarten again, the mother to work, while the child to play. The husband continuously pursued further education to provide a stable and secure life for his family.

Can we imagine such a story? Of course!

It follows an idyllic scheme, and we know countless similar stories of young people starting their lives under similar circumstances. But we may also ask whether we can imagine the same situation once we know that the briefly described case is the story of a Roma family in Hungary?

Specifically, the young mother is Roma, while her husband is Hungarian. To what extent would we consider such a life path as a plausible scenario if

we are aware of her ethnic background or her subsequent life circumstances and the system of majority prejudices against the largest ethnic minority in the country?

And if we reveal that the young woman is a Roma who spent her first five years in a children's home and was then raised by a foster family? In this context, how does all this relate to the story of an average young person just starting out in life?

If the answer is yes, then everything in the world is in order, the society is not divided by conflicts marked by prejudices, we live in a world free from inequalities where discrimination driven by status envy does not shape our everyday lives.

If the answer is yes, but she is the exception, then we are approaching to the reality. The story outlined above is not typical but rather the exception that proves the rule: according to our common expectations, a young Roma woman who grew up in a children's home in Hungary would owe her success in life solely to chance.

If we would like to summarize the disadvantage factors which can characterize the life path presented in our example, then the Roma origin, years spent in the child protection system then in a foster family, financial instability at a young age and uncertain housing conditions, moreover life and management difficulties makes the list. Each of the disadvantage factors described above can, on its own, act as a circumstance that strongly shapes a person's life. Their accumulation can effectively determine an individual's life course, making it seem predestinated. We are all aware of the public attitudes and the negative prejudices prevailing in the media and in the public discourse which are expressed in connection with the perspectives of children who grew up in public care and/or in a foster family or their Roma ethnic background – often referred to by a pejorative colloquial term “foundlings”. (Csepeli, Fábíán és Sik 1998; Marián 2013; Enyedi, Fábíán és Sik 2006.)

The concept of intersectionality, introduced in the 1970s, provides a framework for analysing the accumulation of multiple disadvantage factors. The cumulative effects of the multiple mutually reinforcing disadvantages helps explain, why the situation outlined above so strongly determines the fate of young people facing similar circumstances. The intersectional analyses does not give an example why the life path of the above mentioned “protagonist” is not an average story. Why was she successful in something in which her fellows, most of the disadvantaged are usually not?

It would be an oversimplified answer to say that the detailed intersectional disadvantage factors either separately or collectively determine the future, the possibilities and chances of the persons concerned – their opportunities on the labour market, their possibilities for advancement, or even their ability to integrate into society. In this study, I attempt to demonstrate, through some cases developed in the AntRom Filmműhely (documentary filmmakers workshop) at the University of Debrecen, how and why individual life stories can unfold in ways that serve as counterexamples to the determinism associated with social disadvantage.

Determination effect of prejudice on the community

In the following, through the analyses of some case examples, we attempt to present the role of stereotypical practices arising from prejudiced thinking in the community processes of local societies. Moreover, we aim to make visible how the developed local coping practices act against the determining forces of macro-social structures.

In the last ten years I examined the issue of Roma-Hungarian coexistence in nearly 30 settlements, one of the key influencing factors of which is prejudice and its result in negative discrimination. Primarily rural, disadvantaged, peripheral settlements made the location of the examination

in the eastern and north-eastern region of Hungary.

The widespread perception about the countryside and even the area where the researches took place is the aging local society, the growing conflict characterizing the majority–minority coexistence the shifting demographic balance among coexisting ethnic groups within settlements, the unemployment, the deprivation and generally the hopeless future prospects. The listing is the collection of prejudices. At the same time, if we take a closer look at the *small worlds*, we can see numerous positive initiatives, organized to preserve or revive elements of local traditions, and traditionalist communities who regard their surroundings as the centre of the world, „a place where a whole life is worth living.” (Magris, 2002) The traveller’s first impressions of the place rather evoke the sense of disadvantage and deprivation. A closer examination of these local communities reveals a complex and micro-levelly dynamic countryside that seeks to adapt to macro-level social changes.

The two local sites selected as the basis for our case studies are rural, peripheral, multi-ethnic settlements with similar environmental (physical and geographical) characteristics, where the long-term coexistence of three local sub-communities – the Hungarians, the Olah Roma, and the Romungros – can be observed. The general determining factors operates very different casual social processes which challenges the schematic viewpoint.

The works of AntRom Filmműhely demonstrate that, in contrast the absolutist approach of determining factors, numerous creative solutions emerged in the local contexts. In consequence, they symbolically dethrone the prejudices that shaped perceptions of local societies and the inhabiting Roma and/or disadvantaged local communities. According to our experiences, it is important to examine the civil community processes in the rural, disadvantaged settlements to understand the ethnic coexistence since these are influential to the Roma-Hungarian coexistence. The homogenous Roma or

Hungarian associations of the so called ethnic civil communities or the transethnic civil communities, which is considered as a distinct type, makes great influence on the coexistence (Szabó H., 2023).

Researches showed that in places where the local traditions have been more strongly preserved as the part of the everyday life, the civil communities developed on this basis, had a positive impact on the coexistence of the local ethnic groups. For instance in the movie *A hídon túl – Nagyecséd* (*Across the bridge – Nagyecséd*) the fourth episode of the series *Kisvilágok* (*Small worlds*), we examine, for instance with the role of Gypsy dance and the significance for social coexistence (Biczó és Szabó, 2019).

The nine sites explored in the AntRom Filmműhely documentary series *Kisvilágok* (*Small worlds*), represent local environments that, at first glance, seem to fit the previously described deprivation rural area. Furthermore, in every examined settlement, phenomena can be observed that may be interpreted as signs of a “rural revival,” thereby challenging the exclusive role of determinative factors in the interpretation of social processes. The cases, the coping practices are thought-provoking examples that there are peripheral rural communities where the local societies makes progressive sociocultural patterns as living conditions based on the situational rules. The situational practices revealed through field research challenge the approach that social coexistence can be interpreted within general, pre-established theoretical frameworks.

Oppositional Hungarian-Roma coexistence situation

The first research (2017 and 2021) example to *dethronement of determination* is Nyírvasvári, a large village near Nyírbátor. The situation of the society of the settlement is determined by the oppositional relationship of the Hungarian majority and the two local Roma communities. It is interesting, that the settled Romungros (Roma with Hungarian mother tongue) identification shows strong similarities with

the autochthonous local Olah Roma community (Roma people speak a dialect of the romani language, *cerhári* in Nyírvásvári). This unusual integration practice – the literature and the field studies consider the mixture of Romungro and Olah Roma as an exception – strengthened the isolation efforts of the Hungarian community against the Roma. In Nyírvásvári, we can describe the relationship of the ethnic groups in the frames of the so called dynamic model of oppositional and dissimilative coexistence (Szabó H., 2023). The model aims to define the relationship among the three coexisting ethnic communities as interactions between groups that, in everyday social practice, perceive and interpret each other's positions in terms of mutual opposition. According to this, the relationship of the local Hungarian majority and the two local Roma communities is oppositional and the cultural distance between them are deepening as a result of dissimilation processes. All these greatly materialize in social, cultural and economic differences.

The consequences of the local social processes can be clearly observed in the features of the ethnic spatial arrangement. In case of Nyírvásvári, neighbourhood relationship exists between the two Roma communities, and the local Hungarian society tries to keep the physical distance against the Roma. This segregative, isolative practice would result in local social groups that are mutually largely exclusive and do not maintain any relationship.

During the research *Kisvilágok (Small worlds)*, the local football club was identified as a connection and meeting point of the ethnic communities. In terms of the members, this is the largest civil association of the settlement with an ethnically diverse composition. Regarding its impact on coexistence, the significance of the club goes beyond an ethnically diverse membership. Through their joint efforts in sport, their struggle for the common goal, and the shared successes and failures, they learned that skin colour, ethnic background are secondary compared to the value of the purpose

which holds the community together. „*So this a win-win situation for everybody. And the settlement is proud of them for what they achieved. So there is a champion celebration, I remember when we won the County III championship, and that was a sensational party. There were the whole world and his wife and celebrated together. So I think that is an immensely great place and possibility for integration. And nevertheless, they do not notice we now are integrating very intensely and unprecedentedly. But they are there with their happiness and passion to the game and give good example of integration.*” (Biczó és Szabó, 2021)

We portrayed the operation and social impact of the Nyírvásvári 16 FC on local community processes in the movie *Egy fecske is csinálhat nyarat* (Even one swallow can make a summer) (Biczó és Szabó, 2021). Based on the physical and socio-cultural distances of the settlement's ethnic groups, and on the determinative logic of the mutual isolating practices, it might seem that no form of cooperation could exist in the community. However, as can be observed through the above-mentioned example, the materialised relationship extends expectations.

The case of the harmonious coexistence and its social consequences

The second settlement selected for analyses is Hodász, a large village in north-eastern Hungary, located in the district of Mátészalka where the ethnic relations can be described as affirmative in character. That means that sub-community relations result in a harmonious local coexistence, considering the ethnic parameter.

We interpreted the situation of coexistence in the framework of the *affirmative model of interethnic relations that mutually balance ethnocultural differences* (Szabó H., 2023). Unlike Nyírvásvári, in Hodász – where three ethnic group live as well – the coexistence is not oppositional. The relationship between the three sub-communities is controlled by the '*local Hodász ethos*' instead of ethnic specific determinacy, which is based on the long-standing experience of

a common destiny (comp. Biczó, 2013). The daily coexisting practices of the local society overwrites the ethnic cultural, and lifestyle differences. In regards of relationships, the constant traverse of the borders of ethnic community can be seen in order to operate the coexistence, instead of highlighting the differences. That is an important value of the settlement's social life and takes shape in a distinctive local model.

The affirmative practice of coexistence observed in Hodász can be effectively described by the usage of two operational concepts: structural integration and amalgamation. These processes create the so-called "transethnic corridors" between the ethnic sub-communities, facilitating communication, cooperation, and positive intergroup relations. These factors ensure that the inter-ethnic coexistence is not merely "living side-by-side" but a locally functioning interpersonal social network which interweaves the village community. Through numerous mixed marriages, a "bridge" is created between the ethnic sub-communities which ease the borders that separate the cultures. Based on the results of research conducted in the settlement, the institution of mixed marriage does not primarily function as a means of social mobility, and it does not imply that either spouse enters the relationship in pursuit of potential social prestige gains. That also results that the mixed marriage does not automatically mean the abandonment of the ethnic identity and the persons concerned do not become victims of social exclusion by any of the ethnic sub-community involved.

In summary, we can observe that the affirmative relational ties – specifically the effect of mixed marriage – bring the groups to a structurally similar level, while culturally they continue to follow distinct patterns.

We made the movie *Sokat tanulhatunk egymástól* (*We can learn a lot from each other*) in Hodász in which we give an example how an effective and cooperative co-worker relationship can be possible

between a Roma and a non-Roma kindergarten teacher. An important scene in the movie being presented occurs when the manager of the rural kindergarten – surprised by the question – explains that it is not unusual to employ a Roma pedagogue at the institution. According to them, it is a natural process.

Another important scene in the movie occurs when the Hungarian mother shares her experiences when she first realised that her preschool child learns the Romani language at the kindergarten. Her reaction was positive about this situation because at the settlement, Hungarians and Roma live side-by-side, so why cannot her child learn their language so they can make connection with the Roma easier.

The movie also features a couple in a mixed relationship, who suggest that we can learn a lot from each other. Their coexistence, which can be described as an affirmative relational tie, originates partly from mutual dependence and partly from experiencing similar life situations in comparable ways. The movie shows that, according to the characters, people are not as different from one another as they usually perceived to be from an external perspective and through stereotypical assumptions.

If we put the example on a national level, we can see that alongside the growing awareness of the need for social integration among members of the majority society, perceived uncertainty and threat regarding the minority group also intensify. These are described as potential risk to their group identity, value system and norms or rather the source of uncertainty. The fear in this context serves as a psychological self-reflection that reinforces prejudice (Bahns, 2017).

In Hungarian–Roma coexistence context, the functioning majority community is typically shaped by active and symbolic practices aimed at maintaining higher social status and leadership positions. Accordingly, the majority seeks, both

consciously and unconsciously, to preserve their integrity by ensuring, through all available means, the hierarchical relation with the coexisting Roma minority considered as a “threatening group”.

If the majority society is confronted somebody from a prejudicially stigmatized group achieving a position that contradicts biased expectations and implies a comparable social status – as in the Hodász example, a Roma person becomes a kindergarten teacher –, two kinds of reaction are induced. On the one hand, the feeling of uncertainty is intensified because approaches different from the existing stereotypes should be introduced to understand the process successfully, which is rarely possible because of the information deficit of the majority about the minority. The example which challenges prejudices often induces the opposite effect: the social mobility and the associated higher social status, considered as the precondition for integration, can intensify the prejudice-based attitude within the majority society. Based on field research, the majority does not perceive the positive changes in the minority’s social status as an incentive to reconsider prejudice-based attitudes. Rather, such changes often lead to reinforced exclusionary strategies, generate social closure instead of prompting reflection on the potential benefits of the positive shift (Szabó H., 2024).

The majority often interprets the successful mobility and the higher social status of minority members through the lens of “the exception proves the rule” principle. Some “good examples” may fit into their prejudiced attitude they maintain and enact. We can see a challenging example in the society of Hodász.

The constructed Roma image and its impact on social integration, or the determining impact of the prejudice on the individual

The general Roma image, widespread in the majority society and shaping everyday perceptions,

and often detectable even in the scientific thinking, is a constructed scheme that, although partly based on real experiences, presents the status of Roma communities in a simplified and disfigured manner.

Hence, it is difficult to overcome the habitual patterns of thinking rooted in generalization and everyday experience, and to resist the tendency to identify an individual, based on their outward appearance, with the characteristics attributed to their group.

The thinking of the majority is shaped by stereotypes not only at the community level but also at an individual level, which determine the content of the opinion. Perceptions of an individual who appears as a Roma are shaped by the beliefs we hold about the Roma as a group. The extension of general characteristics attributed to a community onto individual, in the case of Roma people, the description of stereotypical stigmatization is not a new phenomenon. It represents a recurrent and well-documented theme in the social sciences, recalling for instance Edward Said’s concept of Orientalism (Said, 2000). On the contrary, its actuality is unquestionable if we approach to the issue from the perspective of its impact on social life.

Regarding to the story outlined in the introduction, this reflects the expectation, based on the first impressions, it is supposed that the young Roma woman will have a baby at her teenage years, remain uneducated, live in miserable housing conditions, be unable to have an ordinary life since this is determined by her origin, and her children’s home and foster family background. However, every aspect of the young woman’s story contradicts the constructed Roma image which is ascribed to her. It is reasonable to ask how and why this is possible.

In the following, we analyse some consequences of prejudiced thinking for individuals as illustrated by the documentary series: *“Kik va-gyunk... és miért?”* (“Who we are... and why?”) made by AntRom Filmműhely.

The social expectations and Roma female fate

The protagonist's life path and the immediate environment as presented and analysed in the documentary *A hagyomány árnyékában (In the shadows of the tradition)* (Biczó és Szabó, 2018) challenges the average expectations regarding the advancement, integration, and labour market status of Roma living in our country. The protagonist is a young woman with Olah Roma background, who could shape her future using the opportunities given by the musical career with her talent, exceptional voice, and only focusing solely on making money, but she decided to act differently. She demonstrates awareness, perseverance, and determination when she resists the temptation of an easier career and the advantages of fame, choosing instead the more difficult path, marked by further prejudices based on her previous experiences, and pursues higher education.

In her case, the social disadvantage factors based on her status and background can be observed in the majority stereotypes. A non-exhaustive list: early parenthood, marriage, early school-leaving, social exposure and exclusion, unemployment, and its transmission, inequality of opportunities, and a future without prospects (comp. Janky, 1999; Janky, 2005; Maszlag, 2022; Durst, 2007; Szabó L., 2022). At first, the determinations may seem exaggerated, but based on field experiences and research results, the accumulation of the attributed stereotypical expectations attributed to Roma women living in a closed, traditional community is not an exaggeration. In such communities, the externally imposed system of expectations deeply influences women's life paths, coming not only from the majority society but also from men of their own minority environment (comp. Biczó, 2019).

However, the protagonist of the movie in the example resists the stereotypical expectations towards her, deliberately concentrates on her education. She attended a secondary school where she

had to persist as the only student with a Roma background. Her immediate family provided significant support: even the grandparents' generation also encouraged her to continue her education and be persistent that they regarded the foundation of stable existence and freedom. However, as the movie reveals, her story was far from smooth. Her endurance by her decision was not easy as it challenged the expectations of the external environment, and even the values system of her own broader micro environment (segregate). That was not easy.

The first unsuccessful university entrance attempt, followed by a repeated final exam, logically fits into the challenges arising from her personal life choices. The movie traces the consistent pursuit of these goals all the way to the point of graduation, when the dreams of the protagonist and her family are realized: "We are all now focused on getting that degree, being the first Roma in Nyírvásvári to do so." (Biczó és Szabó, 2018)

The story of her life path is the dilemma of determination factors and its result as inner conflict. The narrative is the conscious attitude against the known stereotypes which is supported by the desire for individual prosperity and the social responsibility. The protagonist's argument and attitude against the determinations are constantly expressed. For instance, she interprets the intense prejudice expressed by the majority in social media (in the form of negative comments) as one of the factors that contributed to the strengthening and conscious affirmation of her Roma identity. "We are considered different", so in her interpretation, the stereotyping practices of the majority evoke and render inevitably a conscious assertion of identity as a form of resistance to the expectations associated with prejudice (Biczó és Szabó, 2018). Her proud reference to her mother tongue (cerhári dialect) and to the wonderful culture is the conscious refusal of the stereotypes which partly refer to these.

The story draws attention to the fact that resistance to determinism carries significance not only on the level of individual personality, but also in a broader social and cultural context. The consistently expressed social responsibility toward her whole community is also important in the protagonist's argument.

In a scene, the young Roma university student visits her formal school where she speaks about her fate at a homeroom at her formal teacher's class. She expresses an important thought to the students about a successful university career, besides the support of the environment. The commitment to deliberate planning and consistent pursuit of life goals also represents a denial of determinism, serving as an example for the children sitting in the classroom.

Determinant impact of social expectations on Roma men

The researches deals with examining the situation of Roma women in a larger rate than the situation of Roma men. The aim of this brief subsection is not to reveal the reasons behind this phenomenon, rather we would like to the fact draw attention to the possibilities of Roma men to integrate and succeed in society are equally shaped by prejudice as in the case of women.

The person selected to present our example is the protagonist of the documentary *movie Mi lett volna ha (What if)* made by AntRom Filmműhely. (Biczó és Szabó, 2022) His life path is a model example of the accumulation of the intersectional disadvantage factors. His father was imprisoned, he lost his mother at a young age, he experienced exclusion and serious segregation based on his background which resulted in harsh living conditions for a period of time. Not going into details, we would expect a life based on the difficult fate experienced since the early period of socialization that was also expressed by his teachers about his future as a determinant expectation: "I was

constantly confirmed in the belief that I will be a jailbird. I wouldn't achieve anything in my life. And this was expressed several times publicly in the class." (Biczó és Szabó, 2022)

The majority perception in this case manifested in the teacher's prejudice-driven interpretation, did not become a self-fulfilling prophecy regarding the student's future. It did not become a determination in spite of the origin, the discrimination based on the family and social background, the vulnerability and repression which was sometimes followed by physical violence.

The protagonist's fate in the movie completely contradicted the version which was imagined based on assumptions and prejudiced expectations. In the movie, the viewers can follow how he successfully completed his higher education, find a job, and began an independent life after earning a university degree. It could be described as an exceptional story of success, as many interpret it that way. However, that is more than a mere exception or coincidence.

The life story of the young Roma man is the narrative of constant struggle which subject is the method how he could manage with the prejudices based on his background and its consequences. In his case, the distinct external anthropological racial features appeared as a recurring disadvantage, even at the very beginning of his independent adult life, when he first started looking for a job. He has to face the fact that, as a Roma, he is judged not by his knowledge, abilities or his professional competence by his background and the deterministic stereotypes prevalent in the majority. He says that once he applied to a hotel as a receptionist, he did not get the job because of his appearance; however, he met all the requirements for applicants. The employer did not conceal the reason of the rejection: he was afraid "if a Hungarian family arrives and sees that a black gypsy lad is sitting behind the counter, they may rather leave." (Biczó és Szabó, 2022)

Despite all this, the protagonist did not give up, and after earning a degree, he looked for a job more closely connected to his university studies, and eventually finding employment as a social pedagogue. The movie narrative reveals the long term process that makes visible how the individual can overcome the social and environmental determinants. All of this occurs with the awareness that his struggle is a continuous process, never fully concluded, as racist stereotypes reappear in each new life situation, regardless of how successfully he may have managed them previously.

Summary

The outlined social and individual examples, the cases of *dethronement of determination*, sounds exceptions, and this is partly true. Moreover, beyond their exemplary nature, the presented stories demonstrate that, in coexistence situations of varying characteristics, both the individuals and the communities are capable of overcoming the constraints imposed by circumstances. The cases of the briefly analysed local social examples and individual life paths proves that the structure of the coexisting situations determined by the *particular* circumstances of the ethnicity may be similar, however, they produces the diverse practices of adaptation.

At the AntRom Filmműhely, and in our work as sociologists, we see our task as presenting these individuals and giving voice to those who have little opportunity to do so. Discovered and interpreted the community processes that characterize the coexistence situations of the Roma and/or disadvantaged, we think that practice of managing the determinants, attributed to their life, contains important information for the majority. The individual and community stories treated in the movies of the AntRom Filmműhely draws attention to and assign the themes which we have to (or should) talk about in connection with the Roma-Non-Roma coexistence. The patterns of ethnic coexistence are differ fundamentally. Analyses conducted

using an anthropological approach and from an emic position have practical significance. They may contribute to the development of effective policies aimed at improving the quality of ethnic coexistence. Furthermore, they can inform applied social science research and development initiatives. Finally, the results may help redefine the phrasing through which the issue of Roma–non-Roma coexistence is approached, taking as a starting point cases capable of dethroning determinism. The true story of the case study, presented in the introduction and later referred to in the analyses, makes visible an example of overcoming of social determinants. It also shows that such cases are not exceptional due to the absence of a general theory explaining when and how people can overcome social determinism, but simply because the very fact that it can happen is exceptional in itself.

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