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**Analysis of public elementary education in
selected municipalities of the historical Heves
county between 1868 and 1901**

Theses of doctoral (PhD) dissertation

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Introduction

The main objective of the dissertation is to produce a comprehensive work on the history of public education in Heves county in the selected period. Due to the limitations and characteristic features of the doctoral dissertation, it would have been almost impossible to analyse the whole county so I conducted the research on a limited sample but, at the same time, I aimed at drawing conclusions that would contribute significantly to the knowledge of the county's education system and to outline the tendencies, taking into consideration national trends and previous researches and reviewing their results. This required a considerable amount of source identification and source processing: consequently, in addition to the literature review, hundreds of primary archival sources were processed during the research. Many of these are previously unused, unexplored archival sources. This also means that the dissertation came into existence after a basic research which can be further used and its results can also be put into more and more new contexts.

Reasoning and relevance of the topic

The era of modern schooling began in the 18th century but it gained momentum in the 19th century and fully developed in the early 20th century. This process is considered to be a global phenomenon, not exclusively Hungarian. We can talk about an emergence because schooling was not constructed, i.e. it was not created and developed solely by external political will, and it is not a completely self-righteous process driven by internal forces. Rather, it is the result of a combination and completion of external and internal factors.

Within the history of education, the research is mainly concerned with the history of schooling, the sociology of education and the history of professions. In the research, I analysed the public educational situation of those municipalities of the historical Heves County which, according to the data of the 1869 census, had a population of between 2000 and 4000 inhabitants. An exception to this was the village of Pély, which had a population of only 1,950 in 1869, but its extensive school records have certainly contributed to the detailed picture of the public

education conditions in the municipalities of the county between 1868 and 1901. Moreover, according to the data of the 1880 census, the population of Pély already exceeded 2,000 people. As the starting date of the research, I chose an important milestone of the Hungarian national education, the entry into force of the National Schools Act of 1868, and as the closing date I chose the year of 1901 because in the school year of 1899/1900, the royal inspector of the education of Heves county made a census in which he listed the shortcomings of the county's schools in terms of staff and equipment. In 1901, the royal inspector of education submitted a report to the Administrative Committee of Heves County on the correction or refutation of these deficiencies which, at the same time, gave us an insight into the inner world of the county's public schools. The sample is thus narrower than all municipalities in the county but large enough to show us general trends. The sample included 22 municipalities belonging to several dioceses from an ecclesiastical point of view so it was also possible to draw parallels between the actions of the different ecclesiastical authorities. The earlier works on public education in Heves County present

only a general overview of the county's educational system, but do not discuss the conditions in the public schools of the individual villages. In my research I have tried to fill this gap. The situation and state of education is still a topical issue these days, so it is important to explore and understand the historical processes as accurately as possible.

Structure and objectives of the dissertation

The first part of the paper focuses on the research background and methods in which I have reviewed the domestic research tradition and the relevant background of domestic educational history writing.

In the second major section of the dissertation, I analysed the antecedents of the development of the institutional system of public education in a national context. I have reviewed the development of the education system from its beginnings until the start of the narrow research period, 1868.

Third, I examined the path towards the creation of the 1868 National Schools Act of 1868 and the spirit and impact of the subsequent law.

This is followed by the section that contains parts closely related to the narrow research topic. First, I presented an overview of the history of education in Heves County up until the Austro-Hungarian Compromise of 1867. Although this is only an antecedent of the topic, it is

already necessary to include primary sources in the analysis.

The narrow topic of the title is discussed in detail in the fifth major section of the dissertation. In this section, I have reviewed the personnel conditions of schools including the history of the profession, the expansion and remuneration of teaching jobs and the phenomenon of feminisation.

This is followed by an analysis of the infrastructure conditions paying special attention to the construction and extension of school buildings and the equipment of classrooms.

In the last major chapter, I examined the issues of educational effectiveness within which I included school attendance rates, statistical analysis of student progress, and the effectiveness of literacy.

Thesis questions and sources

Initially, I formulated the following thesis questions and along these, I identified the directions of the research as well:

- What impact has the National Schools Act of 1868 had on schooling conditions (maintenance, infrastructure, etc.) in the municipalities concerned?
- To what extent can the expansion of education in the given municipalities be considered successful, i.e. is there an increase in the willingness to go to school?
- I was also looking for an answer to the following question: in a county where there was an archdiocese, how committed was the political community to education and how willing was it to establish public schools?
- I hypothesized that there is a strong correlation between pedagogical spaces and student performance: therefore, I am looking for an answer to the following question: is there a

relationship between the condition and equipment of the public school building and student performance?

- How many qualified public teachers were there in the municipalities concerned, and to what extent did their presence influence student performance?

To be able to answer all these questions, I used school registers, progress and absence sheets, church and school visiting records, teacher income statements, reports of school inspectors and correspondence as primary archival sources. As I included parish records documents of deputy lieutenants in my research, I was able to work with blueprints, teacher's fees and school inventories as well. Of course, it was also necessary to review the legislation and the press of the time which I compared with the archival source material.

Research methods

My research methods include the exploration and analysis of literature but I also used source analysis and source criticism as the classical methods of historiography. Within this framework, I finalised the exploration of the relevant source material. In order to be able to detect and correct inaccuracies and inconsistencies, I used source criticism and the inclusion of control sources was also a crucial part of this phase.

During the analysis of contemporary press and legislation, I used not only the methodological elements of source analysis, but also those of document analysis as these are contemporary sources and documents at the same time. As a research method, I also used statistical data analysis with the IBM SPSS Statistics 24 software. The charts presented in this paper were created with Microsoft Excel.

Scientific results of the thesis

One of the major and original scientific achievements of the paper is the exploration and processing of primary archival sources. By researching in several archives in several cities, I managed to find and process source material that was previously unknown and there was no sign of them in the literature and scientific publications that I have known and processed.

The research also involved the digitisation of school registers, progress and absence sheets. I created a database as well which aims to save sources as much of the processed material had been in very poor condition. From an archival point of view, the research thus also serves conservation purposes. A repository of digitised data is included as an annex to this paper while the resulting database could form the basis for further research as well. In addition, the database can also be used in the field of educational science and in public education, for example in the field of archival pedagogy. Last but not least, the database can also be useful in the teaching of civic education introduced by NAT 2020.

As far as the history of education is concerned, a report on the people who taught in these schools is of paramount importance. A summary similar to this report does not exist in an organised form so I have compiled it by comparing several different types of sources. All this can be of great help and support for future research about the history of professions and the history of education. The teachers' repository can also be used for didactic purposes in archival education, family history and in other activities as well. In other words, many elements of the thesis results can be used in the field of pedagogy beyond the history of education.

Further research directives and opportunities

During the preparation phase of the dissertation, it became clear that the topic opens up many avenues for further research. A possible further research directive may concentrate on extending the research period to the late phase of dualism.

For reasons of space, the study of repetition education has not been included in the dissertation. However, the relevant material makes it possible to change the depth of the research and to explore the characteristics of the missing repetition education in a detailed way.

In addition to the temporal limits, it is also possible to extend the research sample by including towns or small villages. This way, the research would be even more comprehensive although this account is beyond the level of a doctoral dissertation or even a single large monograph.

Another possible area of research is the detailed study of sociological issues in education by paying special attention to the sociological status of teachers, pupils and

the exact changes in their status. In the longer term, it is also possible to create an archontology of public education teachers and career analyses.

The role of the state, the regulation of education and the question of the maintainers' rights would also be beneficial areas for further research, but for reasons of space I could only partially address these issues in the thesis.

The analysis of curricula, textbooks and teacher's handbooks as well as the exploration and presentation of their local application can also provide several useful contributions to the research of the history of public education however, they shall also be part of another paper.

The candidate's list of publications

The full list is available here:

<https://m2.mtmt.hu/gui2/?type=authors&mode=browse&sel=authors10043689>

1. Ádám Mészáros

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Heves Megyei Levéltára (2023) pp. 303-336., 34 p.

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https://mnl.gov.hu/mnl/hml/hirek/pusztai_iskolak_nyomaban

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5. Ádám Mészáros

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6. Ádám Mészáros

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szakmások a dualizmus korában.
ISKOLAKULTÚRA: PEDAGÓGUSOK
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11 pp. 110-112., 3 p. (2020)

7. Ádám Mészáros

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KÖZLEMÉNYEK (2012)- 57: 2 pp. 23-27., 5 p.
(2017)

8. Ádám Mészáros

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9. Ádám Mészáros

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években. HONISMERET 3 pp. 10-11., 2 p. (2016)

10. Ádám Mészáros

Az elemi népoktatás viszontagságai a XIX. század
második felében a korabeli törvények tükrében egy
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