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Community and Social Capital in Hungarian Denominational Schools Today

Introduction

Church schools have played a fundamental role in Hungarian education for centuries. The collaboration between church and state was characterised by co-operation and a division of tasks. As a result of the Communist takeover, however, church schools were nationalized in 1948. Only 10 of them were allowed to exist under strict constraints, mainly as a display for the West. Nevertheless, in the wake of political change, the early 1990s witnessed a flurry of founding or the re-establishment of church schools. Naturally, the phenomenon became a focus of general interest, and though heated public debate addressed even issues of what had been going on behind the scenes in the 1980s, little unambiguous evidence on the social background and pupil achievements of these schools has been established. Now that the "warlike atmosphere" of disputes over schools has abated, the aim of this paper is to contribute to the study of the social function of denominational schools in the Hungarian educational system. With the following empirical analysis, the author seeks to contribute to rational discussion on church schools.
As a result of the expansion of secondary education, the majority of teenagers attend secondary schools. Selection during and after this level determines the prospects of further education and thereby the future social status of the pupils. Denominational secondary schools have become a very interesting field of study, as the few institutions that were allowed to operate under the former regime attained considerable social esteem. In the 1990s, the number of these schools increased, implying a continued demand for such institutions. The main goal of this research is to reveal, on the one hand, the social expectations regarding denominational institutes of secondary education, and, on the other hand, how these social expectations are fulfilled.
It is widely believed that the majority of denominational schools are elite establishments mostly attended by pupils with favourable social backgrounds. Supposing, however, that church-run institutes of education are used by people who are religious in the church-adhering sense of the word—but who, according to research data, have been less qualified and have worked in jobs of lower esteem until most recently—, similar indicators should be found with regard to the social backgrounds of denominational pupils. Nevertheless, if the latter statement is true, what is the reason for the high university acceptance rate among denominational pupils, as confirmed by statistics?

Data

This article is grounded in empirical research based on a survey conducted among denominational secondary school pupils in 1999. After describing the pupils'

religiousness and social background, it analyses their extra-curricular and school achievements and their motivations concerning the choice of school. Titled "The Interactions between Family and School Socialization among Pupils at Denominational Schools"[1], the research project was a nationwide survey investigating representative samples of school-leavers. Using the information provided by the Ministry of Education and church pedagogical institutions, we made a multi-step stratified, group sampling (according to denomination, region and the type and the size settlement where the school has its seat). Pupils filled in the questionnaires by themselves with the help of interviewers. The data thus gathered were analysed with single and multivariable statistical methods.

Religiousness in the Families of Denominational Pupils

When comparing religiousness data on denominational grammar school pupils' parents to those of the entire population belonging to the same age group, it is noteworthy that the former group is far more religious. To illustrate this, we compared the data on churchgoing provided by the Monitor '98 survey to the data provided by denominational pupils about their parents. In Hungarian society, 10-15 percent of the middle-aged population goes to church regularly, whereas, in our sample, one-third of the fathers and more than half of the mothers do.
Accordingly, it can be stated that denominational schools are chosen by a definitely and actively religious and church-adhering strata, and they transmit a specific culture in a pluralistic society. Another conclusion that can be drawn from these data, however, is that the pupils of denominational secondary schools do not exclusively come from church-going religious families, implying that denominational schools are more than merely schools for a religious minority.

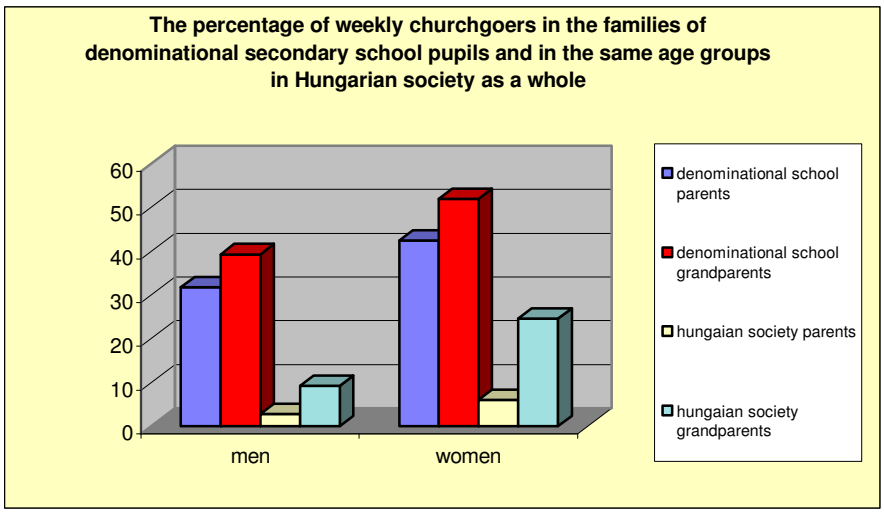

Figure 1.

Comparing the generations, we can observe not only that the families of denominational grammar school pupils are more religious than society as a whole, but also that the generation gap in these families is not as wide as is typically the case. This suggests that

[1] The research project, no. F 22476, was financed by OTKA. This article was written with support from a János Bolyai Research Scholarship granted by the Hungarian Academy of Sciences.

the religious persecution under the Communist regime left no significant mark on these families. In fact, the majority of these families considered it very important that they should take part in church ceremonies such as First Communion or Confirmation in the period when religiousness was approaching its lowest level in Hungary.

Types of Family Religiousness

In the survey, the pupils themselves classified their parents into different types of religiousness. Attending church schools, and thus equipped with a fair grasp of religious knowledge, the teenagers can be assumed to set a higher standard than their parents in this respect. That is why it is also advisable to examine religiousness in several dimensions, and to analyse the concrete manifestations of individual and communal religious practice together. For reasons of methodology and brevity, the survey mainly focused on religious group membership and religious orientation with the help of a number of variables. With this multidimensional approach, we managed to relate the categories to their real content, i.e. to the manifestations of religiousness.

In addition, it was not by looking at separate individuals that we tried to get a picture of the religious climate in the pupils' families but by examining married couples and multigenerational families. Parents' behaviour is essential in this respect, too, as it is primarily their cooperation that can create a community based on effective norms. Further shades are added to the picture by the siblings' and grandparents' contribution. For our investigation, we therefore first used cluster analysis to identify family types based on the parents' religious behaviour, and then we observed the behaviour of the older and younger generations in the given types. We could thus separate three basic types of religious climate in families: homogeneously religious families, families who do not practise their religion, and heterogeneously religious families.[2]

Nearly 40 percent of the sample counts for homogeneously religious families. In these families, both parents go to church and pray regularly, and actively participate in church services—e.g., by taking communion. Their circle of friends comprises mostly religious people. With regard to their grandparents' generation, the intensity of religiousness seems to be increasing or at least continuous in this group. It was in this grouping that pupils most often remembered some of their family members having been prosecuted for political or religious reasons. The majority of siblings go to church weekly, and the proportion of those who pray regularly is high even among those who do not or did not go to denominational schools. This suggests that intense religiousness can be regarded as a result of domestic socialization. Children were baptised in their infancy, and their religious education started before the age of 10. This family type is characterized by traditional, multigenerational and church-adhering religiousness, but a more modern type of micro-community worship is also significant. It seems that the children's socialization is made more effective by the long-lasting unity of the value systems of families and friends, as well as by the power of reference groups that strengthen each other through a similarity of norms (Merton 1980:508, Coleman 1990).

Forty-five percent of the families do not practise their religion, yet it would be incorrect to describe them as non-religious. Among this group, institutional worship is uncommon, but the majority demonstrate some signs of religiousness or religious practice. Scarcely any parents proved to be non-religious in any of the measured dimensions. The multidimensional approach to religiousness reduces the proportion of those who can be

[2] The above categories were established with the help of cluster analysis. The four basic variables we used referred to the churchgoing and praying habits of mothers and fathers.

considered as absolutely non-religious. This model comports well with what has become one of the most important characteristics of modern religiousness: it is restricted to private life in certain quarters of society. Yet it is interesting to observe that parents who do not take part in institutional religious practice themselves still choose denominational schools for their children in such a significant proportion. This type can be suitably described with the term 'cultural Christianity' borrowed from Yves Lambert's typology, because, apart from low religious activity, they are characterized by uncertain religiousness and low-level group membership (Földvári-Rosta 1998).

In these families, the parents either go to church irregularly or do not go at all. They do not belong to a local community, but on the few occasions they attend service, they receive communion. In this circle, religious activity in microcommunities is also atypical. Personal worship is more uncertain, too; the vast majority seldom pray. Typically, it is in this group that the children are the most uncertain when asked about their parents' religiousness, as this kind of religiousness is often likely to remain concealed even within the family. Presumably, this family type cannot socialize the children for religiousness as efficiently as the first type.

In this type, the previous generation can also be described as non-practising. It appears that the original families of the parents were also characterized by an uncertain religious climate. So this is not the case of jettisoning religion gradually from one generation to another but of a traditionally non-churchy religiousness. This phenomenon can be detected among the youngest generation whose religious activity is sporadic, their churchgoing rare. The relative intensity of the pupils' own religious practice is due to the school environment rather than the family background. Essentially, without a school context, they are nevertheless non-practising.

Families of this type also had their children baptised in their infancy, and sent them for religious education before the age of 10. In this group, the only result of increasing religiousness in society has been institutionalized religious upbringing for children.

Less than one-sixth of the pupils live in heterogeneously religious families with only the mothers attending church and praying regularly. The mothers take communion, whereas the fathers most typically do not. Some of the mothers have a circle of religious friends, and they are also in touch with some kind of religious micro-community. Gender differences are also significant in the grandparents' generation. Obviously, this does not support the religious socialization of children, so the young generation's religious activity is not as high as in the first type.

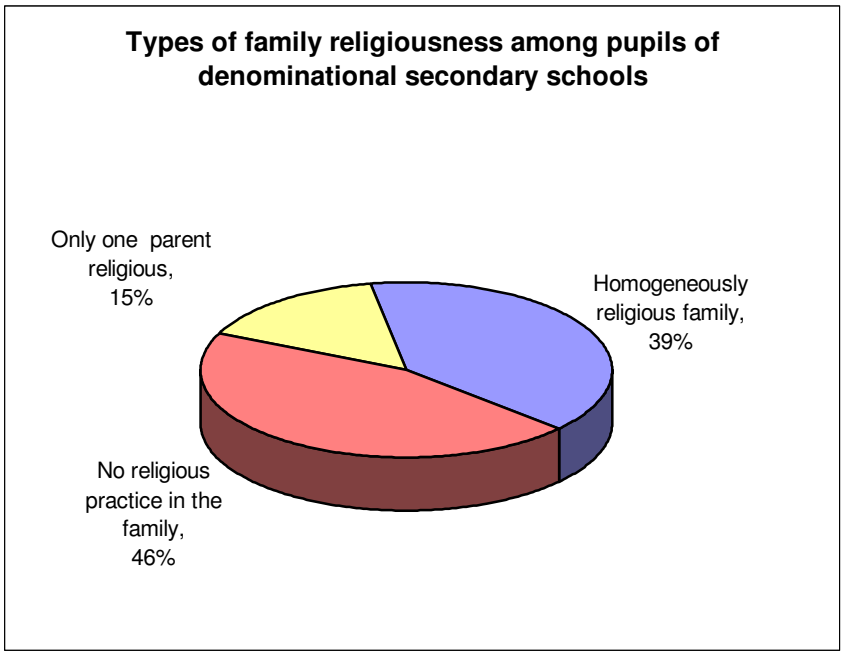

Figure 2.

It can be concluded from the corresponding figures that there is a continuity of tendencies rather than a gap between the generations. This suggests that certain societal groups have held on to their religious orientation under the former regime, and that, after the constitutional confirmation of the freedom of religious practice, religiousness has even increased in some circles. On the whole, it seems that the immediate family circle and close friends have a stronger influence on the new generation's religiousness than does the broader social environment.
Consequently, the limitations imposed on open religious practice undermined religiousness mainly in families without homogeneous intergenerational religiousness. Without these direct contacts, the religious socialization of the new generations has been ineffective.

The Social Background of Pupils

With regard to educational levels, the social background of denominational secondary school pupils seems to be superior to that of other secondary pupils: there are more highly qualified parents and fewer parents with definitely little schooling. Yet the considerable difference between the data collected in the capital and in the country shows that this phenomenon is not significant in rural areas. If we compare other indicators of social status, it appears that, among denominational pupils' parents, both the top and the bottom of the occupational structure are missing: there are fewer intellectuals in leading positions and fewer unskilled workers. In spite of their higher qualifications, denominational pupils' parents do not work in jobs of the highest prestige but rather in subordinate positions, a phenomenon which indicates that discrimination against religious people, typical under the former regime, remains a factor today. There are a larger number of self-employed persons or entrepreneurs among the parents, but our research data show that these people were forced to set up their own businesses to avoid unemployment.

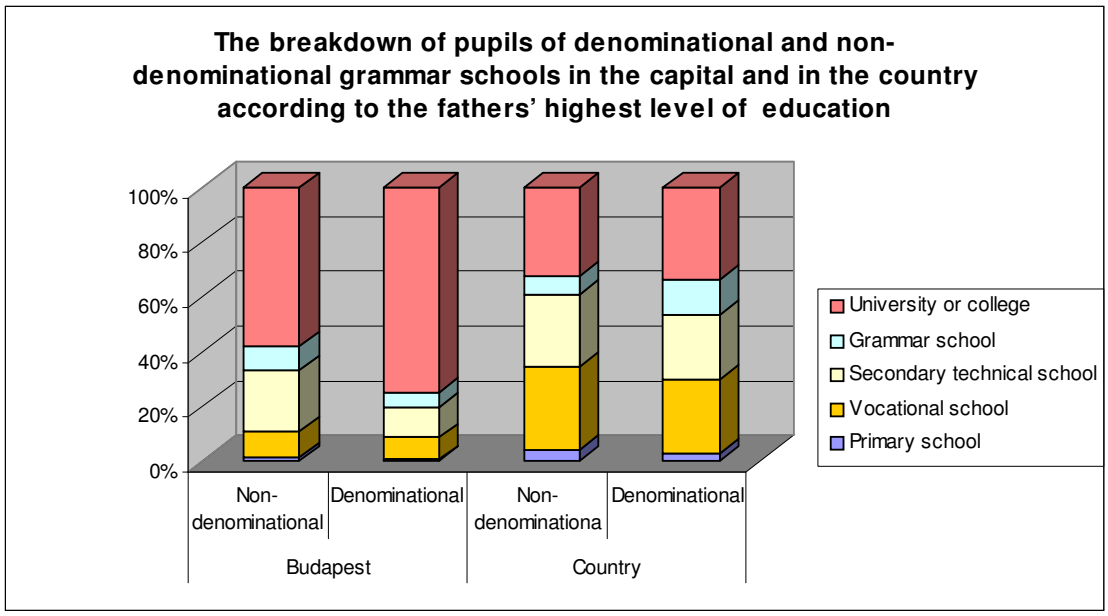

Figure 3.

There is a significantly positive correlation between religiousness and education in this sample as well, but, unlike society as a whole, the proportion of people with university or college degrees among church-adhering religious parents is above average, and so is the proportion of absolutely unqualified people among non-religious parents. This correlation holds true in all dimensions of religiousness or religious practice.

To sum up, a large proportion of denominational pupils' parents are religious adhering to church practices: they go to church weekly, pray regularly, take part in services, socialize with other religious people, and, moreover, are highly qualified: mainly with higher education degrees, less typically with certificates of secondary education. It is worth noting that, among parents taking part in the activity of religious micro-communities, there are hardly any without at least secondary education.

The regional differences in the social makeup of denominational secondary school pupils reflect the inequalities in education and urbanization in regional societies; so, in other words, denominational schools are not chosen by the elite, but their users' social backgrounds fit into the social structure of the given region. In the sample, compared with non-denominational schools, the proportion of pupils coming from cities is lower, and that of pupils coming from small towns and villages is higher. Denominational schools have more boarding facilities, so they can admit more children from rural areas, thereby reducing inequalities arising from different places of residence. In denominational pupils' families, the average number of children (2.36) is far above the Hungarian average, which is 1.9 in the same parent age group. In the sample, almost 40 percent of parents with a higher education degree have three or more children. As the average number of children is even higher in homogeneously religious families (2.67), we interpreted this as an indicator of the consequential dimension of religiousness.

Because of the increasing complexity of the picture attained when exploring the correlations between education, occupation, place of residence and religiousness, it became necessary to identify family types. The aim of the multidimensional cluster analysis was to identify groups on the basis of similarities in the examined factors so that we could describe the social background of denominational pupils' families more precisely. The variables we used in the classification were the following: the parents'

education, cultural consumption, financial status, place of residence, and their individual and communal religious practice. During the analysis, we were able to outline six sociologically relevant basic types.

Every fifth pupil comes from a "worldly intellectual" milieu. All the families of this group live in an urban area, and many live in the capital. The majority of the parents, who have higher education degrees, are professionals, engineers, economists, doctors, lawyers, or teachers. Slightly more than one-fourth of the mothers and more than half of the fathers hold leading posts. Few of them assume roles in civil public life, and do not take part in the public life of the church at all. These families are the most well-to-do in the sample. The domestic cultural environment and the parents' readings are educated in a worldly sense. They are predominantly families with two children. Pupils of Protestant schools are overrepresented in this group. In the opinion of majority, the value systems of their schools and their families have only one or two common points, an observation that is also supported by the picture we gained about their religious practice. These families do not have a religious climate, and the children regard their parents as religious in their own way or non-religious. At most, half of the parents and grandparents go to church occasionally, and an even lesser number prays. The parents' circle of friends mainly consists of non-religious people; they do not belong to any micro-communities, and neither do the pupils attend Christian youth groups. Among the pupils' friends, religious ones are in the minority. A large number of these families had their children baptised around the time the political system changed or before enrolling their children in a denominational school, or they made them attend religious education only before they started school there.

In our sample, this group of parents embodies the type of highly-qualified people also discussed in the literature (Tomka-Zulehner 1999) who put aside their otherwise not-too-intensive religious practices for the sake of their careers during the decades of socialism, but, since the political system changed, they seem to have returned to religion, and for some reason found denominational schools useful for their children.

Every tenth pupil comes from a "Weberian entrepreneur-citizen" milieu. The fathers are skilled workers, technicians or run private businesses; the mothers are skilled workers, technicians or work in the services. The mothers often work as housewives or stay at home on child care allowance. Although no less well-to-do than the previous group, they do not perceive their financial situation to be improving unambiguously.

One-third of these pupils come from families with three or more children. Most of them are boarders or lodgers, or they often commute. Almost two-thirds of them go to Catholic schools. They feel that the value systems of their schools and their homes are similar or absolutely identical; the parents' views on religion are homogeneous, and the children unanimously regard both their parents as church-adhering religious persons. Most of their parents go to church every week, take communion in their respective communities, and pray regularly. The majority have religious friends, and forty percent take part in other community events apart from the weekly services. The brothers and sisters, half of whom go or have gone to a denominational school themselves, are nearly all weekly churchgoers. The pupils themselves have taken part in religious education since an early age, and they are also members of some Christian youth groups. Their circle of friends consists of mainly religious children.

This group is surprisingly active in public life: in every third family there is a member involved in civil public life, mostly in local politics. As far as their cultural consumption is concerned, they read mainly religious literature and popular science. The mothers are also fond of popular women's fiction.

Twelve percent of the sample can be regarded as belonging to an "uprooted peasant or working-class" milieu. In this group, a larger number than usual claim to have a lower standard of living than a decade ago. Their financial status is the worst in the sample. A large proportion of the fathers are skilled workers, technicians or run private businesses. The mothers are skilled or unskilled workers, and a lot of them are housewives. Every third father is economically inactive because of being invalid, an old-age pensioner or unemployed. An even fewer number of the mothers are economically active, being housewives, unemployed or invalid. In several families, both parents are economically inactive.

These families are usually village-dwellers, and the children are boarders. It is typical of their cultural environment that, among the parents, the majority are non-readers, and their children spend the most time, 2.86 hours per day on average, in front of the television. There are relatively fewer children in these families, the average number being two. One-fifth of the children complain of poverty, some also of the parents' alcoholism. Denominationally, they are also often mixed families.

The pupils are rather divided as to whether the value systems of their home and their school are similar or not. This uncertainty is due to their domestic religious climate, with the women more involved in religion and the men distanced from it. Half of the mothers go to church every month, whereas most fathers rarely, if ever, attend. Only the mothers practise their religion in a personal way. A downward religious mobility is characteristic of these families, having sent their children for religious education only directly before enrolling them in a denominational school.

Every fourth pupil comes from a confessing intellectual milieu. Their families are fairly well-to-do, though not to the same extent as members of the first type. The children also feel that their standard of living has risen definitely in recent years. Most of them live in the capital or other urban areas. The fathers are professionals, engineers, economists, doctors, teachers and clergymen; nearly one third of the mothers are teachers and the rest are doctors, pharmacists or work in banking. There are a few female pastors, as well. Over half of the fathers hold leading posts. Most of them were appointed during the past few years.

Apart from works of high culture, the parents' readings include religious literature, as well. Their children spend the least time, 1.72 hours per day on average, watching television. There is a civil public life figure in almost every second family, and in 40 percent of the families there is a lay or an ordained church official. In more than half of the families someone suffered political or religious persecution in during the period of the former regime. This is the family type with the highest number of children: 2.72 on average. There are three or more children in over 50 percent of these families. The proportion of Catholics and pupils at Catholic schools is above average. This family type also exhibits the most homogeneous religious climate; almost all fathers and mothers go to church every week, take communion and pray regularly. Compared to the previous generation, religious activity has basically increased in this group as well, although, under the given circumstances, the generation of the grandparents can also be described as active. The parents, whose friends are also religious, actively take part in Christian community events beyond the weekly church service. Nearly all of the pupils themselves pray regularly, have taken part in religious education from an early age, attend Christian youth groups and their circle of friends consists mainly of young religious people. In these families, the largest number of children have knowledge of a relative having been persecuted for political or religious reasons.

Every fifth pupil comes from a "passively, culturally religious" milieu. These families are below the financial level of the first two and the fourth types. They live in villages and

small towns. The number of economically inactive fathers, being either unemployed or invalid, is above average. Being mostly skilled workers, the fathers are predominantly self-employed. The mothers are skilled workers, technicians and subordinate white-collar workers. Compared to the sample average, the number of children is very low, whereas the number of families with one child is the highest. Only a few of the parents read books; if they do, they read everything from popular science to ephemeral novels. The religious climate has been heterogeneous for generations. Half of the mothers go to church weekly or monthly, but the fathers go much more rarely. The same applies to praying. Few parents have religious friends or connections with micro-communities. Catholic families are overrepresented in this group, but a lot of their children go to another denomination's school, so they are such Catholics for whom it is not essential to send their children to their own denomination's school.

Sixteen percent of the pupils can be associated with a "proletarianized non-religious" milieu. This group consists of poorer families than the previous one, faring worse than earlier. They mainly come from small towns. Many of these pupils regard their position as disadvantageous for a number of reasons such as poverty, the parents' alcoholism or their bad relationship with them.

Most of the fathers are skilled workers, technicians or run their own businesses, and the majority of the mothers are technicians at most. Most of the mothers are non-readers; if they are, they read ephemeral women's fiction, and the fathers might sometimes read thrillers. The children spend the second longest time, 2.82 hours per day on average, watching television. In this group the number of Reformed families is above average, and many of the families do not belong to any denomination. These families can basically be classified as non-religious: the parents going to church only rarely, if ever. One-third of the mothers pray but, on the whole, the fathers and the children do not. The parents had their children baptised only around the time or after the political system changed.

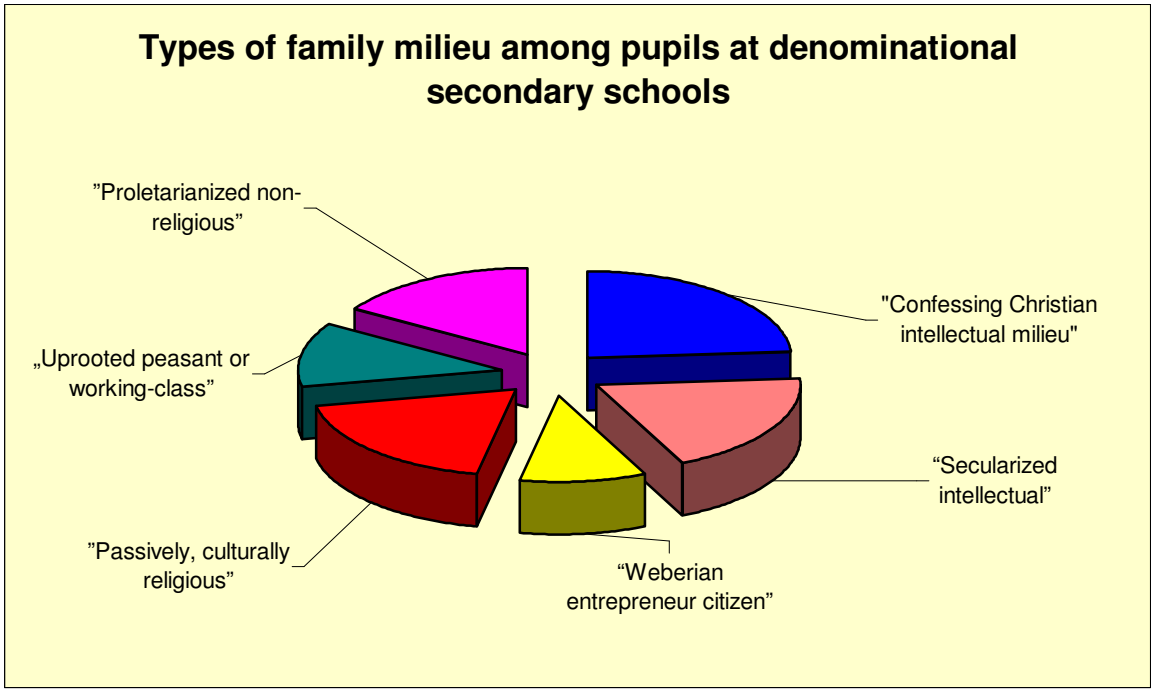

Figure 4.

The Decision about Higher Education

Though the social background of denominational pupils is not much more favourable on the whole, except in Budapest, than that of their non-denominational peers, denominational pupils with a disadvantaged family background express more definite plans for higher education. In denominational schools, 86% of the pupils interviewed plan to go on to higher education, whereas only 75% of average secondary school pupils do. In addition, many more denominational pupils apply for admission to prestigious universities than non-denominational pupils of similar social status. This difference has implications pointing beyond the differences of being supplied with cultural capital between denominational and non-denominational pupils (Pusztai 2001, Dronkers-Róbert 2004).

The picture is further refined if higher education aspirations of groups identified by the parents' level of education (Table 2) is considered. The children of highly qualified parents, of course, have more ambitious plans in both groups, but there is a striking difference among children of less educated parents. The high occurrence of intentions to go on to higher education among children of less educated parents in denominational schools is also significant because, in addition, they all go to school in the country. This leads us to the conclusion that the effects of social reproduction prevalent in this area, too, are reduced by some factor in the denominational sector.

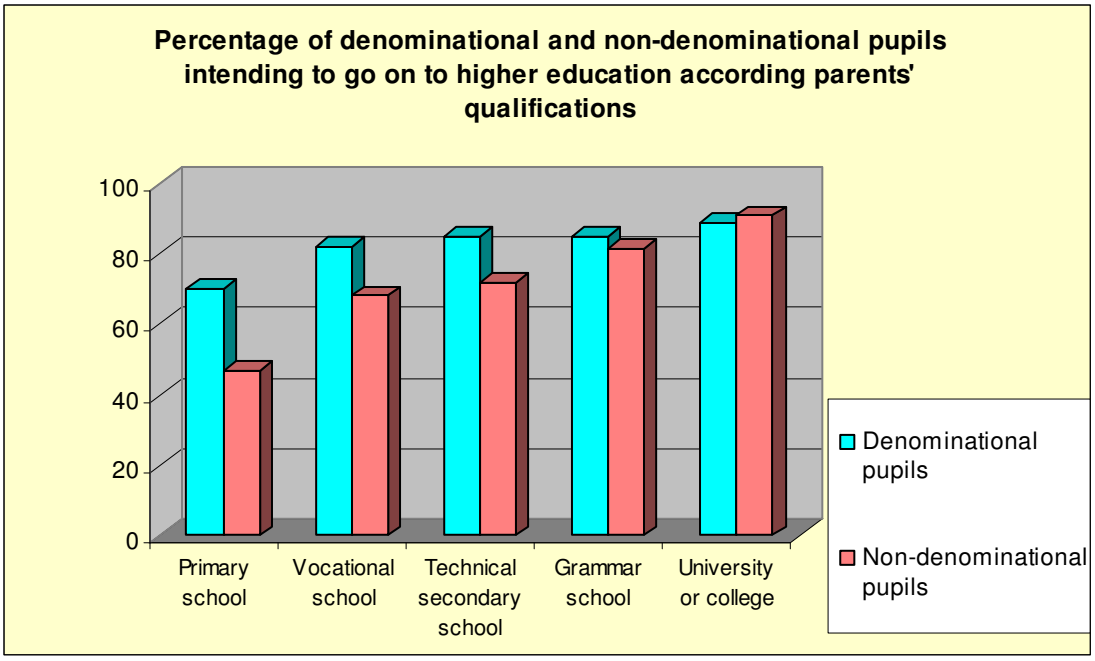

Figure 5.

According to Coleman's theory (1988), this factor is social capital, which, like other forms of capital, can be transformed into other kinds of capital—into, for instance, human or cultural capital. Social capital can take various forms: it can be based on exchange of favours and information or on norms generally accepted in a community. We have been familiar with the effects the exchange of information and favours have on one's career (Granovetter 1982, Putnam 1993), but it was Coleman who first pointed out the use of effective norms and closed structures of relations during one's career at school. The relationships creating social capital can be, with respect to form, structurally open or closed, intergenerational or intragenerational; with respect to duration, stable or less

stable. According to Coleman, as a result of both pupils' individual attributes, i.e. "student input" (Coleman et al. 1985), and the influence of the school community, i.e. "school effect" (Coleman et al. 1985), it is both dimensions of social capital, content and form, that account for the better achievement of denominational schools. The content element in these relationships is the clear set of norms resulting from religious faith. The formal element is the intergenerational closure of the school's community of pupils and parents, effective through preventing deviant behaviour and rewarding achievement. This is the empirical basis of Coleman's hypothesis that it is closed structures of relations based on effective norms that are most capable of creating social capital best convertible into human capital. Moreover, he maintains that this kind of closure of relations is capable of creating a larger amount of capital than any other resource (Coleman 1988).

Wanting to know whether it is cultural or social capital that better accounts for pupils' ambition to go on to higher education, we introduced some sets of variables referring to the former type of capital, and others referring to the latter. In Bourdieu's opinion (1983), cultural capital in the family can take several forms. To measure institutional cultural capital, as represented by educational titles, we combined the mother's and the father's highest level of education (Róbert 1986) into a dichotomous variable. An appropriate indicator of incorporated cultural capital can be the parents' cultural activity (Róbert 1986, Blaskó 1998). In the model, this is represented by an index summarizing the parents' habits of reading literary works. The concept of financial capital is also represented by a dichotomous variable, which selects children whose financial status is above average. As there was no absolutely distinct correlation between the parents' qualifications and their occupations in the sample, we included in our analysis yet another variable referring to parents holding intellectual or leading posts. Besides, we also found it necessary to include the place of residence as an important indicator of social status.

Examining the various factors that influence achievement at school, Coleman also broke down the effects of family background into different dimensions. As an average survey can hardly provide information about the existence of close relationships guided by effective norms within a family, Coleman uses the structural features of a family (number of children, the ratio of children to parents) as indicators of social capital in the family (Róbert 2001). Our database has made it possible for us to grasp the appearance of social capital in the family with the help of features of content rather than those of structure. Going back to Coleman's original conception, we measured this resource of capital with a dichotomous variable referring to the religious unity of the family. Another functional characteristic of structures of relations is that they also serve as channels of information, so we also included a variable referring to the family relationships that facilitate the flow of information about school, i.e. the existence of family members who formerly attended the same denominational school.

In his own empirical analysis, Coleman found that the greatest difference between schools maintained by different organizations is in the structure of relationships outside the family. He observed that it is pupils of denominational schools whose background relationships have the closest structure with the strongest cohesion: the parents connected to a given school belong to the same religious community, whereas, among non-church-run schools, he found no connections among parents belonging to the same school. He claims that this closed structure helps enforce norms that stimulate achievement. This suggests that the criteria of content and form are interrelated in this case, too. As the debates about the Coleman hypothesis have been focused around the verification of these criteria, it is worth looking at the features of content and form in the structure separately. From the point of view of the content of the relations, a local religious community is undoubtedly based on essentially similar norms. People of different social status

cooperate rather than compete. Typically, this structure is socially open, so becoming a member is not rendered difficult by demographical or other filters such as gender, age, education, place of residence, so it is not a selective network. As to the closeness of the ties, it is rather like involvement in other voluntary organisations: it is a network of loose ties characterised by transitivity—the high probability of connection between those who have not been directly related before—and multiplexity—the possibility of the primary relationship being used in other situations. We can illustrate the effects of the social capital thus created in several ways, for example by introducing a variable indicating the families' embeddedness in the local church community.

According to Coleman, formal closure is a typical structural property of social relations based on common and effective norms (1988:105). Norms are only effective if the structure is closed enough for the members to be able to combine forces for possible sanctions. The closed structure with an opposite content may, of course, have an influence pointing to another direction: the pupil may become embedded in such a community of contemporaries that does not support his or her work at school and does not regard studying as best one can as a moral duty or as a useful investment (Portes-Landolf 1996). A religious community can be presumed to agree on the duties of its members (Weber 1982). The element meeting both the formal and content demands of Coleman's concept of closure is, at the intragenerational level (Coleman 1990), the homogeneous religious makeup of a pupils' circle of friends.

According to Morenoff et al. (1999), collective effectiveness is a result of the intergenerational consensus on norms, whereas Coleman uses the term "intergenerational closure" for the more complex structure involving parents and children who, through their relationships outside the family, form a network in which the children's behaviour among themselves reinforces the norms interiorized in the family. As a result, norm-related sanctions become more effective, and the young generation's behaviour can be monitored extensively and effectively. This element of Coleman's hypothesis, which has been interpreted in several ways, is present both at individual and school levels; and, at the individual level, it can be interpreted as the predominantly religious makeup of the parents' circle of friends.

The toponymical character of various forms of capital (Kelly 1995), i.e. their dependence on concrete location, also supports the examination of the effect of explanatory variables at the contextual level. In his theoretical argumentation, Coleman makes it quite clear that "unlike other forms of capital, social capital inheres in the structure of relation between persons and among persons. It is lodged neither in individuals nor in implements of production." (Coleman 1990: 302). In spite of this, Carbonaro (1999) interprets intergenerational closure as the individual's property, as the individual pupil's attribute in the sense that there is a relation between his parents and his friends' parents. Morgan and Sorensen, for their part, consider it as a feature of the community of pupils at school, from which it follows that pupils with a low-level system of personal social relations but having close ties with the school community can enjoy the same advantages as pupils with a high-level system of personal social relations (Morgan-Sorensen 1999).

In accordance with the theory of reproduction, achievement at school is influenced by the proportion of pupils with high cultural capital within the community (Caldas-Bankston 1997, Kozma et. Al 2003). With the help of the variable indicating the proportion of parents with higher education degrees at a particular school, the cultural capital attainable at the contextual level could be examined. In addition, we included three school-level variables in accordance with the considerations of the theory of social capital: the density of people at the school belonging to the local church community, the density of parents

who have a circle of predominantly religious friends and the density of pupils having a religious circle of friends.
Control variables included those referring to the regional locations of schools and to the pupils' own denomination in order for us to be able to spot the differences between the more developed western and the less developed eastern regions and between the various denominations' possibly different views on achievement (Weber 2004).
It was a logistic regression model which also took into consideration the effects of variables on each other that seemed suitable for the comparison of the effects of the factors listed above. The dependent variable was the intention to go on to university. The exponential coefficients (B) indicate how the individual factors increase the chance of the decision to go on to university; in other words, how far they influence this very important decision.

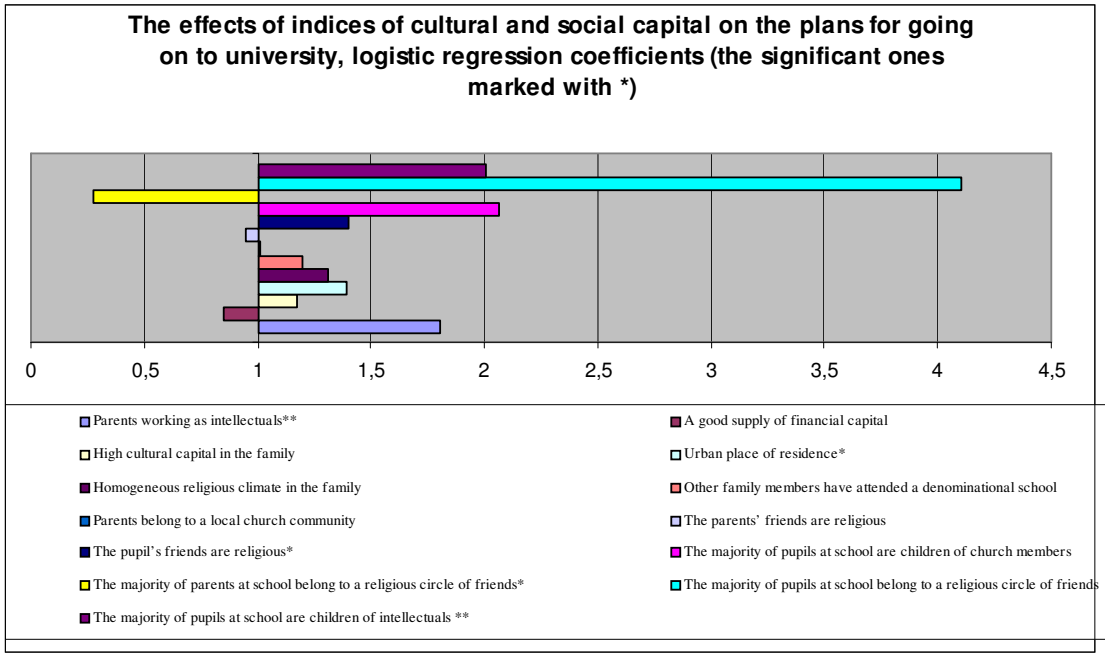

Figure 6.

The results show that the tendency for children of highly-qualified parents to have more ambitious plans for higher education is manifest in the sample, as well. The effect of the indices of cultural capital, however, differs from the results of previous research. In general, it is the parents' (primarily the father's) education that has the strongest influence on the next generation's achievement at school and, in the end, on their mobility (Róbert 1986). Our data show that, among the pupils at denominational secondary schools, it is the parents' occupation that plays the most important role among the indices of cultural capital. The stronger differentiating effect of occupational status can be most probably explained by the fact that denominational pupils' parents, in spite of their higher qualifications, work in jobs of relatively lower status than non-denominational pupils' parents; for example there are fewer intellectuals holding leading posts (Pusztai 2004) as the disadvantaged position of religious adherents, typical under the former regime, remains detectable in the parents' generation in Hungary.
Among denominational secondary school pupils, the proportion of pupils living in big cities is relatively low, that of pupils boarding is relatively high, and almost 70% of them come from villages or small towns. Place of residence has lesser influence on plans for

higher education than was expected; no significant difference in opportunities between pupils coming from big cities, small towns or villages can be demonstrated.

The controlled analysis of the pupils' individual resources of social capital provides an excellent illustration of the fact that the analysis of the data gathered at the level of the individual makes possible only conclusions of limited validity. The religious unity of the family, the facilitating role of information obtained through family connections, the degree of embeddedness in a religious community, and the religiousness of the parents' and the pupils' friends have a positive effect on plans for higher education in themselves, but they are strongly influenced by effects coming from community level. It is the homogeneity of intragenerational relationships that continues to have an important part in young people's decision-making about higher education. In our sample, half of the pupils have such resources of social capital.

Among the communal resources, we first examined the contextual effect of cultural capital. The high density of parents with a university degree in a school has an undoubtedly significant bearing on plans for higher education, it is more important than any other individual resource of capital, and it even inhibits the inheritance of inequalities in family background. The power of the contextual effect of cultural capital confirms the presumption that the favourable social composition of parents in a particular school also has a stimulating effect on pupils with low cultural capital.

The contextual effects of social capital have also been examined among communal resources. The stimulating effect of the density of families embedded in local church communities is present in the schools, but it is relatively weak. It is probably because of the significant differences between the individual schools in this respect that it does not have a measurable influence on plans for higher education. The same applies to the frequency of the closure of the parents' circle of friends in a particular school. However, it is worth noting that the density of children with a homogeneously religious circle of friends in a school has a more important influence on the plans for higher education than all the explanatory variables discussed above. This influence appears to be stronger than the contextual effect of cultural capital in a school. Pupils having a closed religious circle of friends, being more typical of denominational schools, provide such cultural capital within a school community that can be beneficial even to those pupils who lack this kind of resource. The effective transformation of social capital at school into human capital can thus be proved at the intragenerational level.

Coleman's intergenerational closure is not fully manifest at schools even in spite of the fact that those having religious friends are basically religious themselves, and that, within their families, the religiousness of the different generations is significantly correlated. When comparing family types with respect to religion, we found that the religious faith of the parents' generation is different from that of young people, and it is exactly in communal embeddedness and relationships that they fall behind their children (Pusztai 2004). This is explained by the fact that in the prior decades religious practice in Hungary was far more restricted to private life than, for example, in Western Europe (Tomka-Zulehner 1999).

Regional differences such as the favourable location of schools in Budapest and western Hungary do not result in more ambitious plans for higher education. Belonging to a particular denomination has no significant influence on pupils' decision on higher education, so it does not influence one's career at school in itself. Official denominational membership is not equal to religious faith anyway, and the differences in norms held by practising members of different denominations do not influence achievement. Weber himself attributed the stimulating effect of Protestant ethics on achievement to the internalisation of certain norms rather than to denominational labels.

Summary

Our empirical analysis has shown that the social and religious background of denominational pupils is not homogeneous; on the contrary, its diversity has proved to be beyond all expectations. The simultaneous examination of religiousness and social status has confirmed the tendency pointed out by previous research, namely that groups of highly qualified people and of lower-status people are taking shape among the religious population in Hungary (Hegedűs 2000). It is also obvious that the multidimensional analysis of religiousness has so significantly enriched the identification of social status that it has provided a basis for the identification of clearly distinct milieus. From among the dimensions of religiousness, this paper has primarily focused on the effects of communal religious practice and the religion-based systems of social relations. In most denominational secondary schools, the organic relations within the community of users, the connectedness of parents and children forming a community and following similar norms become a resource for pupils' development, which has an important influence on their school career. The particular efficiency of the resource called social capital and the mysterious ways it functions is proved by the fact that in a school community it also becomes useful for pupils who otherwise, owing to their individual families and social environments, are less supplied with or absolutely lack this resource. On the whole, we can state that denominational schools in Hungary have the social function of transmitting religious culture, but they also have a latent function of reducing the unequal opportunities of culturally disadvantaged pupils through interpersonal resources rooted in a school community with lasting and reliable norms.

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