

EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH IN CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE I.

Third Mission of Higher Education  
in a Cross-Border Region

Edited by  
Gabriella Pusztai – Adrian Hatos – Tímea Ceglédi



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**Third Mission of Higher Education in a Cross-Border Region**

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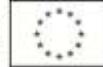
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Two countries, one goal, joint success!



**HERD**  
HIGHER EDUCATION  
FOR SOCIAL COHESION –  
COOPERATIVE RESEARCH  
AND DEVELOPMENT IN A  
CROSS-BORDER AREA

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

**Foreword:** *What Do We Mean by the „Third Mission of Higher Education“?*.....4

### Educational policy discourse

**Reisz, Robert D.:** *Academic Rankings and Quality in Higher Education*.....14

**Szolár, Éva:** *The Bologna-inspired Higher Education Reforms and Debates in Hungary*.....32

**Flóra, Gábor & Szilágyi, Györgyi:** *Hungarian Minority Educational Policies and Opportunities in Bihar County*.....45

**Györbíró, András & Ceglédi, Tímea:** *Insight into the Hungarian and Romanian Talent Care System in Higher Education – a Legal Approach*.....63

**Teperics, Károly & Czimre, Klára:** *Study-driven Migration in the Modern World Economy*.....80

### Campus Realities

**Săveanu, Sorana & Ștefănescu, Florica:** *Academics Perception about University Curricula in Bologna System. Case Study at the University of Oradea, Romania* .....96

**Pusztai, Gabriella & Fónai, Mihály:** *Asymmetric Students' Relations and Deprofessionalization. The Case of Teacher Training* .....114

**Bălțătescu, Sergiu & Kovács, Klára:** *Sport Participation and Subjective Well-being among University Students in the Hungarian-Romanian-Ukrainian Cross-border Area* .....134

**Oșvat, Claudia:** *Volunteering and employability. A comparative study among students from the University of Oradea* .....149

**Bocsi, Veronika & Fényes, Hajnalka:** *Values and the Motivations of Higher Education Students' Volunteering in a Borderland Central Eastern European Region*.....160

**Hatos, Adrian:** *Enrollment in Higher Education: College Choice in the Hungarian-Romanian Cross-Border Region*.....179

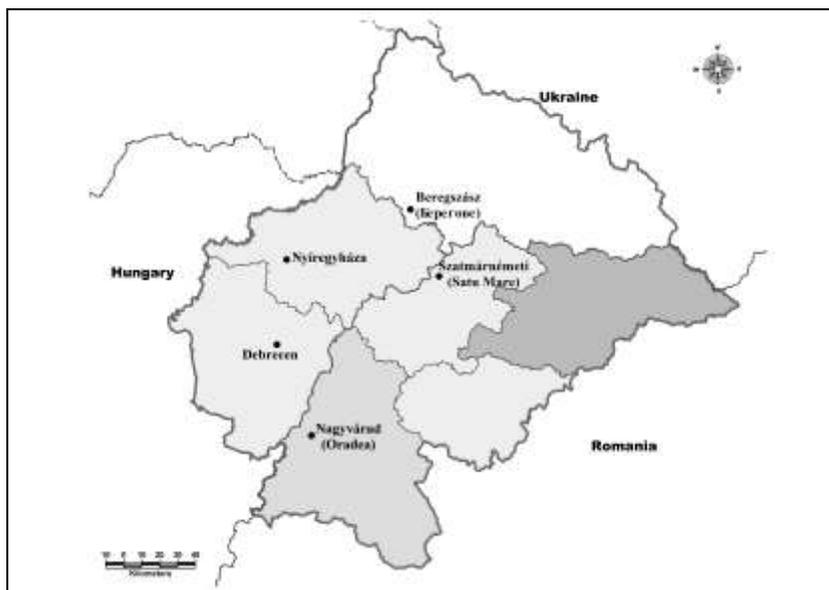
**List of Authors**.....199

## FOREWORD: WHAT DO WE MEAN BY THE „THIRD MISSION OF HIGHER EDUCATION”?

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF HERD RESEARCH IN REVEALING THE CONNECTIONS BETWEEN SOCIAL COHESION AND HIGHER EDUCATION

„Higher education should be a Pharos and not an ivory tower” (Hrubos ed. 2012), as the title of one of the bestselling works of higher education research, published in Hungary recently, puts it. Our present volume discusses the roles of higher education reaching beyond the traditional, direct functions of higher educational institutions. In this volume the initial findings of the project titled HERD: Higher Education for Social Cohesion – Cooperative Research and Development in a Cross-border Area (HURO/0901/253/2.2.2.)<sup>1</sup> are summarized. The research focused on some of the dimensions of higher education in the special region called Partium, a territory shared by Hungary, Romania and the Ukraine (Kozma & Pusztai 2006) (Figure 1).

*Figure 1: Partium region*



Source: Designed by Gábor Németh, based on István Süli-Zakar

Although it is now a well-known fact that higher education becomes increasingly international, higher research education usually deals primarily with data

<sup>1</sup> The research has been carried out in the framework of the Hungarian-Romanian Cross-Border Cooperation Programme, and co-financed by the European Regional Development Fund, Hungary and Romania.

gathered at a national level. Our research transcended the limitations of that restricted approach addressing a region that is in the border zone of several countries, and the institutions in the area are often slightly ignored in the respective mainstream national research programs. This area, at the same time, affords an excellent example of an emerging new international higher education area that comes into being as a result of the general restructuring of higher education. The region of higher education examined is not only unique because this area, at present shared by several countries, has constituted one single social, economic, political and, last but not least, educational area for centuries (Fekete 2007, Kozma & Pusztai 2006, Teperics 2005). In the course of the past decade we have had a good opportunity to observe how that new higher education area emerges from the common historical heritage in the border zones of the countries concerned (Kozma 2002, 2010, Pusztai 2011). The now common educational area is undergoing major political changes, and the formerly rigid political borders are now evaporating. The so-called „Bologna process“ enables students to proceed through the stages of higher education built upon each other in the multi-ethnic region. Eventually, students gravitate towards two major educational centers. As it was pointed out in our former research projects (Regional University<sup>2</sup>, Further study plans among secondary school students in a border region<sup>3</sup>, TERD<sup>4</sup>), in this area, the state borders and the borderlines of the statistical regions within the nation states do not coincide with the boundaries of the educational region. The importance of the area concerned is further increased by the fact that it is on the Eastern border of the European Union. In fact, it even stretches slightly beyond the borders of the Union. This relatively small area well illustrates a number of challenges that the increasingly diversified European higher education system faces. The European system of higher education is only able to meet the challenges if the institutions undertake the tasks that come with the so-called „third mission.“ What are those challenges specifically?

The overall number of non-traditional students is on the increase all over Europe. Research projects dealing with them, however, tend to focus mostly on certain specific dimensions, providing reports about women, minority groups or those with a low cultural capital (see Engler 2011, Forray 2003 among others). As correct information regarding the effectiveness of the new student groups is important for the decision makers of higher education, any such limitation or simplification of the examination methods of the non-traditional groups is harmful to the general efficiency of higher education.

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<sup>2</sup> A research called Regional University. Leader: Tamás Kozma (financed by NKFP, 26-0060/2002)

<sup>3</sup> A research called Further study plans among secondary school students in a border region. Leader: Gabriella Pusztai (financed by OTKA, T-48820)

<sup>4</sup> A research called The Impact of Tertiary Education on Regional Development. Leader: Tamás Kozma (financed by OTKA, T-69160)

When higher education is examined from a bird's eye view or the research is not conducted in a sufficiently sensitive way, the non-traditional character of many students remain hidden from the observers. In most of the data bases, indicators such as social status, stations in the educational career of the individuals or their home town are accessible. Less attention is paid, however, to the cultural and interactional diversity of the communities of students. As a consequence of the restructuring process of higher education – particularly in peripheral regions and in certain types of institutions – students coming from lower social classes and different cultural backgrounds have become dominant in number (Fónai et al. 2005, Fónai et al. 2011, Kozma & Pusztai 2006, Pusztai 2010, Szemerszki 2010, 2011, Teperics 2005, 2006). As a result, new models of socialization among the students have developed (Nyüsti & Ceglédi 2010, Pusztai 2011, Pusztai et al. 2011). For researchers of Hungarian higher education, the homogeneity or heterogeneity of smaller and larger student communities did not appear to be relevant. It is, however, worth noting that a number of recently published works have made efforts to draw up a wide range of indicators in order to capture the complexity of the institutions of higher education. In this way, it is possible to identify the special characteristic features of individual institutions. It is not possible to fully understand the regional mission of a particular institution without taking into account the appearance of regional students in the institution concerned. „University mapping” – as a study by Robert D. Reisz refers to it in our volume. The composition of the communities within the institutions concerned and the cumulative contextual effects of those communities is therefore a highly relevant issue. Within the system of higher educational institutions, diversity is increasing, and the communities of students are also increasingly segmented between institutions and between faculties within the institutions. As a result, students within the confines of their own institutions or faculties of different status and prestige will have a very similar social background, while new dimensions of inequality and diversity will become important (Gáti 2010, Neuwirth & Szemerszki 2009, Pusztai 2011, Róbert 2000, Szemerszki 2009a, 2009b, 2010, Veroszta 2010). These inequalities are so varied that we have paid special attention to the higher educational career of non-traditional students – see the studies by Gabriella Pusztai and Mihály Fónai or Adrian Hatos. We find it important to recognize that higher educational institutions now take into consideration the special circumstances and needs of the community of non-traditional students. The institutions must monitor the career of the students within the institution and re-structure their curricular and extra-curricular development strategies in order to integrate them into the life of the institution more efficiently.

The role and forms of elite training and talent care also require reconsideration (Ceglédi et al. 2012, Ceglédi & Fónai 2012). In the traditional institutions of elite training in higher education, it was believed that students with

outstanding abilities and ambitions were easy to identify, and no particular effort was needed for recruiting and training them. In a re-structured higher education system, however, the pressure from the social-family background of the students that is making efforts to minimize investment and their credentialist norms exert a powerful pressure on the institutions. These effects may easily make it more difficult to recognize, select and care for gifted students. Talent care institutions should not therefore limit their selection system, aiming only at students with a relatively evident intellectual edge. Similarly, they should not restrict their activities to creating a certain infrastructure and material assets (cf. Bordás & Ceglédi 2011, 2012). They should, instead, implement a comprehensive approach to students' culture, and strive to reform the communities of young people (Pusztai 2011). As the study of András Györbíró and Tímea Ceglédi points out, it is imperative that legislation should also follow the need of talent care and introduce the necessary measures so as to replace the former system, based on recruiting readily available students at schools, with a system that actively searches for and identifies gifted candidates.

It is not possible to measure the efficiency of higher educational institutions located in peripheral areas through the direct success of their graduates in the labor market (Györgyi 2012). Our volume offers various perspectives to the connection between higher education and the labor market: the interrelation of the success of graduates in the labor market and the voluntary work they performed during their studies is discussed by Claudia Oşvat in her study. Sorana Săveanu and Florica Ştefănescu, in their joint essay, examine the opinions and attitudes of educators and leaders of institutions. Éva Szolár's study, dealing primarily with educational policy, also addresses certain issues in relation to the labor market.

The oft-urged closer cooperation between higher education and the labor market is made difficult by the structural discrepancies of industry in the region. If the so-called „third mission of higher education” is to be taken seriously, more reliable efficiency indicators must be found. In the course of our research we came to the conclusion that it is now inevitable for higher education to develop and implement its own efficiency indicators that are independent of the transitory and temporary processes going on in the economic environment. Once these indicators have been established, it is necessary to create publicity for them, so that the general public as well as professionals will be familiar with, and accept, the new methods. The new indicators should reflect the efficiency of the institution and the success of the graduates, with the key elements of the system being independent of factors outside the institution. The indicators should take into account long-term effects and added educational values, regardless of the specific subject major the student has graduated in. As part of our research program, we studied several models described in the related litera-

ture and drafted an apparently well-functioning model that meets the requirements set up preliminarily. The main elements of the new indicator system are the commitment of students to do curricular and extra-curricular work, their devotion to improve their knowledge in formal and informal ways and their readiness to undertake work – work also for public good, and not exclusively personally profitable activity (Pusztai 2011). In order to offer a fair comparison with the efficiency of higher education institutions in the capital or in big cities that are able to recruit strongly selected students, it appears to be desirable to encourage measuring the students' competences and attitudes when they enter higher education and when they leave it.

Higher education institutions are expected to play a crucial role in shaping common European identity and students' attitude to responsible citizenship. The core of Jewish-Christian heritage and European values is showing solidarity with and respect to other people. The higher educational region concerned is characterized by a multitude of ethnic and religious groups. The traditional communities living in the area usually offered a positive answer to the issue of joint use of resources for educational purposes, they were open to cooperation with other ethnic/religious groups, and they showed solidarity with others. These issues are addressed by Gábor Flóra and Györgyi Szilágyi in their study. In the higher education institutions, however, students face an even higher level of multiculturalism and cultural pluralism (Dusa & Kardos 2012, Teperics & Czimre 2012). At present the institutions do not fully make capital out of the resources created by the cultural diversity. Instead, colleges and universities tend to separate students of different ethnic groups also in extracurricular and free time activities. In our research, however, we experienced the positive effect of multiethnic and multiconfessional groups on voluntary work. Informal institutional networks appear to have a positive effect on civilian attitudes as well (Pusztai 2011). We observed the same connections among students as well as between students and faculty. When analyzing the connection networks supporting the success of students, we found differences between institutions and between units within specific institutions, so we believe that it would be worthwhile to invest more energy into examining and comparing various examples of good practice in student integration. Our first experience in this field suggests that higher education institutions should promote extracurricular activities which could help establish stronger and more informal connections among students and faculty. The small student communities and groups based on cultural and voluntary activity should be encouraged inside the colleges and universities. The improvement of the faculty involvement in student extracurricular and informal education is also needed (Pusztai 2011, Pusztai et al. 2012). Sergiu Bălțătescu and Klára Kovács in their study concentrate on one such activity: sport.

Researchers of higher educational are usually complain about the fact that students in a particular region are allegedly not sufficiently mobile. Our re-

search has revealed that students in the investigated region are usually impeded by the limited financial resources of their families from going to institutions in the central regions (Ceglédi & Nyüsti 2011, Nyüsti & Ceglédi 2012), and the reason why they rarely go abroad to study is likely the same, although it is nearly impossible to obtain reliable and comprehensive data about those who migrate to foreign institutions. As part of the traditional values of the region, local people tend to attribute great significance to family ties and community solidarity. As a result of this, they are strongly bound to the area and to the local community (Jancsák 2012, Pusztai 2009, Pusztai 2011, Pusztai & Nagy 2005). This bond to the local community often comes together with more altruistic ideas about work, performance-oriented and responsible work ethics. Decision makers in the labor market should consider whether it is really worth moving this valuable and qualified work force away from their roots to more remote areas. It is likely that keeping them in their own region and making use of the resources manifested in the coherence of the local community is a better approach (Nyüsti & Ceglédi 2012, Pusztai et al. 2012).

Our introduction contains some of our conclusions that we find worthy of consideration. This book, as well as the other volumes in the series containing the results of our international research, is recommended to researchers who find „the third mission of higher education” important and wish to promote the cohesion of regional society (Györgyi ed. 2012, Pusztai & Hatos eds. 2012). We believe that the significance of our research reaches far beyond an analysis of the processes occurring at the institutions of a specific region of education. Our intention is to offer professional discourse new aspects and criteria for analysis that will enrich higher education research with new dimensions.

The HERD project is an organic continuation of our earlier research projects into regional higher education, coordinated by the University of Debrecen’s Center for Higher Education Research and Development (CHERD-Hungary), has been in the forefront of research dealing with the colleges and universities of the Partium region for a decade. We contacted the colleges and universities of Debrecen, Oradea, Nyíregyháza, Satu Mare and Berehove several times. The findings of these research projects are published in a series of books titled *Régió és Oktatás* [Region and Education] (Pusztai ed. 2005, Juhász ed. 2006, Pusztai ed. 2008a, 2008b, Juhász ed. 2010, Pusztai ed. 2010, Kozma & Ceglédi eds. 2010, Kozma & Pataki eds. 2011). Several years of joint work established the cross-border cooperation that is now going on with the participation of the professionals of the University of Debrecen, the University of Oradea and Partium Christian University. The joint work serves as a foundation for the HERD project. Our present volume turns towards an analysis of the higher education of the national communities by providing a comparative analysis of Hungarian and Romanian universities. This volume is

intended to be the first in a new line, titled Educational Research in Central and Eastern Europe, launched by our research center, CHERD-Hungary.

HERD research uses a wide range of methodological procedures. On the one hand researchers using qualitative methods addressed smaller target groups in order to reveal the opinions and attitudes of people involved in higher education. On the other hand researchers selecting a quantitative approach, used a large-scale, coordinated survey through an inventory circulated simultaneously among the students of the University of Debrecen (in Debrecen, Hungary), Kölcsey Ferenc Teacher Training Institute of Debrecen Reformed Theological University (in Debrecen, Hungary), 3 faculties of College of Nyíregyháza (in Nyíregyháza, Hungary), Ferenc Rákóczi II. Transcarpathian Hungarian Teacher Training College (in Berehove, Ukraine), Faculty of Humanities and Natural Sciences with the Hungarian Language of Education of Uzhgorod National University (in Uzhgorod, Ukraine), Partium Christian University (in Oradea, Romania), University of Oradea (in Oradea, Romania), Emanuel University (in Oradea, Romania) and the Branch of Babeş-Bolyai University in Satu Mare (in Satu Mare, Romania). During the survey, conducted in the spring of 2012, a total of 2,728 students completed the inventory, as we wished to reach the highest possible number of participants in higher education. (For a detailed description of data collection and sampling method please see the Introduction to Volume 3 of the HERD-series. See: Györgyi ed. 2012).

*The editors*

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## **Educational policy discourse**

**ROBERT D. REISZ**

ACADEMIC RANKINGS AND QUALITY IN HIGHER  
EDUCATION<sup>1</sup>

**Abstract**

*Complexity overwhelms. Just take the United States: over 4000 colleges and universities supply higher education. While many of these might be limited in scope, catering only for a small community or a specific religious group, the sheer number of alternatives remains larger than what a human mind can encompass. College and university rankings, as well as accreditation mechanisms, are intended to reduce complexity and criticized for reducing it too much (e.g. in Leef & Lowrey 2004).*

*The present paper will discuss the types of data used in ranking higher education institutions and the way these data reproduce the social creation of prestige in the higher education community. We will first take a look at the data used for ranking in a few of the more influential ranking systems, such as the US News and World Report, The Times Higher Education Supplement – QS World University Rankings, The Academic Ranking of World Universities compiled by the Shanghai Jiao Tong University, the Top American Research Universities by The Center for Measuring University Performance and the German CHE (Center for Higher Education Development) ranking. In the second part of the paper we will classify and discuss the statistical and sociological nature of these data. We will end by comparing soft (i.e. opinion) and hard (i.e. factual) data.*

## **1. Rankings and the Data they use**

While we have started by mentioning the overwhelming number of universities and colleges, the number of different ranking systems also seems overwhelming at first site. Nevertheless, on a closer scrutiny these can be classified in universal rankings, intending to compare all universities in the world, national rankings and specialized rankings, comparing colleges from a particularistic point of view, be it scientific, professional or life-style related, such as Young America's Foundation's top ten conservative colleges.<sup>2</sup> We also include here rankings that rely only on the internet presence of universities, as e.g. the G-Factor, or rankings of a single criterion as Wuhan Universities ESI (Essential Science Indicators) based ranking.

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<sup>1</sup>First version of this paper was presented at the 4th Meeting of the International Rankings Expert Group (IREG-4) – *International and National Academic Ranking: Commonalities and Differences*, 14-17 June 2009, Astana, Kazakhstan

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.yaf.org/innerpagetemplate.aspx?id=3368>

Universal rankings, while being most prone to be criticized for comparing the incomparable, get the widest publicity, at least in Europe. The most famous of these are the already mentioned The Times Higher Education Supplement – QS World University Rankings and The Academic Ranking of World Universities compiled by the Shanghai Jiao Tong University. Another well-known ranking compiled by Newsweek combines data of these two.

Let us follow by shortly introducing the data material used by five of the most influential ranking schemes.

### **1.1. The Times Higher Education Supplement – QS World University Ranking (THES-QS)**

The THES-QS<sup>3</sup> Ranking has first been published in 2004<sup>4</sup> and relies on a combination of data. The definitions and weights as presented in the simple overview of the method<sup>5</sup> are:

*Table 1: Indicators of the THES-QS Ranking*

<b>Indicator</b>	<b>Weight</b>	<b>Source and definition</b>
Peer Review Score	40%	„Composite score drawn from peer review survey (which is divided into five wide subject areas). 6,354 responses in 2008”
Faculty/Student Score	20%	„Score based on student faculty ratio”
Citations/Faculty Score	20%	„Score based on research performance factored against the size of the research body”
Recruiter Review	10%	„Score based on responses to employer survey. 2,339 responses in 2008”
International Faculty Score	5%	„Score based on proportion of international faculty”
International Students Score	5%	„Score based on proportion of international students”

Source: Own design based on:

[http://www.topuniversities.com/worlduniversityrankings/methodology/simple\\_overview/](http://www.topuniversities.com/worlduniversityrankings/methodology/simple_overview/)

These indicators are intended to cover according to self-presentation, four criteria: research quality, teaching quality, graduate employability and international outlook. Let us take a closer look at the data involved. Half of the score originates from surveys, or is soft data, half of the score is hard data. The survey data stem from two surveys, one of academics and one of employers. The methods used in doing the surveys are presented on the web-site of the ranking system. The academic peer review that accounts for 40% of the THES-QS score is based on the responses to a survey that is distributed to

<sup>3</sup> QS is Quacquarelli Symonds a company specializing in education and study abroad programs, also offering different publications and organizing events. QS produce the ranking in cooperation with the THES.

<sup>4</sup> All information on methodology relies on self-presentation according to: <http://www.topuniversities.com/worlduniversityrankings/>

<sup>5</sup> [http://www.topuniversities.com/worlduniversityrankings/methodology/simple\\_overview/](http://www.topuniversities.com/worlduniversityrankings/methodology/simple_overview/)

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the world-wide subscribers to two databases: the World Scientific and the International Book Information Service. The responses are weighted between five subject areas (Arts & Humanities, Engineering & IT, Life Sciences & Biomedicine, Natural Sciences and Social Sciences) and three geographical areas (the Americas, Europe and the Middle East, Africa and Asia Pacific). The survey takes place as follows: after selecting the geographical and subject areas that the respondent considers being familiar with, he can select from a list of universities filtered according to his previous answers those maximum thirty international and maximum ten national institutions that produce the „best research” in the subject area of his expertise.

The employer survey takes place through a global online survey of employers from the QS database, working partners of QS and lists of contacts that originate from participating institutions. This last source of contacts will include mostly employers known to have received graduates from the respective institutions. The questionnaire is much more complex than the academic review questionnaire including questions related to MBA recruitment and salaries, where recruitment has taken place from, in the past, the functions offered to new hires, etc. Nevertheless a similar question to that of the academic peer review also exists. Employers are asked to select from a filtered list the thirty international universities that produce the best graduates. The survey results are weighted according to the three geographical areas.

The other four indicators are to be considered factual data. Student/staff ratios, numbers of international staff and students are rather simple straightforward indicators. The citation score is based on: the total citation count for the last five years as results from the Web of Science of Thomson Reuters, Scopus of Elsevier and Google Scholar divided by full-time equivalent faculty numbers. In 2008 the citation count was based solely on Scopus.

### ***1.2. The Academic Ranking of World Universities of the Shanghai Jiao Tong University (ARWU)***

The ARWU was first published in 2003 (Liu & Cheng 2005), and like the THES-QS ranking has known yearly updates ever since. As in the case of the THES-QS ranking there are four criteria and a number of weighted indicators that are to account for these. Here is a list according to self-presentation.

Table 2: Indicators of the ARWU

Indicator	Weight
Alumni of an institution winning Nobel Prizes and Fields Medals	10%
Staff of an institution winning Nobel Prizes and Fields Medals	20%
Highly cited researchers in 21 broad subject categories	20%
Articles published in <i>Nature</i> and <i>Science</i>	20%
Articles Indexed in Science Citation Index-Expanded and Social Science Citation Index	20%
Academic performance with respect to the size of an institution	10%

Source: Own design based on: Liu & Cheng 2005

The first indicator has to account for the quality of education, the second two for the quality of faculty, the following two for research output and the last one for the size of the institution (Liu & Cheng 2005). For institutions that specialize in arts & humanities or social science the indicator referring to the number of papers in *Nature* and *Science* is omitted and its weight distributed to the other indicators. All citation information stems from Thomson Reuters Web of Knowledge. Further weighting is involved in the first two indicators to favor recent winners over those from a more distant past.

All ARWU indicators are hard data, none relying on opinion surveys. The only partially common indicator between the two ranking systems is the number of articles indexed in international research output databases (Thomson' Web of Knowledge respectively Scopus). We will follow presenting three national ranking systems, two from the United States and one from Germany.

### ***1.3. American's Best Colleges by the US News and World Report***

The US News and World Report rankings exist since 1983, being according to our knowledge the oldest of the ranking systems. The ranking separates between categories of higher education institutions, such as national universities, as classified by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, liberal arts colleges, universities-master's and baccalaureate colleges as well as specialty schools, such as music or arts schools. Universities-master's and baccalaureate colleges are ranked separately within four regions: North, South, Midwest and West.

The US News and World Report also rank undergraduate program areas in the so-called specialty rankings.

All rankings use the same indicators that fall under seven broad criteria. The table below presents these along with the weights that are assigned to them in the computation of the final score. While most indicators have a factual content, 25% of the overall score relies on a peer assessment system. This indicator reports on how the school „is regarded by administrators at peer

institutions”.<sup>6</sup> The information is gathered by polling presidents, provosts and deans of admissions at institutions in the school’s category. Each of these can rate the peer schools’ programs on a scale from 1 to 5. The school’s score is the average score of all respondents.

*Table 3: Indicators of US News and World Report*

Ranking Category	Category Weight		Sub factor	Sub factor Weight	
	National Universities and Liberal Arts Colleges	Universities Master's and Baccalaureate Colleges		National Universities and Liberal Arts Colleges	Universities Master's and Baccalaureate Colleges
Peer assessment	25%	25%	Peer assessment survey	100%	100%
Student selectivity (Fall 2006 entering class)	15%	15%	Acceptance rate (ratio of admitted students to applicants)	10%	10%
			High school class standing—top 10%	40%	0%
			High school class standing—top 25%	0%	40%
			SAT/ACT score (average)	50%	50%
Faculty resources (2006)	20%	20%	Faculty compensation	35%	35%
			Percent faculty with top terminal degree	15%	15%
			Percent full-time faculty	5%	5%
			Student/faculty ratio	5%	5%
			Class size, 1-19 students (percentage of classes with less than 20 students)	30%	30%
			Class size, 50+ students (percentage of classes with over 50 students)	10%	10%

*Cont. on the following page*

<sup>6</sup> All information relies on self-presentation according to: <http://colleges.usnews.rankingsandreviews.com/college/>

Ranking Category	Category Weight		Sub factor	Sub factor Weight	
	National Universities and Liberal Arts Colleges	Universities Master's and Baccalaureate Colleges		National Universities and Liberal Arts Colleges	Universities Master's and Baccalaureate Colleges
Graduation and retention rate	20%	25%	Average graduation rate	80%	80%
			Average freshman retention rate	20%	20%
Financial resources	10%	10%		100%	100%
Alumni giving	5%	5%	Average alumni giving rate (percentage of record alumni who donate money)	100%	100%
Graduation rate performance	5%	0%	Graduation rate performance	100%	0%
Total	100%	100%	—	100%	100%

Source: <http://colleges.usnews.rankingsandreviews.com/college/>

While the previous two ranking systems introduced here were generally oriented towards research output of the higher education institution, the US News and World Report focuses much stronger on the student experience. There is no indication of any importance given to research in the ranking.

#### ***1.4. Top American Research Universities by The Center for Measuring University Performance (Center)***

The Center for Measuring University performance collects and analysis a large amount of data on all higher education institutions in the United States that receive some form of research funding.<sup>7</sup> The Center collects this information since the 1990s when the methods of measuring were developed first at the University of Florida. Since 2000 the Center publishes its „Top American Research Universities” yearly report. The method is constructed as follows. Each of the indicators produces a ranking. Each positioning of a university in the top 25 or 26-50 positions in any of the ranking is counted. As result two groups are built. The top 25 group contains all universities that have at least one top 25 positioning on any of the indicators. The 26-50 group contains all universities that have at least one 26-50 positioning on any of the indicators. Within these groups the universities are ranked according to the number of

<sup>7</sup> Information relies on self-presentation according to <http://mup.asu.edu/>

positions in the respective group. E.g. the top 25 group will start with universities being in the top 25 on all nine indicators, than those being in the top 25 on eight of the nine indicators, and so on.

*Table 4: The indicators of The Center for Measuring University Performance*

<b>Indicator</b>
Total research and development expenditures (in USD)
Federally sponsored research and development expenditures (in USD)
Number of members of the National Academies among an institution's faculty
Number of significant faculty awards earned
Number of doctorates awarded
Number of postdoctoral appointments
Median SAT scores of students
Size of the institution's endowment
Annual giving

Source: <http://mup.asu.edu/>

All indicators are factual and most refer to research in some form or other. The evaluation of research does not happen directly through publication or citation output, but rather through the amount of financial support secured from different sources. There are no weights in this ranking method as separate rankings are conducted for each of the indicators and the composite score is computed as presented above.

### ***1.5. CHE University Ranking by the Centrum für Hochschulentwicklung (Center for Higher Education Development)***

The German Center for Higher Education Development (CHE) ranks German universities in three groups: the top, the middle and the end group according to a series of indicators. The CHE rankings are strictly discipline specific and have discipline related rules. The CHE uses over 100 indicators, some of which are (Berghoff et al. 2008). Indicators resulting from a questioning of the faculties and official statistical data:

*Table 5: The indicators of Centrum für Hochschulentwicklung*

<b>Indicators resulting from a questioning of the faculties and official statistical data:</b>
Total number of students
Percentage of women
Number of first year students
Ratio of admitted students to applicants
Number of graduates
Percentage of graduates in the formal duration of studies
Research funding / professor
Patents / staff member
Scientific publications / professor and research staff member
Citations / publication
Ph.D.s awarded / professor
Student / staff ratio
<b>Indicators resulting from a questioning of professors:</b>
Research reputation, each professor will be asked to name the five German universities that are leading in its subject area.
Reputation of professors, according to the same method as above.
<b>Indicators resulting from a questioning of students:</b>
Quality of teaching measured by a number of indicators
Quality of e-learning supply if available
Evaluation of study supply, different criteria
Evaluation of contacts between students

Source: Berghoff et al. 2008

The indicators of the CHE cover as good as everything that can be said about a university and nevertheless manage not to include some of the indicators of the other mentioned ranking systems, such as most of the indicators of the ARWU ranking. As the amount of data included in the CHE ranking is immense, the overall methodology remains quite un-transparent. The goal of the ranking being the separation of disciplinary studies in merely three categories, it is probably considered that such a decision is defensible even if the ranking remains methodologically prolix.

## 2. Soft Data and Hard Data

The first conclusion from the previous overview of variables used by five well-known ranking systems is the impressive variety of data used. In social science quantitative data are generally used to represent, to operationalize theoretical concepts. All these data are used to operationalize the same concept, that of a „good university“. The general logic behind these values, computations, weightings and normalizations is to measure „quality in higher education“. While all ranking agencies are very careful in not overstating the meaning of their results, the basic assumption remains: all these are ways to measure „quality in higher education“. But this concept is not only difficult to

operationalize it is also difficult to define. While quality can be simply considered as being fitness for purpose (Vlăsceanu et al. 2007), to define „quality of higher education” one needs to define first the role or purpose of higher education and then find a way to measure in what degree the organization is fit for that purpose. This is not only a complicated question it most definitely is a question that will lead to contrasting answers. Different social groups and different cultural environments will have different opinions. Higher education has not only one function in society and the differences will emerge mostly from the weight and meaning given to more or less generally accepted different functions, such as producing original research, defining scientific valid research, producing social and cultural capital, preparing specialists for the labor market, socializing in professional functions, legitimating for social positions, etc.

Let us take the reverse of the usual empirical design. Let us look at the operationalization and find properties of the concept it measures. What is the nature of quality in higher education if this is the way it is measured by some of the most influential agencies? This question is all the more interesting as research results show that it is common in many higher education systems to learn to „play the ranking game” in order to improve one’s organizational position by speculating ranking criteria (or accreditation criteria or classification criteria, for that matter) (Lenhardt et al. 2008, Nelson Espeland & Sauder 2007). Some authors in fact consider that the purposeful improvement of ranking positions is an improvement of objective quality in itself (Kiesewetter 2008, Lombardi et al. 2004).

So first, let us see what the nature of the data used by ranking agencies is. While data are very varied there are two major categories that appear in many methodologies. These are: (1) Soft or survey data resulted from polls of academics, higher education administrators, students or potential employers. (2) Hard or factual data resulted from official or organizational statistics.

The difference of nature between these two types of data deserves closer scrutiny. Soft data are information that is considered to be socially represented. There does not exist a „true” value of the variable, the value itself does have no hard, factual existence. Survey questions return no estimation of a „true” value of a variable, but are bases for the estimation of a variable value as it is distributed within a population. As it is so, soft data are dependent on the way they are collected. The apparatus to measure such variables is a part of the result itself. An opinion collected with a questionnaire depends as much on the data collection method (questionnaire, sampling, selection, interviewing, etc.) as it does on the preexisting opinion in the population subject to the research. Hard data, on the other hand, are supposed to be roughly independent from the way they were measured. To give examples from the ranking systems, the number of students and teaching staff should not de-

pend on the way data was collected, be it by reading official statistics, phoning in or writing to the administration of the faculty.

Of the five ranking methods we have presented, two contain only factual data, while the other three contain both types of data. The logic behind using each of these two types of indicators seems at first different.

Soft data generally intend to find measures of opinions held in a population. The surveys are in this case conducted to find a measure of the quality of a higher education institution in a relevant population, be it academic peers, administrators or students. In order such an approach to make sense there has to pre-exist a statistical distribution of the concept „quality of higher education of institution X” within the studied population or whichever the collected proxy concept might be. Those interviewed will have to have an opinion and the aggregated results of the interviews will be an approximation of the overall distribution of the respective variable in the relevant population. Turning things a little bit around this also means that by measuring quality with soft data we consider that quality is in fact a social concept. We must not necessarily go so far as to consider quality as socially constructed in an decoupled sense, but we have at least to recognize that quality exists in its social incarnation, in the way relevant social actors project it.

Accepting that quality in research and higher education is socially represented has nothing new to it; even more so, it is the rule of college exams, peer reviews and academic awards. But the traditional view is not that of a socially constructed quality, but that, that only peers are able to judge academic quality. Simply said a certain „amount” of quality exists in the substance of a research paper, or an exam paper or a book, the peer reviewer is the expert that is able to judge it. And indeed the soft data used in rankings seem to follow the same logic. This is most obvious in the fact that none of the ranking systems that use soft data and that we have studied gives importance to sampling methods. The opinions resulted from the polls are not statistical sample survey results, they are peer reviews. While many ranking agencies state the number of overall questionnaires, as questions are always put only to those having declared knowledge of a subject area or geographical area the overall numbers that decide on the quality of a certain institution seem to be relatively small and most probably insufficient for statistical significance. What is more important, none of the ranking systems that we have surveyed gives attention to statistically sound sampling, as good as all the collected data being prone to self-selection. Statistical generalizations are as such not possible from the collected opinions to an overall distribution of opinions in a population. But as said, this is not intended. Quality, though measured by surveys is not considered as an opinion. It preexists and is only judged by

experts. This essentialist approach is also present in some of the papers in which ranking agencies describe their methods.<sup>8</sup>

Let us separate the hard data used in the ranking in two categories. Many of the indicators result from forms of collective action. Take, e.g. indicators that are intended to measure research. The most common of these are citation numbers, publication numbers in peer-reviewed journals and different awards and memberships. One of the central points of this paper is that these data do not differ at all from the previously presented soft data. More than that: all these, citations, publications, awards, rely on the same logic of peer reviewing that is since quite some time the central indicator of academic merit. Deciding to cite a paper, acceptance for publication or the receipt of an award are all decisions taken by relevant peers.

Some research indicators, e.g. those used by the Center might seem different in nature at a first look. Nevertheless at a second look they prove to be similar. Receiving research funding from any agency is in the end the result of a review process during which academic criteria are applied on a research proposal by peers. A similar logic can be applied to understand the relevance of the results of students at college exams or third part examinations. The CHE-ranking, for example, also uses results of graduates at the formal exams for a medical or legal career as indicators of quality.

College selectivity, an important issue in the American rankings and one up and coming subject of debate in many European countries is also a materialization of choices of would be students and their families. As such, selectivity is the result of a socially existing desirability of studying in a specific college. Any college is interested in accepting students with high SAT scores or graduating top of their classes. Where such students apply depends of course on many factors. As proximity to home, value orientations and costs finally average out, what remains includes prominently a socially accepted quality of the school, this time coming not from academic peers, but from the clients of higher education, would be students and their parents. And if research indicators parallel the surveying of academics, alumni giving (which appears in different forms in both American ranking systems mentioned) is an apt parallel of an alumni survey.

Not many indicators remain. Most important of these are student / staff ratios, percentages of small classes or of large classes, percentage of full time faculty. A very simple logic lies behind all these; they state that the teacher should be able to focus on its students. Or that it is better for the quality of education if teachers have the time and opportunity to focus on individual students. Scanning all indicators of the studied rankings, maybe with the ex-

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<sup>8</sup> E.g. for the ARWU: Liu & Cheng 2005, for the THES-QS: [http://www.topuniversities.com/worlduniversityrankings/methodology/purpose\\_amp\\_approach/](http://www.topuniversities.com/worlduniversityrankings/methodology/purpose_amp_approach/)

ception of the CHE method, this is all that remains as hard, factual operationalization of quality of higher education.

### **2.1. One „quality” or more?**

As mentioned, the ranking scales vary essentially in the indicators they use. While e.g. the US News and World Report ranking focuses on the college experience and the ARWU uses only indicators of research, the other ranking systems we have studied use a mix of indicators that intend to cover different facets of the quality concept. Nevertheless, ranking scales do not consider that the quality they measure is a socially constructed concept but rather that it is a socially represented concept. The question that arises from the high variation of used indicators is if the ranking schemes refer to the same meaning of „quality of higher education” or not.

The simplest way to make a first empirical check of the coherence of the different concept „quality” of ranking schemes is to consider that all succeed in reproducing in the rankings the quality they intend to measure and correlate the rankings between each others. This we will be able to do for two situations: for „all” universities in the world we can correlate the THES-QS and the ARWU rankings, while for American higher education institutions we can correlate the US News and World Report ranking with the Center’s America’s Top Research Universities ranking.

The overall image of most of the rankings is given by the coherence of the top ten or twenty higher education institutions, nevertheless going lower in the ranking scales and checking ranking one to the other the correlations are relatively low. The rank-order correlation of the two American rankings is 0.672\*\*<sup>9</sup> for the year 2008, while the correlation between the THES-QS and the ARWU is even a bit lower, at 0.583\* for the year 2007. Even more so, if for the American case we control the influence of the indicator „total endowment” the correlation becomes statistically not relevant and almost disappears in size. These results reproduce in fact publications by other authors for different years and even different ranking scales (for the ARWU and THES-QS: Saisana & D’Hombres 2008, for the CHE and other German rankings: Liebeskind & Ludwig-Mayerhofer 2006, for ARWU, THES-QS and webometrics: Jowkar & Rajabali Beglou 2008). Let us here mention that the numerical values of the correlation coefficients might not look very low indeed, but they do not represent the relationship between very different concepts or processes but rather intend to test the coherence of two different proxy variables for the same concept.

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<sup>9</sup> All correlations are Spearman rank-order correlations, as the variables that have been investigated are ordinal. The following convention was used for significance: \* p<0.05; \*\* p<0.01; \*\*\* p<0.001.

The simple empirical conclusion is: even if some relationship between the overall orders exists, this is not very high. It is safer to consider that rankings do not measure the same quality of higher education or if they do they do not measure it coherently. For the US case the fact that two different meanings of quality are measured seems coherent with the selection of indicators. If the US News and World Report ranking focuses on colleges and, as such, on the student experience, the Center's ranking concentrates on research and especially on research funding. For this case the value of the correlation coefficient is reasonable and the meanings of quality while necessarily correlated have not to be facets of the same concepts. The case of the two global ranking is very different. Both rankings name more or less the same elements of a good university: quality of graduates, quality of teaching staff and of research. The THES-QS ranking adds internationality, the ARWU the size of the organizations. All in all the fact that the correlation is here so low shows that while the concept of quality might be more similar than for the two US rankings, the way these are measured implies different meanings of the elements of quality taken individually.

## ***2.2. Is „quality of higher education” a substantive concept?***

The previous empirical results lead to another important question. While we can still accept that quality might have different facets and that rankings might still do a good job in each measuring some other facet of the overall concept of quality, there appears an even more important question. Is in fact quality an essential concept as all rankings seem to consider it? Let me here develop a little bit. As quality is not collected with methods that would allow for statistical generalization, the value of the quality ranking results from expert diagnosis. There exists an essence, quality, and the way to measure it is to use an expert.

If this would not be the case the idea of collecting information on quality with the data that are collected, data that do not have a sound scientific reason for representing the overall opinion of a population be it of peers or others, would be futile.

If quality exists outside of the process of its evaluation and the ranking methods are sound and unbiased there should exist a stability of rankings over time. This mainly because we cannot imagine that in a system so stabile and even resistant to change as higher education, quality could change very much over a period of few years. In order to investigate this we have gathered time series of rankings and have done rank-order correlations of rankings of consecutive years.

Let us first note that the methodology of ranking includes a stability of many indicators that is not a result of the independent existence of a „quality of higher education” but rather the result of the way certain variables were constructed. We do not consider this to be an artifact as it follows closely

from the nature and the stability of data and activities in higher education and research. To take the simplest example, the percentage of foreign students (used in the THES-QS ranking) cannot differ very much from one year to the next. The differences can only result from the differences existing between percentages in graduating classes and percentages in freshmen classes (plus some resulting from drop-out rates). The overall difference would at an average duration of studies of four years not surpass 25% of the value of the indicator, even if continuity would be totally broken. Many indicators have similar characteristics. The THES-QS, to take another example from the same ranking scale, uses citation information collected from the last five years. The year on year differences cannot surpass 20% of the value of the indicator. All these lead to an expectation of high year on year rank-order correlations within ranking scales.

We were able to make the year on year rank-order correlations for four of the five selected ranking methods.<sup>10</sup>

The THES-QS year on year Spearman correlations are very high, e.g. the 2008 on 2007 correlation is 0.954\*\* if we consider the first four hundred universities. A year on year correlation of the ARWU system is 0.990\*\* for 2008 on 2007, taking all 500 universities, while after the 99th position only the group of hundreds is mentioned. Other year on year correlations are as high. In the case of the ARWU we could compute only for 4 pairs of years. This might be the reason for which we could sense also no attenuation of the correlation. The US News and World Report ranking also shows very high year on year correlations, the Spearman coefficient for 2007 on 2008 being 0.992\*\*. As in the case of the THES-QS ranking, older year on year values are as high or almost as high. Nevertheless as the US News and World Report is the oldest of the ranking systems we were able to correlate over longer periods of time. In this case the coefficients become lower and lower. A correlation of rankings from 2007 and 1987 only reaches 0.563\*\*<sup>11</sup>. Computing the year on year correlation of the Center's ranking of top research universities leads obviously to the same high Spearman coefficients. The value for the last years in our time series (2007 on 2006) was 0.984\*\* for the number of top 25 rankings and 0.924\*\* for top 26 to 50 rankings. The time delayed correlations remained in these cases high, nevertheless the number of available pairs of years was only six. For top 25 rankings no relevant trends could be sensed, for top 26 to 50 rankings, a low but significant reduction of the correlation with time delay was present. After six years the rank order correlation of top 26 to 50 positions is 0.864\*\*. The time delayed reduction of correlation is as

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<sup>10</sup> We have computed all correlations according to public data available on the internet from the sites of the ranking systems.

<sup>11</sup> The US News and World Report ranking is the only one to allow for such a computation as all other ranking methods are much newer.

good as linear. If we project this time series linearly after 20 years we find a correlation of 0.684 only slightly higher than the one for the US News and World Report ranking.

The CHE rankings do not produce simple lists. Besides being discipline specific, they only set specific characteristics of the discipline in one of three groups, a top, middle and a lower tier of the German higher education sector.

The study of the time coherence of ranking scales shows very high year on year correlations and a natural reduction of these correlation with time delay. Do all these computations mean that „quality in higher education” is an essential concept having a real independence from its evaluation? Not necessarily, but it means that we cannot refute such a hypothesis. While rankings do not measure the same thing, or at least we have to accept that they measure different facets of the quality concepts, on the basis of our evidence we cannot refute the existence of a certain „quality in higher education” beyond its measurement.

### ***2.3. Conclusions and comments***

Let us put the results of the present investigation together and try an analysis of findings. The main results, simply enumerated are that (1) ranking scales use very different indicators; (2) almost all these indicators are not substantive, but social representations of the concept of quality in higher education. They rely not on measuring what quality is but rather on measuring what peers or stake-holder consider as being quality; (3) the collection of data is for most of these indicators not statistically sound, self-selection and low case numbers being widely present. The methodological documents of ranking do not consider sampling as essential for data collection; (4) different ranking scales do not correlate very highly between each other and cannot be considered as proxy-s for the same concept; (5) each of the ranking scales is coherent in itself, showing high year on year stability and a linear reduction of rank-order correlations with time delay.

All these findings lead to a conceptualization of „quality in higher education” as a multivalent concept, socially represented but not necessarily socially constructed. This gives „quality in higher education”, metaphorically speaking, a status similar to concepts of the natural sciences. It is typical for the natural sciences that a scientific definition, be it from the world of physics, chemistry or any other hard science<sup>12</sup> while being the formalization of a scientist or a group of such and being established by the social group of practitioners of the respective science, has nevertheless an independent empirically provable existence. The logic behind experimental science needs such definitions of terms. In the social sciences, at least since Berger and Luckmann (1966) we do not have to consider that concepts have a real substance beyond

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<sup>12</sup> except mathematics

their social representation. It would be neither absurd nor inconsequential if „quality of higher education” would have no substantial existence beyond its social representation. And it would not mean at all that this socially constructed abstract concept would have no effect. On the contrary, it would very well effect upon the organization, its stake-holders and peers. In such a case the „quality of a higher education” organization would be identifiable through empirical social research. Statistical sampling of the survey would then allow for a coherence of results and the convergence of sample indicators to population indicators. In the case of rankings this is not done. All methods collecting soft data consider that there is no need for statistical sampling. By this they implicitly consider that there is no need to reproduce in the sample the population distribution of values. Indeed, a natural scientist, interested in gathering information on the nature of, e.g. high energy particles, will not think about constructing a statistical sample of physicists to be interviewed / read. He might read papers of more than one author in order to collect better or more varied information. This will nevertheless be expert information, information considered to be independent of any characteristics of the physicists as persons. Such a method of data collection has to be based on the independent, objective existence of high energy particles and the existence of any such object of the natural science means in fact a shared common acceptance of its definition. While hardly any physicist would accept that the existence itself of an object of experimental physics depends on the act of its definition, there would probably be no denial of the fact that the scientific study of the object cannot take place without social acceptance of its definition within a group of experts. Let us return with these considerations in mind to the objective existence of the „quality of higher education”. As said, all investigated rankings consider that the „quality of higher education” can be judged by informed peers and has not to be gathered as a population opinion of peers or other relevant groups. If quality would not have an independent existence, the questioning of a small number of informed peers would not be able to represent the whole population and interviewing different peers each year could possibly lead to high year on year differences within the same ranking scheme or to paradoxical time series. This we did not find. There might be a variety of reasons for this nevertheless it does not allow us to refute the existence of an objective concept of „quality of higher education”.

And yet, there is a big difference between the objects of the natural sciences and the „quality of higher education”. While in the natural sciences, the definitions of scientific objects are accepted without any problems by the scientific community and have a univocal meaning „quality of higher education” has no such simple, accepted definition. As we have seen, the different rankings deal with different meanings or at least different facets of the concept. By using in the rankings largely soft data and hard data that result from the aggregated actions of many individuals, these methodologies seem to con-

sider that „quality of higher education is what people who know about higher education consider quality of higher education to be”. Such a consideration seems at first to contradict our previous findings.

Putting the objective existence of quality together with the fact that it cannot be defined in such a way as to be accepted by all parties seems rather inconsequential. But is not this the general case with quality in the arts, for instance? Pierre Bourdieu has analyzed the social nature of the arts and described the formation of artistic value as a result of the interplay between a field of artistic production and one of artistic validation (Bourdieu 1974). As with „quality of higher education”, the „quality of an object of art” is supposed to have an objective existence, can still not be defined and is nevertheless recognized by experts, and maybe practitioners. And indeed inquiring on the quality of an object of art, one would not design a statistical sample of the population of art critics and artists, but would ask more or less haphazardly a few critics, experts that can judge quality. Hence, rankings treat higher education as an art form, something valuable in itself, having an objective quality but nevertheless the kind of quality that only the expert eye can judge and not even the expert can satisfyingly define.

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ÉVA SZOLÁR

THE BOLOGNA-INSPIRED HIGHER EDUCATION REFORMS  
AND DEBATES IN HUNGARY

**Abstract**

*The objective of our research was the study of the introduction of the Bologna process and the two-cycle degree system from a multiactor perspective in Hungary. The research aim was to analyze the change processes in higher education, and the actor beliefs and structures. The perspective on the Bologna process is primarily a political one, rather than a technical-structural one, though we provide a presentation even on this aspect. Accordingly, the analysis involves not only the study of higher education policy contents, but also the way these policies are evolving. We are conceptualizing the Bologna process as a new political platform for the higher education policy debates and struggles. In addition, partly we present the functional-structuralist view of the Bologna process which conceptualizes the reform as an introduction of a new framework for individual study roots.*

**Introduction**

The understanding of the dynamics, policy ideas and functioning of institutional disciplinary implementations is at the centre of the focus of the empirical research presented in this study. According to the complexity of studied phenomenon we used varied methods and data sources with multiple operationalizations and triangulations (critical multiplism) in an iterative manner. In the research process we collected the interpretations of actors and affected policy communities at various levels of implementation (e.g. government, central educational administrations, political opposition, leading academics, expert groups, buffer organizations, universities and colleges, disciplinary organizations) regarding the reform policies unfolding under the Bologna umbrella. The primary data sources were the semi-structured interview (with decision-makers, various leaders of higher education corporations, experts, academics, bureaucrats) and various document texts (e.g. press articles, committee minutes, expert analyses, reports), on which we conducted content analysis. Thirty-four interviews with different stakeholders<sup>1</sup> were conducted, and all the relevant documents were collected from the archives of the Hungarian Ministry of

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<sup>1</sup> The interviews can be accessed after requesting a permission here: <https://sites.google.com/site/bolognainterjuk/>

Education and Parliament<sup>2</sup> for the period of 1999-2009. In the article's text we will not refer to particular interview or document data, only a synthesis of the findings will be given. The outcome of this empirical work is presented now through a case study on the Hungarian Bologna process.

The empirical research presented in this article has been elaborated under the regional, comparative research project titled „Higher Education for Social Cohesion” (HERD) that focuses on the cross-border area of Romania and Hungary. Accordingly, two country studies regarding the implementation of Bologna-reforms were developed. The introduction and reception of Bologna process in Romania has been published previously (Szolár 2012). The systematic comparison of the two country studies still has not been realized.

### **The Political and Professional Agenda of the Hungarian Bologna Process**

Hungary joined the European Higher Education Area in 1999, as one of the first states to sign. At that time, central decision makers and the national higher education system were concerned with the implementation of „World Bank reforms” inherited from the previous government. In addition, on the one hand, political and professional elites were engaged with institutional mergers, on the other hand, the prevalent idea was that the Bologna Declaration (1999) will share the same fate as other supranational agreements in the field, without any real effect. In the first years this attitude was rather widespread in Bologna countries. The Prague Ministerial Conference in 2001 revealed that there was little progress in the harmonization of higher education architecture. In order to remedy the whole-scale inertia and absence of enthusiasm a proposal was formulated for the establishment of the Bologna Follow-Up Group and the elaboration of progress reports financed by the resources of the European Commission.

The external and internal events (e.g. change of political-administrative control of education) induced the conservative government to create the policy framework for the implementation of the Bologna objectives. The development-oriented policy envisioned a small-scale transformation where the main aim was to introduce the two-cycle degree program without comprehensive sectoral reform or educational paradigm shift. In fact, this vision conceptualized the degree reform as a simple formal process, where the main task was the harmonization of national degrees with the Bologna framework, or in other words the integration of new structures into old arrangements. This would have meant the sustaining of binary configuration, the optional institutional implementation of two-cycle programs, and consequently the parallel operation of

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<sup>2</sup> These documents also may be studied after a long procedure of authorization in the referred archives.

old and new structures, at least for a while. For example, in this concept the short-cycle three-year college programs were translated as BA/BSc, while the long-cycle academic specializations would have been divided into two parts (e.g. 3+1 or 3+2). As a consequence, in this context, the three-year BA/BSc academic programs would not have given professional qualification, only a record on fulfilled studies and acquired credits authorizing their owner for further studies. Clearly, the concept defines academic Bachelor's from universities as a preparatory and selective period for Master's. This approach to implementation, which mirrors the perspective of traditionalist academics, was legitimized by governmental policies. However, it was never implemented due to the political elections of 2002 (See JEHEA 2003).

The new Liberal-Democrat educational government was engaged in a great reform process starting in 2002. The minister of education and the allied experts were the same people who were not able to accomplish their reform goals between 1996 and 1998, because in 1998 the Conservatives came into power. As a result, they put back on the agenda their previously unrealized reform plans and the Bologna objectives in one reform package. The political and professional (experts) rhetoric used international policy frameworks and agreements (the Bologna process and the Lisbon process) to legitimate the governmental change in priorities. The Hungarian Bologna process is primarily identified with these reform attempts.

### **Structural and Curricular Reform Debates**

Based on our empirical data we can state that during the power conflicts and the debates of agenda-setting and policy formulation the two-cycle degree structure and its additional arrangements, as the original Bologna goal, drew little attention, which seems to be the reason for its „survival” in the programming process. Seemingly, the actors of higher education in this period did not consider the degree reform as an ideologically and politically significant issue, which was threatening the existing power structures. There were some sporadic attacks against the implementation (see the initiatives of the Constitutional Court), but with their limited effects they exhausted in delaying the reform. As a result, the two-cycle structure was perceived mainly as a technical and administrative problem in the period of policy formulation, decision-making and micro-implementation. However, the policy debates over goals, preferences, problems, casual theories, solutions, and implementation models were clearly apparent.

### **Two competing visions on implementation**

In Hungary, two competing concepts have existed until now regarding the substitution of the binary structure with the so-called Bologna model of Bachelor's and Master's programs, which interchangeably influences govern-

mental higher education policies. The two concepts have different intellectual roots: one originates with progressivist and reformist members of the academic community, whereas the other with traditionalist, reform-skeptical views and their communities. To sum up, the most important conceptualizations of these structural preferences can be traced back to different academic elite groups. By a simplistic classification, I will call these academic differences between the traditionalist and the modernist concepts.

The traditionalist concept dominated the scene at the beginning of the Bologna process (1999-2002), and emerged again after the evaluation of implementation experiences (2008-2010), although it still had no specific impact on policy. Through an official version (*Javaslat a magyar felsőoktatás... 2002*), the concept could be summarized as follows. The point of departure is the idea that education is a national competence in the European Union, consequently every innovation (new degree structure) is welcomed, although it must be implemented with the preservation of Hungarian higher education traditions and values. Those in favor of this perspective found the model of implementation worthy of imitation in Germany. This policy perspective pays special attention to the defense of academic programs and traditional university ideas. In fact, they are guided by the „elitist instincts” (Scott 1995). The implementation of new degrees in college education is conceived through a simple step: the conversion of all college programs into the Bachelor-cycle. Accordingly, this vision implicitly supports two study tracks: the tracing of clear boundaries between academic and professional, and practice-oriented education. More specifically, the old university-college distinction according to institutional types survives as the academic and professional tracks in line with the emphasis on program types. In addition, the vertical hierarchies according to institutional types would have been preserved through the restriction of advanced program levels (Master’s and PhD) to universities. The reform perspective involved even some restrictions concerning the upward mobility ambitions and academic drift of non-university institutions. In Hungary, the traditional concept of university prevails, therefore university status was and still is hard to achieve, but the academic drift seemingly resists governmental interventions.

In this concept, the implementation of the new framework is a matter of institutional autonomy, where internal decision-making bodies consider the introduction of new degrees in individual programs. The vision enhances the position of academic programs: old long-cycle (4-5-year) programs would have been divided into two-cycle ones, but after 3 years of study students would have received a Bachelor’s degree, qualifying them mainly for further studies, since it does not involve any qualification. It is argued that after 3 years of study in academic programs nobody is adequately prepared to be qualified for an occupation. Consequently, in academic programs, Bachelors would get a preparatory and selective function to Masters. However, the pri-

vate sphere as a potential market for these diplomas could respond positively, and in this way students could obtain a certificate of acquired competences with which they might enter the labor market. Public services, as the major market for degrees of academic programs require more preparation. Therefore, in order to get a full-value degree in the new framework, students must continue their studies at the Master's level, which would extend the study period in the academic programs.

As one can observe, adherents to the concept see in the different study tracks the continuation of the dual or binary configuration, which carried the potential to channel students according to their preliminary educational achievements, talents and socio-biographical background. According to the assumptions, the dual system makes it possible to direct the masses toward the intellectually less demanding college sector, thereby traditional universities and high-prestige programs would be preserved for the well-qualified elite. The different study tracks and selection promised the survival of this arrangement. In short, the markers of this continuously renewed perspective are: (1) a clear division between university and college, academic-professional and practice-oriented studies, (2) voluntary implementation, (3) the defense of traditional universities by giving them the privilege to run advanced level programs, (4) the protection of academic programs, with different tracks and internal selection.

Modernists regarded this as the sabotage and distortion of the Bologna vision. As a result, university and professor-friendly attitudes were surpassed, and a paradigmatic structural and curricular change was envisioned. New policies were elaborated on the implementation of the two-cycle degree structure, which marked the first decade of Bologna reforms in Hungary. According to political declarations, the Anglo-Saxon system served as the model for this new policy (JEHEA 2003). The policy agenda evolved around the substitution of the binary system with the stage structure, the increasing of mobility between institutions and program levels, and the strengthening of competition and differentiation between elite and mass structures. The most important difference is in the function and curricular emphasis of the Bachelor's cycle where experts aim to guarantee a higher relevance to the labor market. In this policy perspective, Bachelors (1) are designed uniformly, (2) have to equally fulfill the function of entering the labor market and advanced levels of education, and as a result (3) to provide a qualification after 3 years. With regard to the curricular emphasis, this concept envisions an intensive, practice-oriented and generalist content for most Bachelor programs, instead of old, extensive, theory-oriented and specialized ones. According to the concept, in academic and teacher training programs the concurrent curricular vision has to be substituted by the consecutive organization of studies, where specialization takes place at Master's level. By the initial plans Bachelors would have been so general that in humanities only one entry point was suggested for

all programs. The expectation of such attempts was that general Bachelor's would provide sufficient but not thorough specialization which could be supplemented at the future place of employment. This way public funds would not have to be wasted for unnecessarily thorough specializations. Contrary to the traditional view, where a degree is eligible for one or a few occupations, general Bachelor's offers preparation for a large scale of occupations.

### **The two-cycle system from a technical-administrative perspective**

The government implemented the second concept regarding the Bologna model. According to the Act CXXXIX of 2005 on higher education, the government defines the frameworks (study areas, branches and specializations, the available number of credits for the various levels and main units, the procedure of the establishment of new programs, and the organization of post-secondary training and doctoral/PhD education) for the new degree structure (BA/BSc and MA/MSc). The most important structuring aspects were the length of the study period and the credit points according to the program levels and disciplines. The government attempts to maintain a standard configuration regarding the length of the study period (3 years Bachelor's + 2 years Master's). However, in line with the requirements of different study areas a flexible framework has been set up where the Bachelor's level may last from 3 years (6 semesters) to 4 years (8 semesters), whereas the Master's level would be managed in a structure of from 1 through 1.5 to 2.5 years of study. For example, in agriculture and engineering it is organized as follows: 3.5+1.5, while in civil engineering programs Bachelor's takes 4 years. Practice-oriented areas with high curricular emphasis on labor market relevance apparently introduced an additional semester, which explains these organizational variances. At the same time, others in the standard model of 3-year Bachelor's initiated internal divisions from the available credits in order to introduce practical and specializing contents directly employable in the labor market. We have to note that these are the largely defined frameworks, where the great variety of micro-implementations is not transparent. In effect, formally we can observe a convergence both nationally and internationally, but essentially there exist various models in study areas and individual programs, especially if we consider the internal, curricular and organizational aspects of a program.

### **Various expectations**

Structural reform was accompanied by various expectations which were structured on the one hand by the recurrently expressed hopes of the Bologna countries and on the other hand by the previously unresolved problems in Hungarian higher education. The actors wanted to see a universal solution and the possibility to heal various problems at once.

1. International competition: reform enthusiasts believed that the structural and curricular reform will considerably improve the international and European position and attractiveness of Hungarian higher education, especially in terms of learning (incoming students, faculty staff and researchers) and labor mobility. In addition, the actors were also hoping for the entrance of some selected and strengthened universities to the global education market.
2. The status of short-cycle education: according to the expectations the Bologna-model will reduce the study period and will raise the status of short-cycle programs.
3. Over-diversification: the presumed proliferation of institutions and programs created a highly fragmented system and unequal distribution with regard to program types (academic versus professional, practice-oriented). According to the policy actors, the implementation of the new degree structure would be a great opportunity for the rationalization of the higher education system.
4. Elite and mass higher education: the expansion of higher education generated considerable tension in the system. During the restructuring it was possible to reconsider the function of different institutional types and program levels where the non-university sector, short-cycle programs and the Bachelor's level were seen as the place for mass higher education. At the same time, the university sector was conceived as the place for intellectually demanding activities (academic programs, high emphasis on research, advanced levels) for elite groups in terms of students and faculty staff, as much as possible.
5. Relevance and employability: the curricular reform suggested more practice-orientation, directly employable knowledge and competences, and labor market relevance in all programs and at all levels, since the continuous academic drift of previously vocational and professional programs were regarded as a problem. In addition, academic programs were expected to become more practice-oriented, which the academic side considered an unwelcome „vocalization”.

As one can observe, these reform expectations, with the exception of internationalization, are not novel, since they have always been on the policy agenda of higher education since as early as the '50s (see Ladányi 1992, 2000). For example, even under the moderate expansion of higher education, institutional and program structures were considered continuously detrimentally fragmented, and despite the repeated reform attempts they never reached a satisfactory level of integration.

### **Uniform Bachelors and diversified Masters?**

A major conclusion of the institutional and disciplinary implementations of the two-cycle structure could be summarized as follows: the preservation of the old content and organization behind the front of a new structure. As we pointed out, Hungary opted for uniform Bachelor programs which offer both a qualification for entrance into the labor market (practice-oriented curricular

emphasis, development of professional competences), and a preparation for further studies (theoretical and general curricular emphasis). As one could expect this created greater controversies in traditional long-cycle academic programs (university programs of arts and sciences), since the vocational and professional programs have been simply renamed to Bachelor's or finished with compromises. In line with the various functional expectations and existential pressures, the developers of curricula in the academic programs maintained the extensive curricular philosophy, dissipated the credit points, declared most subjects to be compulsory and crammed the 4 or 5-year curriculum into the 3 study years. As a result, overcrowded and rigid academic programs were constructed, limiting the inter- and intra-institutional mobility, the selection of individual schedules and the creation of flexible learning paths.

The most important themes in policy debates concerning the implementation of the second cycle related to the distribution of Master's programs between different institutional types, the assurance of a consecutive structure, and especially the curricular content of this level. According to the policy concept, diversification and specializations should be realized at Master's level. However, the implementation of Bachelor's programs was realized without further conceptualization of the subsequent stage. In university studies according to the curricular thrust of long programs all the previous content was put in the Bachelor's cycle, not giving a thought to what would remain for the Master's and with what curricular support (Pusztai 2007). Due to the lack of synchronization of the two cycles, there emerged a considerable curricular overlap between Bachelor's and Master's programs in the first period of implementation. In the following academic years with the unfolding of Master's this overlap was reduced. The policy actors were divided regarding the desirable diversification at the Master's level: the policy experts call for „let 100 flowers bloom”, while others (HRC, Hungarian Rectors' Conference)<sup>3</sup> claim that there are too many and too specific programs with a lack of interdisciplinary focus. In addition, with regard to mobility between institutions and programs, there is little improvement.

### **The elite and the masses in higher education**

What is more, in uniformly conceived academic programs implementers had faced the issue of the type of structure in which they should handle the different student groups in terms of their socio-biographical background, talents, and prior educational achievement. How it is possible to organize catching-up and talent management in the first years of Bachelor's (e.g. their place in the curriculum, credit points, different working load and tasks, etc.)?

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<sup>3</sup> Original name: Magyar Rektori Konferencia – the editors

This problem construction served as an umbrella for raising issues such as the tension between elite and mass education, the access to different program levels and types and selection within them, the potential for preserving the boundaries between universities and colleges (the functional dualism, the supremacy of academic content over professional and practical, the hierarchical relationship). Accordingly, the academic community formulated the claim for the separation of talents and the creation of elite programs and institutions, the formal recognition of existing differences in programs (both Master's and Bachelor's level) instead of uniform arrangements. This claim was supported not only by traditionalists, but also by reformists due to the potential for the realization of inter-institutional competition, the introduction of market mechanisms, the starting of a natural selection and the differentiation of programs and institutions, and the creation of market-driven hierarchies in the system. According to the expectations, this process would produce those elite institutions which if strengthened further will have the possibility of competing in the international market and of serving the long-term interests of the country educating „excellence”.

### **The university and non-university sector**

What is the desirable institutional configuration for Hungary? This remains a recurrent theme in higher education policy debates after the transformation. Traditionalists argue for a dual configuration or in a more generous mood for the maintenance of the existing (binary) one. Modernists speak up for a system where the main structuring power is the program level, in harmony with the Bologna goals. According to the expectations, this emancipates the system from the boundaries rooted in institutional and program types. The two opposing views involve (1) whether it is desirable to maintain advanced higher education levels and research at universities or (2) should non-university institutions be given the right to establish Master's and even doctoral programs. Clearly, some actors perceive the implementation of the Bologna model as challenging these boundaries and existing monopolies.

The Act CXXXIX of 2005 on higher education formally gave colleges the right to establish programs at all levels as long as they meet the criteria set by the Hungarian Accreditation Committee (HAC)<sup>4</sup>. The discourse within universities mostly perceives this right as a threatening initiative, which opens the way for undesirable institutional upgradings (colleges to universities). Hungarian higher education is marked by strong traditional university values and weak vertical mobility of institutions. Even if there have been individual cases of institutional mobility, they have been implemented through the merging of institutions rather than upgrading. However, most of them will continue to be considered second-class universities. In addition, we have to note that the

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<sup>4</sup> Original name: Magyar Felsőoktatási Akkreditációs Bizottság – the editors

accreditation of all of the new two-cycle programs is a significant restricting power to possible upgrading as a result of the right conferred by the law. The main buffer organizations succeeded in ensuring that all programs have to be accredited by the HAC, thus the government's power for authorization remains limited and contested. Several actors stated that this resulted in criteria biased toward universities and academic programs.

As one can observe, the relation between the two sectors could be characterized by competition for resources and students. The vertical differences are emphasized: the fight is for prestige, reputation and a better place in the hierarchy. In the competition for the students, the unambiguous advantage of universities can be observed with regard to the selection of students, admission experiences and the composition of the student body. The preference for universities and the so-called normative funding contributes to the deprivation of local non-university institutions with narrow portfolios. The higher education policy experts from our empirical research suggest that these institutions should be remodeled and their function changed in an American fashion (community college models). Accordingly, local institutions have to concentrate mostly on teaching, Bachelor's programs, general education (the preparation for further studies at universities) and some short-cycle specializations for lower-level jobs in the regional market. However, as other actors point out, universities are not willing to pursue such division of labor, since the concentration on Master's and doctoral levels (elite functions) would entail a significant decrease in the number of students, which in turn entails a loss of power and funding.

### **The rationalization of the structure**

According to the critical problem constructions, the Hungarian higher education system is extremely fragmented and over-dimensionalized („the proliferation of programs and institutions”). Critics point out that in Hungary there are too many programs and institutions, and the program structure is too diversified. In the academic year of 2008/09 there were 70 higher education institutions, consisting of 45 colleges and 25 universities. In the university sector there were 3 traditional universities and several new and specialized universities or university-level institutions. However, in these policy debates the desirable size and diversification are not defined. Barakonyi (2004) argues that the phenomenon of proliferation unfolded due to the expansion affecting mainly the universities and to the lack of adequate central and institutional planning. As a result, there emerged a top-heavy system: a large university sector with multi-campus, giant institutions and a non-university sector formed by small (mainly private) colleges. In addition, the status of post-secondary education remains uncertain, narrow in size and unpopular. The

boundaries and the perceived fragmentation in the system restrict horizontal and vertical mobility.

Consequently, the introduction of the Bologna model served as a platform for the renegotiation of the program structure despite the fact that institutional integration at the turn of the millennium aimed at the rationalization of the program structure and the forming of a more integrated national system. The actors demand the rationalization of the program and the institutional structure, the removal of parallel programs in the same region, no more wasting of public funds on programs with little or no relevance on the labor market, and the concentration of resources to highly valued institutions and programs. Rationalization, especially in the most extensive study areas (human sciences and health care), raised significant tension. The problems of institutional and program structure are emerging as quality policy and financial issue. According to the critics, local colleges are characterized by weak staff and infrastructure as well as low performance, thus in a most radical view they must be closed, or from a generous perspective, demand and supply should be harmonized (Pusztai & Szabó 2008). However, it is highly debated which actor's (society in general, private and public labor market, students) perspective from the demand side should be decisive. Those making this claim argue both for market regulation and the central planning of enrolment numbers to particular programs and institutions.

### **The curricular thrusts and the labor market**

In the university discourse over the two-cycle structure, it is continually claimed that two types of Bachelor's programs should be implemented with different admission criteria, study length, curricula, and further prospects in higher education: the academic (theory and research-oriented, preparing for further studies) and professional (practice-oriented, preparing for entrance to the labor market) Bachelor's programs. This would legitimize the divisions already existing, though hidden. Adherents of this view suggest that these two types of Bachelor's should serve different labor markets, and the division would communicate more clearly the difference for the employers. However, the formation of the two-type model exists only in policy plans, not in reality.

The improvement of labor market relevance of programs and the employability of students was one of the most emphasized goals of the reform. According to policy experts, in this process employers would have a central role in decision-making, especially concerning the curricular and practical issues. However, as the critics point out university studies were designed in accordance with the „dreams of the faculty staff” or as they imagine the market needs rather than the real requirements of the labor market (Barakonyi 2008). Other actors stated that the involvement of employers lacked any antecedents in several programs, as opposed to information technology and engineering,

for instance. The solution would be partnership and intensive communication with the economic actors, but this in most cases is restricted to individual contacts and projects. Polónyi (2009) points out that the Bachelor's must solve the problem of Hungarian higher education regarding vocational education, but not in a very specialized curricular arrangement. He argues that the consequence of expansion and the lack of planning resulted in incongruent employment, since the existing occupational structure is not able to absorb the graduates. Therefore, the function of the Bachelor's is to provide some kind of preliminary vocational training, where the graduates do not take a thorough and narrow specialization, only general vocational knowledge and competences, which could be easily completed at the actual place of employment.

### Final reflections

Diverse reform areas, institutional and program types responded differently to the policy aims of the political-administrative level. On the one hand, colleges and second-rate universities, and practice and profession-oriented programs responded quickly and in several cases innovatively, with little or no controversies. On the other hand, however, traditional universities and academic programs showed a great resistance, both in debates and in micro-implementation. In their case, clearly, the re-conversion of old structures and curricular thrusts was apparent. The speed of change in these two settings differs markedly. The reform areas strongly connected with the distribution of power and influence between the actors were the scenes of the most passionate debates and resistance. Clearly, system-governance and institutional management are the most prominent in this regard, with the most significant withdrawal of the government. Finally, it is important to emphasize methodological challenges in assessing the levels and areas of change, since reform aims and their interpretations change from government to government, between actors and even within an individual policy cycle. Under such conditions it is hard to formulate universally valid statements on reform performance.

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## GÁBOR FLÓRA & GYÖRGYI SZILÁGYI

### HUNGARIAN MINORITY EDUCATIONAL POLICIES AND OPPORTUNITIES IN BIHOR COUNTY

#### **Abstract**

*In Romania, in the wake of revolutionary changes and the post-communist transition after 1989, the reconstruction of educational system – including its higher education component – has significantly enhanced the educational opportunities available to Romanian citizens through restoring the right of Hungarian minority to education in their mother tongue, and at the same time establishing a pluralistic educational system based on the equal recognition of various (ethnic, national religious) identities. Bibor is a territorial-administrative region (county) located at the North-Western border of Romania inhabited by a significant proportion of the Hungarian population. The region's geographical position creates favorable conditions for cultural and linguistic pluralism within the educational system, underlying the need for coordinated cross-border educational policies. This paper aims to survey the evolution and current situation of Hungarian minority education in Bibor in light of the most important demographic, socio-economic, political and cultural developments. It concludes that access to university education opportunities in one's native language is becoming increasingly a fundamental prerequisite of equal opportunities for the social advancement of members of the Hungarian community.*

#### **Introduction**

In the fast changing social environment, characterizing the construction of a new Europe, educational systems are facing new challenges. Recent years have seen the emergence of social problems, which in a globalizing world need to be analyzed in a framework of interaction (Flora & Szilagyí 2006: 2). The new developments have had profound effects upon higher education, particularly in countries undergoing post-communist transition in Eastern and Central Europe. This has resulted from the interplay of processes connected to Europeanization, internationalization, Euro-regionalization, globalization and the transformations at nation-state level with the characteristics of local and regional development (Belényi et al. 2012: 109).

The global/local dynamics is particularly demanding in the case of Eastern and Central European countries. In fact, their difficult task is exacerbated by global pressures for intra-regional integration and for the devolution of power to sub-regional and local authorities. The development of a sustainable environment both within and between these countries is dependent upon the suc-

successful balancing of global and local pressures. In particular, institutional and political frameworks are needed in which the respect for ethnic, national, religious, local and regional identities represents the source of integration and cooperation rather than the ideological motive for division.

In this context, a key concept is that of membership in its various interpretations (membership of a local/regional community, ethnicity, nationhood, nation-state citizenship, European citizenship). Multicultural regions might face additional obstacles originating in the persistence of ethno-cultural and ethno-political dividing lines between majority population and national minorities. Thus the main question emerging in such regions is how educational policies can overcome culturally rooted inequality and discrimination, and transform cultural diversity from an obstacle into a tool of regional development.

Bihar is one of the multicultural territorial-administrative regions of Romania located at the country's north-western border shared with Hungary, also generally regarded as one of the administrative units of the country where conditions for economic development are comparatively favorable (Szilágyi et al. 2007a: 23). Beyond its proximity to the border, there are advantages deriving from the relatively well-developed infrastructure and human resources, which make the region attractive to foreign investors. It is worth mentioning here, that the proportion of university and high school graduates within the population is significantly higher compared to the average Romanian level (Romanian Census 2003).

The opportunities related to the geographical position of Bihar are conducive to cultural and linguistic pluralism within the educational system, emphasizing the need for coordinated cross-border educational policies, to be adapted to the requirements of unifying the cross-border labor market. After the expected elimination of border crossing formalities between Romania and Hungary, the again increased number of onetime opportunities to study, work and live in the neighboring country will likely produce demographic, socio-economic and cultural effects which should be taken into account when elaborating development programs and cooperation projects within the Bihar–Hajdú-Bihar Euro-region.

## **Methodology**

With the above mentioned dimensions and influencing factors as starting points, this paper aims to offer a sociological analysis of Hungarian minority education in Bihar county in light of the most important demographic, socio-economic, political and cultural developments. The issues pertaining to minority education are discussed on the basis of research information drawn from statistical data, available research information and the content analysis of relevant policy documents. After an overview of the evolution and current situation of Hungarian native language education in Bihar, including its edu-

cational policy component, the paper discusses the higher education options of Hungarian secondary school graduates in view of the region's offer of native language education available to Hungarian minority members.

### **Hungarian minority education in Bihor: an overview**

According to the preliminary 2011 census data, more than a quarter of Bihor county's population (25.2%) identify themselves as ethnic Hungarians. This is a statistically important proportion, at the same time denoting a clear-cut minority situation. The view of parents who argue that for their children „it would be more reasonable to study in Romanian, which provides more chances in life” needs to be interpreted in this ethno-demographic context. It should be emphasized, however, that the Hungarian community does have deep cultural roots in the region, including an important tradition of centuries-old autonomous educational establishments. With the advancement of European integration, linguistic abilities are more and more appreciated by employers, and the possibility of receiving education simultaneously in Romanian and Hungarian language (besides at least one important international language) tends to be increasingly perceived as a potential advantage.

Table 1 provides data on the demographic size of the Hungarian community in Bihor as recorded by the censuses conducted between 1930 and 2011, helpful in analyzing the current significance of minority educational trends and policies.

*Table 1: Ethnic Hungarian population in Bihor county (1930-2011)*

Census	Ethnic Hungarians	Increase or decrease compared to previous census data
1930	171 907	-
1956	194 883	+22 976
1966	192 948	-1 935
1977	199 615	+6 667
1992	181 703	-17 912
2002	155 829	-25 874
2011	138 441	-17 388

Sources: Demographic Yearbook of Bihor County (2005), Bihor Statistical Office (2012)

As it can be seen, in the years following the political transformation in 1989, the number of ethnic Hungarians has diminished continually, partly as result of assimilation, but mainly due to emigration, a phenomenon affecting particularly the young, the middle aged and the highly trained segments of the population (Anghel & Horváth 2009).<sup>1</sup> Emigration from Romania to Hungary had intensified already in the last years of communist regime, when due to the

<sup>1</sup> For more details concerning the ethnic aspects of migration from Romania and Hungary see Anghel & Horváth 2009.

restrictions a large part of resettling population arrived by illegal means. The opening of the borders provided an opportunity for those who wanted to leave but had been forced to stay, as well as for those who simply decided to start a new life under new conditions. The interethnic tensions in Romania after 1989 also contributed to ethnic Hungarian emigration by increasing the feeling of uncertainty and insecurity among ethnic Hungarian minority members (McIntosh et al.1995).

Due to the ethnic, linguistic and cultural ties between Hungarians living in Hungary and Romania and the mediating role of relatives and friends, the decision to settle in Hungary and the practical possibility to implement such a decision do have strong ethnic dimensions and connotations. To Hungarians from Romania Hungary is a place of special social, economic and symbolic attraction and it does not appear simply as a foreign country like any other. Their concept of „home” is more complex. It can include and integrate into a unitary vision both the place of origin (Romania) and the place of destination (Hungary). What is taking place in fact in the mind of ethnic Hungarian migrants is a continuous redefinition of the significance of geographic, economic, social and cultural space in which they are moving, both in terms of the requirements of adaptation and in terms of symbolic appropriation.

A numerically significant category of migrants, especially in the first years following 1989, consisted of young people whose number one purpose was to become enrolled in institutions of higher education in Hungary, a move which in the overwhelming majority of cases turned out to be their first step towards definitive emigration (Horváth 2004). The en masse emigration of highly educated Hungarians and of young aspirants to higher education along with the severely restricted opportunities to study in their native language during the communist period are among the important factors that contributed to the lower educational level of Hungarian population compared to the general population of Bihor county.

As shown by the 2002 census data,<sup>2</sup> only 4.6% of ethnic Hungarians in Bihor had a diploma from a higher education institution, compared to a country average of 6.6%. While among the general population 45.7% finished only compulsory school (8 classes), in the case of the Hungarian community this figure was as high as 52%. Although the share of ethnic Hungarian population within the population of Bihor aged 10 or above was 26.5%, they made up only 18.8% of the population with a higher education diploma and 15.7% of the population employed in a leading position which requires university studies. In the same year, 72.8% of Hungarian university graduates had access to leading positions and jobs requiring higher education, compared to 81.4% of the county's general university graduate population. The census data also point to the fact that disadvantages due to ethnic background are likely to be amplified

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<sup>2</sup> The similar kind of data from the 2011 Census is not as yet available.

by the gender factor. In 2002, only 3.9% of Hungarian female population had a diploma from higher education and 60% did not continue education once they finished the compulsory years (Romanian Census Bihor Database 2003).

Beyond external emigration, several other factors contributed to this situation. While access to minority native language education in the primary school remained more or less the same throughout the whole communist period, during the seventies and the eighties no more than an estimated one-third of Hungarian pupils finishing the compulsory grades of education could be integrated in native language secondary education and only one in five Hungarian high school graduates could continue their studies at a university level in their native language (Szilágyi et al. 2007a: 106). The access of ethnic Hungarians to university studies continually diminished during the communist period as the result of two things: a severe restriction of the areas where Hungarian language university education remained available, and the implementation of *de facto* *numerus clausus* policies against potential Hungarian candidates, particularly in fields of study which provided graduates with the opportunity to apply for positions within the state apparatus. In 1977, for example, at Babeş-Bolyai University of Cluj – the most prominent higher education institution of Transylvania where teaching in Hungarian was still available to a limited extent – the proportion of ethnic Hungarians amounted to only 1.2% of the total number of Law students and decreased even further in the 1980s. In 1977-78 Hungarian students made up only 4.15% of the total student body of the university, while the Hungarians' share in the total population of Transylvania reached 22.0% (Vincze 1999: 219).

The restrictive policies of the communist period, which drastically limited access to the higher levels of the educational system, left many young ethnic Hungarians with the only option to learn a profession by enrolling in a vocational school or obtaining a qualification through professional training at the workplace. As for those few who were successful and lucky enough to enter universities and then obtain a diploma, the regime established a system of compulsory assignment to workplaces, with the officially undeclared aim of preventing specialists belonging to minorities from returning to their home regions. Several thousands of young Hungarian doctors, teachers and engineers had been assigned compulsory jobs in different regions of Romania where they had no possibility to use their native language and were subjected to strong pressures to assimilate. As a response to such measures and as a defensive reaction to the lack of possibility to obtain employment in their place of origin, particularly in the last years of the regime, a drastically increasing number of ethnic Hungarian university graduates chose to emigrate (Frundea & Ştefoi 1997: 19).

In spite of the fact that the first years of post-communist transition opened up many new channels for Hungarian minority members, particularly concerning their access to secondary education, the disadvantages inherited from the communist past could not and did not disappear overnight. The demand to

ensure the right for native language higher education for the members of minority ethnic communities provoked an acute perception of insecurity and strong negative reactions among members of the Romanian majority and political elite (Daftari & Grin 2003: 256-257). Faced with the refusal of the authorities to reestablish the Hungarian language Bolyai University of Cluj abolished by the communist regime in 1959, the Hungarian community has adopted a flexible strategy, combining efforts to increase the number of fields of study available in the Hungarian language within the state sector with the use of new legal opportunities to establish private and religious educational institutions (Szolár 2010).

Nevertheless, the share of Hungarian students in the general student population constantly remained lower than the percentage of ethnic Hungarians in the population of the country throughout the first decade of post-communist transition. (Bárdi et al. 2001: 48-49, Romanian Census 2003). The access of Hungarian minority members to higher education has an important regional dimension as well, since „Széklerland, with an overwhelming majority of Hungarians provides significantly lower chances of attaining a diploma of higher education than the rest of ‘Transylvania’” (Hatos & Bernáth 2009: 40).

At the other end of the spectrum of educational options, young Hungarians who chose the vocational training track had even smaller chance to receive education in their mother tongue. According to the data provided by Bihor County Statistical Office in 2007, of 73 professional training programmes included in the educational offerings of vocational schools in Oradea only 8 organized courses in Hungarian (Szilágyi et al. 2007b). Under such circumstances, the unavailability of vocational training in their native language caused vocational training to become unattractive in general for ethnic Hungarians living in Romania, a phenomenon which emerged in the last two decades in the context of the large-scale post-communist expansion of higher education. Today, most young people who opt for a vocational school do so because of weak school performance or financial difficulties, which practically exclude them from the opportunity to enter secondary education.

The low status of vocational education has been reinforced by the comparatively weak institutional network of adult vocational training in Romania. The legal framework of adult education has been rather volatile and not sufficiently regulated until recent years (Flóra et al. 2011: 4). In the absence of adequate legal provisions, the public recognition of adult education and vocational training programs organized in the Hungarian language faced obstacles of an administrative nature. To mention just one relevant fact, the regulation which explicitly permits the accreditation and functioning of continuous education in the languages of minorities was approved as late as in 2011.<sup>3</sup> Another disadvantage for minority adult education comes from the fact that current legislation pro-

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<sup>3</sup> Concerning this subject see Szatmár 2012

vides state support exclusively for the vocational training courses organized within the traditional state-owned educational system (Government Ordinance 2000). Therefore, civil organizations aiming to offer training courses much needed on a local level have to rely on private funding, which is subject to changing circumstances. In the case of denominational, private or NGO-based minority educational initiatives, most financial support comes through church community links and international religious networks (Juhász 2010).

The problem of accessing native language education and of other related issues pertaining to the preservation of identity present certain peculiarities in the localities and micro-regions of Bihor where ethnic Hungarians are a scattered minority. For instance, in the Beius Catchment Area, a relatively isolated and economically less developed micro-region located in the south-eastern part of the county, secondary education is accessible exclusively in Romanian despite the fact that 36.6% of the population belongs to the Hungarian community. As a consequence, about half of the Hungarian school-aged population is enrolled in educational institutions outside the micro-region (Szilágyi et al. 2007a: 219). This predominantly study-motivated migration trend results in the definitive resettlement of a large part of the well-educated segment of ethnic Hungarian population. As shown by the data below (Table 2) one of the outcomes is that within the micro-region the proportion of highly educated ethnic Hungarians became much smaller compared to the general demographic share of the Hungarian community.

*Table 2: Distribution of the general population and ethnic Hungarian population of Beius Catchment Basin by attained educational level*

Attained educational level	Total population of Beius Catchment Basin	Hungarian population of Beius Catchment Basin	Share of ethnic Hungarians (%)
Higher education	1 588	237	14,9
Post-secondary education	1 160	215	18,5
High school	7 535	2 142	28,4
Vocational school	5 300	1 927	36,4
Compulsory school (8 classes)	8 946	3 994	44,6
Primary school (four classes)	7 380	3 460	46,9
Others and no schooling	2 345	666	28,4
Illiterates	841	376	44,7
Total	34 254	12 641	36,9

Source: Romanian Census Bihor Database (2003)

The lack of native language educational offerings at secondary school level within the micro-region also causes more and more parents to enroll their children in Romanian language primary schools in order to avoid a potentially difficult transition from one language to another. Under such circumstances, the argument that children might have better opportunities for upward social

mobility or for preserving the social status inherited in the family if they study in Romanian has much more persuasive power. This tendency is only amplified by the assimilationist pressures occurring in a high number of Hungarian-Romanian mixed marriages, existing in a context where Romanian, both as the official state language and as the language of the majority, holds a dominant position (Flóra & Szilágyi 2008).

Our former research data (Flóra & Szilágyi 2008: 145) referring to Oradea show that most children raised in mixed families are oriented by their parents towards educational institutions where they are taught exclusively in Romanian. Beyond the identity related implications, this choice is also a very practical one. It expresses the parents' aim to secure „a brighter future” for their children, „real chances for a successful life” and „better possibilities of self-promotion”. Although the exclusive or dominant use of Romanian within the Romanian-Hungarian mixed families, and the education of their children in Romanian are not necessarily based on ideological criteria, it seems that the effects of the so-called „practical” possibilities (especially the ones involving communication and self-promotion) facilitate in a rather objective way the transfer of the Romanian identity within the family, at the expense of the Hungarian identity.

In contrast, the experience of smaller minorities inhabiting Bihor points to the fact that where native language education opportunities are offered at primary and secondary level, the community has a good chance to preserve its ethno-cultural individuality, at least in the relatively isolated rural areas where it forms the demographic majority. The Slovak community for example, is concentrated in two mountainous localities (Budoi and Sinteu) where the overwhelming majority of local population declared to be Slovak at the latest census. In addition to the native language elementary and primary schools available in the two localities, there is also a secondary school available to Slovak community members, where teaching is provided in their native language (Saramandu & Nevaci 2009).

### **Further education options of high school graduates**

Throughout the post-communist transition period, the denominations closely linked to the ethnic identity of Hungarian minority (Roman Catholic, Reformed, Lutheran and Unitarian) constantly advocated minority rights and were very effective in mobilizing ethnic Hungarians in support of the legislative changes in favor of national minorities. Remarkably, in 2000-2001 these denominations provided the legal and institutional umbrella to the new private universities teaching in Hungarian, established with the financial support of the Government of Hungary: Partium Christian University located in Oradea (the seat of Bihor county) and Sapientia University with branches in

three Transylvanian cities: Tirgu Mures, Miercurea Ciuc and Cluj (Flora & Szilagyi 2005).

In addition, a significant numeric increase of places available for those wishing to study in Hungarian occurred at the state-owned Babeş-Bolyai University of Cluj, particularly with the establishment of territorial branches of that institution in localities with a large Hungarian population (Sfintu Gheorghe, Satu Mare, Gheorgheni etc.).<sup>4</sup> Even so, according to a public opinion poll conducted by the Soros Foundation Romania in 2004, within the age group of 25-29 only 5.3% of ethnic Hungarians possessed a university diploma, while in the case of ethnic Romanians the proportion of university graduates was 15.7% (Kovács 2008: 124).

Under such conditions, as demonstrated by recent research data, a significant shift is gradually taking place in the perceptions of Hungarian minority members themselves. As the process of post-communist economic and social transformation is drawing to an end, accompanied by a rapid expansion of the higher education system, the gradual opening up of the country to students from abroad and the increasing level of educational internationalization on the one hand, as well as the diminishing of ethnic tension and polarization characterizing much of the first post-revolutionary decade on the other, the symbolic value of receiving native language education seems to decrease in certain social segments of the Hungarian community (KAB 2010, qtd. in Belényi et al. 2012: 130).

The results of a survey conducted by researchers of Partium Christian University<sup>5</sup> (Flóra et al. 2010) among high school seniors studying in Hungarian in Bihor confirmed our hypothesis that the „mental map” of university options of ethnic Hungarian high school graduates in Bihor is basically configured around the following three higher education institutions:

- (1) *Babeş-Bolyai University* is a traditional state-owned high prestige institution, which has the largest scale of study offer in Hungarian and the highest number of students enrolled.

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<sup>4</sup> The number of students currently enrolled in study programs conducted in Hungarian language at Babeş-Bolyai University is around seven thousands, out of a total student population of approximately 53 thousands (UBB 2011a, 2011b). To this one should add the approximately two thousand students of Sapientia University (Sapientia 2012) and the almost one thousand ethnic Hungarians studying at Partium Christian University (PCU 2012).

<sup>5</sup> The survey was conducted in the Spring of 2009 on a county-wide sample of high school final year pupils studying in Hungarian (N=475). In selecting the sample we aimed at a balanced representation of pupils by location and study profile. The survey included institutions where the teaching language is exclusively Hungarian, as well as Hungarian language study groups functioning within bilingual (Romanian-Hungarian) schools.

- (2) *University of Oradea* is a relatively young state institution of higher education, close to the home localities of students, offering a large number of fields of study, although exclusively in Romanian.
- (3) *Partium Christian University*, located in Oradea, in 2008 has become the first accredited Hungarian language university in Romania after the change of political regime. Its establishment was initiated by the historical churches connected to Hungarian minority with the financial and political support of the Government of Hungary.

As our survey data (Flóra et al. 2010) shows, Oradea State University ranks first among the options of Hungarian high school graduates (24.37% of those surveyed) even though at this institution all teaching activities are organized in Romanian. The arguments in favour of this university are presumably related to its geographical proximity to the students' places of residency, and the great variety of the subjects offered. The latter is regarded as a very important argument, since 22.9% of our respondents declared that they would accept only a place at a university within their preferred field of study.

The second place occupied by Babeş-Bolyai University in the hierarchy of prospective students' options (22.27%) can probably be best explained by the comparatively higher reputation enjoyed by this traditionally prestigious institution, and its diversity of fields of study and specializations where teaching in native language is available. It should also be noted that since most high school teachers in Bihor are themselves graduates of Babeş-Bolyai University, they likely are in a position to recommend their alma mater institution to their own pupils (Flóra et al. 2010: 161).

Although Partium Christian University is listed only in the third position (17.65%), in relation to the number of available student places which is six times smaller than in the case of Babeş-Bolyai University, its share can be regarded as considerable (Flóra et al. 2010: 161). For potential students belonging to the Hungarian community of Bihor region, this young, recently accredited institution aims to combine the opportunity to study in their native language in a small-size community type educational settlement and the financial and other advantages deriving from the geographical proximity of the university to their home. The university offers a relatively wide range of study programs, including Humanities, Social and Economic Sciences and Arts. Another advantage which might attract candidates is that Partium Christian University provides a number of financial resources to its students (scholarships based on learning performance and/or on demonstrated social needs, tuition fee waivers and special prices, etc.). This makes the university particularly attractive to potential students coming from disadvantaged social groups, who otherwise could not afford the cost of higher education (PCU 2011).

In addition, the numerically significant presence of mature students within the student body of the university is an important feature of campus life.

These students are already engaged in work at the moment of their admission. Their growing number actually signifies that university education is catching up with current international trends, as a manifestation of its Westernization (Chov 2002, Pusztai et al. 2012)<sup>6</sup> This group of students is particularly well represented in the Humanities and also in Social Work (PCU 2011). In order to attract an even higher number of mature students, however, the university will need to adopt more flexible academic programs in order to allow students to combine study and employment more efficiently.

On the other hand, the university faces some obstacles attracting students, including the fact that it does not cover important fields of study (such as Engineering or Natural Sciences), its comparatively low level of institutional prestige (inevitable in the case of a new institution) and that a significant part of potential student population prefers state-run institutions of higher education to private ones. Indeed, 48.4% of our respondents declared that they would continue their studies at state universities, 16.6% consider that the distinction between state-run and private institutions is not an important criterion in choosing their university, while only 10.1% of high school graduates manifest a preference for the private higher education sector (Flóra et al. 2010: 162).

This data is in concordance with the information collected in previous research (Szilágyi et al. 2007b), which detects in the general public a higher level of confidence in state higher education institutions compared to private universities, particularly concerning the legal status and recognition of study programs, the validity of diplomas, the quality of teaching and the opportunities of graduates in the labor market. In the case of ethnic Hungarian population it might seem surprising to some extent that a lower level of confidence in private universities manifests itself, although it was the private higher education sector that contributed so much to the enhancing of native language education opportunities. The accreditation in recent years of the two autonomous Hungarian universities (Partium Christian University and Sapientia University), which are rather atypical as private institutions since they respond to important publicly articulated national community needs, will presumably increase their recognition and legitimacy among Hungarian minority members in the coming period.

Another important factor analyzed in the course of our research (Flóra et al. 2010) was the geographical location of higher education institutions. There is a strong tendency among high school graduates to choose a university close to their homes and families. A relatively high percent (42%) of the respondents opted for a university close to their home localities, while 26% mentioned the geographical proximity of the higher education institutions as an important influencing factor.

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<sup>6</sup> On this subject see Chov 2002 and Pusztai et al. 2012.

The same tendency is confirmed by the distribution of options concerning university studies abroad. Almost half (49.6%) of the respondents said they would go to a university in Romania, 16.6% would combine study periods in and outside the home country while only 6.3% declared an exclusive preference for studying in a foreign country. Taking into account the geographical proximity of Oradea to the University of Debrecen and to other university locations in Hungary, as well as the lack of language barriers, the high percentage of those preferring to study in their home country might be regarded as surprising. Perhaps a realistic approach of estimated costs and benefits related to further study plans and a strong perception of the necessity to remain firmly anchored in the home country labor market throughout university studies in order to facilitate the job search after graduation play a major role in this preference.

The operation of the regional role and the importance of geographical proximity in student recruitment appear most prominently in the case of Partium Christian University, which acts as a primary pole of attraction for high school graduates from Bihor, and also as a secondary pole of attraction for potential candidates coming from the neighboring counties Satu-Mare and Salaj, both inhabited by important segments of Hungarian population. The overwhelming majority of Partium Christian University's students (99%) are ethnic Hungarians, a fact which underlines the strong ethno-regional character and profile of this institution (PCU 2011). Partium Christian University has assumed by its mission statement to offer high-level professional training in order to respond to the need of Hungarian minority to have specialists with a good command of both Hungarian and Romanian (PCU 2012b). What is more, this is the only institution of higher education within the region with this kind of academic offering.

The distribution of Partium Christian University graduates according to the regional location of their first workplace after graduation denotes a strong tendency of students to return to their original home region, which can be regarded as another confirmation of the university's regional role. Most graduates find employment in Romania, which is important from the perspective of the institution fulfilling its ethno-regional mission, to contribute to the socio-economic development of the country and simultaneously to the perpetuation of the national identity of Hungarian minority community. At the same time, our research revealed that beyond its fundamental and officially declared functions, the university also implicitly assumes the role of offering an additional channel of socio-professional mobility to ethnic Hungarian students disadvantaged by their social background (Flóra et al. 2010).

Concerning the preferred language of university studies, our survey (Flóra et al. 2010) provided the following distribution of responses: 55.7% of subjects expressed their desire to study in their native language at university level.

This result confirms that the Hungarian minority members in the region still strongly feel a need for native language university education. It also indicates that the efforts to consolidate and develop the institutional offerings of minority higher education enjoy a strong legitimacy and popular support. At the same time it should be emphasized that an important proportion of high school graduates (21.43%) would prefer to continue their studies both in Hungarian and Romanian. This fact perhaps denotes an increasing awareness among aspiring Hungarian students of the importance of mastering Romanian technical language in their respective fields of study, in order to optimize their future chances in the labor market.

Besides obtaining a bilingual learning experience while also achieving a good knowledge of an international language (preferably English), the possibilities of studying abroad part time within the framework of foreign exchange programs are also highly valued by ethnic Hungarian students and encouraged by their university. According to the data of a recent nationwide comparative research organized by the Romanian National Authority of Public University Financing (UEFISCDI 2011, PCU 2011) focusing on the labor market integration of university graduates in Romania, Partium Christian University students are more involved in international student mobility (22%) than the Romanian average (11%).

This difference could be explained with the fact that the institution is located near the Hungarian-Romanian border, as well as the cultural-linguistic affinities and the numerous university partnerships established across the border. In the first years of its institutional existence (2000-2008) most of the international partnership agreements of Partium Christian University have been concluded with universities of Hungary, partly due to the fact that it was impossible to legally participate in European Union mobility programs (ERASMUS, TEMPUS etc.) before achieving final accreditation in 2008. The number of non-Hungarian European partnerships of the university and the number of students and teaching staff involved in international mobility programs have increased significantly since then (Belényi et al. 2011: 162).

The results of the mentioned nation-wide survey (UEFISCDI 2011, PCU 2011) also point to the fact that the linguistic competencies of Partium Christian University graduates (their Hungarian-Romanian bilingualism together with the knowledge of a foreign language of large circulation) tend to be positively valued by potential employers. As shown by the relevant research indicators, the percentage of Partium Christian University graduates who successfully found a job within the professional fields linked with their studies was 41%, compared to only 27% measured in the nation-wide sample. The institution also achieved a higher score regarding the number of graduates who obtained employment in professional fields outside their field of university studies (26% compared to 17% at a national level).

Among the public institutions where Partium Christian University graduates can find employment, state schools of primary and secondary education where the language of instruction is Hungarian are preferred targets normally accessible for graduates of teacher training specializations, particularly in the Humanities. Social workers also have a chance to be employed by a public institution within their professional field, although in their case institutions belonging to the NGO sector (and particularly organizations linked to Hungarian minority denominations) also act as important potential employers. It is worth mentioning that such institutions often use two working languages, consequently they have a higher absorbing potential of graduates who are able to use both Romanian and Hungarian (PCU 2011).

In contrast, Economics graduates tend to choose to find employment in the private sector, rather than public institutions or non-profit organizations. Although one possible explanation for this might involve the higher salaries offered in the private sector, it is also possible to identify the effects of less visible exclusionary mechanisms related to the larger socio-ethnic and socio-linguistic environment, which might prevent Hungarian minority graduates from obtaining employment in the public sector. Ethnically selective employment policies in public institutions at the expense of the Hungarian minority members might still occur unofficially even though the bilingualism of ethnic Hungarian employers could be – at least in the medium term – an advantage for potential employers not just in the competitive private sector, but also within public administration (PCU 2011).

## **Conclusions**

The setting up of a new institutional framework of mother tongue education has had an important role in legitimizing the legal-political settings in which the Hungarian minority envisaged to organize its life after 1989. The re-establishing of minority education system can rightfully be considered as a prerequisite of the democratic transformations in the country, a step towards equality of chances in the educational and occupational spheres, as well as a response of the educational system to the identity related requirements of Romania's quickly transforming labor market.

Throughout the post-communist transition, native language education has been cherished by Hungarian political and cultural elites as the main mean available to the minority community in preserving its ethno-linguistic and ethno-national identity, perceived as having been endangered by the homogenization policies of the Romanian nation state. That is why the political and civil organizations and churches linked to the Hungarian community have assumed an important instrumental role in advocating linguistic educational rights and in minority institution-building in the fields of culture and educa-

tion. Beyond establishing or reestablishing lay institutions of education in the languages of minorities, the developments starting after 1989 also led to the setting up of denominational institutions of education, thus restoring the plurality of values and pedagogical practices in the educational system, which has been forcefully interrupted by the communist regime.

With the ongoing expansion of higher education, as from year to year an ever larger proportion of young people become enrolled in university studies, the access to native language university education opportunities is increasingly becoming a basic precondition of equal opportunities for the social advancement of Hungarian community members. The insufficient access to university studies organized in the Hungarian language is likely to contribute to the questioning of the practical rationale of using the mother tongue in primary and secondary education as well, providing arguments to students and their parents that the best way to prepare for entering a prestigious university would be to abandon the idea of studying in Hungarian altogether.

The pressing need to avoid such discouraging effects is one of the important reasons which prompted Hungarian minority organizations to promote as their basic educational policy objective the setting up of a full-fledged public educational system in the Hungarian language, encompassing all forms and all grades of education, as an integrated component of the educational system of Romania.<sup>7</sup> At the same time, Hungarian minority political leaders also consider compatibility of Hungarian language educational institutions with the Romanian educational system and assurance that ethnic Hungarian graduates achieve a good mastery of the Romanian language important prerequisites to facilitate integration of Hungarian community members into the larger society and into the labor market.

In the past two decades, the opportunities of Hungarian minority members to receive mother tongue university education have increased significantly, both within the state and within the private sector. In spite of this fact, the increase of study opportunities in Hungarian language was significantly slower compared to the overall expansion of higher education. At the same time and partly as a consequence of this situation, „pragmatic” attitudes of adaptation to the existing educational offerings, including study opportunities in the Romanian language and the preference for bilingual (both Romanian and Hungarian) university studies are gaining acceptance within the Hungarian community.

The perceived better opportunities for upward social mobility, the necessity to select a field of study available in the geographical proximity of the students for economic and social reasons, the lack of minority language educational offerings in the chosen specialization or in the students’ home region,

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<sup>7</sup> Concerning Hungarian minority educational objectives see RMDSZ 2011.

the reputation of higher education institutions (traditional state universities tend to be valued higher than new private ones) and the perceptions concerning the value and usefulness in the labor market of the diplomas issued by one university or another, all might play a significant role in shaping prospective students' options.

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## ANDRÁS GYÖRBÍRÓ & TÍMEA CEGLÉDI

### INSIGHT INTO THE HUNGARIAN AND ROMANIAN TALENT CARE SYSTEM IN HIGHER EDUCATION – A LEGAL APPROACH

#### **Abstract**

*In this descriptive article the authors intend to present and analyze the situation of talent care in the higher education of Hungary and Romania by conducting a comparative study focusing on a special social segment, legislation. Beyond accepting the assumption that the legislation of a certain country does reflect its social values, this research also helps to shape an image of talent care in these countries in the context of social objectives and policies regarding social factors, which might be related to talent care, for example, social mobility.*

*In the first part of the paper the authors present the situation in Hungary, and in the second part that in Romania, using in both cases as a primary source the current legislative documents of the countries, but in the course of interpretation also applying publishing relevant to this topic and some other information obtained from various partial researches. At the end of the paper there is a comparative summarizing table including all the major conclusions drawn by the authors.*

#### **Framework, concept, questions**

In our study we analyze the situation of talent care in higher education in Hungary and Romania. We investigate four main questions, following the main issues of an international study about talent care systems in the USA, Austria, Finland, Israel, Great Britain, Germany, Spain, Singapore and Slovenia (Gordon Győri & Nagy 2011). The main issues are the following: (1) Are general goals clearly formulated in talent care? (2) Is the social profitability of talent care highlighted? (3) Is systematic thinking involved? (4) Are the questions of equality and justice emphasized?

Based on the results of that international study (Gordon Győri & Nagy 2011), the methods of talent care fall in line with, „systematically outlined and sustained and continuously improved systems” in every examined country – the systems being coordinated either by the state itself or on a different level. There is also some sort of concept for the provision of the social profitability of talents everywhere. In the examined countries it is important to set general goals in talent care, in order to highlight the social profitability of talent care, and to introduce systematic thinking. Also, the questions of equality and justice can be found even in programs or in the national educational systems that

are considered elitist. All actors of talent care realize and acknowledge the social responsibility of their activity. By this, the authors mean that it is important everywhere – especially in regions suffering from multiple disadvantages – „for these participants working in talent care to experience narratives whose point is to find a way for a talented person to advance by his own and others’ efforts into a worthy social, professional and human condition despite hindering circumstances. It is also significant for the participants to trigger the new formation of such narratives.” (Gordon Győri & Nagy 2011: 230, 232).

## **Methods**

In our study we demonstrate how talent care appears in higher education in Hungary and Romania. As sources we use the current Acts on higher education, other legislative documents and partly interviews (in case of lack of relevant sources). The „true owner” of the law of education is obviously the current parliamentary majority, as in a legal-technical sense this cannot exist in any other way, but as an important legislative act which has a major effect on the whole process of social reproduction is also based on the country’s and society’s past traditions, even if it defines itself as opposite to them, it still reflects on them. Not to mention that many intellectuals have participated in the elaboration of this Act who are or committed to the actual government or are at least accepted by it. As a result, such an Act expresses a wider concept than merely one of those currently in power (Buda 1999).

The main interpretation of the framework is set by the sources mentioned here, however, these are only a part of talent care, since the educational system and its legislative background are not equal to the talent care system (Gordon Győri & Nagy 2011). Thus, our analysis has certain limits as it provides a particular insight into the talent care system. However, beyond accepting the assumption that the legislation of a certain country does reflect its social values, this research also helps to shape the image of talent care in Hungary and Romania in the context of social objectives and policies regarding social factors.

The sources of our qualitative analysis were texts of acts, documents, studies, and interviews (concrete sources see later). When handling these texts we used codes to categorize the qualitative data along the four dimensions mentioned above (general goals, social profitability, systematic thinking as well as equality and justice). Then the texts were analyzed according to the proportions of words, word combinations and general content in the data pertaining to each category.

## **Hungary**

### ***Education and talent care in Hungary***

The care and development of talent is constantly being formed by the whole society and by intertwining with its sub-systems. Education is one of these sub-systems where the goals of talent care are traceable. This is also indicated by the fact that the aims of talent care appeared as parts of the Educational Acts, and in the recent years a single enactment on talent care has been passed as well.<sup>1</sup> As for present legislation, talent care has been a legal entity since the 1st Act of 1985, after a long period without legal regulation over talent care. This is remarkable, even when considered on a grander scale such as in relation to other European countries, since many of them needed time to realize the significance of legal regulations over talent care (Balogh 2004). Talent care is based on a reputable tradition in Hungary. Talent support appeared not only in legislation during the 20th century (although it was not linear), but a remarkable everyday tradition existed as well. There were many scholarships and other legislative measures, which took care of talented people. Many of these measures dealt with gifted people from the lower social strata, for several goals of talent support were strongly connected with the goals of national endeavors (for details see e.g. Ferku 1996, Harsányi 1994, Micheller 1991, 1996).

In our analysis, we demonstrate neither the embedding of Hungarian talent care into other systems, nor the intertexture of its aims with the aims of other systems. We undertake to analyze recent legislative background of talent care in higher education.

### ***Talent care in the Act on higher education in Hungary***

In 2011 and 2012 there were significant legal changes in higher education. These changes also affected talent care. When introducing the legal framework of talent care in higher education, we use the version of „Act CCIV of 2011 on National Higher Education” which is operative from September 1, 2012.<sup>2,3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Besides the contents of the Acts on higher education and public education, there is a separate enactment (126/2008.) on talent care which was passed by legislation on December 4, 2008. Its title is „On the acceptance of the National Talent Program, the principles of its financing and the operational principles of the National Talent Care Coordinating Forum”. The enactment unites the existing forms of talent care and sets new perspectives and targets based on them. It lays down purposeful and well-outlined principles and uses them as a foundation for analyzing the strengths and weaknesses of the present situation. The enactment uses this analysis to create a legal background for the comprehensive system of national talent care.

<sup>2</sup> The first major change of the last couple of years was introduced by Act CCIV of 2011 passed by legislation on December 23, 2011. From the recent academic year (i.e. from Sep-

The Act lays down the aims of national higher education in harmony with „the spiritual and intellectual renewing of the nation” and the elevation of Hungary, breaking with the former Act on higher education (CXXXIX. preamble<sup>4</sup>), which subordinated Hungarian higher education to the comprehensive goals of the European Union. The aim of the recent Act is to create „the system of conditions necessary for the elevation of the standard of higher education and for giving and acquiring competent knowledge”. It determines the goals of higher education in a less branching manner than the former Act, and sets the goals certainly as subordinate to the elevation of Hungary.

The text of the Act, therefore, does not explicitly elaborate on the linking of the goals of higher education to those of talent care, but in the preamble, it refers indirectly to the wish that „our children and grandchildren would elevate Hungary again with their talent, perseverance and spirit” (CCIV. preamble). Thus, in the preamble, talent is in the service of national interest – as opposed to the former Act on higher education which seemed to emphasize individual-based education, where the student (or more exactly, the „student of outstanding abilities”) as an individual, was the focal point of talent care (see also Zrinszky 2000). However, Chapter XIV (Special Regulation on Talent Care and Doctoral Programs, CCIV. § 53-54) of the new Act on higher education – similar to the former Act – mentions talented individuals when wording the goals of talent care. Overall, social profitability of talent care appears in the new Act, but the connections between the different levels (the nation, higher education, talent care and the individuals) are not described in detail.

When defining the subjects of talent care, the new Act switches from the former definition of a „student of outstanding abilities” (CXXXIX. 66. § (2.), (4.), 2. § (1./e.), (2.)) to a more detailed description: „students capable of performance exceeding curricular requirements, having outstanding abilities and attitudes and students with disadvantages or multiple disadvantages” (CCIV. 54. §). Besides this, the new Act changes the character of talent care worded in the text of the former Act: the initiative step from the student toward talent care institutions and programs is changed by introducing the „search and perception” of the given target group by these institutions and programs. This is done to provide remedy for the deficiencies of the former Act – it creates a larger territory for accessibility and for the legal conditions of talent discovery.

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tember 1, 2012), the Act is valid according to the changes modified by Act CXXIII of 2012. This latter Act was passed by the Parliament on July 12, 2012, and was published in the July 24, 2012 issue of the official gazette, which serves to publish legislations passed by the Hungarian Parliament (its name is „Magyar Közlöny”).

<sup>3</sup> In the following, „the new Act on higher education” term will mean the version of the „CCIV Act of 2011 on national higher education” in power from September 1, 2012.

<sup>4</sup> In the following the „former Act on higher education” term will mean the version of the CXXXIX Act on higher education of 2005, which was valid in May 2011.

The scope of various forms of talent care and their interrelation has changed as well: high-quality education has been excluded from the forms of talent care (but it appears in other paragraphs), leaving only the doctoral program (PhD, DLA), scientific students' circles (TDK<sup>5</sup>) and colleges for advanced studies.<sup>6</sup> In addition, Roma colleges for advanced studies have been included. Another change is that the whole text that expounds doctoral programs and was formerly described in a separate chapter (but also listed in the talent care portion) has been included in the talent care chapter of the new Act. Furthermore, while the passages on talent care in the former Act on higher education included a detailed regulation on colleges for advanced studies (and shared a passage on scientific students' circles) (CXXXIX. § 66 (3.), (4.), (5.)), the new text has a distinctly short discussion on institutions authorized to do talent care. Instead of this, the new Act ordered the regulation of talent care to be brought about via executive decrees<sup>7</sup> (CCIV. § 110 (12.)) (we can read a detailed description only on doctoral programs – however, compared to the former one, it is much shorter (CCIV. § 53)). This shortening, however, is parallel to a new interpretation of talent care in higher education. While the various forms of talent care used to appear separately from each other, from the next academic year they are presented as placed in a valid, legal text system: the Act treats scientific students' circles, colleges for advanced studies and Roma colleges for advanced studies as part of the „talent

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<sup>5</sup> TDK is a traditional form of students' research activity. The research process is based on student-tutor cooperation and discussions with other students in student circles at the home faculty or department. The output of research process is a study that is presented at the Scientific Students' Circle Conferences at the home faculty or department. The best students participate in a national competition: the National Scientific Students' Circle Conference, organized every other year (Szendrő & Cziráki 2009, Anderle 2001, Szendrő & Koósne Török 2002).

<sup>6</sup> The so-called „college for advanced studies” (in Hungarian: szakkollégium) is the oldest traditional form of talent development initiative in Hungary's higher education. Each college has its own profile, values and target group, but the essence is similar: learning more than the compulsory curriculum; living, thinking, researching, criticizing, debating, learning together; inviting famous scientists to discuss topics with them; creating intergenerational relationships; having a nice student community based on the community's own created values; being socially active; creating and mediating values, etc. The first college for advanced studies was Eötvös College (founded in 1896), and the best known ones are for example Rajk László College for Advanced Studies (founded in 1969/70) or Bibó István College for Advanced Studies (founded in 1983), etc. There are currently more than 100 colleges for advanced studies in Hungary and in Hungarian higher education institutions of other countries (Demeter et al. 2011, Fazekas & Sik 2007, Bordás & Ceglédi 2012, Ceglédi et al. 2012, Takács 2009, Pünkösti 2006, Varga 2009, Erős 2010, Forray & Boros 2009).

<sup>7</sup> „a) The national-level system of scientific students' circles activity, b) the principles of organizing colleges for advanced studies, c) the supporting system that promotes talent care activity, d) the principles of the talent care system of higher education institutions” (CCIV. 110. § (12.)).

care, remedial education and programs” operated by institutions of higher education (CCIV. § 54).

Talent or talent care appeared in various passages in the former Act as well, for instance as an element necessary for the improvement of academic science or as a part contributing to the establishment of a knowledge-based society – or it was mentioned together with raising a new generation and the tasks of so-called research universities, etc. In the new Act – besides the separate chapter devoted to it – talent care is mentioned only three times. It appears, in part, in the preamble as we have mentioned (CCIV. preamble). Second, it is a task to be carried out that we can find in the basic operational rules of institutions of higher education (CCIV. § 11 (1./d.)). Third, there is reference to it among the tasks of educators: „It is the responsibility of the person doing education-related tasks to (...) consider the individual abilities, talents and disabilities of the student.” (CCIV. § 35 (2.)).

Among the areas to be supported by national tenders we can only see colleges for advanced studies in the part of the text expounding financing (CCIV. § 84). Earlier, activities of scientific students’ circles and other talent care activities were both included (CXXXIX. § 128). Nevertheless, Chapter XXXI in the new Act orders „the supporting system that promotes talent care activity” to be within the sphere of action of executive decrees (CCIV. § 110 (12./c.)).

The new Act considers the operation of „talent care, remedial system and programs” the task of higher education institutions, and boldly builds on such existing elements as scientific students’ circles, colleges for advanced studies and doctoral programs. Also, it includes Roma colleges for advanced studies, as a new element (CCIV. § 54). At the same time, the Act orders, „the principles of the talent care system of higher education institutions” to be under the regulation of executive decrees (CCIV. § 110 (12.)). Because of this, in the executive regulation, the concept of top-down control is merging with a bottom-up organizational system, by leaning on well-working and already existing elements, earlier systems and programs.

According to our previous findings (Bordás & Ceglédi 2011, 2012, Ceglédi et al. 2012, Ceglédi 2011b) we may assume that the future success of talent care in higher education will depend on the healthy balance between bottom-up and top-down control and operation because the spontaneous practices of higher education work naturally in everyday experience. We can find many examples of bottom-up formations of colleges for advanced studies, often initiated by students and not on a political or a higher education institutional level (e.g. Bordás & Ceglédi 2011, 2012, Demeter et al. 2011). Also, complex talent care programs grew up and advanced seriously to university-level initia-

tions (e.g. DETEP<sup>8</sup>). The intertwining of separate forms of talent care can also take place in a natural, bottom-up manner. Most of the colleges for advanced studies' programs, for example, include the support, requirement and community or conference-based discussion of their members' research activities in scientific students' circles, and the doctoral programs often provide opportunities for students to continue their research started in scientific students' circles (Bordás & Ceglédi 2011, 2012, Hrubos 2010, Szendrő & Cziráki 2009, Takács 2009). Nevertheless, we can see that the organization and dispersion of the various forms of talent care is unequal at different institutions, – even faculties – which is due to the fact that Hungarian universities and colleges have developed different levels and types of talent care strategies (Bodnár 2011, 126/2008) based on their different profiles, local facilities or possibly the information or motivation of those working in this field. Therefore, the comprehensive principles born at the level of executive decrees fill a gap, but are only able to create an appropriate framework for talent care in higher education if respect will be paid to the existing, well-working practices, stimulating the spread of these practices where needs are still found, and if ample financial background is provided to support this.

### ***Talent care and social mobility in Hungary***

Because the new Act on higher education orders higher educational institutions to *search for* talents, an important step forward has been made to broaden the opportunities of students with social disadvantages. Earlier participation in talent care forms regulated in the Act was initiated by students in all cases. Students applied to colleges for advanced studies, student research competitions in scientific students' circles as well as doctoral programs (Bordás & Ceglédi 2011, 2012, Ceglédi et al. 2012, Szendrő & Cziráki 2009). The fact that *searching for* talented students became a priority as opposed to merely *offering* opportunities for talented students is significant because whether or not a student will apply is strongly affected by their access to information, former performance, study attitudes, willingness to take risks, possible employment besides the pursuit of studies, but mostly by their social background (e.g. Andor & Liskó 1999, Bordás & Ceglédi 2011, Bourdieu 1978, 2003, Ceglédi 2010, 2011a, Ferge et al. 1966, Nagy 2003, Örkény & Szabó 2001, Pusztai 2011, Róbert 2000a, 2000b, Sugland et al. 1993, Szemerszki 2009).

Nowadays, the majority of talent care institutions operating in higher education build upon students' existing performances, and their ability for initiative. It is traceable that students with disadvantages share less the benefits of talent care institutions and programs as their advantaged counterparts (Ce-

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<sup>8</sup> The Gift Attendance Program of the University of Debrecen. The program's most important element is the scientific work of the students, which is assisted by tutors and financially supported by the program (Fónai et al. 2011).

glédi 2009, 2010, Ceglédi et al. 2012, Demeter et al. 2011, Erős 2010, Kardos 2011a, 2011b, Márkus 2010). This is true, despite the fact that even the text of the earlier Act referred to talent care that compensates for disadvantages. However, the only point where the compensation of disadvantages and talent care were truly connected was a mentoring program for socially disadvantaged students. In the new Act, we find the Roma colleges for advanced studies as well, which are called to support those with disadvantages – indeed, only one special group of these: the Roma students. Many new church-maintained Roma colleges for advanced studies were established in the last academic year in Hungary, supported by the government. Here we need to note that Roma colleges for advanced studies existed long before their appearance in the text of the Act or before the call for increased support (see also Forray & Boros 2009). Notwithstanding, talent care has received remarkably new foundations, and the search for and compensating care of students with disadvantages and multiple disadvantages has become an organic part of it. Talent care for students with disadvantages, however, can only be successful if the respect paid to them is not restricted to these two special institutional forms in the future. The „mentoring program”, indeed, provides for but a small fragment of those concerned, and the Roma colleges for advanced studies only provide for a minute group (Ceglédi 2011b, Nyüsti 2012).

## **Romania**

### ***Education and talent care in Romania***

To the average observer, Romania today shows the image of a country and society going through dynamic economic and social changes. This country is discovering its place in the new political structures of Europe. There are many reform initiatives currently being implemented regarding the State’s institutions. Migrational tendencies have significantly increased, and there are loud debates about the reform of governmental and administrative structures. These issues and many others contribute to the existence of this image.

As for the main issues of Romanian educational policies, there have been regular and sometimes radical changes, due to the frequent changes in government. These reforms are usually concerned with institutional financing, centrally established requirements, and the assessment of the knowledge of all students studying in public institutions. More or less, these have also been the major issues of the political and social debates in this field.

In this paper, due to limited length, we cannot analyze the general character of the educational system. However, we believe that an analysis of the situation in the field of talentcare can offer a general view on the government’s attitude towards the educational system as a whole, including its purpose and social function. Of course, we cannot exclude the possibility that

„talentcare” as a relatively new element in educational policy (just as in Hungary) could not be fully integrated and included in the broader educational policy concepts and has its own ways to develop. This makes it necessary to analyze it separately, of course, not forgetting about the general context of the country’s educational system.

When we started to analyze the situation of Romanian talent care programs in the manner indicated by the title of the paper, we soon noticed that the conventional methods of research, which are applicable to the research of any nationwide field, cannot offer a sufficient and proper methodological background. This is because neither contemporary Romanian scientific publications, nor individual research on the internet<sup>9</sup> could help us to gain proper insight into this phenomenon and establish an interpretational framework, which would permit us to understand micro-level initiatives, related to our topic.<sup>10</sup> More exactly, all the accessible sources seemed to have shown a rather superficial and incomplete image and would hide many micro-level initiatives that could be identified as talent care programs. Romanian talent care programs are much more complex, and very differentiated, in such a measure that it cannot be analyzed through these fractions of sources and information.

### ***Talent care in Romanian legislative documents***

Before mentioning the paragraphs and articles connected to talent care from Romanian legislative sources, we must begin by sharing some peculiarities about the spirit of these programs. This is a necessary step in order to present the Romanian system, made up of this seemingly incoherent and fractioned (but not necessarily inefficient) system as a comprehensive framework of interpretation.

As for the legislative situation, what can be deciphered and interpreted from the legislative texts is an interesting dualism. On the one hand, the rather brief (and in comparison to other legislative texts from various EU countries, less specific) legislative text contains numerous declarations of principles, which set quality requirements for the entire educational system.

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<sup>9</sup> Hereby we mean on the one hand the Romanian Act of Education, the scientific literature mentioned in the list of consulted works, and many relevant documents elaborated by Romanian institutions (University Chartas, Funding Acts, etc.)

<sup>10</sup> This is why we decided that we would not restrict ourselves to data analysis, but we would also conduct interviews with five people who, because of their positions and past experiences, can be efficient complementary sources for the results we obtained from the data analysis and can offer explanations for a better understanding of the various phenomena. They can also reflect on the fact that there are some missing elements and inconsequential parts that we discovered as we were gathering data. Two of the five people work at central institutions connected to public education, and the remaining three people are leaders of educational institutions. Every detail offered by them contains important added value. In this paper we preserve the anonymity of the experts.

These texts also refer, in several cases, to students with outstanding abilities but while the legislative documents give assurances of support, at the same time they say little concerning the specific manner and forms of said support. Thus, we can affirm that on the one hand the legislative text is severe and consistent in declaring the necessity of talent care, as well as consideration and the provision of financial background for these purposes. On the other hand it defines very broad frames as it does not specify any strict methods and allows the educational institutions to find their own methods of implementing these principles. This contradiction has been clarified for us by some experts we asked. We were interested in finding out what forms of talent care they had observed in the country, and whether there can be any characteristics identified in these initiatives. Because the educational institutions of the country show very different qualities (as far as the offer of educational programs, the number of enrolled students, field of work, legal status, financing mechanism, and qualitative indicators are concerned). Thus, any specific requirements beyond the acceptance of the suggested principles and accomplishment of minimum quality related achievements would create significant tensions in the system, as the abilities and possibilities of the institutions are far from similar.

On the other hand, beyond numerous opinions, further studies have indicated that the innovative abilities, and the flexibility of the institutions of higher education are much more developed compared to the average of the whole nationwide educational system (see Szilágyi 2007: 45). Accepting this conclusion, our informants unanimously affirmed that such legal texts, containing only principles and objectives, give room for local and individual initiatives and can offer support for institution-level programs, not only legally, but also financially. However, it does not set centrally elaborated requirements. Two institutional leaders mentioned that under such conditions the various approaches towards talent care programs, which are determined by local traditions, the students' expectations, and the institutes' financial and human resources, are all free to be implemented.

At the same time (and this is an explanation as to why such a large number of initiatives have remained „invisible”) many talent care programs are carried out within the framework of non-academic circles (outside of the formal national educational system) and are hosted by civic institutions, cultural associations, student associations, private enterprises, and foundations. The majority of these, however, are tiny and insignificant initiatives which run only as long as their maintenance can be financed from any source. In many cases the associations and institutions that launch these programs (these rarely operate beyond the limits of a county) are not even active on the internet. They do not have their own websites, nor are they predominantly mentioned, or can be followed through reports in the local press.

There are, of course, special situations, in which the elite of a certain region fund a sort of talent care program, characteristically with the purpose of motivating local young people and intellectuals, who are potentially useful in the labor force, to stay in the region rather than to migrate (Hatos 2006: 48).

As for the specific textual parts of the legislative documents, it is mentioned that the objective of the Romanian educational system is the transmission of such a system of values and structure of knowledge. This assures its participants of proper civic values and information and enables them to face the challenges of the labor-force market (XXIII. 2. (3.)) (Many Hungarian colleges for advanced studies define a similar major objective for themselves, even if not expressed in the same way). Furthermore, it is expressly stated that at each level of the Romanian educational system, including the sphere of higher education, the guiding principle is the autonomy and sovereignty of the institutions and the freedom of academic life (XXIII. 3. (1.)).

According to the legislative text, the state offers regular scholarships, provides opportunities for the students to participate in various summer activities, and offers non-specified incentives for students who achieve outstanding scholarly performances (XXIII. 12. (3.)). The various summer camps may appear (somewhat anachronistically) to be attractive only to students of an elementary educational level, whereas the assurance of scholarships is a widespread method of encouragement throughout Europe.<sup>11</sup> While these may not mean a great deal, they do offer the legal possibility to develop more creative and more efficient incentive solutions at lower levels (XXIII. 202. (10.)).

The Minister of Education may issue possibilities to apply for foreign scholarships, participation being accessible through nationwide competitions. At the same time, only students of state-run and accredited institutions<sup>12</sup> may apply for these, so for those who study at non-accredited universities there is no chance to apply (XXIII. 202. (11.)).

An important part of the legislative text is that it emphasizes the possibility for students to create special clubs, colleges and professional institutions (XXIII. 203. (1.)). This way it gives freedom to any such initiatives but sets no requirements for them. However, they can be financed by the Ministry of Education through an application processed by the Ministry, and the legal solution of searching for alternative financial resources is also offered to them (CCIII. 203. (7.)).

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<sup>11</sup> What is more, in a large number of countries, including Romania, there are other forms of funding besides academic scholarship granted for scholastic achievement, such as scholarships for students with a disadvantaged family background and difficult social situation. At some other universities, like Partium Christian University, there are also special scholarships awarded to students who produce significant long-term results (PKE 2009/85).

<sup>12</sup> Organizing trainings in Romania is also possible with permission of existence.

As a summary, we can affirm that the legislative document theoretically supports and encourages objectives connected to nationwide talent care, but also delegates these tasks to the individual institutions. It is up to the institutions as to whether or not they wish to set up such initiatives, and if so, in what form. So it comes as no surprise that the success of any local initiative or even the existence of any talent care program depends on the motivation and activity of teachers and educators who work at the given institution. Of course we can find institutions and initiatives operating in a broad geographical area, for example, the representatives of student governments regularly organize professional competitions, which often have a top final, offering a chance to compete for participants from any part of Transylvania (as the model comes from Hungary, from the so-called „TDK”s – scientific students’ circles and their conferences). However, on a Romanian nationwide level, such initiatives do not exist.

### ***Talent care and social mobility in Romania***

An important missing element of the legislative concepts, evident in the above sections, is that talent care, in the majority of the cases, takes the shape of awarding competitions and other purpose-oriented forms. The discovery of talented people, regular investment in them, the tutorial system, or the process of preparation is missing both from the Transylvanian and the Romanian offer. For this reason there is cause to fear that the only students who will succeed in these structures will originally have come from at least middle-class families, with proper financial background. Thus, the contribution of this structure to the increase of social mobility is actually limited. However, it does look promising, that the Romanian law of education defines the talent care system as a priority and a key element in the process of the intensification of social mobility.

### **Summary**

As Table 1 shows, there are significant divergences between the tertiary-level talent care systems of the two countries. The first, most remarkable one is the regulation of the discussed field in higher education and the emergence of concepts with similar content in the statutes regarding education. Concerning Hungary, we can find a detailed and branching regulative system, which – examined in a historical perspective – shows the clear result of a relatively longer process. As opposed to this, we can barely find concepts, or terms of similar content in the Romanian sources, and there are considerably fewer statutes dealing with this field. Provided we accept the assumption that the content of statutes and decrees – simply described – reflects and determines the dominant value sets of society and the separate subsystems (Buda 1999), we may carefully conclude that talent care and its institutional system are a

more organic and legitimate part of higher education in Hungary than in Romania. Nevertheless, we must emphasize that the basically liberal and egalitarian Romanian Act practically sets the ground for whatever has been institutionalized and accomplished in this field in Hungary, which may be considered an advantage as it allows for innovative construction. Of course that is exactly the reason why – presuming that crystallized talent care forms will not spread – we can expect the survival and further improvement of a rather heterogeneous system which, therefore, cannot be easily examined with a uniform methodology and within similar conceptual frameworks. Its qualifications will certainly be based on its sufficiency.

As far as the roles of the institutions are concerned, it is demonstrable that in the field of accomplished practices the relevant statutes in both countries provide freedom. However, in the case of Hungary, talent care is realized as a separate and emphasized task of the institutions, while in Romania, the role of institutions is set in the execution of a more general mission (although the explicit obligation of dealing with outstanding students one-on-one does not appear). Regarding social mobility and remedial compensation of students' social disadvantages, only Hungary demonstrates a significant relationship between these sociopolitical goals and talent care as a tool – although this interrelation has not been present for long.

We believe that both approaches (observed in the legislative texts of Hungary and in Romania) have some advantages and disadvantages. In the case of Romania, the less specific regulations offer quite significant freedom for any person or organization that would launch talent care initiatives. It defines very vague criteria, so the initiatives can be set in such a manner that they can serve regional, ethnic, cultural and other needs. However, the less specific regulation means fewer centrally managed financial resources, so the financing of the initiatives is less predictable and certain than in Hungary. In Hungary we can find a specific system of criteria, not only for the general purposes of talent care, but also for the institutional forms and financial constructions that are related to the initiatives. It assures a certain quality to any institution or initiative and offers access to central funds. However, the standards might not be equally easy to achieve for various institutions in the country, taking into consideration the large differences among the regions of Hungary.

Table 1: Comparative table offering the summary of the situations in the two countries based on some major criteria

Aspects	Hungary	Romania
The level at which Act ~ <sup>13</sup> appears	1. Act on National Higher Education 2. Parliamentary Regulation 3. Regulatory Acts 4. Executive Decrees	Educational Act (edu.ro)
Specific sources	1. Act CCIV of 2011 on National Higher Education 2. 126/2008. (XII. 4.) Parliamentary Regulatory Act on the passing of the National Talent Care Program, the financing principles of the National Talent Program <sup>14</sup> and the operational principles and creation of the National Talent Co-ordinational Forum 3. 152/2009. (VII. 23.) Executive Decree on the financing of the National Talent Program 4. 1119/2009. (VII. 23.) Regulatory Act on the creation and operation of the National Talent Co-ordinational Forum 5. 1120/2009. (VII. 23.) Regulatory Act on the execution of the 2009-2010 activities, programs of the National Talent Program	Legea educatiei nationale [National Educational Act], publ.in Monitorul Oficial, Anul 179 (XXIII), nr.18, 10.01.2011
How long ~ has been present on an Act level	1985 (Act 1. of 1985 on Education)	-
Plainly formulated general goals of ~	Talents are in the service of the nation, but the connection between the goals and tasks of different levels (nation, higher education, talent care and individuals) is not clear enough.	The role of institutions is seen in the execution of a more general mission (although the explicit obligation of dealing with outstanding students one-on-one does not appear). Higher educational institutions have great freedom in the practical realization of ideas.
Systematic thinking in ~	States, „an institution of higher education operates talent care and remedial systems on its own or in cooperation with another institution of the kind.” There is a separate chapter regulating talent care. The Act lists specific institutions (doctoral programs, scientific students' circles, colleges for advanced studies, Roma colleges for advanced studies), and makes it possible to establish numerous institutions that can deal with talent care – however, it omits any details and there are no specific criteria present in the text. Autonomy is widely practiced, but an executive decree will regulate „the principles of a talent care system at institutions of higher education.” The text of these future decrees is yet unknown.	There are indirect references to talent care, mostly in a permissive spirit, supporting local initiatives. The Act lists specific institutions (scholarships, rewards, study tours), and makes it possible to establish numerous institutions that can deal with talent care – however, it omits any details and there are no specific criteria present in the text.
Social profitability of ~	Talents are in the service of national interest. It refers indirectly to the wish that „our children and grandchildren would elevate Hungary again with their talent, perseverance and spirit”.	The Act refers to the goals and objectives of any talent care institution by the presentation of value and knowledge structures that the students who benefit from such initiatives should possess. These are referred to as appropriate citizen values and qualifications that can improve their chances to make a stand in the labor market.
Social equality and justice in ~	Talent care and remedial compensation of students' social disadvantages are specifically linked in two points in the Act: in the case of the mentoring program and Roma colleges for advanced studies. We can also find that in a separate section on talent care the concept of remedial compensating talent care gains significant ground.	No relevant interrelation is traceable between talent care and remedial compensation of students' social disadvantages. These are understood as two separate tasks.

Source: own design

<sup>13</sup>The ~ sign refers to the term „talent care”

<sup>14</sup> Original name: Nemzeti Tehetség Program – the editors

We can only hope that in the future we will see a combined regulation which sets certain minimum criteria but also provides the possibility for regions with various human and financial resources to create locally competent frameworks for talent care. Neither the overregulated, nor the vague criteria can be sufficient in such heterogenic regions as the investigated region of HERD research: the Partium cross-border region between Romania, Ukraine and Hungary.

It is worth mentioning that talent care has a special role in the investigated region of HERD research. As our previous findings show (Ceglédi et al. 2012), the talent care strategy is one of the most important factors contributing to prosperity of the region. As a well-known adage says: there are no mineral resources, but there are talents. To be able to „dig out” this talent, the talent care strategy may take into consideration the unbeneficial and the beneficial specifics of the region. Unbeneficial specifics may include the region’s non-traditional student body: there are many minority or/and socially disadvantaged students who need a new pedagogical approach (Pusztai 2011). Beneficial specifics of the region’s talent care system may include the cross-border cooperation between the countries. Hungarian universities and colleges in Romania and Ukraine seem to be connected to the talent care system of Hungary. This connection is manifested for example in the fact that these universities and colleges have the same traditional talent care forms as the higher education institutions in Hungary (because of their common historical roots), and also the newly established talent care forms appear the same way in the region’s higher education institutions: colleges for advanced studies, scientific students’ circles, talent points etc. (Ceglédi et al. 2012).

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## KÁROLY TEPERICS & KLÁRA CZIMRE

### STUDY-DRIVEN MIGRATION IN THE MODERN WORLD ECONOMY

#### **Abstract**

*The aim of this paper is to place study-driven migration, and within it the „internationalization” process of higher education, into the new world economic context and the accelerating migration processes. It also aims to demonstrate the significance of international educational relations by analyzing the background and relations of the recent phenomena investigated and explored by the different disciplines (economics, demography, and educational research). The data collected and analyzed in the research included data on the foreign students pursuing higher education of Debrecen. Special emphasis is laid on the higher education free-mover students from Bihar county, and the impacts of study-driven migration on higher education in Debrecen. These data and information allow us to complete the image on the composition of foreign students in the higher education system of Debrecen.*

#### **Knowledge-based society**

The spectacular transformation of the world economy around the millennium has become a popular research area nowadays. Economics, political sciences and sociology, of course, investigate it by applying different approaches and use different terminus technicus for the phenomenon but some kind of consensus seems to fall into place in relation to several questions to the point. This section examines the changes from the aspect of study-driven migration. Outlined below are some views about the new world economic context.

(1) Researchers suggest that the new period began in the last third of the twentieth century or in the beginning of the twenty-first century. There is no agreement among researchers. In some places, certain researchers have recognized and studied this phenomenon as early as the second half of the twentieth century (Gottmann 1961, Bell 1976), while others (Goddard 1992, Török 2004) say that only the 1990s (and especially the explosive spread of the Internet) brought something qualitatively new into the world economy. Michael Porter (2001) phrased an absolute criticism with regard to this view saying that we cannot speak about the new economy because it is not a new model but only a version of the traditional model made more efficient with the help of technical devices.

(2) Taking into consideration the spatial dimension of the phenomenon, the consensus is more definite. The availability and validity of the idea of core-periphery by Immanuel Wallerstein (Wallerstein 1983) can be detected in this view here since the phenomenon can be so far detected only in the most developed countries of the world (in certain regions), and the peripheries have a long way to go. Where the new phenomenon can be observed, there is still a difference between the „developer” and „user” countries. Török (2004) quotes Jeffrey Sachs who said that the „developing” areas (two dozens of the countries in the world, including the countries of Western Europe, smaller country parts from Central and Eastern Europe, North America, Israel, Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, Singapore) and the „users” (three or four dozens of the countries, including the countries of Central Europe (certain regions) which are the active and perhaps adaptive users of the technologies) who benefit from the advantages of development. The other 120-130 countries of the world, however, are not yet able to adopt the technologies and culture of the new economy even as users (Török 2004).

(3) The nomenclature and consequently the consideration of the scale of the phenomenon are not standardized. Some of the terms (information economy, informational economy, network economy) imply sectoral approaches meaning that those sectors belong here „in which value is created primarily by generation, management, processing, storage and conveyance” (Török 2004: 140). Similar definitions and broader interpretation is found in the geography works entailing that all those economic activities may be listed here „which require some kind of well-defined information” (Mészáros 2008: 453).

The term „new economy” has a broader content whose (decisive) part is constituted by the information economy. Applying the evolutionary interpretation we may say that this is a new phase of economic development, an economic historical period beginning in the nineties, which differs from the previous ones in its quality. Andrea Szalavetz (2004), based on the work of John Dunning, sees its unique elements in the following: (1) information technology has a more important role than ever before; (2) the information technological revolution made it possible to split the economic activities more than ever before, and to spread globalization; (3) knowledge defines the competitiveness of the company more powerfully than ever before, the technological development accelerated, and the product life cycles became shorter in an unprecedented manner; (4) the network organization of the economic actors is more complex than ever before, the processing industry and the services intertwined, the boundaries between companies and industrial sectors became insubstantial, and the processing industry became tertialized (Szalavetz 2004).

The broadest interpretation can be assigned to the often used term „knowledge-based society” which also affects the social dimensions of the modernization. This term implies the social aspects of the economic changes,

and human resources are given emphasis. The (above studied) rapid and radical transformation of the world economy resulted in the upgrading of human resources. At present, the quality of human resources of a region has become a determining factor in competitiveness. In the global economy those areas (national economies, regions) can be successful competitive societies: where the actors of the society are able to communicate, cooperate, acquire new knowledge and abilities during their lives, and adapt to the new challenges. The appearance of the conditions of the „knowledge-based society” means a paradigm change in economic life and consequently in the attitude of the economy towards education. The term implies that knowledge became a major economic resource, which can no longer be purchased on the free market as a final product (in the form of qualified professionals, technology, etc.) but must be constantly ensured like energy or raw materials, as in the Fordist mass production (Mészáros 2008). Knowledge, besides the costly manufacturing of new information, can also be gained through knowledge transfer (much cheaper). Its sole condition is continuous studying: the docile and mobile labor force who speaks foreign languages becomes more appreciated from the aspect of competitiveness.

The position occupied by Europe in the international economic competition has a decisive significance from the perspective of population welfare of the continent. Competitive integration into the world economy creates jobs; nevertheless, maintaining competitiveness requires continuous adaptation and structural changes, which often affect employees the most severely. The competitiveness of Europe must face more and more challenges: the public redistribution quota and taxes are high on the continent, the labor markets are not flexible, the population is aging etc.

The analyses made in the European Union at the end of the 1990s point out that the performance of the United States was better than the performance of the European Union, not only in the area of productivity at the macro level but the United States – contrary to the EU – could also increase its employment level. The *European Competitiveness Report 2000* prepared by the European Commission, for instance, demonstrated that the catching-up process by the EU to the living standards in the United States that has been observed since 1950 came to an end in the 1990s. The primary reason for that was the more rapid expansion of employment in the United States, and second, the acceleration of productivity growth (Gács 2005). In the United States of America, employees have created productivity growth similar to that of Europe by increasing the amount of working hours, while in Japan (highly

exceeding the values of the USA and Europe<sup>1</sup>), the increase of efficiency is more powerful with lower working hours in comparison to 1990.

During the „European navel-gazing” period, lagging behind is conspicuous with respect of both poles. It is generally accepted that in 30-50 years, Europe will fall behind its rivals, and will not be able to maintain its current standard of living. Europe lags behind both in terms of the GDP growth rate and the employment level, and the growth of labor productivity does not exceed that of the others either.

In the global economic competition of the twentieth century, it had become obvious that Europe lost ground. Following this recognition, the European Council, at its meeting on 23-24 March 2000 in Lisbon adopted the comprehensive economic and social development strategy of the European Union for the next decade. The Lisbon Strategy was born in a forced situation, being a consequence of the fact that the Union has been continuously losing ground in its positions in the global economic competition during the past decades. It had been amended and further detailed by the Council at its subsequent meetings (Santa Maria da Feira, Nice, Stockholm, Goteborg, Barcelona). The strategy developed became known as the Lisbon Strategy (LiS), which set the objective no less than making the European Union (by 2010) the most competitive economy of the world. Nevertheless, the joint European efforts to achieve the goals of the LiS was only partly successful, mainly due to the even more pressing challenges resulting from the severe economic crisis shaking the world. To emerge from the crisis and to be able to face the challenges of globalization, demographic change and the knowledge-based society, the European Commission has launched the Europe 2020 Strategy adopted by the European Council in June 2010.

The program announced in Lisbon is in many respects a milestone from the perspective of modernization and economic catching-up of the Union and the Member States. The starting point of this concept is that the economies of Europe are globally competing market economies, which can be successful only by creating a knowledge-based economy and society. Without global competitiveness, the economy cannot be catalyzed, high levels of employment cannot be achieved, and only competitiveness may lead to keeping the social allowances on a high level.

The Lisbon Strategy is a collection of desirable and nice goals with the aim of catching up to the leading and dynamic regions (USA and East Asia) while keeping European values (high employment and social equity). Increasing the mobility of the labor force is a principle objective pursued by the strategy. In the field of higher education, this can be achieved through the mobile stu-

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<sup>1</sup> The actual number of hours worked by the people in employment in Japan is a little bit more than 2000, in the United States of America 1800, and in Europe 1700 (OECD Labour Market Statistics, reference made by Gács 2005).

dent (as a predecessor of the mobile employee) and the „uniform” and equal higher education system, producing diplomas recognized all over Europe.

### **Role of education in migration**

Qualified and competent employees for the labor market can be „produced” by the national educational systems (using serious efforts), or attracted to our own countries by the mobilization of the labor force with the help of migration. In the latter case the conditions provide advantages for the receiving „recruiting” countries. It is generally true that the recruiting countries provide better economic circumstances for the qualified, and exploit the intellectual capital thus gained. The human resources of the areas of origin are thinning while the money and energy invested in the training of migrants are also lost. It may be established on the basis of studies on return prepared by economists that the social and individual rates of return in education definitely deviate from each other (Polónyi 2002, Varga 1998).

While the *individual* rate of return shows a continuously growing rate of return in parallel with increased levels of education, however the *social* rate of return in the case of higher education can be characterized by a considerable decrease. On this level, investment in human resources is profitable for the individuals but not profitable for the state. Of course, the highly qualified personnel also obtain benefits on the level of higher education but these benefits do not compensate for the increase in cost of training (Polónyi 2002, Varga 1998).

Especially if the graduates go on to use their acquired intellectual capital and knowledge in another country. Hungarian medical training, with all of its problems is a common example of this phenomenon. The graduates of higher education are the chief beneficiaries of increased mobility in the international labor market.

According to the common analogy used in migration studies, they are the ones for whom the „red carpet” is laid, as opposed to the masses of untrained for whom the „red card” is shown following the migration rules.

The migration process itself is based on a rather multifactor reconciliation of interests. The qualified (potential) migrant is a decisive element in the system, affected by both factors: push and pull. The individual composes his strategy, bearing in mind these effects by which it is his obvious best interest to realize the investment in the form of his human resources (studies) with the highest possible profit in the job market. He invests (his studies are targeted) and purposefully collects higher yields under better circumstances (Schultz 1983). His decisions may be either facilitated or aggravated by international legal frameworks – nevertheless they can only influence them.

The state (from the side of the hosts) controls, manages and optimizes the process, trying to repress illegal migration. Bearing in mind that utilitarianism exploits the migration phenomenon by capitalizing on the surplus revenues resulting from the growth of competitiveness as well as productivity – often successfully.

On the other side (areas of origin) countries attempt to provide favorable conditions to retaining people, or at least give them an opportunity to return. In some places, governments attempt to get back the costs of training, imposing compensation costs as quasi bounties and demanding them for the qualified emigrants.

In the current, dynamically intensifying migration process, at present 175 million migrants worldwide (Rédei 2008) approximately one-fifth are qualified and competent employees, one-tenth of whom are students who begin studying abroad for the sake of obtaining a degree. A free-mover student is a student (who graduated secondary school or university) at a foreign university for a period of time equivalent to a semester or an academic year without the benefit of the rules of bilateral agreements existing between the host institution and the foreign institution. Free-mover students must pay the tuition fees for themselves, and they are not compelled to attend a complete educational cycle (Bachelor, Master, Doctorate). These study-driven movements are unique in the migration process with respect to their plasticity. They should be treated as part of the international migration but they conceal serious uncertainty factors in themselves. The registration of students with study contracts arriving legally for a longer period of time is uncertain, and the changes in their goals are hard to follow. The temporary migration for study periods often ends in permanent settling. In their case it is not worth thinking in rigid categories since the phenomenon is flexible both in its nature (temporary, permanent migration) and in its duration (returning or settling down students) (Salt 2001).

From a methodological point of view the difference between the terms mobility and migration should be explained. Rédei (2009) has already differentiated them on the level of intentions: migration as an event that occurred and mobility as a migratory aptitude. Generally speaking, study-driven movements can be characterized by their temporary state: the actors cross state borders to find training institutions for themselves, then after finishing their studies (usually) return to their homelands. Since the intention to return is more frequent<sup>2</sup>, we consider study-driven temporary migration as „mobility”. We think that from a statistical point of view it is useful to use the terms „study-driven migration” and „study-driven mobility” as synonyms and in the present study both meaning temporary movement (marked by the attribute „study-driven”). Of course, we also see and accept that this can be an antecedent for permanent settlement or migration.

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<sup>2</sup> More exactly, not an automatically definitive settlement target.

From a legal aspect, a difference should be seen between the migration with the aim of settling down and the migration with the aim of staying. In Hungary, from 2007, those foreign citizens aged over 14 years can stay with the aim of studying (more than three months, at least one and maximum five years) as long as they can prove that they were enrolled in an accredited regular training at an educational institution. This regulation conforms to the EU as Hungary legislated this Act as member of the Schengen Area, taking effect on 21 December 2007.<sup>3</sup>

As a consequence of the extension of the age limit in 2007 we deem it important to differentiate between „student mobility” (movements on the primary and secondary levels) and „higher education student mobility” (affecting the trainings on the third and fourth levels) within the study-driven migration.<sup>4</sup>

### **Historical roots of internationalization process in higher education**

The phenomenon of the spatial expansion of information also accelerated as a consequence of the spread of globalization, the shortening of product lifecycles, and the accelerated utilization of new research results. In this process, the role of international studies is decisive. In the context of globalization, knowledge is an upgrade from the previous state. Today knowledge is a key factor not only in the competitiveness of the core countries but has also become an inescapably important factor for the survival of peripheries as well. The differences between time and space disappear for the sake of competitiveness as the economy must be operated together in the possession of the most modern knowledge, both in the most developed and developing countries. Amidst the accelerated technical and technological changes and shortened product lifecycles, information and human capital is needed everywhere. According to Rédei (2009) one of the most efficient ways to increase human capital is continuing international studies, a method which has already been recognized by the economic actors (both employers and employees), and therefore came into the focus of attention. The „internationalization” of the (typically higher) educational process created the opportunity for rapid information transfer. The internationalization and emergence of English as a dominant language and the relevance of the taught/obtained knowledge are both equally important in this process. The former enables communication, while the latter results in the widespread legitimacy and application of the knowledge obtained. In the new context, it is almost irrelevant where the student obtained the necessary knowledge as the elements of competition in the

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<sup>3</sup> Act II of 2007 on free movement contains the regulation of the study-driven mobility as well (Rédei 2009).

<sup>4</sup> The first and second levels in Hungary mean the public education, the primary school and the secondary school. The third and fourth levels (in a simplified manner) stand for higher education.

educational market come into the foreground. Students may choose educational institutions by virtue of quality, availability, or on the grounds of value for money.

Bókay (2009a, 2009b) discussed the adaptation process of universities to the new circumstances. The knowledge offered by the „medieval universities” was based on uniform Christianity, was uniformly taught in Latin and the small number of universities were automatically paired with the phenomenon of peregrinatio, the university peregrination (Hrubos 2005). In parallel with the penetration of national ideology, with placing their own language into the foreground, this type of mobility came into the background, and the „modern university” closed its gates<sup>5</sup>. The universities dreamt of by Kant, Fichte and Humboldt have a national character, such as the University of Berlin being regarded as exemplary. The modern university of the twentieth century was founded in the United States of America. This modernized the idea of the modern university of Berlin and generated mobility by partial trainings and the inclusion of courses. The „postmodern university” born in the spirit of Bologna goes even beyond. Mobility with definitive weight in the „knowledge-based society” has an individual character. Here, the movements follow individual interests and became essential elements of the new context. The change is also characteristic in relation to the contents. „The philology-based university was replaced by the logics-based university in the middle of the [twentieth – *the authors*] century, and now ‘the universitas’ with a culture-critics background is being formed.” (Bókay 2009a: 27). Amidst the environment of mass education the university is still shaping the needs of the society but it is also already adapting to it. Instead clear rationality meeting the requirements of the society is getting more and more emphasis. One of the most characteristic features of „mass universities” is the intensification of internationalization.

The present internationalization of higher education has some historical roots. The sciences of the Middle Ages (inter alia through the universal use of the Latin language) may be regarded as international. During the nineteenth century, through the acceleration of nationalization, an inevitable turning inward happened as a result of the intensive use of the mother tongue, which began to be loosened lost in the twentieth century (mainly on the Anglo-Saxon areas, with the use of English). Germany and France joined this process a little later. The relatively distinguished place of Hungary is caused by its population forced into minority. For us, this might mean an advantage of exploiting this model since we may play an important role in one of the most dynamic sectors of the information society of the twenty-first century.

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<sup>5</sup> In Prussia studying at universities abroad was forbidden (Bókay 2010).

A remarkable element of this modern internationalization process is that countries using English as their first or second language have an advantage. The Latin scientific language of the peregrination in the Medieval Times is replaced by the English language and the target areas of the international student mobilization (the most significant universities) are attached to countries where English is spoken.

### **Role of the Bologna process in the study-driven migration in the European Union**

In the process of internationalization the process of launching the European Higher Education Area may be regarded as a reaction at the European level. The states introducing the Anglo-Saxon (mostly „American”) model accomplished the transformation with the help of the Bologna process. In a political scientist and economist approach the „alignment” of higher education at the European level is one of the most important elements of the integration process. Education policy is interpreted as an internal affair of the nation states from the very beginning, consequently the Community does not have the appropriate legitimacy to intervene in the higher education of Member States. In spite of this, it has been active in this question since the Treaty of Rome (1957) and the education policy of the European Union (directives, decisions, resolutions, recommendations) present common goals for the Member States but leave the execution and implementation to the specialized ministries and professional departments of the nation states. In the Treaty of Rome, education is mentioned only implicitly, since the idea of the four freedoms, and the issues related to vocational training are also concerned. The 1960s and 1970s brought slow progress to the process of „standardization”. First, the principle of the foundation of the European University (1961) was adopted, then decision was brought on the establishment of a concrete institution (1972, European University Institute of Florence). This cooperation turned into a concrete practice after the adoption of the first community action plan on education in 1976, which drafted the following objectives: closer cooperation between higher education systems in Europe, expansion of the teacher, researcher and student mobility, and issues concerning the acknowledgement of studies (or diploma) conducted in another Member State. In line with the legal opportunities, not as a central management authority but as a kind of coordinator, the European Commission intervened in the competences of the nation states and universities (Szolár 2011). A multilevel legitimacy deficit can be detected in the integration process, which may be regarded as an intervention from many sides<sup>6</sup> in the idea of *universitas*. On the one hand,

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<sup>6</sup> The top-down intervention means the appearance of the Union in the nation-state powers, while the „sidelong” intervention means the intervention of the national government in the autonomy of universities (Kozma 2011).

the autonomy of education belonging to the nation state competencies was hurt when the Community carried its unification endeavors into execution. The actors of education policy of the nation states intervened in the autonomy of universities when they adopted the directives by acts and regulations to vindicate the expectations of the Community (Kozma 2011).

On the whole, the process has its own history. Solutions have been sought for decades all over Europe for the problems in the background (for example, the issues of the reform of higher education, both in terms of quality and quantity, the questions of the methodological reforms in higher education, the problem of strengthening the relationship with the labor market, etc.). This is a new element, in which the Community has acquired a role and now has an effect on the policy decisions of nation states. Van Damme (2009) argues that the Bologna process is an element of success as a result of the „soft nature of intergovernmental steering” and „open method of coordination” introduced in the Lisbon Strategy, which left sufficient room for national policy development, to the idea of „subsidiarity”, and to the trusted roles of stakeholders and social partners.” (qtd. in Szolár 2011: 31).

The real breakthrough came with the introduction of the ERASMUS Programme<sup>7</sup> launched in 1987 to promote student mobility. Parallels may be drawn between the objectives of the Programme and the expectations presented in the Bologna Process (Table 1).

*Table 1: Comparative analysis of the ERASMUS Programme and the Bologna Process*

<b>Objectives of the ERASMUS Programme</b>	<b>Objectives of the Bologna Process</b>
Creation of a network of inter-university cooperation	Joining the European Higher Education Area
Financial support for students studying in other Member States	Promotion of mobility
Academic recognition of diplomas acquired and periods of study spent in another Member State	Adoption of system of easily readable and comparable degrees, establishment of a system of credits, promotion of European co-operation in quality assurance
Strengthening of the European dimension	Promotion of necessary European dimension in higher education

Source: based on Szolár 2011

## **Role of the Bologna process in the study-driven migration in Hungary**

On the level of Central Europe, the transformation process of the recent past is made even more interesting by the fact that in addition to the rapid growth in the number of students, there was also a structural transformation in our region. Hungary’s narrower environment (post-socialist countries) tried to

<sup>7</sup> **Eu**Ropean Community **A**ction **S**cheme for the **M**obility of **U**niversity **S**tudents

solve the problems of increased enrolment in higher education, the issues of financing, and the challenges of the need for operational reforms in the context of the Bologna Process. In line with Governmental Decree 289/2005 (XII. 22.), the two-cycle or in other words divided degree requirement of the Bologna Process was introduced starting with the academic year 2006/07 in Hungary. The transformation of the higher education system was justified by the adoption to international tendencies and the accession to the European Higher Education Area. As a result, the diplomas acquired in the Hungarian higher education institutions became accepted abroad and their naturalization became superfluous.

The objectives named on the level of intentions were followed by varied implementation. The Bologna Process is permissive since it allows the inclusion of national peculiarities and traditions. This is how the „Bologna Hungaricum” came into existence (Barakonyi 2008), which is the result of the reinforcement of specifically Hungarian problems and national peculiarities.

The Bologna Declaration itself<sup>8</sup> (1999) contains one more very important element (later associated exclusively with this) in addition to the above listed elements, which is the multilevel character of the training. In the beginning, with the two-tier system, then with the inclusion of the PhD level, the three-tier system (perhaps by adding the higher educational vocational training into a three and a half tier system), represents the Bologna Process for the public.

The background of the development of the Bologna Process is relevant to the study-driven migration in several respects. The pupil/student migration plays an important role in various ways (differing by disciplines) (1) in the question of the growth of the European higher education systems, and the expansion of their transnational educational activities, (2) in the task related to the intensification of student (and afterwards hopefully employee) mobility, important from the aspect of competitiveness, and (3) in the liquidation of the slowing development of Europe in general and relative to the economies of the USA and Japan, and of the lagging behind of the accessing Central Europe relative to the core areas. The system facilitates or may facilitate international movement, and enables the recognition of the accomplishment of partial tasks (students on bursary) and the acceptance of diplomas (students on full training).

The present paper does not focus on the evaluation of the Bologna Process but the characteristics of the continuously changing concepts of the Eu-

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<sup>8</sup> Two Bologna Declarations can be distinguished both in time and nature (with respect to those who signed it). The first (1989) is the decree issued by the university sphere, and the second (1999) is the vision of the governmental sphere(s) and the experts of the Commission concerning the European higher education (Kozma 2011).

ropean Union may be observed in their evolution.<sup>9</sup> The result of the multi-player process often deviates from the objectives defined. It is absolutely one of its merits, however, that it sustains a dialogue between the actors involved in higher education, which may provide an opportunity for the substantive transformation of higher education (Szolár 2011).

One of the direct antecedents with great effect on the Bologna Process was the ERASMUS system, which promoted student and teacher migration. While ERASMUS is regarded as a movement based on formal communication, there is also an informal form of movement where the study-driven migration does not have an organizational background but is instead based on informal contacts and communication, resulting in the so-called free-mover migration.

The most important differences between these two forms of study-driven migration include the financial background, motivation, communication type, school levels involved or even the social layers involved. In the case of the establishment of informal links, the economic motivation is worth considering. Those who chose the latter invest in their own intellectual capital so that after finishing their studies in another country, they may get better positions in the labor market, either in their homeland or in Hungary. The students would like to generate higher incomes as employees; therefore, they decide to bear the financial difficulties resulting from study abroad. In their cases, the conditions of the modern educational market prevail.

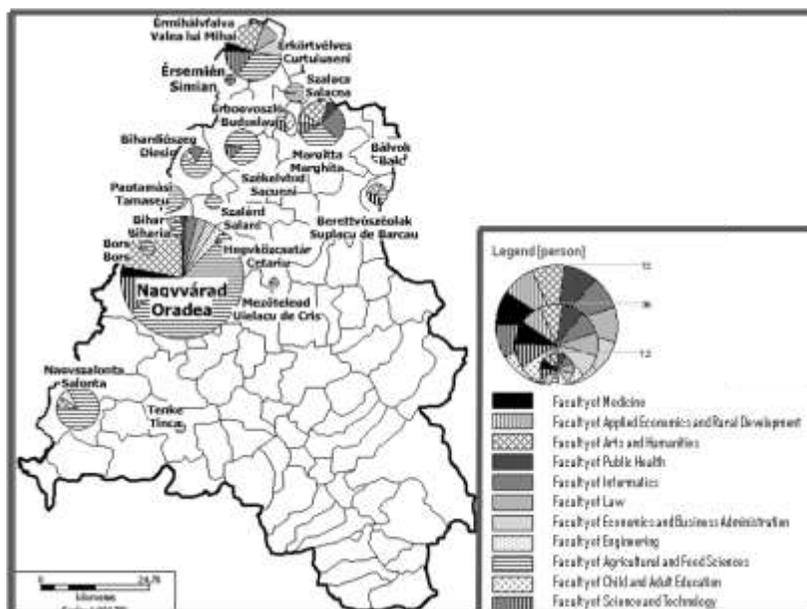
### **Border aspects of study-driven migration in the Hajdú-Bihar-Bihar Euroregion**

The data collected and analyzed in the research included the data of the foreign students in higher education in Debrecen. Special emphasis is laid on the higher education free-mover students from Bihar county and the impacts of study-driven migration on the higher education in Debrecen. These data and information allow us to complete our former findings concerning the composition of foreign students in the higher education system of Debrecen (Figure 1).

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<sup>9</sup> At the time of the adoption of the Declaration the participants decided to meet every second year. Accordingly, there was a line of meetings (Prague 2001; Berlin 2003; Bergen 2005; London 2007; Leuven/Louvain, 2009) where the Bologna Process was continuously expanded with new objectives and actors. The Leuven/ Louvain-la-Neuve Report contains the objectives for the period after 2010, with emphasis on the question of international rankings and research-universities representing the transparency and the global competitiveness (Szolár 2011).

Figure 1: Students from Bihar county at the University of Debrecen in the academic year of 2009-2010



Source: institutional data service, 2009

Students from Bihar county, typically appear in the Hungarian language trainings from the common gravity zone belonging to the two cities. The map shows their origin by settlements and their choice of majors (presented by faculties). The highest representation of the ethnic Hungarian students from Bihar can be observed in the two large faculties: (1) Faculties of Arts and Humanities – 27; (2) Faculty of Science and Technology – 14. The extremely high number in the case of the Faculty of Agricultural and Food Sciences and Environmental Management (88) results from the department established in Oradea. It may be also observed that there are hardly any students from Bihar at the English-language fee-paying medical training (3). Our former studies showed the Hungarian students from neighboring countries representing one-third of the foreign students. They mostly come from a catchment area with historical roots (Partium). They take the traditional majors or courses. It must also be added here that a sharpening competition may be experienced on the higher education market, meaning a decline in demand (similar demographic circumstances as in the mother country resulting in a narrowing source basis) and an increase in supply (widening higher educational capacity both in Hungary and abroad).

The phenomenon related to the ethnic Hungarian students from Bihar county recognized here reflects that the study-driven migration existing in their case at the University of Debrecen is not part of the educational market based on the motivations resulting from the „new economy” but definitely results from the common language.

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# **Campus Realities**

## SORANA SĂVEANU & FLORICA ȘTEFĂNESCU

### ACADEMICS PERCEPTION ABOUT UNIVERSITY CURRICULA IN BOLOGNA SYSTEM. CASE STUDY AT THE UNIVERSITY OF ORADEA, ROMANIA

#### **Abstract**

*The paper reveals some of the opinions and attitudes of teachers from higher education regarding the Bologna system in terms of content, of university curricula. We used focus groups in order to describe in detail this specific issue that concerns the academics/ that occurs in the academic space. This paper follows our previous approach about the impact of the implementation of the Bologna system in Romania, which for starters consisted of a study regarding employers' perception and will continue with a study regarding students' perception about this process. This initiative is enrolled to the work of the HERD project. Analyses revealed the difficulties that teachers have to face when they design the curricula according to the changes and requirements of the Bologna system. Conclusions of the paper lend itself particularly well to a transfer for testing in other academic areas where Bologna was implemented.*

#### **Introduction**

Universities are seen as relatively conservative institutions in terms of their goal and the means established for achieving it. Social and economic changes currently exert pressure on the higher education system as a whole, pressures that claim a greater openness of universities toward the community and its needs and a better relationship between knowledge acquisition and the application of knowledge, between theory and practice, in other words, a social construction of 'New Higher Education Frameworks' (Trowler 1998).

One of the most important and broadest changes in European higher education was the transition to „the Bologna system”, together with the entire suite of accompanying measures, regulations and standards. The comprehensive reform implemented through the Bologna process is the answer to the challenges engendered by the expansion of higher education.

The Bologna system, now implemented in 47 countries, was conceived with the idea to ensure simplification, modulation, certainty, flexibility and transparency in European higher education activities (The Bologna Declaration... 2000). It brought together under the umbrella of university training, in 'higher education neighborhood' (Gibbons et al. 1994: 6), forms of training and study programs of different levels: colleges and universities, bachelor,

master and doctoral studies, formal, non-formal and informal learning and evaluation, which in traditional education had had clear-cut goals and objectives, but were mixed so that it was difficult to distinguish the 'sense' of a program from another. Moreover, the Bologna process cannot be conceived as a uniform one because it is shaped and reinterpreted according to the specific national and institutional contexts in which it is applied (Szolár 2011). Zgaga (2009) argues that the Bologna Process should be treated differently in the case of countries in transition, those in Eastern Europe, particularly the former Socialist countries. The author identifies three categories of countries where the Bologna process was implemented: Central European and Eastern European postcommunist countries and the countries of South-Eastern Europe that joined in 2003 and 2007. Their reaction and the results achieved after the implementation of the Bologna process reveal different situations for the three groups. Regardless of the development level of national education systems, the transition countries started the process from the premise that it is better for them to be „open to co-operation and seek comparability and compatibility” (Zgaga 2009: 90). What is important to note in the case of countries in transition is that the implementation of the Bologna process started not from a 'Europeanization' but more as an awareness that higher education development is not possible in the context of national closure (Zgaga 2009: 91).

The Bologna system had two basic objectives: (1) to create a European area of education with uniform rules and standards that allow comparison and equivalence of diplomas, therefore facilitating the free movement of labor force and mobility of persons in the European area (Berlin Communiqué 2003); (2) increasing competitiveness of European universities in a globalized world, that will lead eventually to a positive balance of brain drain process (keep young people aspiring to follow higher education in Europe and draw other such youngsters from other geographic areas). In 2000, the European Council in Lisbon stated that the European Union should become by 2010 „the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world, capable of sustainable economic growth, with more and better jobs and greater social cohesion” (European Council in Lisbon 2000: 1).

Both objectives are bountiful, aiming ultimately for the increase of the European human resource performance, especially the labor productivity, in all social-economic areas, given the gap that separates Europe in this aspect, from its main competitors: the U.S., Japan, China and Australia. With an elementary economic calculation, the growth of labor productivity will in turn lead to lower the costs and thus to an increase in the competitiveness of the European economy as a whole.

The first statement that comes in question is whether the two objectives are consistent, logically consistent, because, at least at a theoretical level, the

standardization of curricula with the purpose of convergence of educational services in terms of organization and content does not necessarily encourage internal European competition, and thus the increase of quality. Instead, it is assumed that the space for initiative and creativity are limited, leading, according to Ridderstråle and Nordström (2007), to nothing more than an average position, certainly not a top one. Besides, it is proven that „Competitors have both to distinguish themselves from their predecessors and their rivals and to integrate the work of these groups into a construction that transcends it.” (Henkel 2005: 158).

The answer is provided by the progress reports regarding the implementation of the Bologna process which emphasizes „a strong consensus on the core objects of the process aiming at free mobility, employability and international competitiveness or attractiveness of European higher education” but „limited awareness and little concern about European universities seeking U.S accreditation or the proposed inclusion of certain aspects of education into WTO<sup>1</sup> negotiations” (Karseth 2006: 268).

Of course, it is premature to make an analysis of the degree of achievement of these goals, especially since there are as yet only a few generations of Bologna graduates. After analyzing the changes that occurred in countries where this system was implemented, in one aspect or another, we believe it is necessary and useful to signal both the benefits and the malfunctions of the system. Moreover, this kind of analyses allowed interpretations such as: „Higher education institutions are crucial partners in delivering the European Union’s strategy to drive forward and maintain growth” and imposed „a significant increase in the budget devoted to investment in education, research and innovation” in the context of Europe 2020 strategy whose main objective is „achieving smart, sustainable and inclusive growth” (EU 2012, Supporting growth and jobs...: 2)

In this paper we aim to present how the changes in learning content that occurred in a higher education institution in Romania were handled. The conclusions of the paper can further be tested in other similar institutions in order to identify symptomatic problems or even to shape some paradigmatic solutions.

### **Determinants of learning content. Toward a curricular isomorphism?**

In the context of neoinstitutionalism, theory that brings back to the forefront the role of institutions in society and highlights the proliferation of successful models through isomorphic processes (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983), the issue of

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<sup>1</sup> World Trade Organization – the editors

university curricula can be of interest, especially in a period focused on the implementation of changes/major reforms of the higher education system.

Institutional isomorphism, which complete the competitive isomorphism in the sense that competition is „not just for resources and customers, but for political power and institutional legitimacy, [and] for social as well as economic fitness” (DiMaggio & Powell 1983: 150), can be further complemented by curricular isomorphism in all its three forms: coercive, mimetic and normative.

With regard to *coercive isomorphism* of the learning contents, it expresses the change of these contents under the pressure of external forces such as: national and European educational policies, national (ARACIS – Agenția Română de Asigurare a Calității în Învățământul Superior<sup>2</sup>) and European (for example EUA – European Universities Association) institutions in the field of higher education, national (CNC – Cadru Național al Calificărilor<sup>3</sup>) and European legislation (EQF – European Qualifications Framework), the overarching framework of qualifications of the EHEA (QF-EHEA – European Higher Education Area), national, European and global labor market, social and cultural expectations.

The first constraint regarding the learning content comes from the university human resource, namely its specialization. Even though there are now many mobility programs for teachers and opportunities to attract specialized human resources from other universities in the country or abroad (visiting professor, Erasmus, university consortia, fixed-term employment, joint degrees etc.), there are also constraints, primarily of a financial nature and, secondly, of a personal nature. Teachers themselves are not always willing to change employers, even for a more advantageous salary, due to family, friends, habits or environment issues, therefore more often they choose short-term mobility programs, which, although worthy, without some regularity, do not have a major impact on students’ training (Dima et al. 2011).

In turn, universities in Romania do not have financial means to cover the costs of high-value specialists and on the other hand they have financial obligations to their employees. An example of good practice that could be invoked to overcome this constraint is one that we met at the Faculty of Sociology in Trento, Italy (probably present in other European universities too): study programs organized jointly by several universities from several countries.

Constraints on learning contents also come from the national organizations which ensure quality in higher education and which impose certain quantitative and qualitative standards: number of hours/week, the relationship between compulsory and optional courses, the number of examinations and other forms of assessment, the share of fundamental, specialized and

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<sup>2</sup> The Romanian Agency for Quality Assurance in Higher Education – the editors

<sup>3</sup> National Qualifications Framework – the editors

complementary courses and even fundamental subjects in each field of study (ARACIS). Besides these constraints, there are the ones that come, as we have shown earlier, from the European institutions aiming at curriculum compatibility, skills and qualifications, and even constraints coming from globalized society, from „contemporary developments which have applied pressure on universities to treat higher education as a global commodity” (Naidoo 2007: 1).

The question is where are students in this equation, as they are the direct beneficiaries of the curricula? In this respect, there are different opinions. The latest trend, which insists on „student-centered” education, opposes the classic current, in which the teacher has the power both in establishing the learning content and also in the conduct of the teaching act. Of course, the phrase „student-centered learning” (Student-Centered Learning Toolkit 2010), is democratic and apparently beneficial through involving students in their own training process and through changing the role of the teacher from expert to enabler, and also by shifting focus from knowledge to skills, but at the same time, the statement expresses „distrust in the expertise of teachers as a professional group” (Young 1998: 86).

But are students prepared and able to do this? The fact is that this idea has been sustained since the early 70s of the last century in conjunction with other left-wing movements: feminism, civics, etc. (Jarning 1997).

If we consider the expansion of higher education (Gibbons et al. 1994), the lack of exams for the selection of students and therefore the easy access into the system, and also the increasing trend of students’ finding a job during their studies, a minimum attitude of resistance is expected, which is translated into the curricula, the low volume of work, the excessive accessibility of teaching, loose evaluation, in other words „a consumer mentality in students may result in a loss of responsibility for their learning, little tolerance for the expansion of study beyond the routine of the predictable” (Naidoo 2003), and even alienation of students in relation to learning activity (Mann 2001).

We are not saying that students should not be involved in designing the curriculum, but we do recommend involving students who are aware and responsible for their own training (from senior years or graduates) and we aim for an involvement primarily in the segment of optional courses. In addition, the periodical evaluation of disciplines by students, an assessment having been implemented for two years now in our university, has proven to be of great importance in this respect.

A highly debated issue regarding academic curricula is the distinction between use-value and exchange value (Labaree 1998) of knowledge, knowledge acquired by students and differently valued by different agents: students, teachers, employers, community. Students appreciate the academic curriculum related to employability, teachers think of curriculum as an integrated system of knowledge, skills and competencies, as a result of a complex teaching ap-

proach, employers appreciate curriculum that provides fast and easy integration of graduates into the labor market and its contribution to the efficiency of activity, while the community sees the curriculum through the human quality of graduates, particularly their citizenship and possibly their entrepreneurial capabilities. Regardless of the approach, „universities should focus more on developing skills and less on training qualifications” (Roşca et al. 2010: 69).

The trend, also obvious in Romanian higher education, is toward an *academic capitalism* that „involves turning the academy internally into a competitive market place for centrally allocated resources. This encourages departments to redesign their requirements and curriculum in ways that are driven more by short-term market than by educational considerations” (Rhoades & Slaughter 2004: 48). Certainly, such a trend may turn against universities and academics, through the possibility of establishing a dictatorship of the market in organizing and conducting the academic activity. In this sense, „faculty and their associations and unions should reprioritize the democratic and educational functions of the academy, in addition to the local economic roles in community development that colleges and universities can play” (Rhoades & Slaughter 2004: 57). Social changes in Romanian society imply also the adaptation of higher education institutions to new trends in the global market, in which competition plays a decisive role.

The idea that emerges from these theoretical considerations is that of major difficulties in establishing academic curricula, consisting of the need for harmonization of different viewpoints, even disagreements, especially between labor market requirements (with emphasis on technical skills) and the task traditionally undertaken by academic institutions (with emphasis on cultural values and forming students’ personalities and their scientific status). All this within the context of re-drawing and re-conceptualizing the activity of universities, (Biesta 2004) seen as „providers of educational services”, and of the relationships with students (identified as „consumers” of such services) and employers (the „beneficiaries” of the output of the university). In other words, the question is: What should universities pursue: „to educate good citizens for the public sphere or is it to train people to be skilled for a specific vocation?” (Karseth 2002: 123).

So „the call for higher education to contribute in a more direct way to enhancing the country’s competitive edge in the global economy has begun to eclipse other social and cultural roles” (Naidoo 2007: 3).

These divergences increase as the competencies acquired in higher education no longer respond to the occurring economic and technological changes; this creates discomfort and a major complaint among employers, who are expected to give salaries commensurate with the level of education and not with the level of competence. There are also employers who understand the mechanisms that generate these differences, as well as the ways to overcome

them, requiring rather transversal competences than specialized skills of graduates (Ștefănescu & Săveanu 2012). In addition, a growing number of businesses or institutions take charge of the training/development of specialized competences according to the principle of life-long learning.

One of the challenges for higher education systems involves the adaptability and flexibility of universities, and the speed of their response to change (Roșca et al. 2010). According to the study conducted by Dima et al. (2011), among the main issues raised by academics, one is related to the mentality, the resistance to change, bureaucracy and administrative problems specific to the academic environment in Romania. The authors point out that the implementation of the Bologna system requires a paradigm shift in university management.

When asked how they construct a curriculum, perhaps most department managers of universities from Romania would respond that they start with a given one (either an old curriculum or a curriculum from a similar department from another university), which they adapt to labor market demands, on the one hand, and the resources available in the department (human and financial), on the other hand.

Lately, pressured by the need to be compatible with the curricula of European universities in particular, and driven by the desire to facilitate the recognition of diplomas, we actually witnessed some forms of *mimetic isomorphism*. Several curricula take disciplines and learning contents from prestigious European and American universities in order to get a good position in the ranking of universities and thus benefit from proper funding (Top 500, Top 1000, etc.) as well as creating a legitimate identity and attract valuable students.

This trend fits what Morphew and Huisman (2002) called academic drift, as yet a tendency of small, new and marginal universities to adopt curricula and practices from prestigious universities in order to strengthen their identity, to attract more students, but also to respond to labor market demands, a trend often seen as a threat to academic diversity (Morphew 2009). And a threat it is, given the commonly known fact that diversity is beneficial because it generates efficiency, excellence and a more appropriate response to the diversity of education market demands.

*Normative isomorphism* „stems primarily from professionalization [which is defined as] the collective struggle of members of an occupation to define the conditions and methods of their work” (DiMaggio & Powell 1983: 152). Regarding the learning contents, this isomorphism manifests through the establishment of them within the professional associations and academic consortia, therefore being uniform in the case of some specializations (economics, engineering sciences), and very similar in the case of other specializations.

Considered to be a matter of university autonomy, the design of the curriculum appears to be conditioned by many factors which hardly allow desirable consistency. It is this combination of factors that makes it so difficult to choose

disciplines for the curricula, and to choose their content so that they best respond to the imperatives listed above. Education sociology experts argue that debates are being developed concerning educational content, disputes which „reflect the profound social and cultural conflicts” (Hatos 2006: 77).

That is why we believe we are witnessing „the university identity crisis” (McCaffery 2010: 25) today, along with a series of processes that „make organizations more similar without necessarily making them more efficient” (DiMaggio & Powell 1983: 147).

## **Methodology**

University of Oradea is a complex institution in terms of domains and programs of study, with 15 faculties and 47 departments comprising 107 undergraduate study programs, 86 master programs, plus 11 doctoral schools; in sum there are 17.622 students and 1157 teachers (Raport de autoevaluare 2012: 5). Study programs are available in technical and scientific areas as well as in social and human sciences, which is why we felt that our study may have relevance to the theme proposed.

We used focus groups, which as a research method, beyond the potential drawbacks (the possibility of contamination of responses, the possibility that a group member may dominate others, lack of consistency of responses, the evolution of the group being hardly manageable, the difficulty for generalization) it also presents clear advantages (the possibility of obtaining large amounts of information in a relatively short time, the possibility to deepen some issues discussed or return to previously discussed issues, the possibility of „transferability” of conclusions). This method assumes a „systematic and verifiable investigation” and allows understanding and the shaping of a „clear picture” on the topic. We considered it to be suitable for our research theme, since it makes it possible to interpret the responses and behavior, „the mix of feelings and opinions”, and the attitudes of group members (Krueger & Casey 2005: 230-241).

We organized two focus groups at the University of Oradea, one with teachers from the faculties of humanities (FG1) and one with teachers from the technical and scientific faculties (FG2). Focus groups were held on 23 and 24 of July in 2012, and the average time for an interview was between 1 and 2 hours. The first focus group met six participants from the following faculties: Faculty of Social Humanistic Sciences (three members from different departments), Faculty of Economics, Faculty of Law and Faculty of History, International Relations, Political Sciences and Communication Sciences. The second focus group met five participants from the following faculties: Faculty of Constructions and Architecture, Faculty of Energetic Engineering and Industrial Management (two members from different departments), Faculty of Management and Technological Engineering and Faculty of Sciences.

We started with the assumption that the proposed theme will be approached differently by the two groups, at least for two reasons: 1. The characteristics of the represented fields and 2. The transition to Bologna system, which had occurred at different moments for the two fields: humanities faculties first and then the technical ones (due to different study periods in the ante-Bologna system: 4 and 5 respectively).

Our focus groups included the heads of departments who had good knowledge of the investigated issues: *changes in the structure and content of university curricula in the transition to the Bologna system*. The investigated topic can be divided into three dimensions: (1) the transition to Bologna system from the aspect of learning content; (2) the distinction between skills and employability of BA/BSc graduates and MA/MSc graduates; (3) the share of practical component in the Bologna academic curricula.

## Results

### ***Characteristics of the transition to the Bologna system (Changing the curriculum)***

The transition to the new Bologna system and the changes that occurred within the learning content was shaped by the areas of study. The adaptation to the new system took into account the context in which it occurred. Along with the transition to three cycles of education (3 years for BA/BSc, 2 years for MA/MSc and 3 years for PhD), there were particular situations of transition from five-year programs to 4-year programs (some technical universities for instance), or the transition from one form of organization (short-term higher education) to a BA/BSc-level program that covered also 3 years.

A particular situation of normative isomorphism was found in the development of the curricula in the case of programs from the fields of economics and technology. This aspect refers to the collaboration, the formal cooperation, between faculties at the national level. The debate organized by subdomains and the decisions established by joint argumentations allowed a shared vision regarding the general and fundamental disciplines that must be included in the curricula of different specializations. This approach allowed a prompt response to the standards set by ARACIS.

*„We have national level consortia, associations, where people agree on what should be done with programs of study. That was the bright side of things. The result was a relatively homogeneous structure at the national level.”* (Faculty of Management and Technological Engineering, FG2)

Afterwards, the decisions taken within this framework were found in the national standards of the National Agency for Quality in Higher Education (ARACIS). Moreover, this compatibility, the unitary approach of the recon-

struction of academic curricula facilitated the implementation of the system of credit transfers.

*„There were not so many transfers between universities in the country, but we are rather homogeneous in terms of the number of credits.”* (Faculty of Economics, FG1)

However, as a general idea that emerges in this study is the fact that for the development of the new curricula, there was used the consultation of other curricula from similar specializations, either in neighboring university centers (Cluj, Timisoara), or in the capital (Bucharest) or even abroad (USA, Great Britain, Italy, Greece, Turkey), expression of mimetic isomorphism. This approach was applied by both socio-humanistic specializations and by technical specializations. We also find this practice today in the reaccreditation of programs or the development of new programs presenting an open door to the curricula available in the programs of European universities.

*„[...] It was mostly developed starting from the existing curricula found in big university centers present then in the academic field. Cluj, the first landmark, let's say, because we had quite many teachers collaborators there.”* (Faculty of Social Humanistic Sciences, FG1)

The decisions used for curricular restructuring are those found in the scientific literature (see also Teal et al. 2011): expel, transfer and merge. Also, there are few disciplines that have not been modified in any way.

*„Overall the transition was done by lowering proportionally the number of classes, more exactly some disciplines became year courses, others became semester courses... Basically there was a proportional decrease, there cannot be said that great reforms were made following the implementation of the Bologna process.”* (Faculty of Social Humanistic Sciences, FG1)

The transfer of disciplines to MA/MSc programs was performed in a smaller proportion, due to the fact that this solution was not consistent with the Bologna strategy, namely, to pass on a general training, a core of general disciplines at the bachelor level, and specific speciality training, with a focus on applicability, in the case of master level programs. In the study, the reverse perspective was also identified: that of transmitting in master programs more general skills, covering a wider area.

*„[...] the MA direction was followed toward a master program highly focused on particularities, a narrow specialization, which implied, let's say, knowing a general context, namely that of the field of study, and then some narrow specializations organized on specific scientific subjects. Therefore the transfer of disciplines to MA was done in a very small percentage, somewhere below 10%.”* (Faculty of History, International Relations, Political Sciences and Communication Sciences, FG1)

*„We cannot focus on training a graduate in a very narrow fundamental domain. He will not find a job so easily compared to the case of graduating from a MA that would provide a training that reaches more areas of specialization.”* (Faculty of Sciences, FG2)

Yet there are fields of study, particularly those who had not had MA/MSc programs developed in the pre-Bologna system, in which case there were MA/MSc programs developed that were not an extension of BA/BSc programs:

*„[...] they are independent masters, masters outlining a quite clear area.”* (Faculty of Social Humanistic Sciences, FG1)

Depending on the features pertaining to various study programs, the restructuring of the curriculum has witnessed an intensive change of the content of discipline sheets or updates of the content without substantial modification of the structure of the subjects.

In our study we noticed some guidance of the whole transition process to the Bologna system. In this guidance, a decisive role belongs to ARACIS, which induced a centralized, controlled vision on the transition, introducing coercive isomorphism. Focus groups participants attributed much of the change that occurred in the curricula, to the ARACIS standards that limited the freedom of decision regarding disciplines from the curricula.

*„At least these ARACIS standards have made that college to become a kind of extension of high school. There is this temptation of centralized control, control from commissions, committees, and so on...”* (Faculty of Social Humanistic Sciences, FG1)

*„And having ARACIS standards, we were able to maintain this compatibility of study programs at the national level.”* (Faculty of Social Humanistic Sciences, FG1)

Yet it was precisely this guided transformation based on externally imposed criteria that induced some confusion in the universities which found themselves in a position having to follow methodologies and standards that sometimes proved to be unclear and to design curricula without having concrete information as a starting point, described in terms of the specifics of each field.

*„We were not at all prepared or trained. Maybe it would have been better if someone from the outside had come and explained it to us. All we were told was this was the law, follow it; and no one helped us with that. It was a shock and it took us a while to understand what it was all about. And we learned on the way. We needed to adapt.”* (Faculty of Constructions and Architecture, FG2)

*„So in the end this Bologna process, in my opinion, set standards, it was a regulatory intervention, but the intervention wasn't backed up by an intervention in the training of human resources. It passed by, they changed our standards, but people remained the same ... [...] on the surface ... because we do not know if people taught something else. But there was no investment in human resources and then we should not expect to have positive changes like that ... maybe a little more organized, but otherwise, I do not see some extraordinary benefits.”* (Faculty of Social Humanistic Sciences, FG1)

The focus groups reveal the positive judgement of a young team of colleagues that develops along with the groups of students. These teams are better able to meet the challenges of socio-economic transformations and new technolo-

gies. Furthermore, the view of students is a starting point for designing the curriculum.

*„When it was designed, we took into account the learning needs of students that we had at that time enrolled at BA level, and we designed the Master programs based on the discussions and the feedback received from students. Analyzing their learning needs, we designed the courses, the curriculum as a whole, noting their interest.”* (Faculty of Management and Technological Engineering, FG1)

The directive followed by Romanian higher education involves, as is also confirmed in our study, the shaping of the curricula and learning content according to socio-economic developments at regional or national levels. In this sense, academics recognize that much of university curricula is, or should be, determined according to the specifications required by the labor market, the demand for a specific field of study.

*„We actually replace them because they, at least in our field (technical colleges), are eroding. I do not know how it is in other fields, but if you do not show up in 4-5 years with other educational offers in this area [...] because at one point we reached saturation and therefore we have to propose something new.”* (Faculty of History, International Relations, Political Sciences and Communication Sciences, FG1)

*„There were other changes imposed by the feedback received from the companies we have agreements with.”* (Faculty of Energetic Engineering and Industrial Management, FG2)

The Bologna brought along competitiveness. The situation forced universities to prepare for prompt responses to the challenges and changes of the market, the response consisting of a large, attractive and updated offer. Moreover, this competition managed, or it aims, to extend beyond national borders in the following period.

*„Adaptation to the market, but also to the situation created by Bologna eventually because, if before we had a large program and let's say, a MA, now we narrow specializations, including for Masters level, and then automatically we had to [...] adapt effectively to the market.”* (Faculty of History, International Relations, Political Sciences and Communication Sciences, FG1)

*„Students feel the efficacy of the Bologna system, as many of our graduates find jobs in Italy and other countries where their diploma is recognized.”* (Faculty of Sciences, FG2)

Regarding compatibility of the learning contents with the ones found within the European Union, survey participants noted that one of the problems is reflected in teachers from higher education training. The development of the new curriculum, as well as the modification of the existing one, had to take into account the level and fields of training of available teachers. One of the participants in the study expressed in a plastic manner the way in which the transition to Bologna took place:

„[...] I think the ecological model explains this thing pretty well: you put some small animals in a tree and each of them chooses a branch. There will be formed a trophic chain and there will appear specializations...” (Faculty of Social Humanistic Sciences, FG1)

### Specific competences for BA and MA studies. The employability of graduates

There is still some confusion regarding the contents and competences acquired through the two study cycles: bachelors and masters. This is mainly due to the distinction between general and specific competences and the importance these competences have depending on each educational cycle.

„So the differences are clear, because the BA gives the overall training and partly the student undertakes specific issues in some areas, to ease the subsequent choice of career plan, and the masters' gives competences exactly to the specialization.” (Faculty of Social Humanistic Sciences, FG1)

„It is important that the BA level offers graduates those skills which will help them to find a job. Let's not try to turn the students from BA level into researchers.” (Faculty of Management and Technological Engineering, FG2)

What needs to be said about the differences between the skills acquired in the two levels of study is somewhat understandable due to the maturity that characterizes the students enrolled in master's programs. Differences are found in the complexity of the information gathered.

„Eventually, the major difference is between skills or the complexity of the skills trained at BA and at MA would be somewhat at the level of autonomy and responsibility. [...] And the ability to have expertise in a particular field.” (Faculty of Social Humanistic Sciences, FG1)

„We tried at MA to offer the soft components, not just hard ones. Of course the hard component can be deepened, but there are also those soft competences that can enable them to become more creative. Because eventually at BA level they learn what at MA they can develop.” (Faculty of Management and Technological Engineering, FG2)

Regarding the different competences transmitted at BA/BSc and at MA/MSc levels, it is important to mention the orientation of candidates toward applicable programs which develop practical competences and toward those programs that address scientific research and innovation. This is particularly true in the case of technical fields. The research and innovation competences are accessed especially after some work experience.

„I think the Master's should give you the possibility of specialization, of deepening, and it should come after a period of work experience. In my opinion it would seem natural for the technical field [...] that afterwards they come to Master's, and understand how they would make use of such a program. Including the possibility of connecting to research, to acknowledge that research may lead to innovation. Not only apply knowledge

*in practice, but to create something innovative. [...] It's hard, after you graduated, if you did not work, to understand the uses of a Master's degree."* (Faculty of Management and Technological Engineering, FG2)

A problematic aspect regarding the functionality of the Bologna system derives from the differences between competences acquired by graduates of Bachelor's and Master's Degrees. In the cases where these differences are not clearly cut and communicated, it is possible to consider the general training provided at Bachelor level quite sufficient. In such cases the number of requests for Master's Programs will decrease. Consequently, in the long term, it would mean a decrease of the number of specific training years, contrary to the aim of the Bologna system. Eventually, this would also lead to a poorer preparation of graduates for the labor market.

*„We have some Master's programs sufficiently specialized and our difficulty is to convince the students, our graduates from BA level, that they really need a Master's. I think this is the critical point of the Bologna system and people have seen it as a reduction of... But all teachers speak about it among us, so students saw it more as a reduction of the years of study rather than an increase of them. So this is the critical point."* (Faculty of Social Humanistic Sciences, FG1)

The respondents' opinions converge to the conclusions of the study conducted by Roşca et al. (2010) which signal the lack of an integrative approach for all school levels. This integration can be achieved by developing a set of indicators used in the evaluation of competences acquired both at the upper secondary high-school level and continuing with those acquired at following higher education levels.

### **The share of practical component of the higher education curriculum**

The study reveals the positive impact of the transition to the Bologna system from the aspect of the applicative side of academic curriculum. Respondents believe that through a clear and balanced distribution of theoretical and practical courses, according to the ARACIS standards, there is a significant improvement in the professional training of students.

*„The ARACIS norms regulate clearly the balance between the theoretical, the fundamental and the practical. If one respects the common core courses, one reaches a certain percentage that regulates this balance between theory and practice."* (Faculty of Social Humanistic Sciences, FG1)

According to our study, university teachers assign a higher importance to the applicative competences acquired by BA/BSc graduates, alongside with transversal competences, which have a fundamental role for entering the labor market.

*„It is important for BA graduates to easily find a job, which is more or less done now due to the part of applicative competences [...]. It is important that these graduates*

*have those competences that would help them find a job.”* (Faculty of Management and Technological Engineering, FG2)

*„Where we have won is this, first we and then the students through Erasmus mobility programs, we all acknowledge that abroad the lab work and applications matter more, students cannot enter exams if they did not complete all the applications. And then, even if quantitatively we decreased, qualitatively we tried to recover and we even enriched the areas of applications provided.”* (Faculty of Sciences, FG2)

There are faculties, especially in the technical field, in which the transition to the Bologna system determined a reduction of the number of hours available for lab works, an aspect that has negative consequences on the uptake of competences by BA/BSc students.

*„Another problem is the reduction of number of hours, which was mostly done from the applicative side, the lab works [...]. Practically there is a merge of two laboratory topics into one.”* (Faculty of Sciences, FG2)

## Conclusions and recommendations

To a great extent, in the elaboration of the Bologna curricula, people kept the old courses which were distributed between BA/BSc and MA/MSc programs within the same field of study. However, the curriculum was compressed under the pressure of financial resources and standards regarding the number of hours per week, with direct consequences on restricting the interdisciplinary nature of the study programs, which caused concern among teachers regarding the achieving of the aims of higher education.

Teachers feel the complexity and uncertainty of the transition to the new system and resent the fact that the new curricula restrict their time for reflection, critical approaches and for developing intellectual independence of students. At the same time, they complain that the transition to the Bologna system was not accompanied by training human resources in universities, giving rise to confusion, contradictions and failures even regarding the construction of the learning content.

Our study largely confirms the claim that „curricula are often slow to respond to changing needs in the wider economy, and fail to anticipate or help shape the careers of tomorrow” (EU 2012, Supporting growth and jobs...: 6).

There is some inertia in the higher education system, emphasized also by the participants in the focus groups, and embodied in the teachers’ attempt to preserve a certain status of courses taught and even their fundamental content, adapted to recent literature and to their own research, of course.

There is an obvious concern for the design of the curricula’s practical side by increasing the number of hours, the emphasis on skills, the integration of vocational development of skills and competencies in the very act of teaching,

which expresses academic responsiveness to the requirements of the economic environment.

However, the lack of middle management tools, of visions and strategic plans which will outline a clear picture of the future of the university's identity, of what the university wants to be in the future, is also noticeable. The lack of this perspective is visible also in the fact that curricula are developed based on ARACIS standards, and in some cases (economic and technical sciences) also on the established rules within university consortia to which they belong. This indicates a high level managerial context which ensures certain predictability about learning content, an idea also found at Brătianu et al. (2010). As shown in a study by Dima et al. (2011), in the academic field, the whole process is described in terms such as standardization, equalization, harmonization, common standards and procedures (Dima et al. 2011: 128).

Our results are consistent with the ideas of Patricio and Harden (2010) who argue that the transition to the Bologna system must ensure harmonization and not standardization, and that prudent management as well as a creative vision will lead to visible benefits.

By the way in which the curricula are designed, higher education in Oradea is also, to some extent, a tributary of the „snake-like procession” (Riesman 1956), as a form of institutional isomorphism, which means that it is oriented toward achieving a higher position in the hierarchy of universities, therefore it adopts practices, norms, values, and learning contents from other prestigious universities.

Despite some obvious shortcomings, at least for these first years of the implementation of the Bologna system, captured also by Pavlenko and Bojan (2011) who argue that „*in the case of the Bologna process, both the ideal and the idea is no longer accessible, as they have never been completely and coherently formulated*” (Pavlenko & Bojan 2011: 78), this process produced also benefits consisting of a unitary form of organization of higher education, facilitating student and teacher mobility, facilitating recognition of diplomas, the possibility of comparisons between universities, inter-university level rise, shaping the vision of a „university in the relationship”.

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## GABRIELLA PUSZTAI & MIHÁLY FÓNAI

### ASYMMETRIC STUDENTS' RELATIONS AND DEPROFESSIONALIZATION. THE CASE OF TEACHER TRAINING

#### **Abstract**

*In this survey we intend to chart the social and institutional background of students studying to be teachers in the border region of the European Higher Educational Area. This is a higher educational region with international attraction in Eastern part of Hungary and the Western part of Romania and Ukraine.<sup>1</sup> Higher social inequalities than the EU average causes significant regional disparities in participation rates across social groups in the investigated region: students from the lower strata choose the nearer institutions, and the attraction of farther institutions effect mainly students from higher and upper-middle strata. This is because in most families the parents of students' had no experience with HE and students have difficulties combatting the problems of attendance and persistence. We pointed out that the structure of the organization and the behavior of the faculty still work as the old elite education (Pusztai 2011). We also wish to survey the image of the teaching profession that under- and postgraduate students in teaching subjects have. It is necessary to research these issues as the number of students who apply to teacher training institutions has diminished considerably over the past few years. It is partly explained by the generally low attraction of the teaching career; for instance, only two-thirds of students studying to be teachers intend to practice their chosen profession, and only 18% of them are willing to work in the Northern Plains Region (Jancsák 2012a). In our study we point out that there is a well-defined group of students who are committed to the teaching profession despite the rather low level of social appreciation of the job. However, they tend to be integrated into the world of their respective institution of higher education to a lesser degree than other students and they often have a fragmented social capital, and these factors may adversely affect their educational career (Pusztai 2012).<sup>2</sup>*

#### **Institutional Social Capital**

Research of the institutional contribution to the progress of students has made it clear that it is not primarily the structural and infrastructural conditions of an institution of higher education that effectively support the success of a student. Instead, it is the interactional force field offered by the institu-

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<sup>1</sup> The investigated higher educational region has two centers: Debrecen and Oradea.

<sup>2</sup> In the present essay we also rely on our papers published previously on the same subject (Fónai 2012, Pusztai 2011, 2012).

tion that backs up the progress of the students. The structural-infrastructural elements proved to be mere variables in relaying the professional competences to students (Pascarella & Terenzini 2005). When the success of students is explained, the related special literature focuses on the differences in the cultural and economic resources of the students concerned, and relatively little attention is paid to the network of interpersonal connections and cooperation, in the framework of which the objectives of the students and their images of the profession are analyzed. Tinto (1993) believes that the student's integration in the society of institution is a major predictor of the success of the individual. In his comprehensive model he analyzed the students' involvement and participation in their formal (learning) and informal (social) systems. Tinto claims that the integration in these systems largely influences the performance of a student, so much so that the student may finally become detached from their bonds to the outside world. As a result of integration, and because of frequent interaction, students will be conformed to the forces attracting them to the higher education institution. In his theory, students will be integrated into the system to the degree they are able to share the norms and values of their peers and to the degree they are able to meet the formal and informal requirements of the institution. As students' integration improves, so does their commitment to the objective of their studies (profession) and to the institution. All these have a positive effect on their performance, whereas the lack of integration may lead to their marginalization, departure to another institution or dropout. In recent years, however, the number of non-traditional students has increased. They do not have any inherited experience from parents and, what is more, their environment and social status draw them away from the institution (Harper & Quaye 2009, Hurtado 2007, Pusztai 2011).

Tinto's theory has been criticized because he assumes that normative congruence will take place as a result of structural integration but that will lead to the acculturation of non-traditional students who come from a social background different from that of the dominant group. Integration is impeded by cultural distance as well as by the fact that large institutions are not really favorable for real student communities. The theory of integration into the formal and informal structures of the campus is, with certain refinements, acceptable to us. As a result of our former research findings, we give priority to the effects of the informal ties (Pusztai 2009, 2011). While in Tinto's interaction model it is the network of interpersonal links that forge students into a community, in Coleman's functional community concept shared values accomplish the same and maintain integration. In our theory, a strong bond to an element of the institutional network constitutes a source of social capital. In our assumption it has a more powerful influence on the career of the students than a less intensive bond to a wide range of open networks (Coleman & Hoffer 1987, Pusztai 2011).

## The Phenomenon of Deprofessionalization

The theories above claim nothing less than that social integration at the institution may support the commitment of students to their goals and their perseverance in their selection of a career. The combination of professionalization and integration as we see it may afford a new potential approach. In this paper we only draw up the outline of the new approach. *One of the most important statements that we make is that the image of the profession of students learning to be teachers is shaped by the process of deprofessionalization clearly detectable in the communities of students.*

The loss of prestige of the teaching professions<sup>3</sup> has been pointed out by sociological researchers for decades (Nagy M. 1994, Nagy M. 2001). The loss of prestige, the gradual lowering of social status is primarily observed in terms of income, power, autonomy and to a much lesser degree in terms of knowledge and personal prestige, although in the latter fields the lowering of the social status of teachers is also detectable. This loss of status may partially be counterbalanced by intra- and extrainstitutional organizational integration of the students, but the equation may also be reversed: that is, the asymmetric relations are boosted by the deprofessionalization processes that emerge as a consequence of the loss of status. Within the theoretical framework referred to above, we briefly discuss certain elements of profession theories.

In prolific special literature dealing with the concept of profession (for analyses see e. g. Formádi 2011, Kleisz 2002, 2005, MacDonald 1995, Nagy K. 2008, 2009) the definition of „profession” is reserved for occupations of high prestige. Functionalist profession theories, regardless of the types and number of the criteria they use, refer to three components: knowledge, skills and competence required for the profession, the institutional framework of the transference of skills and competences, and the norms regulating the exercise of the profession, including the professional organizations behind the norms and regulations. How are these criteria manifested in the case of the *teaching professions*? There appears to be a relative consensus in terms of the range of knowledge and competences necessary for a profession – cognitive knowledge and competences, as well as the methods applied, are largely shaped by public education. Knowledge and skills are, in turn, often influenced by the interests and decisions of the authorities maintaining the institu-

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<sup>3</sup> In the case of teachers we talk about professions in the plural, as the teaching profession is vertically stratified. It is often unclear where teaching professions begin (see the case of kindergarten teachers) and where it ends, for instance where the teachers of higher education should be listed. The Bologna Process created new circumstances in higher education, and teacher education is now in a rather confused situation. That is why we use the term „professions” in the plural. In the sample of the research projects there are differences between students studying to be teachers in various categories (ISCED 2-3 teacher education and ISCED 0-1 teacher education). We refer to that at the appropriate parts of the description of the project.

tions of education through curricula and other documents. Another set of influencing factors includes the objectives and decisions of the central educational politics. The *system of institutions* for the transference of knowledge necessary for the teaching profession has been well established, looking back on century-old traditions. The norms related to the profession, the ethical code and the professional organizations sustaining the norms of the profession are, however, not as highly developed as in the case of high-prestige legal or medical professions. The efficiency of these organizations and their influence on the profession is also lower than in the case of other professions. Partly because of all these, and partly because of the problems of defining knowledge and skills necessary for the profession, teaching professions are often referred to as *semi-professions* (Etzioni 1969).

When describing semi-professions, Etzioni uses the attribute-list model, identifying the following features: study course shorter than five years, emphasis on the transference of knowledge and not on its application or creation, lower amount of specialized knowledge. Weaker professional autonomy, professional authority often in collision with external social control, the performance of the profession is under extensive supervision, and its social legitimacy rests on poor foundations. The moral code of the profession is obscure and inconsistent, and the profession itself is not very strongly connected to the focus of social communication, and the issues of life and death (Etzioni 1969).

In addition to what is listed above, it is worth noting that in Etzioni's opinion all real professions are male professions; the lower social prestige of semi-professions may be explained by the fact that mostly women work in those occupations. The attributes of typically female occupations move over to semi-professions. They are judged on the basis of traditional gender roles and not on their professional expertise. The original subordination of women has been preserved and transformed into the status of semi-profession, especially in the caring professions, where even the name itself expresses the traditional, assisting and caring female role (Etzioni 1969).

While we accept the idea of „semi-profession”, we need to take into consideration the limits of the process of professionalization. It is partly related to the ways and means of relaying knowledge and expertise during the training, the way these are transferred, and whether they are transferable at all. When analyzing the process of professionalization, Kuczi argues that the work of the teacher is bound to the *personality, and not to the materialized professional skills* (Kuczi 2001). In the work of the teacher it is manifested in the charismatic ability to generate respect and authority, and that type of *charisma* cannot be taught and transferred. Other analysts also came to similar conclusions (Fodor 2001); how is it possible to develop the characteristics of the „good teacher” during teacher education and if it is possible to develop such characteristics, do students receive these during teacher training? Research

findings at the end of the nineties suggest that „laypersons” (adults) and teachers alike expect a system of characteristics of the teachers that are barely transferable in the present structure and methodology of the training (Szabó 1998). The problems in relaying the expected skills and competences challenge the success of professionalization itself, which is a typical phenomenon of deprofessionalization. The large number of students enrolled recently adds to the problem, as large masses reduce the „rarity value” of a degree, further contributing to the loss of the social status of the profession. Deprofessionalization may ultimately lead to proletarianization. An important precondition of proletarianization is (in addition to the new expectations of the clients and high status afforded by „rarity”) the effect of large organizations that diminish the autonomy of the teaching profession, as they tend to treat the representatives of that occupation as employees only (Haug 1973, Kleisz 2002, 2005, Oppenheimer 1973, Toren 1972). Summarize this process, the phenomena of the deprofessionalization means mainly the status decline of the professions, inclusive of the decline of prestige, the low incomes and failing condition of the job.

## **Hypotheses**

H1: Our first hypothesis is connected to the social recruitment of students studying to be teachers. Educational-sociological research in the past decades has recorded considerable alterations in the proportions of the two genders. The number of women has increased significantly in all subjects majors, except science and technological ones. A number of different explanations have been developed to the phenomenon. These include advantages in the secondary schools, changes in the gender roles, new and more favorable approach of the training institutions to female students, and various types of family, cultural and social capital (Fényes 2009, 2010, Fényes & Ceglédi 2010, Fényes & Pusztai 2006, Lannert 2004, Szemerszki 2006).

Related special literature dealing with the social composition of teachers and students studying to be teachers usually registers and discusses their (lower) middle class background (Deák & Nagy 1998, Fényes 2009, Fényes & Pusztai 2006, Lannert 2004, Nagy M. 2001, Róbert 2000).

H2: In the following part of our research we intend to start verifying our assumption that the integration of the students in teacher education is not as good as that of other students. It can be explained by the special course of studies leading to the teaching profession and the dominant values among the students that they bring from their original social background. It may lead to the weakening of their commitment to the training objectives and to their chosen profession. We supposed that the cultural profile of students in teacher education for ISCED 2-3 and ISCED 0-1 levels was different from that of

the majority of other students, and their special needs directed them towards extrainstitutional connection networks (Pusztai 2012). This underintegration also reinforces the tendencies of deprofessionalization.

H3: Our third hypothesis deals with the process of deprofessionalization among students studying to be teachers. We expect that the expectations and preferences of students relating to autonomy, influence, prestige and knowledge out of the attributes of semi-profession will reflect the contradictions, the inconsistent and incongruent situation of the profession as compared to the expectations and preferences of students of other subjects. Our preliminary assumptions are based upon the theories of semi-professions and deprofessionalization as well as on the findings of empirical research projects of the teaching profession (Etzioni 1969, Kleisz 2002, 2005, Nagy K. 2008, 2009, Nagy M. 1994, 2001, Polónyi & Tímár 2006).

### **Students in teacher education for ISCED 2-3 and ISCED 0-1 in Regional Data Bases<sup>4</sup>**

Our research projects in the border higher educational region conducted over the past decade suggest that although this is a cross-border higher educational region, from the aspect of students across the levels of higher education, the institutions constitute an interlinking system in the area. As borders no longer separate people, century-old educational traditions have been revived (Kozma 2010). The regional character is powerfully present in teacher education, as well as in other types of training. It is possible to carry out undergraduate training at a number of institutions, but it is only possible to earn a master's degree and, further, a PhD in teaching in Hungarian at the regional centre, Debrecen. Our analysis is based upon three data bases and we used the empirical findings of the data collection we carried out by circulating inventories among students in postgraduate courses during the three years following the restructuring of tertiary training. We distributed the inventories among the students of Hungarian colleges and universities in the border regions of three countries (Hungary, Romania and the Ukraine). We collected data among postgraduates (studying for a master's degree) in 2010, then among both undergraduate and graduate students in the spring of 2012. In the first year we had 602 respondents, in the second year their number was 1,471. Less than twenty percent of the latter studied for a master's degree. Data collection was done with a *stratified cluster* sampling. In order to make the data thus obtained

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<sup>4</sup> In our analysis we discussed the data bases created as part of the OTKA project entitled „The Effects of Tertiary Education on Regional Transformation” (T-69160), the research project entitled „HERD: Higher Education for Social Cohesion – Cooperative Research and Development in a Cross-border Area” (HURO/0901/253/2.2.2.), supported by the European Regional Development Fund, and the data base of DETEP (the Talent Care Program of the University of Debrecen).

representative of the faculties, a weighting was calculated. The third data base is that of DETEP (the Talent Care Program of the University of Debrecen). The program was launched in 2000 with the purpose of supporting talented students through tutorial assistance, scholarship and other professional means. Before 2009, students were able to enter the program through three steps. First, the faculty recommended the upper twenty percent of the students, according to their study results. At stage two, the students completed a motivation questionnaire and a psychological test. The faculties selected the students for stage three according to the results of the motivational and psychological tests (Balogh & Fónai 2003, Márton et al. 2006, Balogh 2009). 3,183 participated in the tests of stage two, and out of them 304 were studying to be teachers. In our essay we present the results of these 304 students.

### **Characteristics of the Recruitment of Students Studying to be Teachers**

While in both TERD 2010 and HERD 2012 data bases direct questions were asked as to whether the students were studying teacher education for ISCED 2-3 or ISCED 0-1 levels, one of the difficulties posed by DETEP student data base was the *identification* of the students studying to be teachers. The questionnaire did not include a question as to whether the respondent was a student in teacher education or not.<sup>5</sup> It was only possible to conclude it from the major and minor subjects the respondents entered into the questionnaire. The identification of students studying to be teachers was therefore only possible within the narrow framework defined by the variables. With each student we examined whether they were probably students studying to be teachers or not (Table 1).

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<sup>5</sup> In this empirical chapter of our study we rely on our essays written in analogous issues (Fónai et al. 2011).

*Table 1: Distribution of the Students According to Subject Majors<sup>6</sup>*

		<i>Individuals</i>	<i>Percent in the total sample</i>
<b>DETEP</b>	Faculty of Arts, studying to be teachers	200	6.3
	Faculty of Arts, not studying to be teachers	204	6.4
	Faculty of Sciences, studying to be teachers	104	3.3
	Faculty of Sciences, not studying to be teachers	467	14.7
	Other subject majors:	2,218	69.3
<b>TERD</b>	Students studying to be a teacher	122	20.2
	Students not studying to be a teacher	480	79.8
<b>HERD</b>	Students studying to be a teacher	283	19.2
	Students not studying to be a teacher	1,088	74.0
	Students not studying to be a teacher, but planning to	55	3.7

Source: DETEP 2002-2008, N= 3183; TERD 2010, N= 602; HERD 2012, N=1471

We anticipated a large difference between the sexes among students studying to be teachers, expecting more female students in the sample (Table 2). In the DETEP and HERD samples there is a considerable difference between students studying to be teachers and others ( $P < 0,001$ ), whereas in the TERD data base, at which we only asked students studying for the master's degree, the numerical edge of female students was smaller.

<sup>6</sup> Data of TERD and HERD are regional ones. Data from DETEP concern the University of Debrecen.

Table 2: Distribution of Genders among the Students (percent in rows)

		Male students	Female students
<b>DETEP</b>	Faculty of Arts, in teacher education	37.5	62.5
	Faculty of Arts, not in teacher education	39.4	60.6
	Faculty of Sciences, in teacher education	44.7	55.3
	Faculty of Sciences, not in teacher education	34.4	65.6
	Other subject majors	29.3	70.7
	DETEP sample, total	32.1	67.9
<b>TERD</b>	Students in teacher education for ISCED 2-3 and ISCED 0-1 levels	25.6	74.4
	Students not in teacher education	27.2	72.8
<b>HERD</b>	Students in teacher education	20.3	79.7
	Students not in teacher education	33.0	67.0
	Students planning to study in teacher education	32.7	67.3
	HERD sample, total	30.4	69.6

Source: DETEP 2002-2008, N= 3183; TERD 2010, N= 602; HERD 2012, N=1471

Our findings suggest that there is an obvious majority of women among students studying to be teachers. It is also clearly observable that the proportion of women among students in the Talent Care Program (DETEP) and in postgraduate courses is smaller (TERD 2010). The reason is probably the difference in cultural capital (inherited, family and acquired capital) that gradually reduces the disadvantage of the men, and turns it into an advantage by the end of the training courses. This is particularly clear in academic areas, for instance in study circles (Fényes & Pusztai 2006, Fényes 2010). Among students in the HERD sample the proportion of women was somewhat higher than that in the entire Hungarian and Romanian average. It may also be explained by the training profile of the universities involved in the research. Our findings are in accordance with the data provided by international literature, reporting that the teaching profession is becoming increasingly „feminine.”

When examining the *social* and *family background* of students studying to be teachers we expected them to come dominantly from lower middle class and middle class families. Our expectations were verified, as a comparison of the respective backgrounds of students studying to be teachers and other students suggested that a higher number of non-teacher students had a father with an academic degree. Teacher students tend to come from a (lower) middle class family (parents with secondary or vocational school qualification) (Table 3).

Table 3: Highest Qualification of Fathers According to Subject Majors (percent in rows)

		Primary school	School leaving exam		Collegede gree	University degree
			Vocational track	Grammar track		
DETEP	Faculty of Arts, studying to be teachers	8.3	29.3	28.8	16.2	17.3
	Faculty of Arts, not studying to be teachers	13.2	27.5	25.4	16.9	16.9
	Faculty of Sciences, studying to be teachers	10.1	19.0	46.0	7.0	17.0
	Faculty of Sciences, not studying to be teachers	8.4	28.5	32.9	12.2	17.9
	Other subject majors	8.2	28.3	31.6	13.4	18.5
	DETEP sample, total	8.7	28.0	31.7	13.4	18.1
TERD	Students studying to be a teacher	5.1	15.3	56.8	11.0	11.9
	Students not studying to be a teacher	2.2	26.9	41.6	12.4	16.9
HERD	Students studying to be a teacher	6.8	27.5	31.5	7.5	16.6
	Students not studying to be a teacher	4.5	31.7	36.4	12.3	15.1
	Students not studying to be a teacher, but planning to	9.4	20.8	41.5	18.9	9.4
	HERD sample, total	5.1	30.4	37.6	11.6	15.2

Source: DETEP 2002-2008, N= 3183; TERD 2010, N= 602; HERD 2012, N=1471

It has also been noted that a higher proportion of students studying to be teachers come from settlements of lower status and, on the average, an individual has a higher number of siblings. That is, a lot of them come from large families in villages or small towns. Their parents have some sort of a qualification, and their children have some ambition to learn but, because of other conditions in the family and their direct environment, these students often face difficulties worse than the average. Naturally, the findings of cross-sectional surveys are always to be treated with care when such conclusions are put forward, but the results reinforce our original suspicion that there are special regional factors in the recruitment of students for the teaching profession (Jancsák 2012b, Pusztai 2012).

In the HERD data base we also observed *other differences in the recruitment of students* in teacher education for *ISCED 2-3* and *ISCED 0-1 levels*. More than forty percent of students in teacher education for ISCED 0-1 levels have secondary qualification, and in this way they correspond to the regional average. The low proportion of those coming from big cities and the high proportion of students from small towns and villages is conspicuous. Our previous research findings suggested that students studying in teacher education for ISCED 2-3 levels were coming from a background of higher status than the students in the other forms of teacher education (kindergarten

and lower primary school teachers), and that expectation was verified by the data. Approximately one third of students studying for a master's degree are children of fathers with a college or university degree, whereas the respective figure with undergraduates is around one fifth. As for the qualification of the mothers, the differences are even larger. Half of the students in teacher education for ISCED 2-3 levels have a mother with a college or university degree whereas the mothers of the majority of the students in teacher education for ISCED 0-1 levels have a secondary qualification. As far as residence places are concerned, it was shown in a more detailed analysis that the majority of students even in postgraduate courses come from villages, although there is a group who come from big cities. Of future ISCED 0-1 teachers, most students come from villages and small towns (Pusztai 2012).

### **Asymmetric Relational Integration**

When we studied the general and specific higher educational value orientation system of students in teacher education for ISCED 0-1 and 2-3 levels, we pointed out that the students concerned are different from other students more in terms of their cultural background than in terms of social status. An important element of their value system is a traditional way of thinking and religiousness. They bring it from their original community, and further develop it through their new connections during their years in higher education (Pusztai 2012). Recent research carried out among postgraduate students studying to be teachers revealed that commitment to the teaching profession is reinforced by a traditional value system, religiousness and voluntary work in one or more organizations (Jancsák 2012b). As the student society of the region is predominantly postmaterialistic and individualistic, and in that environment students preparing to be kindergarten teachers and teachers may only achieve partial cultural integration and embeddedness (Pusztai 2012).

In the course of analyzing the structure of the network connections of students we observed that students studying in teacher education for ISCED 0-1 and 2-3 levels have an extremely rich system of connections with their teachers; much richer than what can be observed in the case of other students (Pusztai 2012). It is a general phenomenon that the most intensive connections between students and teachers are in the field of professional connections and when the students seek advice about their future, the connections are not restricted to purely professional relationships. Students studying to be teachers enjoy a lot more intensive attention from their teachers than other students. The advantage of the students learning to be teachers is the greatest, in addition to topics of art, public- and other extracurricular issues, in interpersonal attention. This personal attention proved to be the most valuable institutional social capital, as clearly indicated by research projects conducted in recent years (Table 4).

*Table 4: Intergenerational Relations of Students studying in teacher education for ISCED 0-1 and 2-3 levels as compared to the intergenerational institutional connections of students of other majors (percent in columns)*

<b>Relationship with the teachers</b>	<b>Students studying in teacher education for ISCED 0-1</b>	<b>Students NOT studying in teacher education for ISCED 0-1</b>	<b>Students studying in teacher education for ISCED 2-3</b>	<b>Students NOT studying in teacher education for ISCED 2-3</b>
Discussed scientific topics	69.3	50.4	67.1	52.5
Discussed miscellaneous topics	66.5	40.7	70.5	46.9
Discussed topics of art	45.3	13.8	44.3	15.6
Discussed public issues	51.4	29.4	45.6	30.3
Discussed private life	18.1	9.7	15.2	7.8
Discussed future plans	56.4	37.4	59.5	41.6
Received tutorial assistance	21.9	13.1	21.5	14.0
Maintaining contact by e-mail	37.2	27.5	51.3	40.6
Monitoring career	38.4	18.6	50.6	23.6
N	283	1133	79	180

Source: HERD 2012, N=1471

The majority of the researchers attribute a great significance to the intergenerational communication of students, and not solely because of the progress of students in their studies and the transference of knowledge, but also because of their integration into the system of higher education (Tinto 1993, Astin 1993). In the course of personal contacts between teachers and students the bonds between students and institution become stronger, students will be more committed to their study goals, and the likelihood of dropping out or changing institutions diminishes. Students studying to be teachers at a master's level tend to be in a more intensive communication relationship with their teachers than students studying for a master's degree in other subjects. A considerably higher number of teaching major students believe that there are teachers with whom they are able to discuss all kinds of topics than students of other subjects. There is, however, a set of topics in which students and their teachers are in an outstandingly intensive discourse. These are professional topics, and here we use the term „professional” in a broader sense, reaching beyond the specific skills and competences of the students' chosen discipline. Considering the fact that a lot of these students do not have very highly qualified parents, we believe that the communication with their teachers replaces or substitutes for the cultural resources the parental house lacked.

We tend to explain the intensive and close teacher-student relationship observed in students in teacher education for ISCED 0-1 and 2-3 levels with their extraordinarily developed social competences, empathetic character and philanthropic nature. Research findings in the system of intragenerational connections, however, suggest that the relationships of these students within the campus are more asymmetric than those of students of other majors. In terms of maintaining connections and working together with friends, future teachers are less active than the average.

The relative isolation of students in teacher education for the ISCED 2-3 levels will be particularly conspicuous in their reports of their experience of higher education. The interest they show towards their teachers is not reflected in the connections with their peers. Students studying to be teachers relatively rarely find the decisive experience of university friendships. Few of them talk about conversations with their peers about science, books or private life. Similarly, a high number of students learning to be teachers spend their free time in the company of their fellow students. An analysis of the number of the friends of individual students in a group confirms that. The findings of several research projects called the attention to the adverse effects of dual-level training on the connection networks of the students. We believe that the responses of students in which they talk about the dissonances of their intra- and intergenerational relations, are further evidence of the negative effects. When we analyzed the intragenerational relations of students, we did not find students learning to be teachers any better integrated and embedded in the system of their respective institutions than other students. In fact, in terms of spending their free time and discussing scientific issues they even appeared to have a less extensive system of connections than the others. Students studying to be teachers seek the popular pleasures of students' life to a somewhat lesser degree than other students do. Instead, they spend their time learning and they strive to find a job that would mean social progress and elevation for them (Pusztai 2011).

In addition to the functional analysis of friendships, a number of free time activities and participation in voluntary organizations were also involved in the analyses. Our purpose with that was to find out whether centrifugal or centripetal forces influence students in their integration into their own institution. Free time activities with fellow students (chatting, light entertainment, high culture, sports programs, concerts, attending religious events, excursions and community building on the Internet) are considered as centripetal, whereas activities in the company of persons not related to the university are regarded as centrifugal forces. The students in teacher education for ISCED 0-1 and 2-3 levels have been found to be less interested in programs spent with their peers and more interested in high culture and religious events. When we analyzed the direction of the connections, we experienced that outward bound social connections were powerful in all groups concerned, but

the combinations of free time activities and the direction of the connections offered interesting conclusions. Of the activities that students studying in teacher education tend to do with extra-institutional partners, going on excursions, attending religious events and programs of light entertainment dominate. Students of other subjects go on excursions, attend sports programs and events of high culture in the company of friends outside the university. As light entertainment is an important element among students' free time activities, it is noteworthy that students studying in teacher education for the ISCED 0-1 and 2-3 levels are often reluctant to join their fellow students at such occasions. A significant difference was observed between the two groups in terms of the popularity of religious and similar programs.

*Table 5: Internal and external social factors influencing students at different levels of teacher education in their choice of free time activities.<sup>7</sup> A comparison with students of other subjects in 2012 (averages of factor scores)*

Peer activities	Students studying in teacher education for ISCED 0-1	Students NOT studying in teacher education for ISCED 0-1	Students studying in teacher education for ISCED 2-3	Students NOT studying in teacher education for ISCED 2-3
Chatting, conversation	0.04	0.03	-0.04	-0.01
Light entertainment	-0.12	-0.08	-0.22	-0.10
Sports programs	-0.11	-0.16	-0.19	-0.15
High culture	-0.10	-0.18	-0.20	-0.28
Religious events	-0.21	-0.14	-0.27	-0.12
Excursions	-0.21	-0.28	-0.28	-0.32
Community building on the Internet	0.03	0.00	0.03	0.02

Source: HERD 2012, N=1471

In our research in 2010 we noticed that students studying to be teachers at a master's level are more interested in the internal programs of their respective institutions than other postgraduate students are. It is likely that as they are postgraduates, they are already well integrated into the life of their institutions, and their outward bound community links are weaker, and they have fewer unfulfilled ambitions. In 2012, students in teacher education for ISCED 2-3 levels were found to be the most active in voluntary groups again, particularly in cultural and religious organizations. When the centripetal and centrifugal forces were compared, it was found that students in teacher education for ISCED 2-3 levels sought and found a lot more voluntary work outside the campus than students of other subject majors did. It is also noteworthy that

<sup>7</sup> We gave positive and negative index points according to external and internal activities, extent of averages indicate the power of inward or outward bound forces.

postgraduate students studying in teacher education have more unfulfilled ambitions than most other students. Most of them, in a much higher proportion than students of other subject majors, seek but do not find an opportunity to do work in study circles, research groups, to join talent care programs, or to do charity or conservation work.

In terms of relational integration, students studying in teacher education for ISCED 0-1 and 2-3 levels are therefore different from students of other subject majors. Fewer of them are linked to the community of students within their respective institutions. The ones possessing intergenerational connections constitute the majority among them, and it is a general feature of them that they do not very closely belong to the community of students at the campus. Our preliminary hypothesis, that is, that the relational integration of the students concerned is not complete, has thus been confirmed.

### **Anticipative Elements in Connection with the Situation of the Profession**

The expectations of the students about their future have been analyzed both in the frameworks of the DETEP and HERD research programs. Not only the direct results are important, but also a hidden interrelation that we suspect to be behind the anticipative expectations about the future profession and the social integration of the students. Fragmented cultural integration or only partially complete relational integration are the characteristic features of a semi-profession and the signs of deprofessionalization for an analysis of professions. This process of deprofessionalization is likely to be the consequence of the loss of the social status of the occupation. As a result of the processes, the recruitment of the profession is undergoing a change; the social capital of the students is eroding, and social prestige, influence and autonomy are mediocre or low.

Our original hypothesis related to the expectations of the students in connection with their chosen profession was that they would regard the situation of their profession as incongruent. We assumed at the same time that the reaction of the student was going to be „It may have a disadvantageous position, but it has a future.” It may explain the ambivalence and incongruence of the image students have of their profession (Table 6).

Table 6: Teacher education and other students' estimations of their own profession (average on a ten-grade scale)

	<i>DETEP sample</i> (think about themselves)					<i>HERD sample</i> (Students studying in teacher education)	
	Arts teacher	Arts not teacher	Science teacher	Science not teacher	Entire sample	Judgment of own profession	General judgment of teacher profession
Future	6.57	7.37	6.53	7.32	7.29	6.64	4.87
Prestige	5.81	6.80	6.17	6.64	6.81	6.14	4.88
<i>Career chances and opportunities</i>	5.90	6.77	6.28	6.66	6.55	4.86	4.49
Income	5.70	6.14	5.81	6.29	6.47	5.32	4.54
Human reputation	5.96	6.70	5.78	6.27	6.44	5.52	5.04
<i>Interest negotiating ability</i>	5.23	6.14	5.67	5.98	6.25	<b>6.23</b>	5.34
<i>Autonomy</i>	5.26	6.23	5.17	5.45	5.94	<b>6.53</b>	5.02
<i>Influence</i>	4.80	5.44	5.23	5.35	5.76	<b>5.79</b>	5.00
<i>Public role</i>	4.82	5.82	5.02	4.84	5.49	6.03	5.08

Source: DETEP 2002-2008, N=3183, HERD 2012, N=1471

The expectations of students studying in teacher education show that they see the situation of the profession to be disadvantageous from almost all aspects more than the situation of other professions. The incongruence of the image of the profession is general, characteristic of the students of all the teaching subjects, but the results of the entire DETEP sample indicate that it is dominant first and foremost in the case of the professions whose social status is falling and whose situation is incongruent. *The situation of the students learning to be teachers is in this respect incongruent, corresponding to the situation of occupations losing social status, and it verifies our hypothesis about a semi-profession and its consequences to the image students have of their profession.* The differences between the incongruences and the attributes shaping the position of the profession are relatively modest. It means that the students sense a general loss of status that may also be induced by the processes of deprofessionalization, including several decades of continual loss of income, social prestige, influence and autonomy. Students experience all these, so the process of deprofessionalization largely influences the image that students studying to be teachers have of their chosen profession. It is, however, characteristic of the students of other, similar professions as well. In the DETEP sample, for instance, medical students and students of social professions gave similar answers (Fónai 2009b, Fónai 2010, Fónai & Márton 2010, Fónai et al. 2010). In the HERD samples, students of the teaching profession formulated opinions about the social status, future, income situation and social prestige similar to those of students in the talent care program. They were also more pessimistic about the prospects of their profession than students not studying to be teachers. They found the pro-

spects of progress in their career particularly bad for teachers, and they are a lot more pessimistic than students in the DETEP. The differences at the time of the research programs and the further loss of prestige of the teaching profession that has taken place since then may only partially explain the differences. Interestingly, students in the HERD sample view the interest negotiating ability, autonomy, influence and social role of the profession in a more positive way than students of the teaching profession in the DETEP sample. This phenomenon contradicts the generally diminishing possibilities of progress, and may be explained by the fact that these students have a more traditional image (see the high number of students who have a traditional set of values). It suggests that *our hypothesis regarding the future of the students selection process for DETEP has not been justified*, that is, a more successful university career in itself does not bring about the reduction of the ambivalence and incongruences of the image of the profession. The anticipated effects of the profession are more powerful than those of the successful university career.

In the HERD inventory we also asked how students studying to be teachers sensed and observed the image the outside world had of the status of the teaching profession and its specific dimensions. Students believe that the situation is definitely disadvantageous; they graded it as „mediocre” or lower. They do not see virtually any difference between the specific dimensions, that is, students believe that the external image of the status of the profession is consistent. This is probably the result of the long-term process of deprofessionalization.

## Summary

In our research we intended to survey the specific ideas and images that students in the ISCED 0-1 and 2-3 teacher education system have concerning social status, institutional integration and profession. We found that in teacher education women outnumber men, and their overall social status is lower than that of other students. Since their cultural background is considerably different from the background of students pursuing other careers, we had assumed that they were detached from the inter- and intragenerational institutional networks. Our hypothesis has only partially been justified, because students at the different levels of teacher education possess an outstandingly rich network of intergenerational connections, but their need for relationships with peers on campus remain largely unsatisfied. What is more, their needs for memberships in various specific groups and communities are also met only in part, so they position themselves at a distance from their fellow students. As for the macro-social situation of the future students, outside the campus, these days their situation is strongly characterized by the processes of deprofessionalization and the loss of social status. Our findings clearly indicate that our students are fully aware of the position of their chosen profes-

sion. Is it a positive or a negative thing that students are completely familiar with the situation of the profession they intend to pursue? It is obviously positive, as they do not have any illusions; they do not have any false ideas about the reality surrounding them. It has, however, some negative dimensions as well; students do not have any ideals and attractive images of the profession that would support their career orientation in the period of their studies. This is a great challenge for the entire system of teacher education. It is to be noted that the root of the problem consists not in the fact that students have ambivalent and incongruent ideas about the profession, but rather in the situation of the profession itself; in lowering social status and in many ways, in semi-professional characteristics. In other words, the image of the profession in the students' minds cannot be any better than the real situation of the profession itself.

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## SERGIU BĂLȚĂTESCU & KLÁRA KOVÁCS

### SPORT PARTICIPATION AND SUBJECTIVE WELL-BEING AMONG UNIVERSITY STUDENTS IN THE HUNGARIAN- ROMANIAN-UKRAINIAN CROSS-BORDER AREA

#### **Abstract**

*This paper aims to examine the relationship between the sport participation of students and their happiness and satisfaction with life. We start with the assumption drawn from the positive psychology approach that physical activity can function as a protective factor and contribute to students' well-being. The analyses, which are among the first in these countries, were performed using data collected within the Higher Education for Social Cohesion – Cooperative Research and Development in a Cross-border area (HERD) research project (2011-2012). The sample included 2728 students from nine higher education institutions in the cross-border area of Hungary, Romania and Ukraine. According to our findings, males and those from more well-off families report higher frequency of strong physical activities, which supports the gendered sport involvement hypothesis and Bourdieu's theory on sport as class leisure. We also found an association between reports of practicing intense sport activity of at least 45 minutes per day and the subjective well-being of students, even when controlling for socio-demographics. Thus, we are well inclined to affirm that sport can be a protective factor against stress and unhealthy life style for students in this area.*

#### **Introduction**

In the last decades there has been an increased preoccupation for well-being in academic contexts. For the specialists, and, we hope, also for the policy makers, it is becoming clearer that school experience does not only mean a learning process, but also a life experience. Schools and universities, among other factors, contribute to the well-being of young people. We are now, however, more focused on how specific factors of academic experience contribute to the well-being of students. In this part of the paper we will try to find the answer to a more applicable question: whether or not sport contributes to students' subjective well-being, and if so, in what way.

The main shift of the positive psychology approach, developed by Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi (2000), is from the focus on pathological events and dysfunctions in society, to the identification and investigation of positive and protective factors that contribute to the well-being of individuals and communities. They emphasized that autonomy, self-control, optimism, hope,

love, trust, talent, wisdom, creativity, future-oriented philosophy, courage, spirituality, willpower and responsibility for others and ourselves affect individuals' well-being in a positive way. All these may be considered as individual motives, which are characteristic to psychology, while research in the field of sociology of education aims to investigate social factors, mechanisms and phenomena that can be regarded as social protective factors. However, the terms protective and risk factors constitute a basic paradigm in health psychology, while in other fields of social sciences they are less widespread and accepted. Thus, Pikó (2004) called this phenomenon a 'paradigm shift in social sciences'. In sum, in our theoretical model, the positive approach in the sociology of education research means the examination of sport as a protective factor that contributes to the well-being of students in higher education.

This paper aims to examine the relationship between sports and subjective well-being (happiness and satisfaction with life) at universities. Can intense physical activity function as a protective factor and contribute to students' subjective well-being? Proofs of this connection are rather sparse, especially in the case of students. Being a college student implies a specific lifestyle with relatively more free time, leisure and entertainment opportunities and independence from parental monitoring. It has many positive but also some negative sides: students can smoke, consume alcohol and drugs, but they can also be exposed to greater stress in the exam periods than adolescents, and these facts can influence students' subjective well-being. On the other hand, sport can provide better leisure opportunities, and it can also serve as a strategy for coping with stress. Of course, this is not always true: sometimes competitive sports can raise the stress level. Therefore it is relevant to explore the relationships between sports and well-being in the academic setting from a multicultural and multilingual geographical area. The analyses, which are among the first in these countries, were performed using the database of HERD research surveys. The sample was collected from students of higher education institutions from the cross-border area of Hungary, Romania and Ukraine (N=2728).

The paper will proceed as follows. In the first part of our study we will define what we mean by subjective well-being. Then we will make a literature review on the relationship between sport and well-being, analyzing mediators such as healthy behavior and self-esteem. In the last part we will present the results of our research, we will discuss them and draw conclusions.

### **Student well-being, happiness and satisfaction with life: concepts and models**

In this paper we are preoccupied with the effects of sports participation on students. Student well-being is an all-encompassing concept that reflects the whole experience of students. It includes satisfaction with academic life as well as the social-relational aspects of student life (Pusztai et al. 2012). Of the dimensions of student well-being, we will focus on subjective well-being, which

may be defined as the way a person evaluates his or her life. Subjective well-being is the operational mode of the concept of happiness, which has a long history in philosophical thought. The Greeks split this notion into two meanings: one of pleasure derived from experience (*hedone*) and one of action (*eudaimonia*). According to Aristotle, the highest level of happiness is linked with meaningful life and the search for the meaning of life (Kopp & Martos 2011).

The concept of subjective well-being, used in social sciences, comprises two dimensions. First, a cognitive one – satisfaction with life – defined as the way one perceives that his/her life converges with the aspirations, and is closely related to satisfaction in several important domains of life, such as self, family, and work (Campbell et al. 1976). Satisfaction with life is usually measured by simple questions such as „taking all things into consideration, how satisfied are you with your life as a whole?” The second dimension of subjective well-being goes beyond the cognitive manipulations that we do when we are asked how satisfied we are with our lives. It is rather an affective evaluation, also called a hedonic level (Veenhoven 1984), and is measured by questions such as „how happy are you feeling today?”

### **Sport and subjective well-being: a review of literature**

Taking part in a sport activity as a member of a sport community contributes to the social, emotional and other dimensions of well-being. Sport helps to develop physical shape, social competence, locus of control, academic achievement, as well as to accomplish sport goals and assume leadership positions on teams (Greenleaf et al. 2009, Taliaferro et al. 2010). It also teaches skills for success in later life (e. g. social, cooperative, problem-solving skills, exploring a variety of communities, peer roles, etc.) (Gordon & Caltabiano 1996, Serbu 1997). All of these promote healthy choices, pro-social behavior and well-being (Kort-Butler & Hagewen 2011). Thus, sport can be considered as a protective factor for the individual. In the following paragraphs, we intend to present how we can characterize sport as a predictor of health and as a protective factor which contributes to students' well-being.

Fox (1999) emphasized the positive effect of sport on mental well-being. Practicing organized physical activity contributes to the treatment and prevention of mental illnesses and disorders, and increases the level of physical and mental well-being among both the mentally ill and the general population. Besides, it also decreases everyday stress and anxiety, increases self-confidence and has several social benefits, such as the improvement of social relationships (as an element of social capital).

According to the results of a research series about the Hungarian population's health status, quality of life, and their psychological and social determinants (Hungarostudy), sport is the most important health-care behavior at all ages (Kopp 2008).

Sport participants in a group of South African students experienced significantly lower levels of negative effect, somatic and depressive discomfort and also higher levels of positive effect and sense of coherence than non-participants (Malebo et al. 2007). Other research findings about college students' sport-related identities and mental well-being support the claim that sport participation is associated with lower rates of depression. However, the 'jock identity' (which characterizes a person whose only activity is sport, which occupies all his/her thoughts), was associated with a higher risk of suicide attempt (Miller & Hoffman 2009).

Harrison and Narayan (2003) found that students involved in sporting activities have better body images, are less likely to suffer from emotional disorders or to physically or sexually abuse their mates. They also proved that there are fewer suicides among those who do sports regularly.

Numerous studies have proven that the health behavior and lifestyle of youth have a bearing on their health status in later life. Regular exercising as a form of health behavior affects their health status and well-being in adulthood. Young people who do sports are less likely to smoke and more likely to be on a healthy diet. On the contrary, decreasing physical activity is associated with drug use and unsafe sexual encounters. They are more self-confident, have less psychosomatic symptoms and can be better motivated in healthcare programs (Keresztes 2007, Mikulán et al. 2010).

American research results also support the findings that sport positively affects health-conscious behavior. Pate et al. (2000) examined secondary school students and found that male students who did sports ate significantly more vegetables and fruit, smoked less and used less drugs compared to their fellow students who did not do sports. At the same time, female students who did sports consumed more fruit and vegetables and were also less likely to get involved in unsafe sexual relationships.

Young people involved in sport establish friendships more easily, are more content with their bodies, are more future-oriented and disciplined, and are less likely to suffer from depression. Those who do regular physical activities have a better feeling of well-being, higher emotional stability and intellectual performance.

Another line of studies presents evidence regarding the way sport affects the mental/psychological well-being of young adults. Sport and regular physical activity lead to greater body satisfaction which in turns leads to greater self-esteem (Frost & McKelvie 2005), which contributes to the happiness and satisfaction with life of individuals.

Fleche and his workmates (2011) explored the main determinants of subjective well-being in OECD countries by analyzing data of World Value Survey. According to their results, corresponding to previous studies on subjective well-being, not being unemployed, social relationships and health are

particularly important for well-being in most of the countries. Doing sports plays a major role in the last two factors, therefore we can assume that taking part in regular physical activity, especially as a member of a sports team, raises the level of subjective well-being. A survey on a representative sample of 1,000 Romanian high school adolescents indicates that, controlling for age, physical activity is moderately associated with life satisfaction and happiness. The relationship is mediated by self-esteem for boys and by leisure satisfaction for both sexes (Bălățescu 2003). Frost and McKelvie (2005) found that global self-esteem was generally greater for high exercisers among students in elementary school, high school and college. Furthermore, young women who felt dexterous and considered themselves self-determined and assertive were more likely to view their body positively. Feeling strong, physically fit and independent may also motivate girls to stay physically active in adulthood (Greenleaf et al. 2009). Compared with more non-active leisure activities, sport and physical activity were found to be associated with greater subjective well-being at all ages and in many nations (Donovan et al. 2002, Huang & Humphreys 2010, Schnohr et al. 2005, Thrane 1999). As for young adults, Proctor et al. (2009) cites two studies showing that sport activity is positively related to life satisfaction in adolescence (Valois et al. 2004, Vilhjalmsson & Thorlindsson 1992). With US college students, Greenleaf et al. (2009) show that the strong sports activities of college women is correlated with life satisfaction, body image (and implicitly self-esteem) being among the mediators. Serbu (1997) examined male and female college athletes to find the effects of sport participation on later life and job satisfaction. There was no significant difference between male and female athletes in terms of adult job and life satisfaction. Respondents of both genders felt that high school athletic participation highly impacted them. Of the branches of sport, there is evidence that the ones requiring more physical involvement are more strongly associated with subjective well-being in college athletes (Landow 1997).

To summarize, we can state that the positive effect of sport on health could be proven in all three dimensions of health (somatic, psychological, and psychosocial) (Brassai & Pikó 2010, Pikó & Keresztes 2007) and on different dimensions of subjective well-being.

## **Method**

In this study, we are interested in testing the connection between involvement in sports and subjective well-being in university students. We assume that the numerous positive effects of such involvement (physical, psychological and social-relational) add up, conducing to an increase in the subjective well-being of college students. Moreover, they constitute a protective factor against different stressors and the temptations of unhealthy life in the academic settings.

In our study we would like to highlight the relationship between sports involvement and subjective well-being. Are students who do more sport happier and more satisfied with their lives? We expect to find a positive relationship between regular physical activity and subjective well-being, even when we control for the „traditional” variables: age, gender, parents’ educational level, financial status of the family, and so on.

We will analyze this relationship in the multicultural and multilingual geographical area at the border of Hungary, Romania and Ukraine. The sample was collected from students from 9 universities in this area (see the foreword).

Sampling was made by stratified cluster and stepwise methods in order to ensure representativeness. All the selected subjects were bachelor’s and master’s students integrated in regular full-time education. The respondents filled the questionnaires individually during class time, under the supervision of an instructed operator. The distribution of the sample is shown in Table 1.

*Table 1: Characteristics of the respondents by country*

		Romania	Hungary	Ukraine
Year of study (bachelor’s students)	1.	393	416	47
	2.	358	76	0
	3.	288	453	21
	4.	92	108	33
Year of study (master’s students)	1.	88	164	3
	2.	85	78	5
Gender	Male	37.2%	31.8%	28.7%
	Female	62.8%	68.2%	71.3%
The average age by course of study	Bachelor’s	22.0	21.8	20.31
	Master’s	26.5	24.3	22.00
Father’s education in years (average)		12.7	12.7	12.74
Mother’s education in years (average)		12.6	13.2	13.05
Residence when under 14 years of age	Urban	67.1%	71.4%	25.2%
	Rural	32.9%	28.6%	74.8%
Evaluation of one’s family’s financial situation compared to other families in the country	Below average	12.9%	18.3%	10.4%
	Average	64.3%	61.6%	80.2%
	Above average	22.9%	20.2%	9.4%
Students’ marital status	Not married, divorced or other situations	91.7%	98.9%	98.1%
	Married	8.3%	1.1%	1.9%

Source: HERD 2012, N=2728

Data was computed with SPSS® software version 15.0. Where averages and standard errors were computed, the significance of the differences should be interpreted as follows: mean(X) is significantly lower than mean(Y) at 95% probability if  $\text{mean}(X) + 1.96 * \text{std. err.}(\text{mean}(X)) < \text{mean}(Y) + 1.96 * \text{std. err.}(\text{mean}(Y))$ .

## Results

### *Sport activity*

Sport activity was measured mainly by asking respondents to recall how often they did intense sport activity for at least 45 minutes in the last months (outside the compulsory sport classes at the university) (Table 2).

Table 2: *Doing intense sport activity for at least 45 minutes.*

Never	1-2 times per year	1-2 times per month	More often than once a month	1-2 times per week	3 or more times per week
16%	9%	19%	13%	26%	17%

Source: HERD 2012, N=2728

Overall, most of the respondents exercised one or two times per week (26%), followed by those who exercised more often (17%). It is notable that for staying healthy it is recommended to do physical activity at least three times a week. This rate is very low compared to the rates of the youth who do sports regularly in other countries of the European Union: in Netherland, France and England this ratio is above 60%, in Denmark 80%, in Finland and Sweden more than 90% (Perényi 2011). And we should keep in mind that this social group (university and college students) is the one that takes part in physical activity the most because it has the most free time and leisure opportunities compared to young people who work, for example. At the other extreme, about 25% claimed they exercised 1-2 times per year or never. These are at the highest risk of physical or social problems associated with sedentary life.

To compare the levels of intense sport activities, we reduced the data to 3 categories of exercising: yearly (never or 1-2 times per year), monthly (1-2 times per month or more often), and weekly (1-2 times per week or 3 or more times per week) (Table 3).

*Table 3: Frequency of doing intense sport activity for at least 45 minutes by country. Values of adjusted residuals over 1.96 signal a significant difference of the respective cells compared to the others at 95% trust level*

		Practicing intense sport activity at least 45 minutes				Total
			yearly	monthly	weekly	
Country	Hungary (N=1249)	% within country	18.9%	33.9%	47.2%	100%
		Adjusted Residual	-7	1.9	4.3	
	Romania (N=1283)	% within country	30.6%	30.2%	39.2%	100%
		Adjusted Residual	6.3	-1.9	-3.7	
	Ukraine (N=107)	% within country	31.8%	32.7%	35.5%	100%
		Adjusted Residual	1.6	0.1	-1.6	
Total	N=2639	% within country	25.1%	32.1%	42.9%	100%

Source: HERD 2012

Overall, Hungary has the highest level of physical activity, with almost half of the students being involved in this kind of activity on a weekly basis. There are several explanations for this leading position in the region. For one, better university infrastructure in Hungary was supported by higher satisfaction in students with possibilities of doing sport on campus (see Table 4). Other explanations may include better public sport infrastructure in Hungarian cities, and a more developed culture of physical activity at Hungarian universities. This also supports Fábri's earlier results (2002) about sporting habits of youth, namely that the university – offering better possibilities in this case – significantly balances existential differences between students in sports, between those who obviously have better physical activity opportunities, and those who have never done sports before, but at college they have a better chance to do physical activity regularly.

*Table 4: Satisfaction with possibilities of doing sport on campus*

			Very unsatisfied	Unsatisfied	Satisfied	Very satisfied	Don't know	Total
Country	Hungary (N=1237)	% within country	5.1%	16.1%	49.9%	17.1%	11.8%	100%
		Adjusted Residual	-3.3	-0.9	5.1	4.1	-7.3	
	Romania (N=1290)	% within country	8.5%	17.0%	39.9%	11.1%	23.5%	100%
		Adjusted Residual	3.4	0.3	-4.8	-4.5	7.9	
	Ukraine (N=108)	% within country	6.5%	22.2%	41.7%	17.6%	12.0%	100%
		Adjusted Residual	-0.1	1.5	-0.6	1	-1.5	
Total	N=2635	% within country	6.8%	16.8%	44.7%	14.2%	17.5%	100%

Source: HERD 2012

For a more accurate comparison between countries and demographic groups, we treated the variable as a quantitative variable (interval level) with values from 1 (never) to 6 (3 times per week or more) and we computed averages (Table 5).

*Table 5: Average levels and standard errors of frequency of doing intense sport activity for at least 45 minutes by demographic groups and country*

		Romania		Hungary		Ukraine	
		Mean	Std. Err.	Mean	Std. Err.	Mean	Std. Err.
Year of study (bachelor's degree)	1	3.7	0.09	3.9	0.08	3.4	0.22
	2	3.7	0.09	3.8	0.19		
	3	3.4	0.10	3.9	0.08	3.8	0.45
	4	3.8	0.17	4.4	0.14	3.2	0.29
Year of study (master's degree)	1	3.5	0.17	3.8	0.14	4.3	0.33
	2	3.4	0.19	4.1	0.19	3.2	0.92
Gender	male	4	0.08	4.2	0.09	4.3	0.27
	female	3.3	0.06	3.8	0.06	3.1	0.19
Age	<= 21	3.7	0.07	3.9	0.07	3.7	0.19
	22	3.4	0.11	4	0.10	2.1	0.22
	23	3.7	0.14	4	0.11	4.1	0.61
	24+	3.6	0.11	3.9	0.10	3	2.00
Father's years of school	11 years or less	3.5	0.10	3.8	0.08	3.5	0.30
	12-13 years	3.5	0.07	3.9	0.08	3.4	0.25
	14 years or more	3.9	0.10	4.2	0.09	3.5	0.39
Mother's years of school	11 years or less	3.5	0.09	3.8	0.10	3	0.37
	12-13 years	3.5	0.07	3.9	0.07	3.5	0.22
	14 years or more	3.9	0.10	4	0.08	3.7	0.35
Residence when under 14 years of age	urban	3.6	0.06	4	0.06	3.8	0.32
	rural	3.6	0.08	3.8	0.08	3.3	0.19
Financial situation of your family compared to other families in the country	below aver- age	3.5	0.14	3.6	0.11	3.1	0.46
	average	3.5	0.06	3.9	0.06	3.3	0.18
	above aver- age	3.8	0.10	4.2	0.10	4.3	0.53
Married	no	3.7	0.05	3.9	0.05	3.5	0.17
	yes	3	0.17	3.6	0.54	4	2.00
<b>COUNTRY AVERAGES</b>		3.6	0.05	3.9	0.05	3.4	0.16

Source: HERD 2012, N=2728

As Table 5 shows, if we take into account also the standard errors of the means, sport involvement is gendered: males are much more involved – a

finding in line with the theory. Radical and feminist writings claim that sport is still an area where women are oppressed and masculinity is stressed, therefore, male identity and hegemony exclude a lot of women from the world of sports (Hargreaves 1994, Theberge 1981). Less radical writings also report discrimination against women in sport, but they explain it by socialization differences between the genders (see Lüschen 1980). On the other hand, there are no significant variations by level of study, year of study or student's age. Frequency of physical activity is slightly related to the status of the student's family. Respondents with more educated parents and with well-off families have higher levels of sporting activities (the differences being significant at 95% probability level).

This supports Bourdieu's theory (1991) on sport as class leisure. In his opinion, the way people spend their leisure time and, more specifically, to what extent they do sports depends on their position in society. Upper class people have totally different tastes compared to the middle and working class, and this can be explained not only by their different financial background. The habit of the given social group affects mainly the way they spend their leisure time. He implies that leisure and sporting habits are influenced by three factors: free time itself (which is a form of economic capital: higher economic capital is associated with more free time); economic capital, and cultural capital. The ways of spending leisure time and sporting habits depend on their proportion by each class. The consumption habits of the working and the jobless classes are determined by getting their basic necessities. On the contrary, the preferences of the middle class are characterized by trendy goods influenced by the amount of economic capital (financial resources) and cultural capital (the knowledge of fashion and style) (Featherstone 1987).

Our results also support Kovács' (2012) findings about the effects of social factors on the sporting habits of students at the University of Debrecen. It was revealed that significantly more men do sport than women. The financial status of the family and the type of settlement has an effect on whether or not students do any sports. The rate of athletes increases by higher levels of education of parents and it was found a significant difference regarding the willingness to do sports depending on the mothers' education.

### ***Subjective well-being***

Following a common strategy, subjective well-being was computed as a sum of life satisfaction and happiness and varies from 2 to 8. (Crombach's alpha coefficient obtained is rather poor – 0.57). Overall, there are no differences in country averages of subjective well-being, although a study in the same area showed that Hungarian adults reported less satisfaction with life than their Romanian counterpart (Bălț ătescu 2011). It seems that at this young age the

differences are leveled at 75% of the scale, within the interval that Cummins (1995) calls the 'golden standard' (Table 6).

Table 6: Average levels of well-being measured by country

	Romania		Hungary		Ukraine	
	Mean	Std. Err.	Mean	Std. Err.	Mean	Std. Err.
Life satisfaction (1-4 scale)	3.1	.02	3.1	.02	3.0	.07
Happiness (1-4 scale)	3.2	.02	3.1	.02	3.2	.07
Subjective well-being scale (2-8 scale)	6.28	.03	6.24	.03	6.17	.12

Source: HERD 2012, N=2728

### *Relationship between sports participation and subjective well-being*

In Table 7 we computed the average level of subjective well-being by country and categories of the frequency of sport involvement. Overall, subjective well-being increases with each category of doing intense sport activity, those who exercise weekly are happier, while those who do sport yearly have the lowest levels of satisfaction and happiness. This ranking is reproduced exactly in the case of Hungary, while in the case of Romania the positive difference exists only between those who exercise weekly and the two other categories. Differences in the levels of subjective well-being between categories from Ukraine are not statistically significant.

Table 7: Average levels on a 2 to 8-point scale of subjective well-being by country and categories of doing intense sport activity

	Yearly		Monthly		Weekly	
	Mean	Std. Err.	Mean	Std. Err.	Mean	Std. Err.
<b>Romania</b>	6.2	.05	6.2	.05	6.4	.05
<b>Hungary</b>	5.9	.07	6.2	.06	6.4	.05
<b>Ukraine</b>	6.1	.23	6.2	.16	6.1	.21
<b>TOTAL SAMPLE</b>	6.1	.04	6.2	.04	6.4	.03

Source: HERD 2012, N=2728

Next, we are interested in confirming the hypothesis that involvement in sport is associated with higher satisfaction and happiness, even controlling for demographics. We know that material wealth is among the characteristics which have an influence on subjective well-being, but other demographic characteristics may also have an impact. That is why we have to control for these characteristics in order to see the real influence on sport involvement on subjective well-being.

In the following model we introduced in a linear regression the predictors shown in Table 1, with subjective well-being as the dependent variable. As we can see from the beta coefficients displayed in Table 8, there are some socio-

demographics which influence the subjective well-being of students. Thus, being a male or having 24 years of age lowers subjective well-being, while being married or having an average or more-than-average family in terms of financial situation increase subjective well-being. These results (except the gender differences) are in line with other results on subjective well-being of young people (Bălătescu 2009). Nationality, parental years of schooling, or residence at 14 years of age have no influence on the dependent variable.

*Table 8: Affects of social, demographical factors and sport participation on subjective well-being of students (linear regression coefficients and significance level)*

	<b>Beta</b>	<b>Sig.(t)</b>
Hungarian	-.03	.230
Ukrainian	-.02	.349
<u>Gender: male</u>	<u>-.07</u>	<u>.001</u>
Age 22	-.01	.728
Age 23	-.01	.666
<u>Age 24</u>	<u>-.06</u>	<u>.009</u>
Father's years of school 12-13	.05	.060
Father's years of school 14+	.04	.157
Mother's years of school 12-13	-.04	.183
Mother's years of school 14+	.01	.883
You were living in an urban area at 14	.03	.240
<u>The financial situation of your family compared to other families in the country – average</u>	<u>.13</u>	<u>.000</u>
<u>The financial situation of your family compared to other families in the country – above average</u>	<u>.20</u>	<u>.000</u>
<u>Married (vs. other situations)</u>	<u>.06</u>	<u>.005</u>
<u>Doing intense sport activity for at least 45 minutes</u>	<u>.09</u>	<u>.000</u>

Source: HERD 2012, N=2728

What is most important is that the variable we focused on – sporting activity – has an independent influence on subjective well-being ( $\beta=0.09$ ). Thus, we tested our hypothesis, i.e. we found an association between sporting life style and subjective well-being. As a general rule, we shouldn't interpret these correlational results as automatically signifying a certain direction of the causal relationship. Sport contributes to the subjective well-being of the individual. However, it is also true that happier people are more extraverted and open towards other people and experiences. Thus, they are more inclined to take part in sports or any physical activity. The true direction of the causal relationship may be determined only by non-correlational studies.

## **Conclusion**

Examining the frequency of intense sport involvement, we found that males and those from more wealthy families report higher frequency of strong phys-

ical activities, which supports the gendered sport involvement hypothesis and Bourdieu's theory on sport as class leisure. We found a positive relationship between sport activity and subjective well-being. Students who do sports regularly and at a higher proportion are happier and more satisfied with their life. Even when we control for socio-demographics, doing intense sport activity for at least 45 minutes per day is associated with increased subjective well-being.

These facts support the claim that in the case of students at the cross-border area of Hungary, Romania and Ukraine sport functions as a protective factor which contributes to their subjective well-being. Of course our study is only correlational, and we can only speculate on the direction of causal relationship. If indeed, as it is claimed by the reviewed literature, sport conduces to subjective well-being, either directly, by physiological mechanisms, or mediated by variables such as health and self-esteem, we can maintain that sport itself provides resources, feelings, experiences and values which can make students happier.

This result should be taken into consideration by the management of universities who, in a tighter cooperation with the organizers of university sporting life, should stimulate more students to get involved in regular sport activity. Promoting these results can also motivate students to join a regular sport and to use the academic sport infrastructure in order to increase their physical and psychological well-being, a habit that will prove to be very beneficial in their current activities but also in later life.

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**CLAUDIA OȘVAT**

**VOLUNTEERING AND EMPLOYABILITY. A COMPARATIVE STUDY AMONG STUDENTS FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF ORADEA**

***Abstract***

*In accordance with the European trends in youth policies, the education and training of youth for finding employment are focusing more and more on their personal development, on their involvement in civic actions, and on developing their practical skills. The ultimate goal is to prepare them for a competitive labor market. In this context, volunteering assumes an important role, as it gives young people the opportunity to act within an organized structure, under the supervision of professionals, and this allows them to put into practice the theoretical knowledge acquired in school, among other things.*

*The idea underlying this study was, on the one hand, to understand the attitude of students and graduates towards volunteer work, and, on the other hand, the extent to which this activity helped them to find employment or, in case it did not, what they think might have been the obstacles that prevented them from finding employment.*

*The descriptive study consisted of 24 individual, semi-structured interviews with graduates or M.A. students from various academic disciplines within the field of social work. It focused on students and graduates of the Faculty of Social Humanities of the University of Oradea, who were involved in long-term volunteer activities during their studies. While half of the respondents were employed, the other half were not employed when the interviews were conducted. The analysis of the interview results shows that both those who managed to find jobs and those who did not, had a positive attitude towards volunteer work during studies. Most of those who managed to find a workplace claim that it was due to their previous volunteer experience.*

**Introduction – aspects of volunteering and employability**

In 2008, one of the European Commission's concerns was to adopt the European Union's new strategy in the field of youth policies. The starting point was the fact that the proportion of young people within the whole population was decreasing. It is estimated that the 20% that make up the young generation within the entire population will drop to 15% (European Commission 2008). The economic and financial crisis highlights the need to develop human capital. It is obvious that in any developed society long-term investment in the young generation is a priority as it secures the future of that society. In addition, investing in the social capital may have a major impact on economic

growth and development, on life satisfaction and on social cohesion (Barna 2011). Volunteering and establishing associations are key elements of such an approach (Voicu 2010). If we look at the economic aspects, statistics show that, at a global level, the nonprofit sector's contribution to GDP is 5% (European Volunteer Center 2009).

As might be expected, the new strategy focuses on fields such as education, employment, creativity and entrepreneurship, social inclusion, health and sport, civic engagement and volunteering. Survey data (European Commission 2008) show that these are the fields young people are most concerned about. Young people should also be offered the chances to benefit from opportunities such as civic engagement, volunteer work, as well as creative activities and entrepreneurship, etc. Thus, the European Commission, by way of \*the new EU strategy concerning youth, suggests a series of solutions that include creating new opportunities for young people in the fields of education and employment; improving their access to, and full participation in, the life of society, and building solidarity between them and the society at large.

As it can be seen from those mentioned above, the focus is placed on a better integration of young people into society, on fostering access to the labor market by making them feel more responsible, which also assumes their active involvement in the lives of the communities they live in. Education and the creation of more opportunities for young people in the fields of education and employment play an extremely important role in this context, and these objectives can be achieved by improving their access to, and full participation in, the life of society. A form of active participation is volunteering, which is an activity both high-school and university students are interested in.

According to the Universal Declaration on Volunteering (2001), volunteering is a fundamental building block of civil society.

Volunteering is considered a long-term investment for communities, as well as a way of responding to current local problems and of sustaining initiatives and solutions. It is estimated that in Europe more than 100 million people are involved in volunteer activities (European Volunteer Center 2009). In addition, volunteering is seen as a type of non-formal education that helps develop new abilities and may increase the chances of finding new employment. Some studies even show that  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the employers prefer to hire applicants with volunteer experience (McBain & Jones 2005, qtd. in European Volunteer Center 2009).

In the following paragraphs I will analyze the extent to which volunteering is the primary bridge between studying, finding employment, and making young people feel responsible for active involvement in the lives of the communities in which they live. Studies have shown us that currently the reasons for participating in volunteer activities involve career development, personal

development, and gaining work experience (Perpek 2012, Czike & Kuti 2006, qtd. in Fényes & Pusztai 2012).

A good example is England, where in recent years, student volunteering aroused the interest of decision makers and of practitioners from the academic world. As a result of that, the government's strategy (Prime Minister's Strategy Unit 2007) claimed that universities should give credits for volunteer activities (Holdsworth & Quinn 2010). Young people's role is considered very important here and the focus is placed on empowering them to participate in the communities' lives. On the one hand, volunteering encourages students to get involved and to develop „a feeling of self-responsibility and self-confidence”, and, on the other hand, it is seen as „a form of moral engagement, which develops in young people a feeling of duty and responsibility for others” (Holdsworth & Quinn 2010: 114).

There is a similar situation in other countries too, e.g. Romania, Poland, etc. In Romania, for instance, in the curriculum of some academic disciplines there are courses that promote volunteering. A common problem in all of these countries is that earning a higher education degree is not enough for finding employment; furthermore, the skills acquired while studying do not provide enough work experience (Holdsworth & Quinn 2010, Moskwiak 2004).

Thus, one of the major challenges faced by higher education is connecting the basic theoretical knowledge acquired while studying with the practical knowledge required for the potential workplaces (Oşvat et al. 2010: 363). The idea that emerges here is that it is of utmost importance to gradually complement the basic training received in school with training for employment. This must occur both in the specific sense, which means that professional and occupational training prepares students for employment and in a more general sense, which means that a high number of students is justified by the degree to which jobs available on the labor market are taken (Grubb & Badway 1998, qtd. in Oşvat et al. 2010: 363). This can be achieved by student placement programs and completed by facilitating students' access to volunteer activities within relevant institutions. The education received at university is generally considered an important factor in finding good employment (Finaly & Flanagan 2009: 1).

In Romania, volunteering is defined by Law on Volunteering (no. 339/2006) (Art. 2) as „the public interest activity performed on one's own initiative by any natural person, for the benefit of others, without receiving any payment”. Volunteering is also defined as „an activity performed on one's own initiative without external constraints, formalized within an organization, which does not have direct or immediate material benefit for those who perform it, but is directed towards others or the community” (Voicu 2010: 94). In Romanian technical literature there are few studies that refer to volunteerism done by students. This subject is only treated generally with the analyses

capturing global aspects (e.g. data on the number of volunteers by region, the type of volunteering and volunteer groups) or specific modules (presenting initiatives or examples of good practice).

Since we find forms of organization similar to those existing in other European countries (national, regional and local centers), there is a legal framework and there is interest in this field. Studies show (Lambriu & Vameșu 2010: 87-88) that the rate of volunteering is increasing in Romania, but it still falls behind that of other European Union countries, where 3 out of 10 people are volunteers and 80% of the population believe that involvement in volunteer activities is extremely important for democracy. This might be explained by prejudices rooted in the communist era, when volunteer work was compulsory. It is worth mentioning the aspect which shows a shift in the mentality of young people, who see volunteer activities as an „investment in their own personalities”. Studies point out that the profile of the Romanian volunteer is similar to that of the Euro-American area: „richer, better educated, more sociable, and younger” (Voicu 2010: 110).

In Romania, 90% of the NGOs at the national level claim that they involve volunteers in their activities. 63.3% of the volunteers choose the organization they volunteer for, and it is also possible to recruit volunteers through: „advertisements placed in schools, universities, companies, public institutions (44.1%), advertising in mass media (38.4%), and in volunteer centers and at volunteer fairs (only 9.2% and 6.3% respectively). Assessing the overall recruitment process in 2009, NGO executives claimed that it went without any particular problems (17.7%) or fairly well (38.4%), while 7.2% said that it was very difficult” (Lambriu & Vameșu 2010: 87-88).

As previously mentioned, volunteering in Romania, takes place mainly in non-governmental organizations (see Lambriu & Vameșu 2010: 87-88). Also, we have noticed that it can be found among young people. As for the engagement of students in this type of activity, we expect the conducted research to confirm, on the one hand, the fact that volunteer activities take place especially in non-governmental organizations, and on the other hand, the importance of volunteering conducted during studies in professional development and in finding a job, according to those included in the analysis. It must be specified in this context that the subjects of this study were graduates of social assistance specialization. Their preparatory work includes many hours of practice in which they are shaped by direct work with certain categories of beneficiaries of social services. This may cause distortion of the results, partly because by doing practice work they get to know better the institutions that accept and host volunteer activities, and partly due to the specificity of their work, which requires professional support to individuals in need.

## **Study on the relevance of volunteering among the students of the University of Oradea**

The aim of the study was to highlight the educational and occupational benefits provided by students' involvement in volunteer activities during their study years. The study focused on the following aspects: the type of institutions that involve students as volunteers in their activities; the activities performed by the students who volunteer and their responsibilities within the host institutions; the duration of students' involvement in volunteer activities; the subjects' opinions about the extent to which volunteering contributed to finding employment after completing their studies.

The study is a descriptive one. The first part deals with students/graduates who did volunteer work and managed to find employment after completing their studies, and the second part deals with students/graduates who did volunteer work but could not find employment.

The analysis included students and graduates of master's programs licensed in social work, who maintained contact with the department and about whom we had data and knew that they conducted volunteering activities during their student years, and for whom we acted as practice activity coordinator. Since respondents were selected taking into account only the features mentioned above, we expect the results of the analysis to capture especially positive aspects of the subject of study (given that they were not randomly selected of all students and graduates who had conducted volunteering activities during their studies, reported at a certain period).

### **Method**

The study was conducted in June-July 2012 and it consisted of individual, semi-structured interviews with 24 graduates. The method of individual, semi-structured interview was chosen because it offers the possibility of obtaining information that is relevant to the topic studied, allowing the data to be collected and processed more easily, and the interviews to be focused. The basis for the interpretation of the study results was thematic analysis.

### **Subjects' demographic data**

The great majority of those included in the study were females (23 people out of 24), the average age was 24 years, their level of education: B.A. and M.A. degrees, some still doing their M.A. studies, in the last 2 years in various sub-disciplines from the field of social work within the Faculty of Social Humanities of the University of Oradea, graduated in 2010 and 2011.

Twenty-four individual, semi-structured interviews were conducted with graduates/M.A. students from the Faculty of Social Humanities, who worked

as volunteers during their university study years at various institutions in the county, and whose activity was known to the professors and their fellow students. Data collection was done within the framework of personal conversations, the information being written down by the interviewer, with the interviewee's consent. The approximate time spent on an interview was about 20 minutes. It should be mentioned that 12 of the respondents had been hired by institutions from the social field, most of them soon after completing their studies. These people made up the first group. The second group consisted of the other 12 people, all of them without employment. The two groups were formed in this way in order to follow the impact of volunteer work on finding employment.

## **Interview analysis and the results for the first group**

### ***Context of volunteering***

At the time of the interviews, the 12 people included in the study who were employed were working for the following institutions from Bihor county: The National Organization of Disabled People from Romania, PAKIV Association Romania, Ruhama Foundation, Socio-Medical Centre Popești, St. Nicholas Charitatis Association, SOS Autism Bihor Association, People to People Foundation, Caritas Eparhial Oradea Association, Association of Mentally Disabled People Bihor, Caritas Catolica Association Marghita, and the Greek Catholic Diocese of Oradea.

The subjects had been working for periods varying from 2 months to 2 years: 4 out of them under 1 year, 4 for 1 year, and the remaining 4 for 2 years. The majority of the subjects were hired as social workers (8 people), the others as counselor for information and administrative activities, careers officer, education instructor, youth department official.

The time period between completing their studies and finding employment varied between 1 month and 1 year after graduation. Thus, 7 respondents were hired approximately one to two months after completing their studies, 3 within four to five months, and 2 within approximately one year. The majority (8 people) had done volunteer work in the institutions that hired them, the other 4 had volunteered in other institutions.

The duration of volunteering varied between 1 and 3 years. Thus, most of the subjects volunteered for 1 year (5 people), 3 people for a period of 2 years, and 4 people for a period of 3 years. The main host institutions were: Hospice Emanuel Foundation Oradea, The Social Community Administration of Oradea, Romanian Foundation for Children, Community and Family, Ruhama Foundation, Caritas Catolica Oradea Association, Romanian Red Cross, SOS Autism Bihor Association, St. Nicholas Charitatis Association, AIESEC, Greek Catholic Seminary, Association of Mentally Disabled People

Bihor, Caritas Catolica Association Marghita, and Caritas Eparhial Oradea Association. It should be mentioned that some of the subjects did volunteer work at several institutions at the same time.

### ***Content of volunteering***

Moral and social support to people suffering from cancer in terminal stage, organizing various events for disabled people/promoting various events, home energy assistance, socializing activities, educational activities, facilitating the access of Roma children to education, compiling databases of the beneficiaries, community development, fundraising, administrative activities, field-work, conducting therapy programs, home care assistance, and occupational therapy.

Regarding the responsibilities students had while doing volunteer work, those most frequently mentioned were: administrative activities (printing documents, recording beneficiaries in the databases, assistance with filling in documents, etc.), maintaining relations with beneficiaries, taking part in organizing events/actual participation in them, assisting children with their homework, visits to the beneficiaries' homes, providing information, monitoring/evaluating activities, and animating groups.

### ***Perceived benefits of volunteering***

Regarding the skills/attitudes developed during their volunteer services, the subjects mentioned the following ones: empathy, active listening, improved communication, assertiveness, cooperating with the members of a team, building relationships based on trust with the beneficiaries, responsibility, scheduling tasks/prioritizing them, conscientiousness, perseverance, team spirit, field work in a social environment, solidarity, and devotion, etc.

When asked to assess the extent to which their volunteer work helped them in finding employment, the respondents considered their volunteer experience very positive and most of them gave the maximum points for this question. This means that volunteering helped them with getting employed, as they had acquired knowledge and skills that proved useful for their future jobs.

*„The voluntary work I did helped me transpose the theoretical knowledge into practice and to become familiar with the issues various categories of beneficiaries were facing.”* (Social worker, 24 years, female)

There is one relevant aspect. Among motivations, the subjects also mentioned that volunteering helped them become visible, that they learned lots of things from the activities they took part in, but the answers also showed that they did not learn that much regarding their specializations.

All subjects of the study said that during their job interviews they were asked about their volunteer experience. They also claimed that volunteering made up for their lack of experience in their fields.

*„As far as I am concerned, at the job interview, volunteering made up for my lack of experience as a specialist in my field.”* (Social worker, 27 years, male)

When asked what volunteer experience helped them most at their workplaces, the subjects answered: the abilities developed (working in a team, communication abilities, conflict management abilities, active listening abilities, working with beneficiaries), involvement in administrative activities, the knowledge of how to work with cases, the network of experts established (and becoming familiar with the way social systems function and are organized).

## **Interview analysis and results for the second group**

### ***Context of volunteering***

The 12 subjects who did not succeed in finding employment had volunteered in the following institutions from Bihor county during their studies: The Social Community Administration from Oradea, Association of the Physically Disabled People, The National Organization of Disabled People from Romania, Ruhama Foundation, Socio-Medical Centre Popești, SOS Autism Bihor Association, The Multiple Sclerosis Society in Romania, People to People Foundation, Association of Mentally Disabled People Bihor, Caritas Catolica Oradea Association, Romanian Foundation for Children, Community and Family.

Just like their fellows from the first group, the duration of the volunteer services covered the same interval – 1 to 3 years. Half of them volunteered between six months and 1 year (6 people), 5 people for a period of 2 years and one person for a period of 3 years.

### ***Content of volunteering***

As far as the activities carried out while volunteering are concerned, the following were mentioned the most often: administrative activities (secretarial activities: taking documents, filing them, etc.), socializing and educational activities, assistance with organizing various events and participation in them, fundraising, filling in case evaluation/reevaluation forms, and occupational therapy.

When asked about the responsibilities they had while volunteering, the subjects mentioned the following ones: carrying out administrative activities, developing and maintaining relations with the beneficiaries of the services, taking part in organizing events/ actual participation in them, assisting children from disadvantaged families with their homework, visits to the beneficiaries' homes, and providing information.

### ***Perceived benefits of volunteering***

Regarding the skills/attitudes developed during their volunteer services, the subjects mentioned the following ones: improving communication abilities,

abilities of working in multidisciplinary teams, organizational competences, empathy, responsibility, and solidarity, etc.

To the question on the importance of volunteering in finding employment, most of them gave positive answers, pointing out that it is one of the conditions needed for personal/professional development, as well as an important argument at a job interview.

Among the most important obstacles to finding employment in the given context, the subjects mentioned the following ones: the current economic context, which led to a hiring freeze in the state sector, and not only there; fierce competition for vacancies announced by NGOs, coupled with the difficulty of practical tests (two subjects mentioned that they did volunteer work in institutions of a certain type and did not manage to obtain the results that would have enabled them to be hired in institutions with other fields of activity); problems with promoting their own person at job interviews, problems with writing CVs, letters of motivation, and problems with exploiting all the resources they possess in order to promote themselves.

The study showed that doing volunteer work in the field they were preparing for while studying was considered by the subjects as being very important, both for their personal/professional development and as a prerequisite for finding employment. Both those who managed to find employment and those who did not pointed out the benefits of getting involved in volunteer activities. These benefits consisted of developing specific abilities needed to work in their fields, joining professional networks, learning about how the system works, as well as about the practical work done by professionals in institutions. Motivation for participating in this study conducted during the students' study years, was partly attributed to altruism, and partly done for their personal development and for gaining work experience as revealed in the responses recorded. These latter issues were mentioned as benefits of volunteering by the participants of this study.

In terms of the results obtained in the two groups analyzed, we notice a difference concerning the interval in which students were volunteering, namely, that the respondents that were able to obtain a job had been involved in volunteering activities for a longer period of time. In the opinion of the representatives of both groups, they were involved in similar activities in the hosting institutions.

Also, the profile of the host institutions was similar. Regarding their responsibilities while volunteering, respondents in the first group reported that they had more responsibilities, both individually and overall. Respondents in both groups said that volunteering had helped in the creation and development of their skills, and they believed that this type of activity could prove important in finding a job.

## **Conclusion**

According to an EU report from 2009, the unemployment rate among young people in the countries of the European Union was below 16% for the 15-24 age category, while for the 25-74 age category it was 7%, the figures showing that rates decrease when the level of education increases (EU Youth Report 2009: 32). Thus, young people face increasing difficulties in finding employment and the chances of them being employed in the field they had prepared for are getting worse.

In a labor market characterized by increasing dynamics, within the existing economic conditions, where fierce competition is the rule, the requirements set up by employers are more and more diverse and specific. Under such circumstances, the extra-professional activities, such as involvement in the life of communities (e.g. volunteering), or social activism, can become important criteria for choosing between job applicants.

Transition from school to employment has seen important changes in recent years, the trend being towards lower employability among young people, which has led to an increase in the average years of schooling (Layte 2007). Thus, in order to become more competitive in the labor market, more and more young people complement their education with extracurricular activities, which make a vital contribution to their socio-professional development.

As it can be seen from the results of this study, students/graduates from the social-humanities field consider volunteer work a high priority. They appreciate the benefits of volunteering for their socio-professional development and for finding employment, all subjects of the study pointing out that volunteer activities complete the theoretical knowledge acquired in school.

An important aspect revealed by the analysis of the interviews is the fact that institutions hosting volunteers are predominantly NGOs (there was only one exception to this rule, namely, The Social Community Administration from Oradea). This aspect was also recorded in a study conducted by The Foundation for the Development of Civil Society, to which reference was made earlier, where it is shown that „90%” of the Romanian NGOs work with volunteers. Furthermore, the second region after Bucharest with a high number of volunteers in NGOs is „the region of Transylvania-Banat-Crișana-Maramureș” (Lambriu & Vameșu 2010: 87-88).

The results of the study give an overall picture of the relevance of doing volunteer activities in the case of students/graduates, both in respect of their personal/professional development and the contribution of these activities to finding employment. The subjects of the study believe that volunteer experience is one of the factors taken into consideration by employers. In this respect, other research analyzing the answers of employers should be conducted in order to understand the impact volunteering has upon employers. At the

same time, this study should be extended to a representative sample, by doing quantitative research so that the results obtained can be generalized for the entire university.

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## VERONIKA BOCSI & HAJNALKA FÉNYES

### VALUES AND THE MOTIVATIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION STUDENTS' VOLUNTEERING IN A BORDERLAND CENTRAL EASTERN EUROPEAN REGION

#### **Abstract**

*The existence and extent of volunteer work is an important indication of social integration and cohesion, and it also expresses a positive relationship with the broader social communities. The examination of students studying in higher education may be especially significant in our region, as on the one hand the students fulfill the function of the intellectuals setting an example, and on the other hand the socio-demographic indicators of the region may make this form of activity especially valid.*

*In our paper we examine the value preferences and the motivations of students' volunteering. Although much research deal with volunteering, a relatively a small amount of studies examine the volunteering of higher education students. We suppose – based on the literature – that the effect of values on volunteering (which are related to the motivations of volunteering of students) are more pronounced than the effect of socio-demographic variables. Our results show that the „hedonistic – intellectual” and „conservative” factors of value preferences have increased the frequency of volunteering. Our further result is that the „hedonistic – intellectual” factor is positively related to the new and mixed type of volunteering, the „pacifist – micro – community” factor to the traditional and mixed type and the „romantic” factor to the mixed type. Further, our logistic regression model shows, that religiosity, especially church related religiosity and the „hedonistic – intellectual” factor has increased the chance of volunteering, but the socio-demographic variables have only a small effect on it.*

#### **Introduction**

An examination of higher education students' volunteering is fairly significant because one of the most important measurements of higher education is how effectively the students find jobs after the training. Students' volunteering helps in this process, especially the new type of volunteering (see later on the details) (Oşvath 2012). In the special literature there are only few papers which deal with higher education students' volunteering. In Hungary, there are studies about volunteering of the whole Hungarian population (e.g. Bartal 2010, Czike & Bartal 2005, Czike & Kuti 2006, Perpék 2012), and the voluntary activities of the young generation (Szabó & Marián 2010), but they do not focus on the volunteering of higher education students. The study of Handy et al. (2010) deals with the new type (résumé building) of volunteering

of higher education students, but their cross-cultural examination does not examine the tendencies in Central and Eastern Europe. The macro level effects on volunteering and the institutional background of volunteering are examined in several papers (e.g. Curtis et al. 2001, Inglehart 2003, Salamon & Anheier 1992, Salamon & Sokolowski 2003, Salamon et al. 1999, Voicu & Voicu 2003), but now we will focus on only the micro level effects on volunteering, especially on the effect of values, and the motivational basis of students' volunteering.

In the present paper, our goal is to examine volunteering of higher education students, specifically concentrating on how values and motivations influence volunteering. First, we created three clusters from categories of motives of volunteering (traditional motives, modern motives and mixed motives), and we made four factors from the 16 value preference variables. Then two variance analyses were carried out, in which we compared the factor score averages (of value preferences) of volunteers and non-volunteers, and of traditional, mixed and modern volunteering types. Finally we used a logistic regression model to examine the micro level effects on the volunteering of students. We have also examined the effects of demographic variables, the social background variables of students, and furthermore the effects of religiosity and value preferences.

### **Volunteering and the new type of volunteering**

When defining volunteering, four main criteria are differentiated: (1) it is not obligatory, (2) it is done for the benefit of others (for other individuals, for institutions or for the society as a whole), (3) it is not a paid activity and (4) it is usually done in an organizational framework (Bartal 2010, Cnaan & Amroffell 1994, Dekker & Halman 2003a, Handy et al. 2010, Meijs et al. 2003, Voicu & Voicu 2003, Wilson 2000,).

We can differentiate between several micro-level theories which explain volunteering. (1) Rational choice and human capital theory: larger material capital (e.g. the larger income), and larger human capital (e.g. higher education) increase the probability of volunteering. Labor market activity can increase volunteering, due to the larger social integration, but it can also decrease volunteering by decreasing leisure time, so the inactive persons (e.g. pensioners and homemakers) are volunteering frequently, as well (Wilson 2000). (2) Social capital theory (strong and weak ties): larger social capital increases the probability of volunteering, but volunteering also enlarges social capital (Wilson 2000). (3) Demographic differences: age, gender and ethnicity influence volunteering as well (Wilson 2000). (4) The effect of religiosity: religiosity enlarges the probability of volunteering, especially churchgoing (it is the participation in religious communities that is important and not the personal religious practice or the faith) (Fényes & Pusztai 2012b, Voicu & Voicu

2003). (5) The effect of values: preferring altruism, solidarity, reciprocity, equity and being helpful increase volunteering, but among the young generation the motivations of volunteering are changing (especially the motivations of the new type of volunteering, see later on) (Dekker & Halman 2003a).

Bartal (2010) has pointed out that in Hungary volunteers are usually males, middle aged (from 30 to 50) people with secondary or tertiary-level education, with more income, religious people, people living in villages or in the capital. Among higher education students in 12 countries, wealthier students, not studying at business majors, having „compulsory” voluntary work activity at secondary schools and students with non-materialistic values are more likely to do voluntary activities (Handy et al. 2010).

Distinctions can be made between traditional and modern motivations of volunteering. The first are based on altruistic values (it is good to help others), and on the importance of social interactions and community, the second type of motivations include career development, personal growth, useful leisure activity, work experience and professional improvement (Czike & Kuti 2006, Perpék 2012).

The motivations of volunteering among the young generation can be mostly instrumental (but not necessary egoistic), such as making friends, meeting people with similar interest, spending leisure time, learning and practicing sports and cultural activities, gaining information, developing and practicing skills, getting a job more easily, and enlarging human capital. The other type of motivation is mostly altruistic, such as being useful for the society, doing something for others, protection of his/her own or others' rights, protecting interests of a special group. However, there are students with mixed (instrumental and altruistic) motivations as well (Stefanescu & Osvat 2011).

Concerning higher education students, Handy et al. (2010) differentiated between the career-related résumé building motivation<sup>1</sup>, the altruistic value-based motivations, and the social and ego-defensive motivation (friends or other people influenced them to be a volunteer). Based on their results in 12 countries, altruistic values were important for the career oriented volunteers, as well, so the motivations are rather mixed (e.g., helping others were important for both career building and traditional volunteers).

In Hungary the motivations for volunteering among the young generation were those such as: belonging to a community, a challenge, professional development, spending leisure-time in a useful way and making new friends, so the motivations are more or less modern, but these results are valid among the whole 16-29 year old population (Szabó & Marián 2010).

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<sup>1</sup> The career building motivation is not necessarily negative (not necessary motivated by egoism); rather, it is a sign for employers that somebody is career-conscious, has leadership abilities, more self-confident, and has skills in critical thinking and conflict resolution (Handy et al. 2010).

The new type of volunteering is strongly related to the modern motivations of volunteering. It is usually goal-oriented, entailing more freedom and autonomy. It is a short-time activity and it takes place in a flexible organizational framework. „Revolving door volunteering” is also popular among the young generation. Young people want to test themselves. They do several short-term volunteer activities to find out which activity they are best suited for (Hustinx 2001).

Among the new types of volunteering done by higher education students, we can differentiate between résumé building volunteering (with instrumental motives), leisure time volunteering and postmodern volunteering (the participation gives pleasure, it is good to be together with others, it gives an identity, e.g., to participate in green or peace movements).

One of the characteristic features of the new type of volunteering (especially the career-related or résumé building volunteering) is the conversion of various capitals. By means of voluntary activities, the young generation converts the obtained cultural and social capital into material capital later on, in the form of higher wages and better jobs. In those countries (e.g. Canada, US), where volunteering represents a strong positive signal for the employers, when young people are seeking jobs, they are more inclined to volunteer (Handy et al. 2010).

### **Volunteering and values**

If the phenomenon of volunteering is approached from the direction of value examinations we can see that the related forms of behavior and attitudes will cover a certain segment of preferences. However, the impact of values on volunteering is not unambiguous – similar to the case of any other element of human behavior, where no completely unambiguous linear cause and effect relationship can be presumed between values and volunteering. Wilson (2000) presumes a slight connection between the two spheres and emphasizes that the values behind voluntary work are not unified. At the same time, the research of values in certain cases might bring us closer to understanding the motivation behind volunteering, but cannot unambiguously be linked to the frequency of the voluntary activity, for instance (see Bartal 2010, Dekker & Halman, 2003 Wilson 2000).

Certain elements of the measuring instruments of value surveys fit nicely with the drives and forms of expression of pro-social behavior. In this way, thinking patterns and gaining power by participating in activities are becoming conceivable. On the one hand, the position of pro-social values established in the system of preferences can be determined, and its positioning in the society's mentality will be suitable for modeling. If we go through the items of Rokeach's (1973) Value Survey both among terminal and instrumental values, we can find elements relevant from the point of view of traditional

volunteering: the items of helpfulness and equality are clearly ranked here for instance. Rokeach, however, thought that the survey provides results that can be used in the case of the countries of western civilization. From among Schwartz's (1992) universal human value types, the sphere of benevolence is inserted in his two-dimensional model of values between tradition and universalism this concept, and can be defined as the counter-pole of hedonism and achievement. In Morris's life-course examination (Morris 1956), volunteering is mostly related to the Christian type, whose short summary is as follows: being kind and friendly to other people. Values related to communal embeddedness and social conventions fit perfectly with characteristic features of pro-social behavior.<sup>2</sup> Characteristics of the modern type of volunteering are probably more difficult to grasp with the help of the items of value tests: their elements in Schwartz's typology point towards the directions of achievement and efficiency, while in the case of Rokeach's Value Test, they can be described by means of practical-materialistic values (ambition, social recognition, capability). Further characteristics of this type of volunteering, like for instance the conscious establishment of ties and their pragmatic use, are much more difficult to cover with the set of questions most frequently used in value tests.

We do not wish to be involved in the issue and debate of defining values on this occasion, but in connection with clarifying the concept, we investigate certain characteristics that may be linked to the phenomenon of volunteering and must be emphasized. Csányi (1994) writes about sociality as a biologically determined characteristic, which is manifested at a rather high level, as people share their food and accommodation with other people even if their deed has negative effects on them as well. In Csányi's interpretation, the system of rules also covers the dimension of sociality, establishing the idea of belonging to a group and hereby securing the survival of the groups in the long run. Summarizing the standpoint of evolutionary psychology, Bereczkei (2009) claims that selflessness in general does not exist towards the direction of people, while the motivations for performing helping deeds can be different according to whether they are performed towards the direction of relatives, friends or strangers. According to the author, unreturned altruism towards strangers develops parallel with modernization and will be returned for the individuals in the long run as it improves their reputation and later provides them with further advantages.

According to Schwartz (1992) values are concepts or beliefs, which refer to the desirable end-state of existence or to desirable behavior and guide the selection and evaluation of behaviors and events. If a more or less connected set of values is presumed behind pro-social behavior, the embeddedness of

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<sup>2</sup> Morris (1956) used an international sample in which the respondents were university students. The subsamples included Chinese, Japanese, Norwegian, Canadian, New Zealand, etc.

volunteering in collective preferences must also be accepted, which is manifested both at the level of the community and the individual in certain contexts of behavior considered to be ideal. But actions cannot be traced back to merely following the norms – it is enough if we consider Weber's (1987) value-rational action type.<sup>3</sup> Values, however, have collective roots in every case and forms of behavior crystallized in Bourdieu's (1978) theory of „habitus” can also be described with communal characteristics. The role of personality traits in the background of the actions is beyond dispute as well, but Bereczkei (2009) emphasizes that environmental factors also play a role in the formation of personality characters.<sup>4</sup>

Drives of the individual actions are also moved by elements of value preferences that are accepted and highly positioned by social groups, religions, cultures and subcultures and imbued with morality. Ossowska (1973), citing Kluckhohn, writes that every moral norm must be functional otherwise they would cease to exist. The statement that Csepli (2005) stresses in relation to values is that their functions are instruments of the social strata and group integration is especially true of preferences connected to volunteering. On the one hand, voluntary work integrates the individual carrying out the work into an organization or group, possibly strengthening his status or function as a status symbol if the voluntary activity is done in public. On the other hand, it may also shift the integration of the persons on the other end of the deed towards a positive direction.

From the viewpoint of volunteering the axis of collectivism and individualism is considered to be a favored dimension of values – pro-social actions clearly gravitate towards the previous end of the scale. Triandis (1990) makes a distinction between individualist and collectivist cultures: a characteristic feature of the previous ones is that the behavior of most people is determined by their personal goals while in the value conflicts of wider communities and individual small groups it tends to be the macro-level sphere that gets the worst of it. In the case of collectivist cultures, goals set by the community prove to be the factors, which mostly shaping social behavior. The dimension of collectivism-individualism is also important in Hofstede and Hofstede's study. Based on their own international comparative research, Hofstede and Hofstede (2005) state that collectivist societies where the group's interest takes priority over the individual are in the majority. The bases of differentiation have much in common with the elements given by Triandis (1990), while the authors (Hofstede & Hofstede 2005) add that in individualist societies,

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<sup>3</sup> While the new type of volunteering can more easily be identified with Weber's goal-oriented rational actions.

<sup>4</sup>The main factors of the five-factor model to describe human personality are as follows: extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, neuroticism and openness to experience. Bereczkei (2009) emphasizes that providing help is made more frequent by extraversion.

individuals depend on either few groups or not one group, bonds between people are much looser – so it is a behavioral norm expected from everyone to take good care of themselves – this train of thoughts can be neatly incorporated in the phenomenon of new-type volunteering. Comparing the East and the West in the dimension examined seems to be obvious, where the East in most cases means Asia (Hofstede & Hofstede 2005). And although it is a fact that the roots of individualism no doubt can be traced back to western civilizations, we must also consider the fact that collectivism and individualism are not categories mutually excluding each other and that the world of values is just one factor in the formation of pro-social behavior. Based on Hofstede and Hofstede's (2005) research, Hungary is positioned rather close to the collectivist pole, while the proportion of those doing voluntary work is far behind the level that can be experienced in the United States. When explaining this phenomenon we must keep in mind the influence of state socialism on the willingness to associate, and we must also be aware of the fact that the special literature enumerates several sub-types of both the collectivist and the individualist attitudes. The concepts and interpretations used in the value tests can also be different. Whereas Fukuyama (1992) argues that American individualism is considerably discolored by dynamic social life, and there is no Asian model, we can only talk about different Asian models.

### **Volunteering and values in Central Eastern Europe**

In Central Eastern Europe, the situation of the dimension examined may be considered even more complicated as collectivist elements of the character whose strands were connected to the state strongly appeared in the ideology of socialism – this type of collectivism, however, differs at several points from the collective nature of Eastern European societies that can be described with traditional characteristics. On the one hand, during the years of state socialism volunteering as an established practice (Dekker & Halman 2003b), which was often connected to religious life faded away, while a significant part of pro-social actions were taken on by the state, picking them out of the circle of regularly repeated weekday activities. On the other hand, the ideology of state socialism, even if not in the form and direction expected, also latently changed the worlds of values: in spite of its manifest collective characteristic features, it strengthened the elements of an individualist, consumption-oriented thinking structure (Kováč 2010), where goals of the community appeared mostly on the surface, while it greatly reduced the willingness to associate and to empathize.

Parallel with the process of modernization, even if starting from different bases, a shift towards the individualist pole can be grasped,<sup>5</sup> which might question the value rationality of collective values and actions directed towards the community. Examining the relation between economy and values starts with Weber (2001), while comprehensive value sociological theories (e.g. Inglehart 1997) also affect the connection between these two spheres, and the shift towards rationality, self realization and individual interests. But the interaction between the two areas is not unambiguous and they are exactly the cultural-religious phenomena that are able to provide this process with peculiar coloring (Keller 2008). In any case, we must recognize the fact that the background of actions aimed at the community that can be grasped in values is formed from a complicated economic, cultural, social, religious and political constellation and often results in completely different attitudes and practice in the case of communities located geographically close to each other. It is also edifying to view the formation of the new type of volunteering plotted against this restructuring, as its value background nicely fits with the new emphases appearing parallel with the process of modernization.

### **Higher education and values**

As the subject of our examination is higher education, it is also worth considering the relevant sections of theories in sociology of values. If we consider their mission, university viewed as an institution conveying and forming values, adjusting to collective aims and also pro-social attitudes to a lesser degree – setting out from the Humboldt model of the institution. If we examine Schwartz's two-dimensional model, classical student values enumerated by Veroszta (2010), like searching for knowledge, self realization and rational attitude, can be placed farther from preferences related to old-style volunteering. The segmentation of higher education, however, does not exclude the fact, that in the case of certain types of institutions (e.g. religious institutions), majors and faculties (e.g. training helping professionals) pro-social behavior and goals appear among the momentums of values and behavior to be conveyed. From Veroszta's nationwide research (2010), it comes to light that values of social responsibility can be grasped to a lesser extent in the case of elite education, while they are dominant among students majoring pedagogy and social sciences as well as students of religious institutions.<sup>6</sup> It is important

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<sup>5</sup> Meanwhile others call our attention to the fact that this shift is not permanent and one-way: in connection with values Reykowski & Smolenska (2003) argue for it, while analyzing the process of modernity Heller & Fehér (1993) recorded the same findings.

<sup>6</sup> Veroszta (2010) separated the students participating in elite education not on the basis of faculties and institutions, but with the help of the chances of gaining admission to a university major. In the world of differentiated higher education majors and faculties that are clearly elite do not exist. At the University of Debrecen Fónai (2009) ranks economic, legal and medical education among the faculties of higher prestige.

to mention that the so-called practical values, which can be connected to the new type of volunteering, were ranked at the highest position among students' value preferences in Veroszta's examination from 2009, based on career tracking – it is especially true of graduate students of private institutions. In the case of student value clusters, the preferences of practical and utilitarian groups can be connected to this mentality. In the case of the students of the University of Debrecen, Bocsi (2012) detached a philanthropic factor based on the Rokeach Value Survey, where the intention to help and openness towards the society take a central position in its world of values. This group of values was more characteristic of students studying in faculties of health at colleges, in faculties of arts, and in other university faculties focusing on helping other people. But considering the whole of higher education neither prosocial attitude, nor actions performed in practice can be regarded as general phenomena.

### **Previous results on students' volunteering**

Our previous results (Fényes & Kiss 2011a, 2011b) show that the frequency of overall regular volunteering among higher education students of the University of Debrecen was 6-7% in 2010, and overall 26.1% of the students did voluntary work yearly or more frequently<sup>7</sup>, which is quite low compared to other developed countries (Dekker & Halman 2003b). The demographic variables, such as age or gender did not effect volunteering among higher education students at the University of Debrecen. The children of mothers with degrees and the wealthier students volunteered more frequently at this university, which may be due to the fact that this university is situated in a relatively underdeveloped region of Hungary. Only those students with better social and material backgrounds could afford to do volunteering in this region. Religiosity increased volunteering, 28.4% of students who identify as religious on their own way did voluntary work, which is higher than the average, but the regular churchgoers volunteered at an even higher rate (45%), which is in accordance with the literature (Voicu & Voicu 2003). Among the effect of values, preference for material well-being and enjoyable life reduced the probability of volunteering, but preferring happiness, true friendship and helpfulness increased it. Our results showed that those who were volunteers preferred e.g., helping others more than those who were not, although this result tells very little about the real motivations and value preferences as they are not necessary predictors of the type of voluntary activity (Fényes & Kiss 2011a, 2011b).

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<sup>7</sup> Based on the study of Szabó and Marián (2010) only 13% of the young generation (not just higher education students) did voluntary activities in Hungary in 2008, so the students of higher education are more active, higher education increases the probability of volunteering, in accordance with the literature.

In our previous research we could not examine the motivations of students' volunteering, but in the present research, we surveyed this, as well.

### **Data basis and methods**

In our research, we used the database of the HERD research („Higher Education for Social Cohesion Cooperative Research and Development in a Cross-border Area” (HURO/0901/253/2.2.2.). The data collection took place in the Partium region, which is a historically cross-border region of Hungary, Romania and the Ukraine.<sup>8</sup> The data collection took place mostly in the Hungarian speaking higher education institutions of the three countries in 2012. We examined only the Hungarian and Ukrainian part of the Partium region, and the Branch of Babeş-Bolyai University in Satu Mare (N=1471).

To examine the research questions, quantitative data are used. We conducted the data-analysis with the program SPSS; we used cluster and factor analyses, compare means runs and logistic regression analysis.

### **Results**

As the first step of our analysis, we survey the value preferences of the HERD database's subsample (the details of the sample can be seen in the foreword). When examining value preferences, we must point out that the Hungarian student population will most probably position the item of intellect and post-material values (for instance imagination, freedom, true friendship) higher than Hungarian society. The Rokeach Value Survey was questioned in the student sample of the University of Debrecen in 2010 within Campus-Lét Research<sup>9</sup>, and its series of variables indicated lower scale values of items connected to work, diligence and social embeddedness (Bocsi 2012). Table 1 shows results of value preferences surveyed with 16 items in HERD Research (which contains Hungarian students not only from Hungary, but from the Ukraine and Romania as well).

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<sup>8</sup> In present-day Hungarian usage, „Partium” refers only to the Romanian part of the historical region, but we defined it differently, by concerning the historical usage of „Partium”.

<sup>9</sup> Campus-Lét at the University of Debrecen: Groups and group cultures at the University of Debrecen. Leader: Ildikó Szabó (financed by OTKA, K-81858).

*Table 1: Value preferences of the Hungarian students from the Partium region (averages of four-degree scales)*

Family security	3.80
Love, happiness	3.73
True friendship	3.71
Inner harmony	3.64
Freedom	3.59
A world at peace	3.56
An exciting life	3.54
Intellect	3.50
Social order, stability	3.37
Imagination	3.29
Preserving respectable traditions	3.26
National security	3.17
Material resources	3.08
Religious belief	2.53
Politics, public life	2.20
Power	2.05

Source: HERD 2012, N=1471

Based on the Table 1 we can see that students ranked the values focusing on micro-communities at the highest position (family security 3.80, love, happiness 3.73, true friendship 3.71), while power (2.05), politics, public life (2.2) and religious belief (2.53) were positioned on the other pole. Religious belief is connected to old-style volunteering and may predict its lower frequency in the student population. Macro-community values (social order, national security, preserving respectable traditions) tend to be positioned in the central field – these values are also connected to old-style volunteering. In the series of questions used during the query, unfortunately, there are only a few elements that may clearly fit with the new type of volunteering. Thus, as the next step of our analysis, we detached factors based on the value preferences, so that we might get results in categories matching more to the different types of volunteering by means of multi-dimensional statistical procedures. In our sample we managed to identify four factors named in the following way: hedonistic intellectual, conservative, pacifist micro-community and romantic (Table 2). In the hedonistic intellectual factor adventure seeking attitude (an exciting life) is mixed with intellectual characteristics (imagination, intellect), and these are accompanied by material orientation. The conservative factor includes nation based values, focusing on macro-community (national security, preserving respectable traditions, social order). The pacifist micro-community factor includes values connected to peace, security and being well-balanced (inner harmony, family security, a world at peace). The romantic factor was occupied only by the item of love, happiness. In the course of our

analysis, we are going to examine the phenomenon of volunteering more thoroughly by means of these factors.

*Table 2: Hungarian students' value patterns in the Partium region (Factor scores)<sup>10</sup>*

	<b>Factors</b>			
	Hedonistic intellectual	Conservative	Pacifist micro-community	Romantic
Inner harmony	.263	.223	<u>.473</u>	.168
Family security	.276	.153	<u>.554</u>	.227
National security	.074	<u>.570</u>	.243	.091
Love, happiness	.171	.219	.299	<u>.913</u>
Preserving respectable traditions	.233	<u>.746</u>	.124	.086
Imagination	<u>.524</u>	.182	.174	-.018
Material resources	<u>.354</u>	.021	.103	.055
Intellect	<u>.642</u>	.277	.174	.095
A world at peace	.213	.292	<u>.639</u>	.090
Social order, stability	.298	<u>.523</u>	.287	.191
An exciting life	<u>.640</u>	.157	.187	.180

Source: HERD 2012, N=1471

Volunteering was first surveyed by asking the following question: 'Have you done voluntary work besides your present studies?', and 22.5% of the students answered that they do voluntary work. Student groups, detached on the basis of their yes and no answers, were then analyzed by means of these factors. Factor scores were then examined by means of variance analysis. By means of ANOVA test significant relation (sig. 0.005) was found in two cases, in the case of hedonistic intellectual and conservative factors (Table 3). Based on the theoretical background it is no accident that in the case of pacifist micro-community and romantic factors, no significant relation was found, while the first factor could be related to the new type of volunteering and the second factor to traditional volunteering.

*Table 3: Averages of value preference factor scores according to participation in voluntary work – only the significant relations*

	<b>Hedonistic intellectual</b>	<b>Conservative</b>
<b>Did voluntary work</b>	0.089	0.106
<b>Not</b>	-0.028	-0.036
<b>Sig.</b>	<i>0.017</i>	<i>0.004</i>

Source: HERD 2012, N=1471

In the case of the set of questions concerning the motivation for volunteering we detached the students doing voluntary work and formed three clusters from them based on their motivational types: groups of students having the

<sup>10</sup> The factors were rotated with varimax method by using maximum likelihood estimation. When creating the models, we carefully watched that the information explained should not decrease below one unit by variables. The amount of information preserved is 49.05% with terminal values. The matching factor structure could be reached by keeping 11 values.

new type (43 persons), the old type (127 persons) and mixed (143 persons) motivational basis (Table 4).

*Table 4: Cluster centers according to the motivations of volunteering (answer number one denoted yes, answer number two denoted no)*

	<b>New type of volunteering</b>	<b>Old type of volunteering</b>	<b>Volunteering with mixed motivations</b>
To be included in my CV	1.54	1.86	1.66
To gain work experience	1.44	1.56	1.03
To establish or maintain ties	1.48	1.44	1.00
To help other people	2.00	1.00	1.02
To spend leisure time	1.61	1.67	1.16
To improve language knowledge, to gain knowledge	1.62	1.90	1.30

Source: HERD 2012, N=1471

We also examined the factor scores of clusters formed in this way from values and managed to reveal three significant relationships (sig. 0.00) by means of ANOVA test – only the conservative factor did not show a relation to the motivational groups of volunteering (Table 5). The hedonistic intellectual factor reached the lowest average logically in the old type of student group, while in the case of the new type, pacifist micro-community values took on negative values. The romantic factor was also given a negative average in this cluster. We can say that the rejection of the hedonistic intellectual factor is logical concerning the old type of volunteering, since for instance, material resources and enjoying life as values are a far cry from classical pro-social behavior. The phenomenon that imagination and intellect fit less with the characteristics of the clearly new type of volunteering may account for the fact that this group of values is most characteristic of the mixed type. The rejection of the pacifist micro-community factor by the new type may also be put down as an expected result, as items like inner harmony and a world at peace cannot really be included in a practical, ambitious form of life and thinking structure. We may find only a slight difference in the case of the other two clusters, and the balance might tip for the mixed type due to micro-community orientation (the old type of volunteering can be related more to collective characteristics). We can say that the rejection of the romantic factor by the new type is also a reasonable result, while the old type might be given negative values due to its macro-community nature. Only the mixed type can be described with positive factor scores, and as we could see earlier the individual and micro-community values to which the item of love, happiness can mostly be related are connected to this cluster.

*Table 5: Averages of value preference factor scores in the clusters based on the motivations of students' volunteering – only the significant relations*

<i>Clusters</i>	<i>Hedonistic intellectual</i>	<i>Pacifist micro-community</i>	<i>Romantic</i>
New type	0.060	-0.431	-0.307
Traditional type	-0.0360	0.025	-0.096
Mixed type	0.209	0.065	0.102
<i>Sig.</i>	<i>0.026</i>	<i>0.000</i>	<i>0.031</i>

Source: HERD 2012, N=1471

As we can see in our regression model (Table 6), the chance that female students will volunteer is larger than that of males (the effect is not significant, but when we put the whole 16 items instead of four value factor variables, this effect was significant). In our previous research (Fényes & Kiss 2011a, 2011b) the gender of students did not effect volunteering at the University of Debrecen, and based on the Hungarian literature (Bartal 2010), among the adult population, middle aged males volunteer more frequently than females. The reason for the slight advantage of female students in volunteering in our presents research could be that women participate especially in the traditional type of volunteering (or volunteer with mixed motivations), and most of the students participate in these types of volunteering. The new type of volunteering is not so popular yet, only 43 students can be described by clearly modern motives.

Table 6: The effects of several variables on students' volunteering (logistic regression model)<sup>11</sup>

	B	S.E.	Wald	df	Sig.	Exp(B)
Gender	-0.31	0.16	3.67	1	0.06	0.73
Age	0.02	0.03	0.72	1	0.40	1.02
Fathers' education	-0.33	0.19	2.98	1	0.08	0.72
Mothers' education	0.12	0.17	0.51	1	0.47	1.13
If the father read	-0.06	0.17	0.14	1	0.71	0.94
If the mother read	0.34	0.18	3.63	1	0.06	1.41
Type of locality	0.24	0.16	2.22	1	0.14	1.27
Poss. financial problems	-0.35	0.23	2.38	1	0.12	0.70
Durable consumer goods' index (parents)	0.01	0.05	0.04	1	0.83	1.01
Durable consumer goods' index (students)	0.08	0.05	2.22	1	0.14	1.08
Summer holidays	-0.13	0.17	0.56	1	0.46	0.88
Clerical	0.84	0.19	18.74	1	<u>0.00</u>	<u>2.32</u>
Religious	0.37	0.17	4.87	1	<u>0.03</u>	<u>1.45</u>
Hedonistic intellectual	0.22	0.10	4.93	1	<u>0.03</u>	<u>1.24</u>
Conservative	0.08	0.10	0.68	1	0.41	1.08
Pacifist micro-community	0.00	0.11	0.00	1	0.97	1.00
Romantic	-0.05	0.08	0.50	1	0.48	0.95
Constant	-2.24	0.72	9.83	1	0.00	0.11

Decrease in -2log-likelihood=5.1%

Source: HERD 2012, N=1471

The other significant effect was the positive effect of religiosity on volunteering, which is in accordance with the literature and also our previous results (Voicu & Voicu 2003, Fényes & Kiss 2011a, 2011b). Especially church related religiosity increased the likelihood of volunteering (the chance of volunteering is 2.3 times greater concerning these students when compared to others), but all religious students (students who are religious on their own way, and church-related religiosity) volunteer more frequently than those who are not religious (the chance is about 1.5 times higher). Religiosity especially increases the chance of the traditional type of volunteering (this has not been examined yet, further analysis is needed).<sup>12</sup> Among the factors it was the first one, so the

<sup>11</sup> The dependent variable was if he/she does voluntary activity or not. The independent variables are as follows: (1) gender (1: male, 0: female), (2) age (which did not vary much, as only full time university students were asked) (3) social background variables such as parents' educational level (years of study), if the parents read or not, the type of the place of residence (town or village), the financial position of the students and parents (possible financial problems (yes/no), durable consumer goods of parents' and children's (indexes), if the family go on summer holiday or not, (4) two variables concerning the religiosity of the student (one variable is if he/she religious or not, and other, whether someone is clerically religious or not (church-related religiosity), (5) finally, 4 factor variables created from the 16 value preference variables.

<sup>12</sup> The higher education of fathers decreased the chance of volunteering a bit, but the financial situation of students (measured by the durable consumer goods index) increasing it a bit when we put instead of 4 value factor variables, the whole 16 item values scales. This second

hedonistic intellectual factor (sig. 0.03), which could influence the chance of volunteering and in the positive direction. On the one hand, it may point at the transformation of the motivational basis of volunteering, so the appearance of the new type of volunteering, but it could also be connected to the fact that the sociocultural background of those doing voluntary activity in our region can be regarded as favorable – as opposed to the international practice (Fényes & Pusztai 2012a).

## **Summary**

As the main aim of our study we attempted both to outline the theoretical relation between volunteering and the sphere of values and to empirically analyze these relations in the case of the Hungarian students in Partium within HERD research. In the theoretical part of our study we examined the different types of volunteering and pointed out that besides the traditional forms, the so-called new type of volunteering, which is more wide-spread in the case of the population surveyed by us, the youth age group is becoming increasingly empathic. We made an attempt to reveal the phenomena underlying voluntary actions, such as the theory of human capital, religious behavior or the theory of social capital. Our analysis focused on the connection between volunteering and the world of values, as according to the literature, certain patterns of value preferences more frequently occur in the case of those doing voluntary activities, while the values themselves do not induce these activities unambiguously. We later examined those points of value sociology that could be relevant to our survey, and then described the relevant results of the value research.

In the course of our empirical analysis we aimed to find connections between values and volunteering, and behind the various types of volunteering to reveal the frequent methods of arrangement concerning values. In order to achieve this, we first formed factors from students' value structure. The value background of voluntary work becoming mixed, is shown by the fact that in the case of those doing voluntary activities, it is on the one hand, a factor having more material, postmodern characteristics, too (hedonistic intellectual) and on the other hand, the conservative factor that reached higher averages. In connection with the value content behind the motivational clusters of volunteering, we may state that they have peculiar patterns that can be clearly separated from each other. The connection between values and volunteering is demonstrated by certain items of the values and the explaining force of hedonistic the intellectual factor in our logistic regression model.

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result is in accordance with our previous 2010 results at the University of Debrecen, so only the more well-to-do students could afford to do voluntary work in this region.

Although our analysis could produce novel results as well, it cannot be regarded as finalized yet, as the process of operationalization, for instance, could be made more complete with several momentums due to the omnibus nature of the HERD Research questionnaire (value tests operating with a different series of items, nuanced series of questions focusing on the motivational background). However, new research problems can be identified on the basis of the relationships obtained, and they may be the foundation of further longitudinal analyses.

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**ADRIAN HATOS**

**ENROLLMENT IN HIGHER EDUCATION: COLLEGE CHOICE  
IN THE HUNGARIAN-ROMANIAN CROSS-BORDER REGION**

***Abstract***

*In my article I am presenting the results of tests of several hypotheses related to the issue of the impact of higher education sector differentiation on access opportunities. This study is inspired by the model of Effectively Maintained Inequality (EMI) in Romania and Hungary using data from the survey done in the spring of 2012 among students from the Romanian-Hungarian cross-border region. The country-level multinomial logistic regressions of college confirm most of our expectations: class and educational effects have a stronger presence in the investigated Hungarian higher education institutions, which are more status-oriented while the investigated higher education institutions in the more privatized Romanian system appears to improve the access to higher education for youth from the lower classes. A weak confirmation of EMI hypothesis in the investigated Romanian institutions suggests a possible and plausible consequence of expansion in clientele-oriented university systems: a decrease of the capacity of higher education, at least at the BA/BSc level, to contribute to social reproduction.*

**Massification and differentiation in higher education in the cross-border region**

During the last decades, important developments have taken place in the area of higher education worldwide: a dramatic expansion of enrollment figures and significant changes in the organizational structures and governance policies of tertiary education in almost all regions of the world. According to Altbach, Reisberg and Rumbley (2009), participation in post-secondary education for the corresponding cohort has increased, between 2000 and 2007 only, from 19% to 26%, worldwide. In the decade ending in 2009 the growth has been the most prominent in the countries of the former Soviet Union and the post-Communist nations of Central and Eastern Europe (Usher 2009). In the time span 1999-2006 Romania had a growth of Gross Enrollment Rate (GER) of 30% in higher education while Hungary had an increase of 35%. By 2006 both countries have reached GER above 50% qualifying their higher education system as universal (Usher 2009).

This recent massification of enrollment numbers was followed by structural changes in the national higher education systems: the impossibility of hosting a much larger and highly diversified student population in the ancient research or elite universities (Guri-Rosenblit et al. 2007) entailed the spread of novel struc-

tures in the higher education landscape. In the Western world the massification and reorganization of the inner structure of university systems occurred rather quickly during the 60s and the 70s of the 20th century (see Scott 1995). These developments were launched in Central and Eastern Europe only after 1990, following decades of tight state control over enrollments and academic governance (Dobbins & Knill 2009, Pachuashvili 2011, Usher 2009).

Regarding the Northern part of the Hungarian-Romanian cross border region, the restructuring of higher education systems involved a number of important changes. On the one hand, many new universities were established, mainly in Romania, while older ones were transformed. In both countries: new public tertiary institutions appeared alongside the older ones (like the University of Oradea, established in 1990 on the basis of a formerly existing short-term polytechnic or the College of Nyíregyháza – established in 2000 through the merger of two previously existing colleges – and the Branch of Babeş-Bolyai University in Satu-Mare) and new private (i.e. non-state owned) universities were also established, both secular (like the Agora University in Oradea) and Church-owned tertiary institutions in both Hungary and Romania (such as Partium Christian University in Oradea or Emanuel University in Oradea). On the other hand, older universities often suffered processes of restructuring, as was the case of the University of Debrecen, which has had its present organization since 2000 when three prior existing universities in Debrecen merged. Moreover, many new fields of study – and also departments and faculties – were added to the existing ones in the traditional faculties, even before 2000 – these are best represented in the context of my article by the University of Debrecen and the University of Oradea.

Conceptual order can be imposed on this apparent chaos considering the classification of education systems by Scott (1995). Scott (1995) distinguishes between four major types of national higher education systems: 1) dual (composed of universities and an alternative institutional structure with long tradition – as is the case of the duality of German *Universität* v.s. *Fachhochschulen* or of the French contrast between *Universités* and *Haute Écoles*; 2) binary – in which complementary institutions, deliberately set up, coexist with universities; 3) unified – in which only one type of higher education institutions exist as is the case in Italy and 4) stratified, in which the multiple types of institutions that exist are allocated specific roles.

It is clear that neither the Romanian nor the Hungarian case corresponds to the first three categories although conventionally, until the recent legislative changes which occurred in both countries, the Hungarian system was seen as a dual one and the Romanian higher education landscape corresponded to a unified system. Various private tertiary institutions established all claim university status thus not being in a complementary relationship with the ‘traditional’ ones. However, more recent attempts of regulating the competitive

environment in both countries have set some rules that instituted specific roles to each university-level institution: for example the new Romanian Education Law, enacted on January 1<sup>st</sup> 2011 established a three-tier organization of higher education (1. universities centered on research and education, a class which consists entirely of large public universities; 2. universities of education and research which are mainly small public universities/colleges; and 3. the category of education centered universities in which fall all the private universities) which distributes the legitimacy and public resources of running MA/MSc and PhD programs on the basis of an official classification of all tertiary institutions using quality indicators. Hierarchization of universities in Hungary, with ranks like Universities of Excellence or Research Universities was put in place long ago (Fehervari et al. 2011). Thus, it is justified to label both systems of higher education as stratified.

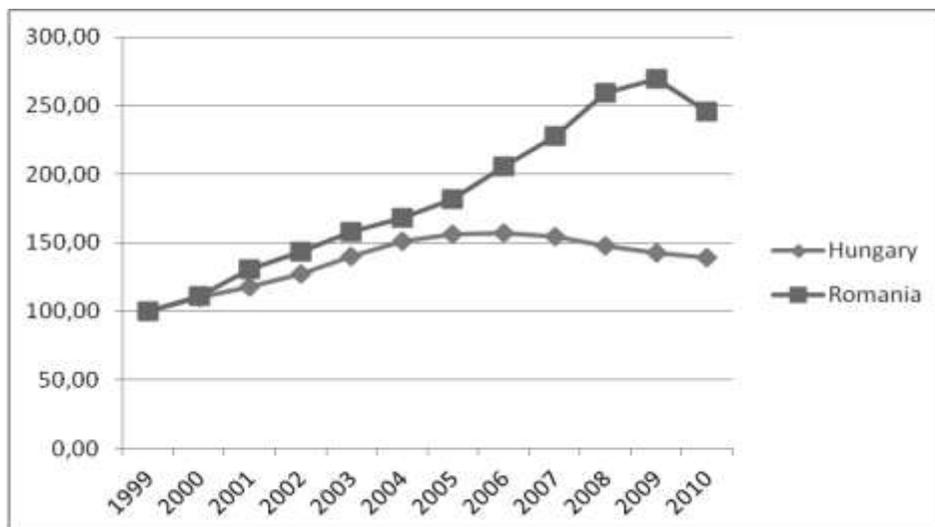
In the Romanian case stratification is not only an academic construct: the hierarchization done by the Ministry of Education in 2011 classified all tertiary institutions and placed the University of Oradea in the second tier (universities of education and research) while all private universities were placed in the third tier (universities of education) clearly displaying the role that the regulator wished to allot to each institution. The classification is also clear in Hungary, where the University of Debrecen is placed in the premier league of Hungarian universities – boasting many postgraduate programs and a high academic prestige – while the other public tertiary level institutions presented in the current research (the College of Nyíregyháza) have a local addressability and are specialized mainly on BA/BSc-level teaching in highly demanded fields.

Expansion of higher education seems to have slowed down in both countries during the last years. This is clear in Romania where the number of newly enrolled students started to decline in 2009, following the shrink of cohorts of secondary graduates, caused by the end of generations born before 1990 (see Figure 1) and by stricter maturity examination especially after 2011. According to Eurostat, in Hungary the number of students enrolled in higher education started to decrease even earlier, in 2007. That points to a possible saturation of demand for higher education certificates in both countries with its possible corresponding consequences on access probabilities.

All the expansion that took place is typically expected to contribute to an increased access to higher education for the disadvantaged classes. Empirical assessments provide, as will be immediately detailed in the following sections, results showing that, to the contrary, access inequalities tend to persist regardless of the evolution of enrollment figures. According to the same theorists, the horizontal differentiation of higher education institutions contributes to this consequence. Following this topic my current research paper will focus mainly on analyzing the correlations between the indicators of students' socio-economic status and their current enrollment status in specific colleges in

the cross-border area of Hungary and Romania, considering the different patterns of differentiation between the two countries and their possible effects on social reproduction through universities.

Figure 1: Evolution of number of students enrolled in higher education (1999=100)



Source: Eurostat

### Diversification and opportunity of access: the Effectively Maintained Inequality hypothesis

Although enrollment numbers have skyrocketed during the last decades, inequality of access remained the same across the region as well as almost everywhere where assessments of the evolution of transition rates and reproduction effects have been made: while in absolute numbers youth from the less advantaged social categories have benefited from the expansion of higher education, their disadvantage compared to candidates from the privileged strata did not decrease neither in industrialized Western societies nor in the post-Communist countries of Eastern Europe (Hatos 2012, Mare 1980, Matijù et al. 2003, Matijù & Smith 2009, Nieuwbeerta 1996, Shavit & Blossfeld 1993, Simonová 2003, Treiman et al. 2003). This persistence of inequality has inspired several attempts of explanation among which the most salient ones are the Maximally Maintained Inequality model and the theory of Effectively Maintained Inequality (EMI).

According to the theory of Maximally Maintained Inequality (Hanley & McKeever 1997, Raftery & Hout 1993) because the expansion of education makes the transition across levels less dependent on primary effects (ability and previous achievements), increasing the impact of secondary effects (social reproduction effect) due to lowered selectivity at previous levels, the broad-

ened access in absolute numbers has the consequence of increasing social reproduction effects until the point at which the demand for certificates of a certain level is saturated in the case of those endowed with the best resources.

Testing the Maximally Maintained Inequality model in Ireland, Lucas (2001) has shown that the saturation of demand for a certain level of education, within the higher classes, does not necessarily lead to an increase of the demand for higher level certificates as a mechanism of status preservation. Instead of an inflationary demand for higher level certificates, candidates from the privileged classes can reorient their demand to certain certificates from the respective level for which saturation occurred apparently. Thus, graduating from certain tertiary institutions or subject fields at the same level becomes an instrument of social reproduction.

Lucas' hypothesis (2001), known as the Model of Effectively Maintained Inequality, highlights the fact that at the same level, certain institutions (or fields of study) can play different roles in class reproduction. This observation is congruent with the conclusions of the previous paragraph in which I underlined the differentiated character of the Romanian and Hungarian higher education system and, moreover, their stratified features within the fourfold classification proposed by Scott (1995).

Stratified institutional networks in higher education can be expected to play different roles in relation to the various abilities, aspirations and resources of their students. This is evident if we keep in mind that: 1) Stratification of university level institutions implies that their entitlement to deliver certificates at the three levels (BA/BSc, MA/MSc and PhD) is differentiated, while status and pecuniary rewards of these corresponding levels are also different. 2) Differentiation of fields of study is correlated with college differentiation as some institutions succeed in monopolizing certain domains. One should therefore consider the fact that the social and economic rewards of fields of study are different, with medical and law studies usually situated on top and, moreover, the costs of pursuing higher education is not equal for all students and for all programs of study due to the differences in the number of years necessary to receive a degree (with Medical studies and Architecture having usually the longest study programs), in the distance between the home and the university – which makes local or regional universities more attractive to students from the poorer social categories.

This means that a simple analysis of access or graduation probabilities is no longer enough to assess the evolution of social justice in access to tertiary education. Instead, a comparative analysis of institutions and of the social and academic backgrounds of their respective student population is needed. Such an approach is even more necessary in the case of Romanian and Hungarian universities as the above figures show that the demand for higher education is saturated in both countries and, therefore, a pressure towards more differen-

tiation across universities and fields of study is predicted by the theory of Effectively Maintained Inequality.

### **Predictors of college choice**

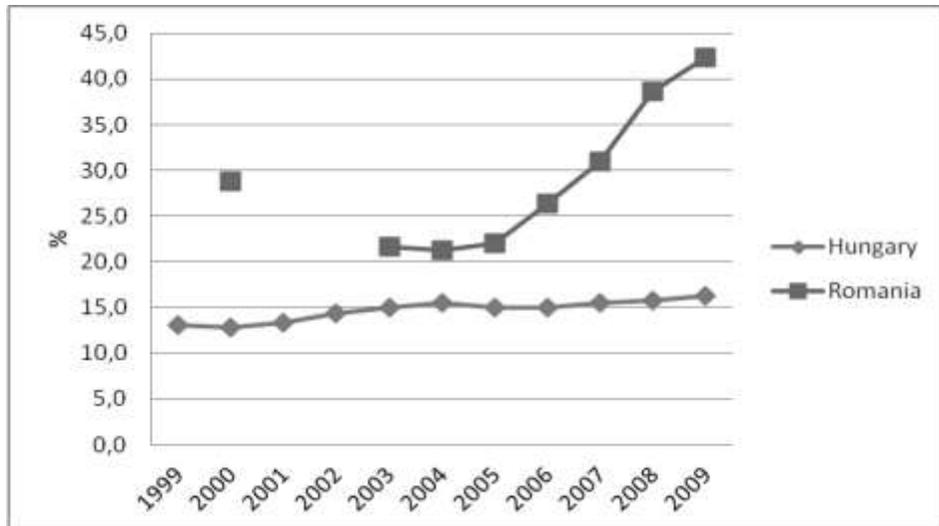
The preoccupations for the social correlates of university choice are everything but new. Social reproduction through the choice of *Grandes Écoles* and subject fields was discussed at length by Bourdieu in *La Noblesse D'Etat* (Bourdieu 1989). He clearly established that sections of bourgeoisie assured the reproduction of their respective status positions and avoided downward mobility by enrolling in the elite programs most suited to their social abilities. Concerning the same issue, more recent empirical research done in this field has reached several results which are by no means definitive but provide good starting points in investigating the social aspects of horizontal differentiation of higher education institutions in the cross-border area of Hungary and Romania.

#### ***Country specificity***

Although both differentiated and stratified, Romania and Hungary have, as suggested already, different structures of higher education. While Romania displays a sizable private sector which is close in relative weight to the public sector, Hungary has been more prudent in allowing the establishment of a large non-state owned sector which I will call alternatively private. In 2006/2007 in Hungary the proportion of students in public universities was as high as 86.4% (Berde & Vanyolos 2008) while in Romania the proportion of students in private universities had reached 42% at its peak. Instead, the growing demand for higher education in Hungary was met primarily by an increasing number of public universities. Many small colleges were established during the last decade of the previous century, providing mainly BA/BSc-level programs in highly demanded and low-cost subject fields. However, this trend was reversed by legal means in 1999 when constraints were imposed upon all universities and the number of the public ones shrank from 55 to 30, especially via the mergers of small public universities. Thus, the lower tier of universities in Hungary is now comprised especially of relatively smaller public universities (like the College of Nyíregyháza), while the private competition is rather weak, whereas in Romania the large public universities have especially privately owned universities among their competitors. These universities, products of entrepreneurial initiatives, focus on the most demanded and least expensive fields of study – law, social sciences, education – and almost never on fields like engineering or hard sciences and are often clientele universities, addressing the needs of minorities whose access or needs are not answered by the public universities. This is the case of the two private universities located in Oradea included in our study. It is also noteworthy that even in the public sector the proportion of

tuition paying students is much larger than in Romania and that public funding for state universities is provided on a per-capita basis.

Figure 2: Enrollment in private universities as % of all tertiary enrollments



Source: UNESCO

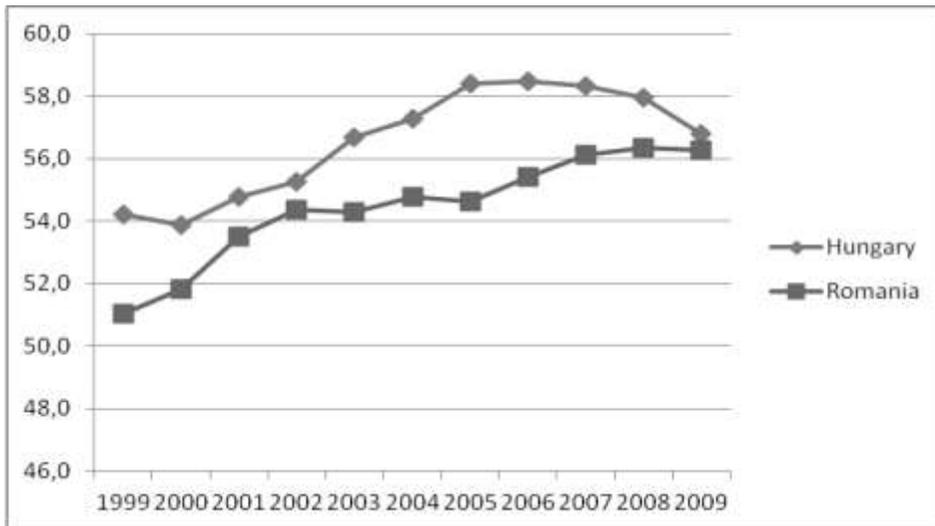
The above mentioned differences between Romanian and Hungarian institutions and systems of higher education fit the dichotomy conceptualized by *status-seeking* (where selective universities and non-tuition paying enrollment dominate) vs. *client-seeking* universities (the contrasting case) (Shavit et al. 2007). It is apparent that the Hungarian landscape is one dominated by status-seeking, where recognition is the most important and sought-for asset while the Romanian universities are first competing for students, even at the expense of selectivity or quality indicators. Given these differences, a comparison between the social composition of Romanian and Hungarian universities and fields of study becomes a legitimate topic, allowing us to assess the ways in which mechanisms of social reproduction manifest in the two differing structures of stratified tertiary education systems. Following the hypotheses of Shavit and his collaborators I expect the more status-seeking systems and universities (the Hungarian ones) to display more indices of social reproduction where access is concerned and the more client-seeking ones (the Romanians) to be more equalitarian in this regard.

### **Gender**

In parallel with the feminization of higher education – which seems to have reached a plateau for the moment in both countries according to official enrollment data – there are still large gender differentials concerning program choice and access although evidence is rarer concerning university choice.

Empirical results show convincingly that males are more likely than women to choose the more lucrative fields (Ayalon & Yogeve 2005, Davies & Guppy 1996, Goyette & Mullen 2006). Among the vocational fields, engineering is obviously the best rewarded and also the most masculine (Goyette & Mullen 2006). Vice Versa there are some fields of study which are apparently feminized (like social science and education) but it is not clear if this is the case because of the abilities involved in the fields or because of the lower pay entailed by the jobs corresponding to their degrees. A recent research following the gender ratio of PhD degrees awarded in US during the last decades (England et al. 2007) sustains the so-called ‘devaluation perspective’: feminization is a vicious circle: it brings the lowering of the pay of the graduates and further deter the men from enrolling in these programs. For the gendered access in higher education in Hungary or peculiarly for the Partium region Fényes Hajnalka has provided compelling evidence (Fényes 2011, 2012).

Figure 3: Percent of females in tertiary enrollment



Source: UNESCO

Based on the above findings I expect gender to be one of the important predictors of enrollment in specific colleges because certain universities are specialized in certain fields of study. Engineering and sciences are, for example, absent from the smaller public universities as well as from the private ones. Thus I expect to find greater likelihood of men to be enrolled in the two large public universities from the sample.

### *Ability*

It is no question that university candidates and their parents choose the university and the field of study according to rational choice deliberations which

consider the chances of admission, especially when access is selective, and those of successful graduation (Ayalon & Yogevev 2005, Davies & Guppy 1996, Van de Werfhorst et al. 2003, Lucas 2001). In Israel, low ability high school graduates are more likely to enroll in the second tier colleges (Ayalon & Yogevev 2005). These probabilities are dependent on previous measures of ability: an analysis of subjective probabilities of success in higher education while strongly predicted by previous results is also dependent on social class and gender (Tolsma et al. 2010). Therefore I expect the measure of previous achievements to be correlated with the tier of institutions in the region: higher in the University of Debrecen than in the case of students of College of Nyíregyháza, and higher in the University of Oradea than in the other Romanian universities included in the analysis.

### ***Socio-economic status***

The association of students' SES (socio-economic status) indicators with the institutions is the main assumption of the EMI model, an expectation that has been confirmed systematically in the empirical analyses of transitions to differentiated higher education institutions. At the level of college and university choice the empirical evidence is compelling: SES predicts admission to selective elite schools in France (Bourdieu 1989), colleges in Britain (Davies & Guppy 1996), lower SES students have increased chances of access in the second tier of Israeli higher education, the newly established colleges (Ayalon & Yogevev 2005). In a recent international comparative research including 11 nations Triventi (2011) found that parents' education is positively related to the length of the BA/BSc program one graduates from and with the prestige of the college he or she attends. One partial explanation for these correlations would be that candidates from the privileged classes perceive their chances of success as being higher than those from other classes, net of ability (Tolsma et al. 2010). Such a subjective calculation seems realistic if we take into account the costs of fulfilling the requirements of college life in the most prestigious of the universities. Preservation of social status is most likely the main motivator as higher ranking jobs demand more prestigious educational certificates. To sum up, I expect to find a larger likelihood of students with high SES to be enrolled in the universities in the upper tiers of their countries (i.e. University of Debrecen in Hungary and University of Oradea in Romania).

### **Research design, data and methods**

The hypotheses that were drawn in the previous pages will be tested using the data from the survey done within the HERD research project.

In order to eliminate the policy and demographic structure biases entailed by working with different countries the hypotheses will be tested at country-

level. Consequently, I will have 2 analyses. As the dependent variable (college) is nominal, the hypotheses will be tested using multinomial logistic regressions run at country level.

In order to control the sampling biases and to simplify the analyses which might be complicated by variations in the organization of the tertiary cycle, I decided to use only the cases from Hungary and Romania (excluding thus the subjects from Ukraine) and only the students enrolled in BA/BSc programs (including the students in non-Bologna programs enrolled in years 1-3 and eliminating the MA/MSc students from the analyses).

*Table 1: Distribution of subjects by university*

		N
Hungary	University of Debrecen (Debrecen)	886
	Kölcsey Ferenc Teacher Training Institute of Debrecen Reformed Theological University (Debrecen)	23
	College of Nyíregyháza (Nyíregyháza)	144
Romania	University of Oradea (Oradea)	565
	Partium Christian University (Oradea)	400
	Emanuel University (Oradea)	125
	The Branch of Babeş-Bolyai University in Satu Mare (Satu Mare)	52
	Total	2195

Source: HERD 2012, Hungarian-Romanian subsample, N=2195

Because modeling is done following a country by university design weighting was not necessary to correct for sampling errors. The only exception of pooled data – Emanuel University and Partium University samples were pooled in the college enrollment model in Romania did not require weighting as the two subsamples are proportional to the actual population.

### **Dependent variables: College categories**

I have classified the institutions of higher education to which the subjects of my research belong based on diversity of covered subject fields, size and ownership. Thus I draw three categories: 1) large public universities 2) small public universities 3) private universities which correspond roughly to the formal classifications in act in both countries. It is evident that in their respective countries, the large public universities (University of Oradea and University of Debrecen) correspond to the upper tier of universities in our population, although in Romania the University of Oradea was classified in the second tier (universities of education and research). In the second category I included in Romania the Branch of Babeş-Bolyai University located in Satu-

Mare while in Hungary the College of Nyíregyháza is a small public university, compared with the University of Debrecen. In the third category I included the Partium Christian University and the Emanuel University in Romania, and the Kölcsey Ferenc Teacher Training Institute of Debrecen Reformed Theological University in Hungary.

*Table 2: Distribution of subjects by college category and country*

	Hungary	Romania
<b>First tier: large public universities</b>	886	565
<b>Second tier: small public universities/colleges</b>	144	52
<b>Third tier: private/church-maintained universities</b>	23	525

Source: HERD 2012, Hungarian-Romanian subsample, N=2195

*Table 3: Universities in the sample and available fields of study<sup>1</sup>*

	UBB Satu Mare	Uni Deb	Ny F	UO	PKE	UEO	Debrecen Reformed Coll.
Arts and humanities (history, philosophy, theology)		x	x	x	x	x	x
Health sciences (medicine, pharmacy)		x		x			
Social sciences (sociology, political sciences, social work, psychology etc.)		x	x	x	x	x	
Economy and business administration		x	x	x	x	x	
Law and public administration	x	x		x			
Natural sciences (biology, chemistry, mathematics, informatics, physics, geography)		x	x	x			
Architecture and construction		x		x			
Education and physical education	x	x	x	x			x
Agriculture and environment studies		x		x			
Engineering		x	x	x			

Because to some degree the college subsample was designed on a proportional basis, the distribution from the above table gives a representative description of the student population in the area with the only substantial limitation that large public universities are heavily underrepresented in both countries.

<sup>1</sup> Explanations: Uni Deb: University of Debrecen (Debrecen), Debrecen Reformed Coll.: Kölcsey Ferenc Teacher Training Institute of Debrecen Reformed Theological University, Ny F: College of Nyíregyháza (Nyíregyháza), UO: University of Oradea (Oradea), PKE: Partium Christian University (Oradea), UEO: Emanuel University (Oradea), UBB Satu Mare: The Branch of Babeş-Bolyai University in Satu Mare (Satu Mare)

It is evident, though, that the private sector is much larger in Romania than in Hungary. It is worth mentioning that due to the estimation method that will be used in the empirical section and because I am not using the pooled data for hypothesis testing weighting of data is not necessary.

### Independent variables

Academic ability was measured via the proxy of count of academic prizes won during pre-tertiary education: prizes for scholar achievement, prizes in academic contests and prizes for arts or sports achievements, for grades 1-8 (primary and lower secondary) and 9-12 (upper secondary) separately. The six indicators correlate highly between each other ( $\alpha > 0.7$ ). Because the distribution of these achievements is different between the two countries, the much higher average of Romanian students suggests a more easily rewarding educational system than in Hungary.

*Table 4: Average of academic ability by country on a 0 to 6-point index*

	Average academic achievement
Hungary	1,394
Romania	2,034

Source: HERD 2012, Hungarian-Romanian subsample, N=2195

Father's occupation, an indicator of class position, has been recodified from the initial coding structure with 11 categories into a simpler one with 6 categories. However, because of estimation errors in the multivariate analyses this variable had to be dropped. Instead of occupation I used two other measures of background SES: parents' affluence and father's education measured in years. Parents' affluence was measured as a count of 6 valuable items likely to be found in the parents' household: own house, weekend house, plasma or LCD TV, PC or laptop with internet access, dishwashing machine, air conditioning, car, and smartphone.

*Table 5: Average of parent's affluence and father's education by country*

	HU	RO
Affluence (0 to 6 point index)	3.98	3.43
Father's education (years)	12.67	12.73

Source: HERD 2012, Hungarian-Romanian subsample, N=2195.

The comparison of country averages shows that on average the students from Hungary come from more affluent families than students from Romania, a situation accountable to the differences in standards of living in the two countries.

Father's education was measured in years of schooling established by assigning a typical number of years of education to the highest reported certificate using the equivalence scale displayed below:

*Table 6: Equivalence between fathers' educational certificate and years of schooling<sup>2</sup>*

	Years of schooling (typical) Hungary	Years of schooling (typical) Romania
Less than 8 grades	6	6
8 grades	8	8
Vocational secondary school, no maturity	11	11
Maturity ( <i>baccalaureate</i> )	12	12
Vocational with maturity certificate	12	13
Technical vocational, college	12	14
College degree	15	15
MA/MSc (university degree)	17	17
Graduate degree (post-MA/MSc)	21	19

Source: HERD 2012, Hungarian-Romanian subsample, N=2195

Rural residence was also introduced in the models as an indicator of additional costs for pursuing higher education and of lower cultural and social abilities necessary to perform in specific institutions and fields of study. In Romania, and in the counties included in the analysis as well, a large share of the population (around 50% in Bihor and Satu Mare) is living in rural settlement, a situation overlapping with social and material deprivation, which I expect to influence college choice and access to higher education as well.

## Results

Because of the large disparities in counts by classes of universities it was not possible to test whether or not the occupational category of the father has an influence on college enrollment. Instead I had to use only the continuous (count) indicators of affluence and the fathers' years of schooling. Also, for the sake of precision, given the large frequencies in the first tier universities (large public universities) I have taken them as reference categories. As can be read from Tables 7 and 8, the fit of the two logistic models is not impressive suggesting that a large part of the differences between the chosen categories lies elsewhere.

<sup>2</sup> Data for Hungary provided by Fényes Hajnalka and Ceglédi Tímea from the University of Debrecen.

Table 7: Multinomial logistic regression of college enrollment in Hungary at BA/BSc level (reference category: large public university)

	B	Std. Error	Wald	df	Sig.	Exp(B)
Small public university:						
Intercept	-0.295	0.577	0.260	1	0.610	
Female	0.100	0.197	0.261	1	0.610	1.106
Rural	<u>0.384</u>	<u>0.196</u>	<u>3.827</u>	1	<u>0.050*</u>	<u>1.469</u>
Achievement	-0.079	0.058	1.839	1	0.175	0.924
Father's years of education	<u>-0.099</u>	<u>0.045</u>	<u>4.887</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>0.027*</u>	<u>0.906</u>
Parents' affluence	-0.086	0.056	2.393	1	0.122	0.917
Private university:						
Intercept	-3.795	1.263	9.026	1	0.003	
Female	0.462	0.482	0.916	1	0.339	1.587
Rural	0.318	0.461	0.478	1	0.490	1.375
Achievement	-0.072	0.133	0.296	1	0.587	0.93
Father's years of education	0.047	0.091	0.269	1	0.604	1.049
Parents' affluence	-0.178	0.126	1.997	1	0.158	0.837
LR=24.48(df=10) p<0,01						
Nagelkerke R <sup>2</sup> =0.038						

Source: HERD 2012, Hungarian-Romanian subsample, N=2195

In Hungary, covariates of enrollment to small public universities (in our case the College of Nyíregyháza), compared to enrollment in the large University of Debrecen, confirms partially our hypotheses: 1) students from this college have almost 50% more chances (based on odd-ratios) to have been raised in rural settlements and 2) each added year of education of the father reduces by 0.10 the odds of enrolling in the small regional college and increases the chance of going to the large university instead. It is possible that the subject fields available at the College of Nyíregyháza partially explain the preference of rural students for this university but I assume that economic and cultural reasons also justify the decisions of high school graduates with a rural background to choose this locally more accessible institution. It is not less important that the county of Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg – which is the catchment area of College of Nyíregyháza – has a larger rural population (45%) than Hajdú-Bihar with a mere 19% of the population living in countryside (KSH).

The very small subsample from the Kölcsey Ferenc Teacher Training Institute of Debrecen Reformed Theological University produces standard error large enough to make all parameter estimates unreliable therefore the absence of any significant parameter in this case should not be taken simply as an indicator of a lack of relationship with the independent variables. Still, this is

possible since this college, placed by us in the third tier, in that of private universities, is a religious institution, in which enrollment should be primarily based on religious affiliation and of religious vocation rather than on the predictors assumed in my hypotheses.

*Table 8: Multinomial logistic regression of college enrollment in Romania at BA/BSc level (reference category: large public university)*

	<b>B</b>	<b>Std. Error</b>	<b>Wald</b>	<b>df</b>	<b>Sig.</b>	<b>Exp(B)</b>
<b>Small public university:</b>						
Intercept	-2.521	0.965	6.827	1	0.009	
<u>Female</u>	<u>1.113</u>	<u>0.404</u>	<u>7.581</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>0.006**</u>	<u>3.043</u>
Rural	0.49	0.323	2.303	1	0.129	1.632
Achievement	-0.085	0.096	0.777	1	0.378	0.919
Father's years of education	-0.07	0.071	0.962	1	0.327	0.933
Parents' affluence	0.023	0.098	0.057	1	0.811	1.024
<b>Private university:</b>						
Intercept	1.759	0.372	22.361	1	0.000	
Female	0.24	0.132	3.304	1	0.069	1.272
Rural	0.116	0.135	0.739	1	0.390	1.123
Achievement	-0.027	0.037	0.539	1	0.463	0.973
<u>Father's years of education</u>	<u>-0.158</u>	<u>0.029</u>	<u>30.501</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>0.000**</u>	<u>0.853</u>
Parents' affluence	0.002	0.038	0.003	1	0.957	1.002
LR=54.43 (df=10) p<0,001						
Nagelkerke R <sup>2</sup> =0.06						

Source: HERD 2012, Hungarian-Romanian subsample, N=2195

In the Romanian case, the small data set of students from small public universities (the Branch of Babeş-Bolyai University in Satu Mare actually) makes the estimates hard to interpret. The large positive parameter of gender shows that the odds of students at this university being female are three times larger than at the University of Oradea. Considering the fields of study available at the college in Satu-Mare (teacher training for primary education and public administration), which are strongly feminized, this is not a surprise.

The results that compare the access to private universities in Oradea with the University of Oradea are much more robust given the large subsample. Here we have again a weak feminine effect, due to the fact that private universities deliver mainly highly feminized specialties (in humanities, social sciences and economics). The strong effect of background educational capital is more remarkable: each additional year of schooling of the father reduces by 0.15 the odds of the student to be enrolled in one of the two private universities included. Although this result looks like a simple confirmation of my hy-

potheses assuming the Effectively Maintained Inequality model, the interpretation should be contingent on the fact that both private universities have captive selection base: one is a Hungarian university devoted to youth from the local Hungarian minority while the other is a faith-based university (with origins in a Baptist Bible school) which practices tight selection procedures based on religious criteria. Since both categories (Hungarians and Neo-Protestants) have most likely lower average SES indicators in the parents' cohorts (causes of lower educational achievements in the adult generations within the Hungarian population in Romania are treated in Hatos 2012, Hatos & Bernath 2009) one could say that the obtained parameters do not prove SES-based preference for colleges but rather the fact that these small private universities are increasing the chances of youth from their respective communities, which are usually of lower socio-economic background, to have access to higher education.

To conclude this section of our research, although the multivariate analyses show statistically significant correlations of the independent variables with college enrollment, it is difficult to consider the theoretical propositions confirmed for several reasons: 1) Differential enrollment might be due to the specific supply of specialties in second and third-tier universities. The apparent feminization of the small public universities or of the private universities can be explained by the fact that only large public universities provide teaching in fields usually seen as male-dominated such as engineering and architecture. This underlines, on the other hand, that large public universities retain monopoly over the more lucrative domains in which, partially, the presence of men is more dominant. 2) In Romania at least, conjectures about the validity of the EMI model for the explanation of enrollment in small colleges compared to large public universities is not valid as the participating third-tier Romanian institutions are both niche institutions addressing captive prospective students selected from two client communities: Hungarians and Neo-Protestants. It is worth noting though that the establishment of these universities has increased the chances of youth from those communities to have access to higher education although usually in less rewarding specialties – social sciences, humanities along with economics.

## **Discussion and conclusion**

In my research paper I have attempted to investigate several hypotheses concerning the horizontal differentiation of higher education, among institutions in the post-secondary education arena in the Romanian-Hungarian cross border area. The expansion of tertiary education in the two countries, which manifested itself in the region through the proliferation of new universities and colleges, mainly in Romania, public and private, besides several older and larger public ones and recent state-level reforms directed towards regulating the field made it

possible for me to classify the higher education systems of both countries as stratified, using Scott's classification (1995). Massification, on the one hand, and differentiation on the other, are raising some legitimate questions. To what extent does a larger supply of higher education contribute to increased university-level instruction for formerly excluded social categories? To what extent does massification contribute to social justice, by decreasing the inequalities in opportunities of access between youth of different classes and statuses? While the increase in probabilities of access in absolute numbers is unquestionable, all the relevant empirical findings give less optimistic answers to the issue of social justice (Hatos 2012, Konstantinovskiy 2012, Matijù et al. 2003, Nieuwbeerta 1996). It is no wonder that the mechanisms through which class differentials are maintained despite the unprecedented expansion of enrollment numbers have become one of the important issues of contemporary sociology of education.

In the HERD survey we had subsamples from several regional universities that I classified into three categories: large public universities (University of Debrecen, University of Oradea), small public universities (College of Nyíregyháza, the Branch of Babeş-Bolyai University in Satu Mare) and private universities (the Kőlcsey Ferenc Teacher Training Institute of Debrecen Reformed Theological University, the Partium Christian University in Oradea and the Emanuel University also in Oradea). Relying especially on the theoretical and empirical developments from the area of research on the distribution of access opportunities, where the Effectively Maintained Inequality Model (Lucas 2001) convincingly argued that social reproduction does not force an inflationary increase of the length of studies, as was supposed by other theoretical approaches, but can produce an imbalance of social outcomes among programs and institutions at the same level, I have proposed several hypotheses linking indicators of social background of students with the enrollment in specific classes of universities: 1) Social selectivity (class and educational effect in access to colleges) is more pronounced in the Hungarian system, which is more status-seeking than in the Romanian system, which is more client-seeking. 2) Therefore I expected students with high SES to be more likely to be enrolled in large public universities, but this correlation will be stronger in Hungary than in Romania. 3) Academic ability is positively related to enrollment in the most selective and rewarding colleges: I expected high achieving students to be better represented at first-tier universities (large public ones) also because this include the most lucrative fields of medicine or law.

The conjectures about college choice have been tested separately by modeling through multinomial logistic regression the enrollment of BA/BSc students into one of the three college categories. The regressions were made separately by country.

The most general hypothesis was supported by my analyses: access to universities is more dependent on social resources (education of parent and type of

residence in the case of college choice) for Hungary where this sector is far less privatized than in Romania. In more detail, models of enrollment in types of universities show that small public university in Hungary and private universities in Romania serve a clientele with lower educational and social resources. As such they play a role in increasing the access to higher education for deprived categories (female, rural, low status, ethnic or religious minorities) but mainly in less materially and socially rewarding fields of study which just supports the theses of the theory of Effectively Maintained Inequality. In contrast, large public universities (University of Oradea and University of Debrecen) retain monopoly of the most lucrative fields, that is, medicine, law, architecture or engineering where the presence of males or of descendants from high status groups is more significant.

The main limitations of the present study are determined by the possible errors in the samples. Collecting data from students using self-completion on campus entails a systematic bias that leads to the overrepresentation of students being more available and more likely to attend. Non-traditional students, those who cannot attend all classes and those who are less available to answer questionnaires will tend to be underrepresented. Different student populations and variations in regulations concerning attendance across universities and countries can also correlate with this error and exacerbate it. Thus, the rules of attendance in Romanian public universities, as well as at Partium Christian University, are much softer than in Hungary or at Emanuel University. It is very likely that the data from the Romanian public universities and Partium Christian University underrepresent non-traditional (older, working) or underachieving students. At the University of Oradea we have tried to compensate for this error by designing the sample to be representative concerning the ratio of tuition paying/non-tuition paying students knowing that tuition paying students are more likely to be among the students that are underrepresented. The other limitation is derived from the impossibility of using data on parents' occupation which would make it possible to test more adequately the effects of class on college and subject field enrollment.

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