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Article

Schools and Communities of Norm-awareness

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Abstract: The relationship between religiosity and educational attainment is an important question in the sociology of religion literature. It is widely contested whether the natural outgrowth of the spreading rational worldview and the increase of educated people can account for the decline of religious adherence. Is there any other explanation for the different opportunities of religious and non-religious societal groups to obtaining the highest educational level? After the political transformation in Central and Eastern Europe, one of the most important challenges of restructuring the educational system was how different cultural groups would be able to infuse their own spirituality into their children's education after the domination of the totalitarian ideology. The Hungarian case is unique because of the mixed confessional landscape, the populous Hungarian minority outside the border, the alternating hard and soft periods of religious harassment. Recently, more than half of the Hungarian population can be described as religious in their own way, one sixth strongly affiliated with churches, and another sixth are atheists. However, several studies showed that basic indicators of social status were very strongly and negatively interrelated with religiosity. It turned out that preferred educational views, values, approaches and priorities regarding the norms at schools differ very sharply according to the religious views, and belonging to a religious network significantly supports educational careers. This paper is a comprehensive review of research on the educational functions of denominational schools and religious communities in contemporary Hungary.

Keywords: denominational schools; religious networks; social capital

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1. Introduction and Background

The relationship between religiosity and educational attainment is an important question in the sociology of religion literature. It is widely contested whether the decline in religious adherence is a natural and unavoidable outgrowth due to a spreading rational worldview and the increase of educated people, which is known as the modernization process. Since the educational system plays an equally central role in status attainment, it is worth paying attention to dominant interpretations of religious views in educational institutions, and observing the association between a highly educated population and the level of several indicators of religious practice and belonging. In this respect, it is not obvious what a reliable explanation could be for the different opportunities of religious and non-religious societal groups to obtain the highest educational level. Our paper aims to address this question by summarizing the research findings about school careers of students from denominational schools and religious communities in post-communist Hungary.

Schooling was among one of the most important factors of education in Hungary, and up to the 20th century their value and norm systems were a consistent part of a comprehensive and more or less homogeneous religious culture. From the 11th to the 16th century, schools were maintained by units of the Catholic Church, and subsequent to the expansion of the Reformation, a few parallel denominational school systems were started. However, from the 18th century, the government endeavored to control and operate the entire school system on the basis of the uniform principle. Contrary to the competitive and restrictive models, cooperation between churches and state was characterized by mutuality and the sharing of tasks, because the modern state invoked churches to help extend the institutional system in the first waves of educational expansion in the 19–20th century. After the Communist takeover in 1948 all schools were nationalized, religious associations and civil movements were eliminated from public life, and only 10 denominational secondary schools were allowed to exist under strict limits [1]. In the new state-controlled schools there was no place for religious instruction. Teachers and students were constrained to acquire and propagate the Marxist ideology [2]. It was a particular subject of instruction, yet aggressive atheism penetrated all elements of the curricular and extracurricular activities and youth movements. Different worldviews and ways of thinking, in particular faith-based world views, were declared to be a dangerous enemy of communism. For this reason, teachers and university lecturers had to report on students' world views before their entrance examinations and final university exams. Religious instruction continued within parishes, but it could attract very few children because, on the one hand, students who were affiliated with religious communities became stigmatized and, on the other hand, a number of clergymen were harassed who attempted to organize youth work. Religious students who expressed their religiosity were discouraged or excluded from applying for higher education. All in all, the disadvantages of religious people could appear similar to the phenomenon in Western Europe, but it was a more complex problem. While several forms of indoctrination and persecution continued until the 1990s, the so called soft dictatorship brought about a much more substantial religious change. It enabled the unambiguous religious revival after 1978 [2] and paved the way for "a reflex-like crude individualism aiming at the accumulation of material wealth and survival" [3].

2. Post-communist Countries: the Exception or the Rule?

Although from the viewpoint of the sociology of religion, the cultural contrast between European and American religiosity seems to be the most significant present fracture, we can state that the multiple modernities that exist within Europe also have some consequences for the religious landscape and social status of religious people in the Hungary [4]. Euro-secularism, which, according to Berger and workmates [5], is an essential part of European culture, characterizes post-communist countries slightly less or in a different way. One special type of modernity was communist modernity, which mainly influenced previously pre-modern countries, and the changes brought about by this centrally controlled quantitative modernization affected only superficial spheres of society, such as urbanization and industrialization, but the deep structures of society and culture remained intact. There is no doubt that before communist rule, the German and Czech areas were economically the most modern parts of Eastern and Central Europe, and now they are characterized by a strong decline of involvement in the churches, thus showing similarities to Western European societies. In contrast, countries with a traditional social structure that went through socialist modernization are now also the most religious parts of this region, and the role of religion in the construction of personal and national identity is extremely important [6,7]. This seems to support the secularization theory. There have been very large social and economic differences in Hungary, such as between habitants of the capital city, country towns and villages, and among western, eastern and south-eastern peripheral regions. However, as far as the objective and subjective dimensions of religiosity are concerned, people from developed regions, settlements and from higher strata proved to become more active than others with a lower social status [8].

The superficial socialist and pseudo-modernization era was accompanied by enforced atheism, and met mainly with passive and rarely active resistance from the churches. It is still unexplored to what extent church leaders—who worked under great political pressure—pretended cooperation or were corrupted ideologically, but societies in the region proved to be more religious in places where churches played a crucial role in the collapse of communism (e.g., Poland). It is unquestionable that the underground face of churches with vigorous lay participation in small communities, and in the "movement church" ensured the sole way of pluralization in ideological supply to the society **[**9**]**. It seems to confirm the supply-side theory **[**10**]**. Where churches yielded to the pressure of the state party, the first-generation separated their spiritual lives from political reality, but the second generation dropped out of churches. They did not become atheists, but they aspired to have advancement in education and careers, and as a result their social ties towards the local religious communities were injured or broken for a few generations. Consequently, after the alternating hard and soft periods of religious harassment, more than half of the Hungarian population can be described as religious in their own way, one sixth are engaged church members, and another one sixth are atheists. In this respect it seems to be consistent with the individualization approach [11]. However, after the fall of communism and following the adoption of a post-material value system, one part of the highly educated young generation turned towards the religious communities [12].

As we are dealing with the relationship between religiosity and educational careers, the focus of our interest is the religiosity of intellectuals, especially of teachers. According to the Euro-secular model, the most influential subculture of intellectuals seemed to be committed to the transmission of secular values

also in Central and Eastern Europe, and this phenomenon remained a predominant feature in higher education in post-communist countries [13]. During the decades of communism promotions were awarded mainly on an ideological basis, and achievement was replaced by political reliability. Intellectuals and leaders mostly only took part in religious rites of passage ceremonies secretly, and drew away from regular churchgoing. After the political transformation, intellectuals with overtly alternative world views only very slowly collected enough cultural and social capital to come out from their catacomb-existence [1]. Religious and denominational affiliation counted—and for this reason still counts—as a private matter also in the whole of society [14]. As for the teaching profession, the core element of teacher training was the message that traditional communities (such as churches and also parents) turned children against the official ideology and teachers should keep a check on students not to fall under the influence of a "clerical political reaction" [1].

The confessional landscape is supposed to be an influential factor within the present religious setting in the Central Eastern European region. Secularization has been more intensive in partly Protestant countries, and the proportion of religious Protestants has declined. The most secularized culture is displayed in previous provinces of East Germany and the Czech Republic [15]. Although according to the supply-side theory, confessional pluralism stimulates religiosity, some researchers consider confessional diversity the weak point of resistance to state-facilitated secularization because in this situation the representatives of the state-party used the "divide et impera" tactics effectively [16]. It is beyond question that confessional pluralism in Central and Eastern Europe has historical roots. The fundamentally mono-confessional blocks of Europe are replaced by the broadest and most manifold multi-confessional belt here: Catholics, Protestants, Orthodoxs and Muslims live close to one another. Ethnic and confessional factors are interrelated and religiosity is stronger in those regions where confessional affiliation functioned as a central component of identity. The Hungarian case is unique because of the mixed confessional landscape and the populous Hungarian minority outside the border. Since 1920 in Romania and Ukraine there have been compact Hungarian ethnic minorities in Romania[1] and in Ukraine. There is a significant gap within levels of religiosity in ethnic Hungarian communities and those in the home-country, the first group lives in a plural religious context and the latter is characterized by greater individualization. This border region is characterized by traditional multi-confessionalism, with a significant protestant presence. More than half of the Hungarian ethnic students belong to the Reformed church, so the proportion of Catholics is somewhat lower. Until recently, religion has been one of the pillars of ethnic Hungarians' national identity in reviving Orthodox context in Romania and in Ukraine. After the communists came into power, Hungarian denominational schools were nationalized also in today's Ukraine (which was the Soviet Union at that time) in 1945, and then simultaneously in Hungary and in Romania in 1948. At the time of the political transformation, the peripheral border areas in the region had an insufficient network of education, and they wanted to fill the gap by opening denominational schools. While in Hungary several denominational schools were opened or re-established, in Romania and in Ukraine there was no legal way for the churches to run schools and receive funding because the dominant Orthodox Church preferred not to run general education schools.

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[1] In Romania the number of Hungarians is 1.5 million living in two compact areas and in diaspora. Apart from the border area, the other compact Hungarian area is in the middle of Rumania in the very Eastern corner of the Carpathian basin. In Ukraine the Hungarian population of 150 thousand lives in a compact community along the border and also in diaspora.

Other denominations were not allowed to engage in activities that were incompatible with Orthodox tradition. As a consequence, denominational schools are run by foundations there.

3. Youth Religiosity

In the special tripartite structure of the religiosity of Hungarian society, ecclesiastical religiosity (people who practice their religion within a church) and non-religiosity are two smaller groups of about the same size, whereas the majority—almost every second person—claim to be religious in their own way [17], which is also known as patchwork religiosity. Essentially the same classification applies to young people as well. Tomka observed that basic indicators of social status are very strongly but negatively interrelated with religiosity, but in recent years the tendency seems to have weakened with respect to the frequency of churchgoing. For example, the most highly qualified people (with university degrees) follow the path of the least qualified people. Among young people, highly qualified parents are already overrepresented on both ends of the scale, and practicing young church members come from not only more educated but also economically higher-status backgrounds, especially in big cities [18]. Young people increasingly practice their religion in small communities, which often surpasses or even replaces their practice in the large community. All research done among young people unanimously contends that religion-based voluntary membership is by far the most popular organized activity among young people, even more popular than sport activities [19]. There are considerable differences between the ethnic Hungarian and home-country youths' religiosity, as more of those in the minority are practicing religiosity.

4. Data and Methods

This paper is intended to summarise a 15-year study of educational functions of denominational schools and religious communities students in post-communist Hungary. We used multiple data sources in our study. First, we used the European Value Survey (EVS) and the World Value Survey (WVS), which are longitudinal, cross-national survey programs. They were designed to investigate moral, religious, political, and social values. Their questionnaire, details about sampling, data collection and databases are available online. We used comparative data from both survey programs, and analysed databases of 4th wave of the European Values Study from 2008. This survey was conducted in 47 countries, and the Hungarian data file contains 1513 cases.

Second, we used data from the serial Hungarian Educational Public-opinion Research organised by Hungarian Institute for Educational Research and Development. Present analysis is based on the databases from 1999 (N = 1010), 2002 (N = 1000) and 2005 (N = 1278). We compared parental educational value preferences from the different school sectors.

Third, we identified data on denominational schools' students (Family and School Socialization among Pupils at Denominational Schools'1999, N = 1464) as well as on students from different sectors (paralells 2006, N = 1446). The 1999 research was extended to Hungary as a nationwide survey, investigating representative samples of school-leavers in denominational schools. We made a multistep stratified cluster sampling (according to denominations, regions, and the special position and the size of the places of residence). The students filled in the questionnaires by themselves with the help of the inquirer's instructions. In 2006 our study is based on data gathered in the border regions of three Central

Eastern European countries, namely Hungary, Romania and Ukraine. As our aim was to detect the sector effect, the most appropriate method seemed to be to observe, just like in experiments, two students groups of approximately similar social backgrounds in different sectors. As we intended to examine the school careers of Hungarian students within and outside Hungary in denominational and non-denominational secondary schools, we picked the schools sampled by pairing each denominational school with a non-denominational one of similar status regarding their location and the students' social position. Thus, the list of sample schools consisted of pairs of schools chosen in the way described above. The students included in the survey picked from the 11th and 12th grades.

Fourth, we used data from a longitudinal survey program conducted by Center for Higher Education Research and Development among Hungarian-speaking higher education students in seven institutions of the above-mentioned border region, which is situated on the eastern edge of the European Higher Education Area. In 2003 freshman (Regional University I. N = 1500), in 2005 finals (Regional University II. N = 952), in 2008 undergraduate (The Impact of Tertiary Education on Regional Development I. N = 1211) and in 2010 graduate students (The Impact of Tertiary Education on Regional Development II. N = 600) were surveyed. We used cluster sampling in which students were picked at all facilities based on student number and seminar groups were selected at random.

We have already validated our survey results with several methods, from various points of view and with various methodologies. We also compared the results obtained during the application of contextual and multilevel analysis techniques in our investigations to our earlier multivariable analyses [20,21].

5. Religiosity and Educational Values

After the political transformation, one of the most important challenges of restructuring the educational system was to offer the possibility to different cultural groups to pass their own spirituality on through their children's education in a school system affected by the domination of the totalitarian ideology. This was a common task for the whole of Central and Eastern Europe in the post-communist era. Although the previous decades had been characterized by state-supported secularism, after the political transformation, countries of the region were able to find different solutions in the educational field according to their confessional composition, history of religious culture, and educational traditions of churches. In Hungary, teachers' and politicians' views on the role of schools as conveyers of values were most powerfully shaped by the pluralism of values appearing in society and schools on the one hand, and by a liberal attitude to education as a reflexive response to pedagogy of communist period on the other. According to the liberal view, children have a high degree of autonomy in value choices and influences coming from actors traditionally involved in their upbringing (parents and teachers) should be limited in this respect.

According to the Aufbruch (2007) survey, it was a widespread view in post-communist societies that bringing up children is among those activities that are most strongly influenced by religiosity. Half of the respondents in the region thought religious people brought up their children better than non-religious people [22]. Yet the question whether religiosity makes education more effective seemed to divide religious and non-religious respondents. All this suggests that various social groups have sharply different principles on upbringing. International comparative value research shows that Hungary falls in the middle of the scale also with respect to the importance generally attributed to religious

upbringing. It is considered more important in Poland, Romania and Slovakia; it is considered less important in the Czech Republic, Estonia and Germany. Between one fifth and one fourth of the population, predominantly but not exclusively those who practice their religion either individually or in a community, place the transmission of religion among the five most important goals of bringing up children in a family. The past two decades has seen the rise of a hard core that gives outstanding importance to religious education in schools. The issue was repeatedly examined in the Hungarian Educational Surveys on education. In 1999 24%, in 2002 18%, and in 2005 40% considered religious education in schools very important, and a further 30–40% considered it somewhat important.

Surveys rarely ask respondents to name components of religious upbringing, but much of it is revealed by the educational values religious people find important. Since the 1990s the difference between religious and non-religious peoples' orders of educational values appears to be unchanged[2]. Both groups put good manners in the first place, but after that, religious people give more importance to hard work and respect for others, whereas non-religious people give priority to independence. The dominant axis of educational values seems to be the individuality *vs.* community scale, on which religious people are closer to the community pole, while for non-religious people the value of individual freedom overwrites solidarity with the community. The differences on the autonomy *vs.* outer control axis reveal that in the religious system of education, children are less emancipated and are looked upon as creatures needing protection and supervision in the charge of adults, whereas non-religious ideologies tend to accept children's moral autonomy and limited responsibility of adults.

The right of decision on upbringing is an index of ideological character. In the socialist era representatives of institutional education regarded parents as ideologically unreliable, but since the 1990s, parents' right to choose schools has been generally accepted. However, school users are divided as regards children's ability and right to decide. People attached to denominational schools give priority to schools' and parents' responsibility and right of choice. As for the relationship of the two, in accordance with the "in loco parentis" principle, schools can be looked upon as the "extended arms" of families responsible for the upbringing of their children. This idea is essentially different from the principles preferred by public schools, namely children's moral autonomy and their consequent autonomy in the choice of values and the restricted ideological influence of parents and teachers, the traditionally dominant actors of a child's upbringing.

At the same time, however, one has to keep in mind that there is no longer such a unified view on the upbringing of children among practicing religious people as previously, as there are remarkable differences—corresponding to the transforming religiosity of the particular groups—according to the level of schooling [23,24]. The most highly qualified religious people place a sense of responsibility in the first place and respect for others comes third, but good manners, hard work and obedience appears only later (Table 1). This reveals the trend that, while community values retain their priority, the importance of individual autonomy is on the increase in religious groups' educational value systems. The changes in educational values within religious groups might be related to the different types of religiosity among people of different social status. Of more importance, however, is that highly educated

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[2] The order of values were basically similar in the 2008 EVS data and the 1990s' WVS data. The question was about what qualities respondents considered important in child rearing at home.

religious people's educational values do not become similar to the highly educated non-religious, and the differences become more distinct over time.

Table 1. The five most important educational values among Hungarian respondents of various school levels (2008, N = 1513).

Order of Importance	***Primary Education***		***Secondary Education***		***Higher Education***	
	Non-religious	***Religious***	***Non-religious***	***Religious***	***Non-religious***	***Religious***
1.	good manners	good manners	good manners	good manners	independence	feeling of responsibility
2	hard work	hard work	independence	hard work	good manners	good manners
3	respect for others	feeling of responsibility	feeling of responsibility	feeling of responsibility	respect for others	respect for others
4	feeling of responsibility	respect for others	hard work	independence	feeling of responsibility	Independence
5	independence	Frugality	respect for others	respect for others	hard work	religious faith

Source: European Value Survey, Hungarian sub-sample

6. Research after Rebuilding Denominational Schools

Hungarian denominational schools are government-financed private schools maintained by a unit of churches and guided (in the spiritual sense) by a church or denomination. Most of our surveys focused on students of denominational schools, since our question was whether and how denominational schools can help overcome educational disadvantage among religious people. However, church adherents have been less qualified, have lived in the villages, and have worked in jobs of lower esteem. Because of their high university acceptance rate in Hungary it was widely believed that denominational schools are elite schools mostly attended by non-religious students of favorable social backgrounds. We found that denominational schools accept a mixture of students from various social and religious backgrounds. Many denominational schools are located in disadvantaged peripheral regions, and almost three-quarters of students in denominational schools come from villages or small towns. Apart from the capital city, where the neglected children of non-religious well-educated parents were in the majority, denominational schools students had an average and lower social status, similar to public secondary school pupils. However, we noted some differences in their social status in that there are fewer intellectuals in leading posts among pupils' parents in denominational schools. In spite of their higher qualifications, these parents do not work in jobs of the highest prestige but rather as subordinate intellectuals, which indicates that the effects of religious people's negative discrimination, typical in former times, were still detectable. There are a larger number of entrepreneurs and fewer unemployed workers among the parents. The reason why these people were driven to set up their own businesses was to avoid unemployment. The number of children per family was well above Hungarian average, and thus the per capita income was lower [1]. As for religious climate in their families, we separated mainly religious families and families who do not practice their religion. The first type is characterized by traditional, multigenerational and church-adhering religiosity, but a more modern type of micro-community worship is also significant. It is clear that the children's socialization is made more

effective by the long-lasting unity of the value systems of families and friends. Almost half of all students live in a family characterized by low-level institutional adherence and group membership, but the majority demonstrate some signs of religiosity.

Our research focused on the composition of school users, their expectations, and the fulfillment of those expectations [1]. We came to the conclusion that students have chosen a denominational school either in hope of direct religious upbringing and moral development or putting their trust in the school's careful and safe atmosphere, assumed because of its religious nature. Thus the main line of expectations is connected with either religiosity or some of its consequential dimensions. Besides this, however, we detected a further function that had been previously ignored, namely reducing inequalities of opportunity among students of culturally disadvantaged backgrounds. Schools achieved that with the help of the social resources of school communities that are based on the safety of norms [1]. According to our results, students' educational careers were influenced—to a much greater extent than by all other explanatory variables—by the strong and organic relationship network within the community of school users. This includes a sense of belonging on the part of parents and children who followed similar norms and formed a community, and, most of all, by the school density of student groups with a circle of friends practicing religion [1,25,]. The same explanatory variables influenced denominational students to refrain from drugs and accept members of different ethnic groups [26]. This influence proved to be even stronger than that of cultural capital on school context. Students having a close circle of religious friends—a phenomenon typical of denominational schools in particular—provide such social capital in the school community that also inspires those who lack this resource themselves.

Whereas the hypothesis on denominational schools as functional communities producing social capital has been a matter of discussion since the 1980s in American research. In Europe it received attention after the turn of the millennium when a Program for International Student Assessment proved that denominational schools had better results than public schools in 14 of the 17 countries [27,28]. When Corten and Dronkers [29] tested the theory of social capital, he grounded his hypothesis on Coleman *et al.*'s concept [30] of a functional school based on shared values. In the original interpretation, the value system of a functional community consists of a coherent unity with a unified system of preferred values, such as: man's life in this and in the other world; man's mission in the world; the individual's dignity irrespective of abilities or social background; paying attention to the teacher and making a decent use of one's talents. These values support one another, forming an efficient and functional system for the community. Coleman emphasizes the cohesive nature of the network (closure) and that there is a general consensus on values in the school community, so he focuses on form and content alike. The existence of an intergenerational closure around the school is often not a measured, but a so-called assumed, variable in surveys concerning denominational students. Dronkers, who insisted on Coleman's formal criteria, found that European data did not support the fact that the functional school community came into being due to parents' frequent personal interaction within the same religious community.

We think that as long as the majority of those belonging to a denominational school community are involved in communal religious practice, we might assume a value consensus among the church adherents and among the members of small groups even without everybody knowing everybody else. Approaching the concept of the functional community from the content element of the structure of relationships, we concluded that the unity of norms and behavioral patterns is an important element of a

consistent value system. A functional community is characterized by harmony between everyday actions and religious norms within the school community. We found that the effectiveness of a denominational school can be explained by the density of religious students who function as a bridge between the school community and the religious community, thereby supplying their fellow students with important and seemingly novel (under modern school circumstances) information such as discipline, respect for the teacher's dignity and conscientious work [31]. In other words, the better achievement of denominational schools may be due to the fact that students do not only mobilize their internal achievement-stimulating norms to their own purposes, but they also make them available to the rest of the school community. The question is what proportion needs to spread new information in the community so that the spillover effect of stimulating norms can reach the other students.

7. An Attempt at Intersectoral Comparison

The next phase of research consisted of searching for answers to several further questions. Our first survey had been conducted only in denominational schools, and for intersectoral comparison we used identical or similar variables available in various national databases. However, those data were collected with different methodologies and often with different variables, so it was necessary to obtain data with the specific aim of intersectoral comparison. Since a populous Hungarian minority lives outside the border, by studying within different school systems it became possible for us to make international and intersectoral comparisons at the same time: to check whether a school community's communal resources with roots in religiosity function similarly in the education systems of three different states. Above all, we wanted to find out, whether there were any differences between the student populations which are seemingly similar in status in the two sectors. As regards students' religious backgrounds, there are considerable differences between the sectors of the school systems. Although all three types of religiosity are present among denominational school students' parents, more than double are practicing compared to public schools. However, it is our conviction that, when researching school processes, it is not sufficient to examine only the characteristics of individuals and families, since pupils connected via an organizational framework will obtain new and common characteristics. In this respect, we treated the religious practice of pupils as a characteristic of school communities. One fourth of the pupils attend schools where adherents of religion are in the minority, and almost one third of the sample attend schools where three fourths of the pupils are believers by personal conviction. Therefore, we could see that while pupils in non-denominational schools can study in very heterogeneous environments in this respect, the denominational school students are present in a predominantly religious environment. In connection with building friendships, the school itself provides the greatest source. Whilst in non-denominational schools, students make friends at places of amusement and during hobby activities, in denominational schools, it is the religious communities and the dormitory that prove to be the most determining source for making friends.

We have also concluded that even in the case of a student population having approximately similar socio-economic status indicators, there is a significant intersectoral difference, which is due to the distribution of the students among the schools. Non-denominational schools turned out to be socially closed and segmented, compared to their denominational counterparts. Non-denominational students go to schools which can be classified socially into five different groups according to the social composition

of the schools. On one end of the scale, we find schools where the rate of parents with degrees is only 10%, whereas on the other end this rate is over 60%. There are no such social cases in denominational schools. It confirms the thesis that if a school is organized on a religious basis, identification with the religious community overwrites the vertical structure of social status in recruiting students [32].

Besides this, we mainly focused on exploring the nature and effects of special contexts in schools. Using the various dimensions of achievement we created a summarizing index of achievement that included aspects such as taking on extra academic work (taking language exams, participating in competitions), planning one's future academic career (higher education) and a subjective element, namely the importance attached to academic activities. The aim of the dominant part of our study was to find what elements of the school context are able to moderate the reproductive effects of the school. According to our findings, school context strongly influences school performance. The individual-level influence of parental social status can be reduced by school context rates of parental education mostly in the denominational sector where the school system was less divided into social castes. The second source is students' personal religious practice enabling them to work persistently and ambitiously, act purposefully with strong self-control and respect the work of others (teachers and classmates). The third source is students' relationship networks developing predominantly along religious communities and appearing as an indirect consequence of religiosity in that cooperating students in the relationship network support one another's purposeful and disciplined academic work [33]. The school density of those linked to religious networks modifies the individual and context-level determinisms of social status, albeit in a very discrepant manner. Whilst in the non-denominational sector it has barely any effect, in the denominational sector it becomes the dominant compensating factor. It is likely that the members of religion-based networks need to be present in the school context in considerable density to be able to influence their peers coming from disadvantaged backgrounds for cooperation with the school and teachers, academic performance, and balanced work [34].

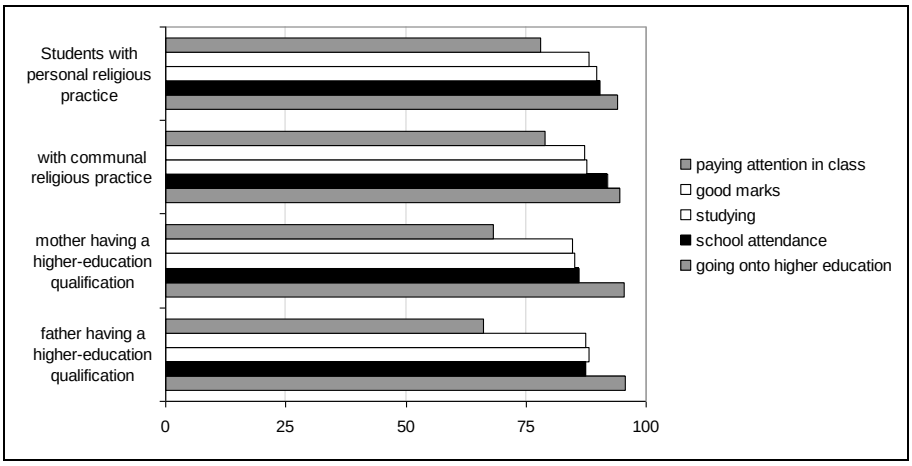
8. Norms Related to Studying in Denominational Schools

Here we summarize our findings not only about attitudes to academic achievement, but also to academic work itself. This is of utmost importance in our region according to the fundamental hypothesis that the high achievement of denominational schools might be due to the fact that the community of students generally accept norms related to the importance of studying and sense of duty, and these values are also supported by a transcendent set of arguments [35-37]. The same argument is present in the pedagogical documents of the surveyed schools, but it will produce real effects only if it appears in the personal opinions of the widest possible circle of students. In order to detect possible intersectoral differences, we asked students about the importance of various activities related to studying. The examined variables were school attendance, studying, receiving good marks, prospects of higher education and paying attention in class. To get a feel of the context, we also wanted to know how important students thought those activities were to their friends, classmates and student hostel roommates. Having looked at the entire sample, we found that secondary-school students gave the highest priority to continuing to higher education and the lowest to paying attention in class. It was noteworthy that students, irrespective of sector, tended to group themselves more than their peers among those to whom school-related activities were very important. That is to say, their intended and realized

attitudes to studying showed some discrepancy, as the majority seemed to be less devoted from the outside than they themselves claimed to be. That is why it became necessary to examine the peer environment. Our data enabled us not to base our analysis on self-evaluating individual-level answers, but on attitudes appearing on the context level.

In regards to attitudes attributed to friends, about one fifth of the students were helped by a uniformly supportive environment, and when evaluating their friends' attitudes to school activities, students came up with a wider range of attitudes than during the expression of their own opinions. On the whole, every tenth student attended a class where studying was important for everybody, whereas in the classes of at least every fourth student those who really wanted to study and get good marks were in the minority. We were surprised to find that half of the students spent their days in classes where the prevailing norm was not paying attention during lessons. It is only enough to imagine this learning environment in order to make sure it hinders students' achievement not only through its contextual influence but also in its physical reality. In contrast, classes in denominational schools were much more unanimous that it was important to pay attention in class and they were somewhat more homogeneous in their opinions on the importance of school attendance. These were the two variables that typically produced intersectoral differences. Instrumental and credentialist elements of school activities, such as getting good marks, going on to higher education and preparation for classes were regarded as indispensable also in the non-denominational sector, but school attendance and paying attention to the teacher in class was of utmost importance to students in the denominational sector. The reason why school attendance stands out from the other activities may be due to the great appreciation of involvement in the school community, which, as research shows, is one of the most frequent motives for choosing a denominational secondary school. It is an interesting question why denominational students give more importance to paying attention in class. Possible motives might be a kind of utilitarianism—to reduce home preparation time—or rather the acknowledgement and appreciation of, and tolerance towards, discipline in class and the teacher's work. We suppose the former is the result of home-acquired behavioral patterns, which correspond with the inner logic of the school system, whereas the latter may be a consequence of religiosity.

Figure 1. Proportion of those who consider studying-related activities important within their circle of friends.



Source: Paralells'2006, N = 1446

Our hypotheses about students coming from families with high cultural capital were not borne out, as they did not consider either school attendance or paying attention more important than average. On the contrary, it was exactly students whose fathers did not have a degree that seemed to take paying attention in class somewhat more seriously. Among pupils with high cultural capital, going on to higher education, getting good marks and studying was slightly but not remarkably more important than average. What we found significant was that there was a particularly strong correlation between religiosity on the one hand and school attendance and paying attention on the other. Religious students' attitudes to school activities were definitely better in all respects, regardless of whether they practiced individually or in a community (Figure 1). All this suggests that the high density of students with religious practice in the school context may shift the prevailing studying-related norms of the school community in a favorable direction. That is to say, we have discovered a marked distinguishing feature of the learning environment of denominational schools [38].

9. Religious Interpretive Communities in Higher Education

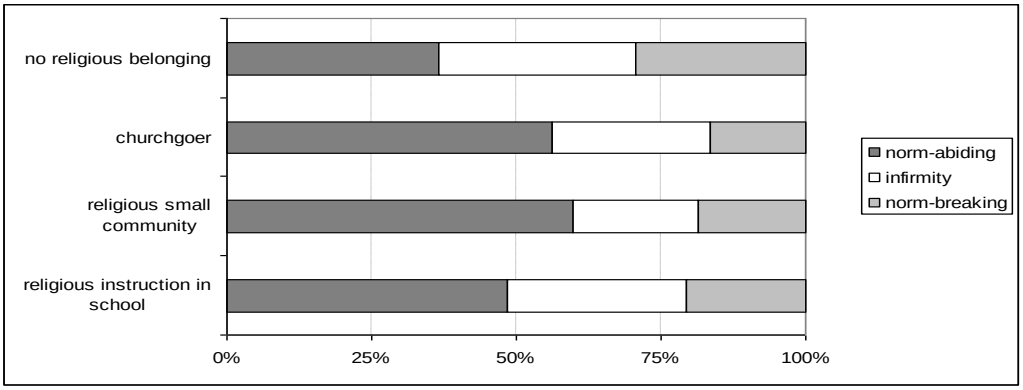
We consider attitudes towards academic work to be a very important predictor of adult job attitudes and occupational status. Our research team has been conducting surveys for a decade among higher education students in the above mentioned border region. The focus of our research has been how religious students or students coming from denominational secondary schools are socialized and how well they achieve higher education. In this area one fifth of undergrad students and one fourth of master students belong to a religious small community (in 2008 and 2010).

During the communist decades not only were previous social identities discredited, but also moral consciousness and social cohesion. Dual morality was widespread in socialist countries: several generations grew up believing that "socialist ethics" and practical ethics were separable. After the transition to democracy, the system of norms was further challenged by the performance pressure post-socialist societies had to face both on individual and social levels in the process of joining the developed world [39]. The perception of the young generation, that fortune of the new economic and political elites was based not always on honest work, caused uncertainty in norms, anomie. This attitude seems to be all the more important in the status attainment process, because not only the politicians but the employers increasingly count on the development of dedicated attitudes to work, ethical awareness and self-improvement as the most important outputs of higher education [40,41]. The results of all of our surveys clearly showed that former denominational schools' students and members of religious communities had very favorable attitudes towards work [37,42-43]. Whereas our earlier results showed significant differences in future career plans, our recent findings also contained considerable differences in the moral awareness of students' work between students with religion-based and other relationship networks.

Higher education, which is generally characterized by a relatively open goal-system, loose control-mechanisms and high fragmentation, serves as the first opportunity for students to work and organize their activities independently. According to our findings, fair academic behavior of students (for example reading obligatory and recommended literature, not buying their thesis, not using crib-sheet, not learning for money, attending all lessons, no plagiarism, working for diploma, learning hard) differ regarding the religious education and community experiences (Figure 2). We can state that it

is a consequent trend that also formal, informal and non-formal types of religious education can prove standard norms and a high level of moral awareness.

Figure 2. Level of moral awareness of undergrad students according to religious environment.



Source: The Impact of Tertiary Education on Regional Development I. N = 1211

During the social and economic restructuring, mass redundancy, a high level of unemployment and job insecurity became frequent phenomena in Central and Eastern Europe. Therefore, young generations are threatened by meaninglessness and they have to adapt to living with unemployment. The ways of how students enter and get along in the world of work reveal different attitudes. As for the positive attitudes towards socially useful work, there is more empirical evidence among students who take part in any kind of religious education. Interregional research has shown that they are determined to get a job and they can be outstandingly characterized by an altruist attitude towards work. They have a coherent image of work, in which the central elements are responsibility, helping others, social usefulness, dealing with people and team work. Students from other school sectors, however, consider advancement in career, prospects for promotion, and high salary important [37].

The process and main agents of student socialization seem to have changed, as the role- concept and the interpretation of norms and views about desirable learning outcomes are not clear-cut and purposefully transmitted. They depend on the meanings constructed in students' context. Since it is more effective than any curriculum or pedagogical method in higher education, the interpretive communities and the diffusions of different reality constructions within the student society at the individual campuses is worth highlighting. Religion-based interpretive communities have proven to be among the most influential agents in transmitting higher educational values. Perhaps the values and norms dominant in religious interpretative communities assists in reducing the social disadvantage of religious people, and this is not only for their own benefit, but also for larger communities.

10. Conclusions

This article has given a comprehensive review of our research on the correlation between religiosity and school careers. We maintain that modernization took place in Central and Eastern Europe differently than in Western Europe. The so-called pseudo-modernization that the majority of the region underwent did not affect the deep structure of society. People did not cut ties with religious institutions due to their own spontaneous individual decisions. Under political pressure, the process took place only on the

surface. As a result, however, the past decades have seen the appearance of a large social and demographic gap between religious and non-religious people. Looking at young people's religiosity 20 years after the political transformation one can see that religious practice, both personal and in communities, especially small ones, is more frequent among children of higher-status parents or young people studying at higher levels than among lower-status youths. In recent years we have demonstrated, in several analyses, the academic achievement advantage of those involved in religion-based relationship networks. In this study we have summarized our findings that belonging to a religious community constitutes a clear separation between educational values and attitudes to academic work both in schools and higher education, which foreshadows the probable future attitude to work. We have attempted to approach the problem of how—with what mediation—religion contributes to a successful school career, which is one of the key issues of the sociology of religion. The above results are very important and unique in the surveyed region, and call for further analysis and research. They shed light upon the fact that the correlation between academic career, social advancement, high status, and religiosity do not necessarily follow the Western European secular model. High status is not always accompanied by decreasing religiosity and individualism that seeks one's own accomplishment. Instead, there is another model in which dedication to community interests and high academic achievement can support social advancement, and be influenced by the interpretation of norms by a religious community based on cohesive relationships.

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