



**Gabriella Pusztai (2009): The social capital and school career. [A társadalmi tőke és az iskolai pályafutás]. Budapest: New Mandate Publishing House. [Uj Mandatum Kiado.]**

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Gabriella Pusztai's work attends to investigations concerning young people who are studying in high schools or universities in disadvantageous parts of Hungary such as the northeast region and beyond the borders of the country in Ukraine and Romania. She examined Hajdu-Bihar and Szabolcs-Szatmar- Bereg County in Hungary, Bihar and Szatmar in Romania and Beregszász, Munkacs, Nagyszollos and Ungvar in Romania. Her work is based on national and international resources, according to which the students who study in religious schools receive better grades and tend to continue their studies in universities than students who study in non-religious institutes. Pusztai's investigation is directed to the mentioned effect in those areas.

The author is a well-known researcher of the subject, a doctorate in Educational Sciences of University of Debrecen (2002), directed by Emeritus Professor Tamas Kozma. She published her doctoral dissertation in 2004 via Gondolat Publishing House entitled „School and Community- Pupils of Denominational Schools in the Turn of the Millennium”. In 2013 she became the member of the MTA. Her Hungarian and English monographs, books and publications are essential source materials for researches.

The present volume is the third of the “Education and society” series, which was preceded by „A high school history teacher education” (2008) by Andor Ladany and the “Bologna process in Central Europe” (2009) by Tamas Kozma and Magdolna Rebay.

The book consists four chapters where the author clarifies the relation between the education and the social capital. The term „social capital” – referring to the given phenomenon- appeared firstly in Hanifan Lyda J.'s study in 1916. She preferred Coleman's interpretation about the subject, according to which „the behaviour of the social system shall be discussed at the macro level, however, the notion of the

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orientation to the purpose shall be interpreted according to the individual's level<sup>1</sup> (Pusztai 2009, 14) Coleman, such as Bourdieu, distinguished three types of capital, where the third one corresponds to the term "social capital". It occurs in the personal relationship and contains the norms, trust and information generated by it. Pusztai describes the methods which are currently used to measure the social capital, including the Competence and PISA tests, which examines the connection between social capital and the great performance in schools.

Young people are affected by several factors during their lifetimes, such as the school and residential communities, the family and the relationships outside the family. Coleman did not pay so much attention to the influence of friendship on the one's personality; however, he examined the effect of the residential and school communities in details. According to his opinion, schools containing functional communities are the most suitable to provide important values and norms to the pupils, since the parents also create a community in this case (such as identical religious communities). Pusztai, while detailing other researcher's observations, pays also attention to lead the reader in accordance with the thematic mentioned in the title. To easier interpretation, she constantly provides a basis for comparison consisting research results from abroad and other types of institutes.

Although the author's dedication to the chosen topic is obvious, she did not mention pros and cons, she only declares the national and international results of the research. Concerning higher education the researchers claimed that being religious has not got a positive impact on studies, the religious students did not seem to be less motivated in this case. Presumably, the family was more important than studying. Despite this fact, the positive impact of belonging to a religious group is outstanding in case of the young generation; furthermore, the test results of pupils of religious schools are better than students studying in public schools.

Reliable, comparative analyses between religious and non-religious schools can be found from the 1980s. The religious schools seemed to be more advantageous than higher test scores, fewer students decided to leave the schools and higher college entrance success. In the author's previous book she confirmed the positive effect of this school type to the students living crucial circumstances.

The basic question of her research, namely is there any difference between the sectors of the examined areas concerning public education, is followed by several further questions. In this way, several hypotheses were set up: functional community hypothesis, social network hypothesis, long-term impact hypothesis. The author's purpose with investigating the areas beyond the border is to examine whether a character can be observed among the students of religious schools that can be found in Hungary as well. The other hypothesis of her research also follows this way of thinking that puts an emphasis on social composition.

The base of the research was the social situation of the candidates in order to compare the religious and control schools. The author draws out attention to the difficulties of the research, the low amount of replies. The data show that highly qualified parents tend to send their children to Hungarian and Transcarpathian schools than to institutes in the Partium. Although the Hungarian data shows that according to their profession, the parents of children studying in religious schools are higher qualified than the control group, however, it still belongs to the middle class of this area.

Another indicator of the cultural capital is one's attitude to high culture that the author would like to measure with reading. Her results show that in the families where the child goes to religious institutes tend to read more. The classification according to authors provides a speciality to the examined group.

In the chapter „Hidden sources” the author focuses rather on the capital forms and their effect which differs from the regular Education Sociological tests. Pusztai examines the effect of the social capital in the families and in the school as well. She draws special attention to the pupils' relationship system; moreover, she also investigates the parents' behaviour. The students' value preferences show interesting results, mainly because the chapter deals with the examination of students abroad. Finally, the author discusses the religious capital that completes the presentation of the social capital. Concerning the examination of the students in religious schools, we can declare that it highly differ from the students of non-religious schools.

The pupils' efficiency was influenced by several factors, such as the student's workload, the motivation and quality of university studies, the school activates, moreover, the application to universities, the future plans, the attitudes to work, studying and culture. The fourth chapter of the book concludes the differences between the efficiency of the two school types. The most interesting result is that the cultural consumption, owing cultural articles and places in dormitories have a significant effect on the students' efficiency. The fourth chapter of the book summarises the deductible denominational and non-denominational school effectiveness differences. The last summary section presents the results of the coordinated research by the author revealing the relationship between Easter border area and Hungarian students with a comparative analysis. The author of the book takes a special sensitivity during the whole book, her analytical methods are modern, used the educational sociological paradigm.

The special value of this volume make differences between the three countries educational policy and educational system, draw a picture of a society unique perspective which maintains their respective educational system the two cross-border area has much different from each other.

Gabriella Pusztai's volume's importance is not only in the fact that in addition to the traditional canonical capital resources, hidden resources (the religious capital, connections, value consensus), but also tests the three countries (Hungary, Romania,

Ukraine) education policy, and education system and keeping in mind differences of analyses.

The „Social capital and the school” volume was not only for the education sociologists a valuable reading material, because a fairly specific in the scientific sense, however, it addresses a wide professional audience, it’s style is expressive, a variety of interesting approach, in addition, teachers and people working in teacher training and students also rotate benefit from this book.

The book also confirms the practising teachers in their belief that the school which maintains and creates, and in which various levels of social relations can be detected, determines their student’s further career and quality of life.