The Effects of Institutional Social Capital on Students' Success in Higher Education

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Abstract

Educational researchers have highlighted that schools can have some institutional characteristics in compulsory education (stable relationships in school community, mutual trust of actors and expanded faculty role models) that can serve as resources of social capital. Recent changes in higher education and increasing diversity in student population turned scientific interest towards students and communities. Tinto at their colleagues advocated the statement that students' institutional integration and institutional social context attributes have a strong effect on student achievement in higher education as well. Our question was whether students' integration into higher education institutional and external communities and associations during the university years can contribute to the improvement of higher education outcomes also in a EastCentral European region where the rate of graduated population is lower than the EU avarage and the majority of students' parents had no experience with HE. We analised the TERD data of full time students ,The Impact of Tertiary Education on Regional Development 2008-2011). When comparing explanatory variables we found it noteworthy that it was the informal side of intergenerational relationships that proved to be very efficient, whereas the most prominent areas of intragenerational relationships were those based on the expansion of knowledge and attachment to a voluntary community.

Keywords: *higher education; nontraditional students; social capital; student success; institutional effect; disadvantaged region*

1. Introduction

In its so-called elite phase before its large-scale expansion, higher education was characterised by input selectivity (Trow, 1974). Also in Hungary, the structure of secondary education that prepared for the entrance exam, the process of making a decision to apply for admission, the highly competitive entrance exam and later the distribution of students among different types of institutions and training took place in a socially selective way (Kozma, 2008), but after entrance the dropout rate was not high. After the transition to democracy in Hungary, regardless of the expansion's alternating periods of full swing and halt, the strictness of entrance selection has gradually decreased owing to the joint influence of the funding system and demographic changes (Kozma, 2008, Polónyi, 2013). Nowadays European higher education policy no longer keeps strict selection on its agenda; instead, recent general aims include widening participation and raising the proportion and supporting the academic careers of disadvantaged students (Reay et al., 2009, Thomas, 2002, Greenbank, 2009, Teichler, 2008, Pasternack and Bloch, 2008). That certainly raises the question how competitive mass higher education is as it is realised in particular regions, institutions and faculties, since in most higher education institutions of the surveyed region non-traditional students are in such majority that one can actually speak of non-traditional campuses.

As regards the diversity of the student community, some of the literature discusses the heterogeneity of students in terms of sex, social origin, ethnicity and religion (Harper and Quaye, 2009). Studies in educational sociology and pedagogy of higher education are

consistent in calling certain groups non-traditional if they show new features in the above respects or are underrepresented compared to their social significance. The concept of *non-traditional student* does not have a stable semantic field; its meaning keeps expanding. The following risk groups have been identified also in Hungary: students from low-status families (Fónai et al., 2011), women, family providers and those who work besides studying (Engler, 2013), those who belong to an ethnic or religious minority (Pusztai, 2007, Forray-Kozma, 2013), those who come from secondary technical schools or start their studies at a somewhat later age (Györgyi, 2008). Risk groups usually include students who entered higher education as new target groups in the second wave of expansion. Lack of integration threatens mainly first-generation students, whose former social and intellectual background differs sharply from the culture of the institution. Badly achieving middle-class students had also appeared in higher education by the 1990s, increasing "middle-class dropout rates" in massive numbers as a new crisis group (Tinto, 1993, De Witte and Cabus 2013).

2. Theoretical approach
2.1. Interpretations of social capital in higher education research

The explanations of student advancement are grounded in the reproduction of the family's social status and the transmission of cultural capital, but these theories do not work among non-traditional students, for example in a campus community dominated by them. As our earlier research had shown that social capital in the Colemanian sense was able to compensate for the determinism of reproduction to a certain extent, we wanted to know whether this positive effect of social capital could be detected in the context of lower-status higher education students and campuses (Coleman, 1988, Pusztai, 2006, Pusztai, 2007). Accordingly, first we will give a review of how literature on social capital and relationship networks in higher education takes this phenomenon into account and then we will present our own theoretical framework and analysis.

The majority of studies on higher education that use the concept of social capital set out from Coleman's concise definitions published in 1988 and 1990 (Arcidiacono and Nicholson, 2005), elsewhere one finds Bordieu's three categories of capital (Berger, 2000, Thomas, 2002, Greenbank, 2009), whereas the third group of researchers rely on both authors' interpretations without reflecting upon the fact that they are attached to essentially different paradigms of social theory (Martin and Spenner, 2009, Thomas, 2002).

In the discourse of higher education research the crucial matter for debate is which form of social relationship helps the development of that particular type of social capital which is the most supportive to the individual throughout their career. When Coleman claimed that social capital is rooted in the structure of social relationships and it gives the individual stimulating support in achieving their academic goals (Coleman, 1990), he pointed out closed and tight relationship structures as the most efficient. Others argued for weak ties and open networks (Granovetter, 1973), adding that the resources inherent in loose relationships are efficient if they mediate between cohesive social formations.

In this debate our train of thought is furthered by Burt's (2000) and later Lin's (2005) consensus-creating suggestions. Their models lead to the assumption that both tight, homogeneous relationship networks and looser ones are able to bring benefit to members, in different ways. In terms of the higher educational system it means that at times of transition between the stages of the system it is the open relationship network with its loose ties that may come in useful, whereas within a given stage of one's education successful socialisation and good academic achievement are helped by closed and tight relationship structures (Pusztai, 2011). As long as different relationship networks bring their members different benefits, the question is which type of capital is the most necessary in higher education?

Provided that higher education is a competitive field, it seems that a loose and - whether in terms of age, generation or social status - heterogeneous network is more useful; however, if young students still need reinforcing, redundant norms in order to get prepared for later competition, a dense and homophilic relationship network is more expedient (Pusztai, 2011).

2.2. Student involvement based on students' networks

Prompted by his longitudinal comparative survey of higher education students, in 1984 Astin developed his influential theory of student involvement, which attributes students' advancement to their involvement in the higher education institution's academic and social life. A distinctive feature of the theory is that involvement and identification with the student role refer to students' actual activities rather than their motivation. As the author put it, it is not what students think or how they feel that is important but what they do. While looking for the reasons for dropping out, Astin noticed that students do better if they are in harmony with their institutional environment. Astin found that cultural attachment at a denominational college, for example, supports the achievement of the members of the particular denomination, because it is easier for them to identify with the institution and they take pleasure in participating in its events. He also observed that entrance to higher education influenced world views, religious orientation, ways of life and taste in several cases and concluded that the common changes must be rooted in students' interaction with their institutional environment. This is the observation on which the theory of involvement grounds its explanation of student outcome (Astin, 1993).

One of the outstanding theories of student integration is Tinto's theory (1993) based on his empirical research on student attrition. In the 1980s, to satisfy the urgent need for theories on the part of the independent sociology of higher education, he interpreted the findings of his decade-long research on student attrition within the frameworks of *rites of passage*, a concept borrowed from ethnography, and Durham's theory of anomie. The choice of the interpretational framework suggests that the author intended to break with the almost exclusively psychological approach of student sociology. He emphasised that the difference between the attrition rates of selective and comprehensive institutions cannot be attributed to different personality types (Pusztai, 2011). According to the theory of student integration both individual success and the efficiency of the institution crucially depend on the stability of the higher education institution's societal community, the condition of which is a significant shift between ties outside and inside the institution.

It is primarily incorporation into a student society made up of loose ties that Tinto looks upon as a valuable form of capital, while those who have empirically revised his concept opt for close friendships (Bean, 2005). Others, relying on the ecological analysis of student relationships, hold the view that the closeness or distance of relationships cannot serve as a basis for distinction or contrast. Since interpersonal relations in the narrow sense (such as roommates, group of friends, work team, sport club, connections between faculty and students) interact as independent microsystems, they serve students' development only if they support one another (Renn and Arnold 2003). As the student society within an institution consists of networks of subcultures and one student can belong to several of them, it is not enough for a student to find support of their views on studying in only one microsystem, but the entire perceived student culture should be stimulating.

Advocates of the reproduction theory criticise Tinto for devoting less attention to social status than they think would be necessary. In their opinion, both the choice of institution and selection within an institution are kept in motion by the reproduction of cultural capital, therefore institutions admit and retain such students that contribute to their cultural capital (Berger, 2000). Academic and social integration are determined by students'

cultural capital alone as the range of social contacts is both a direct and, through communication skills, indirect consequence of the family's cultural capital (DiMaggio and Mohr, 1985).

2.3. Institutional social capital

Having analysed the large amount of literature on the subject, one is led to the unambiguous conclusion that institutions of higher education do not contribute to the development of their students through structural or infrastructural factors but by providing them with an interactional force field. Moreover, within the interactional force field there has been a shift of emphasis towards informal and intragenerational forces. Simultaneously, there has been an increase in the proportion of non-traditional students, who do not only lack any passed-down higher education experience, but are also attracted out of the higher education milieu by their social status and microenvironments.

Among the theories that lend themselves as interpretational frameworks to the more noteworthy research findings available on the subject the most influential are Austin's theory of student involvement, Tinto's theory of student integration, Bourdieu's theory of reproduction and its improved version, the theory of institutional habitus (Tierney, 2001), as well as Coleman's concept of social capital. The most popular of these, Tinto's integrational paradigm worked well especially as an explanation of lower-status students' integration into HE, based on the observations made when the first wave of non-traditional students streamed into higher education in the 1980s. The theory relies on a concept of socialisation with a more traditional, passive and static student image and a somewhat simplified picture of organisational society. Revisions of the theory lead one to the conclusion that it does not apply equally to all student groups; e.g it works better with residential students than commuting ones and it works differently with the two sexes.

Since then, during recent waves of expansion, higher education has also been attracting such students that do not (only) differ from traditional students in their hard indicators of social status, but (also) in other respects. They are the ones who have already entered institutions with strongly heterogeneous faculty and student societies. Perhaps now it is time to seek a more precise explanation for the achievement of various student groups in by using a more sensitive, multidimensional approach to social status, taking into consideration subcultural lifestyles and value and identity categories that influence personal relationship networks and thereby detecting subtler social categories. Within the interpretational framework we are interested in paying special attention to the dimension of relationships because, beyond their help in more sensitive status assessment, we assume that network resources as well as traditional forms of capital prove to be very useful in academic advancement. Accordingly, we have reviewed theories and research that count on the power of relationships among students.

Tinto analysed students' integration into the society of the institution as an explanation of success. In his comprehensive model he reflected on students' connectedness to formal and informal social systems and concluded that integration into them influences achievement in such a way that it cuts the ties that attract students out of the world of HE and, through frequent interactions, they conform to forces attracting inside. They get integrated to such an extent as they are able to share fellow students' norms and values and meet long-term formal and informal requirements of the community of the institution or a closer student community. While integration strengthens or remains strong, students' commitment to both their personal goals and the institution increases, which has a beneficial effect on achievement. Lack of integration, on the other hand, leads to getting distanced, marginalisation and attrition. For a long time the theory of academic and social integration counted as the only dominant

explanation of the issue, and although several of its details were debated, it was generally considered applicable. We also think there are limitations to the applicability of the theory because one cannot assume the existence of a tangible common culture in the institutions, and neither is the student community such an entity that incorporates newcomers smoothly. When compared, the theory of student integration and Astin's (1993) theory of student involvement have a number of contact points. Whereas Astin does not give a coherent explanation as to what determines the differences in the extent of student input, differences in the success of student integration, as formulated by Tinto, gives some guidance. Bean, Spady, Astin and Tinto all come to the same conclusion that the state of commitment necessary for success is a result of integration.

The other influential theoretical model that has contributed to the research of the connection between relationships in higher education and success is Bourdieu and his followers' interpretation, which claims the individual's relationships and achievement are related to the interplay between student habitus and organisational habitus. This theory fails to give a satisfactory explanation for the success differences within non-traditional student groups. Habitus is closely linked to hard indicators of social status, so it cannot be helpful in the interpretation of achievement differences within a class or class fraction. Whether they speak of the individualisation of young people or disciplinary socialisation, the authors do not go far away from the paradigm of the structural determinism of students.

The majority of literature focuses attention on insufficient student resources when it comes to finding explanations for success or the lack of it. Less attention is paid to an important dimension of student socialisation, namely how and in cooperation with whom dispositions and goals are shaped and reinterpreted. What our model, based on international theories and research findings, considers relevant is students' personal relationship networks, which have a powerful influence on students living on heterogeneous campuses.

We find Coleman's theory suitable for the examination of higher education students' resources because it gives high priority to individual decisions and considers class of orgin important but not crucial to one's career, which makes it possible for us to explain the achievement differences among non-traditional students. In Coleman's theory differences are accounted for by the existence, composition and strength of personal relationship networks. It does not presuppose a unified or domineering and enforcing organisational community and norm system, but takes the relationship network approach, which is more sensitive to the diversity of subcultures. Therefore it is better applicable in the heterogeneous culture of higher education institutions. It is also sensitive to the fact that in a microenvironment formed by personal networks students' resources do not flow into one direction but they are exchanged. Not only does this dynamic and mutual exchange of resources keep networks alive but it also explains how they are shaped by entering members. Meanwhile, it is not only individual resources that receive emphasis but also the structural characteristics and the content of student relationship networks, which modify the achievement one would expect on the basis of individual resources. We think what really influences student achievement is values and norms shared and spoken to life in these microcommunities.

3. Materials and Methods
3.1. Research questions and data

We look upon the society of an institution as a network of personal relationship structures. We make a distinction between students' intergenerational and intragenerational contacts and compare their importance. Several studies point out that in higher education there is a widening generation gap because of students' and faculty's diverging interests. In all

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segments of formal education there is a tendency for faculty to lose some of their authority and public activity and have less confidence placed in them. It is to be examined to what extent and with what consequences these phenomena appear in higher education. There are further questions on organisational social impacts. We do not have clear-cut answers to the questions whether it is formal or informal, intergenerational or intragenerational, close value-based homophilic or loose heterogeneous relationships that provide students with really supportive resources during their studies. It is difficult to mark out one's organisational reference group in a large organisation, but the circle influencing one's career is supposed to be bigger than one's personal relationship network. Beyond that network, which presupposes reciprocal relationships, we have to take into account people in the same organisational position, e.g. students of the same faculty, functioning as a reference group. The source and content of the information about them are certainly unclear, exchange of information is not reciprocal; yet it seems to influence how students make sense of their experiences of HE, and they also adjust their decisions to this constructed picture.

This research is based on the serial quantitative research conducted by the Center for Higher Education Research and Development among Hungarian-speaking higher education students in seven institutions of a cross-border region, which is situated on the eastern edge of the European Higher Education Area. Data were gathered in the border regions of three Central Eastern European countries, namely Hungary, Romania and Ukraine. In the TERD project[1] Bachelor's training full time students in their finals (2008, N=1211) and first year Master's training full time students (2010, N=600) were surveyed. The samples are representative concerning the faculties. We have made cluster sampling; we asked all the students at the chosen seminar groups which were selected at random.

3.2. Indicators of student success

In the world of mass higher education the concept of student success is even less clearly defined than in compulsory education. One interpretation, on which researchers reached a consensus long ago, takes a negative approach. Studies published around the turn of the millennium showed a growing tendency to search for the reasons for students' failures, attrition, and disappointment with their academic goals or institutions. The primary question was why different student groups were unable to take advantage of expanded higher education.

In overseas higher education research, which was launched in the 1960s, the first outcome comparisons among institutions sought for the criteria of the excellence of universities and colleges. A remarkable - and still influential - contribution to the project was the creation of the expanded notion of student outcome (Astin, 1993), which threw new light on the achievements of both students and institutions. Another essential step forward was a new concept of institutional outcome that took into account the makeup of the entering student population and their attributes at entrance. Realising the importance of student (self-) selection and the institutions' individual impact mechanisms, Astin created the IEO (Input-Environment-Output) model of the impact of higher education institutions, which gives a comprehensive model of students' characteristics at entrance, the impacts of the environment and student outcomes (Astin, 1993). With this, he has made a remarkable contribution to the research of added value in higher education. The concept and methodology of that research

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are becoming subtler all the time and the notion is on its way to be the key concept of the quality of higher education. On our part, we see the necessity of a broader interpretation of student outcome in tertiary education, which is undergoing a transformation and adjusting itself to the school system. Factors to be considered are the changes in students' knowledge, skills, value preferences and attitudes to higher education and work. We look for the so called inner indicators of student outcome within the world of higher education. Indicators of success are successful entrance to various stages of higher education in accordance with one's career plans, persistence, (fulfilled) aspiration to move one stage forward, exam result averages (taken individually or in comparison to others), advancement (presupposing input and output measurement), and even commitment to one's studies and doing one's work in compliance with academic norms (Tinto, 2006, Klein et al., 2005, Banta and Pike, 2007).

4. Results and Discussion
4.1. The Impact of Embeddedness on Planning One's Master Studies

As our research focused on the very first students entering two-cycle higher education, it is no wonder we are looking forward to data on the proportion of students who have identified with the message implicit in the structural change, namely that it is not necessary to spend more than three years at university to obtain a degree. We had expected the majority of students to be determined to spend a longer period of time at higher education for some reason or other. However, only slightly less than half of the students approaching the end of their bachelor years expressed their intentions to continue their studies. Their intentions were significantly but not exclusively correlated with their fields of study.

Our earlier research led us to the assumption that strong integration into institutional relationships helps students not to lose sight of what, according to the inner logic of the educational system, is the primary goal, namely the acquisition of the highest qualification (Green, 1980). We do not certainly claim there is a direct and conscious correlation, but rather an influence exerted by the context that supports students' persistence in their goals through the stability provided by everyday interactions. As academic aspirations are powerfully influenced by parents' social status and qualification, we wanted to know how indicators of embeddedness influence plans to continue one's studies under the control of parents' education and some other strong determining factors (Table 1).

Having examined the indicators one by one we found that, with similarly qualified parents, the following had an unambiguously significant positive impact: trust in faculty and university management, the impression of being taken care of by the institution e.g. by career counselling, involvement in research and other academic activities, participation in the institution's adult education programmes, membership in the institution's academic and interest organisations and students' enlarged relationship networks (compared to their parents' and their own previous ones) now including persons attracting towards academic mobility.

Table 1
Predictor coefficients of the formation of students' aspirations for continuing their studies (Exp (B) values)

	1.	2.	3.
Constant	0,665**	0,508***	0,381***
Student attributes			
Father with degree of higher education	0,748	0,716	0,689
Mother with degree of higher education	1,815**	1,783**	1,755**
Father with secondary education	0,948	0,944	0,904

Mother with secondary education	1,846***	1,865***	1,872***
Sex	,538***	0,508***	,500***
Minority student	0,518	0,429**	,372**
Secondary school providing general education	1,390**	1,393**	1,402**
Intergenerational integration			
Trust in faculty		1,270**	1,299**
Perception of mentor attention		1,583**	1,525**
Intragenerational integration			
Participation in adult education within the institution			1,322*
Intragenerational public activity within the institution			1,446*
Harmony with fellow students' world views			1,332*
Decrease of -2LL	3,4%	7%	9%

Source: The Role of Tertiary Education in Social and Economic Transformation (TERD) 2008. The significance of Wald statistics: ***: $p<0,000$, **: $p<0,01$, *: $p<0,05$. The fit of models is indicated by the decrease of -2* loglikelihood value in percentage.

When we examined the impact of the above factors in a single model, the first thing to take into account was the impact of students' attributes at the time of entrance into higher education. As regards the qualifications of the two parents, the education of mothers, (who are more highly qualified anyway), has a strong influence on graduating bachelors' intentions to continue their studies. The impact of this factor is long-lasting, and it is only close contact with faculty that is slightly able to diminish its distinguishing influence. Thus bachelor students gain definite advantage from the fact that their parents, especially their mothers, are highly qualified. As far as sex differences are concerned, our earlier regional research had already revealed the weakness of males' academic commitment. Only those males take the risk of entering higher-level university training whose families have more cultural capital than their female peers' families do. This is due to their aspirations to obtain economic status in the surveyed region, where unemployment is very high.

Our findings have also revealed minority students' more uncertain future planning. Although the most important outcome the two decades of the new political system has produced for them is the establishment and academic legitimisation of minority higher education institutions, the restructuring of higher education has posed further serious obstacles for them as in a minority position it is even more difficult to meet the accreditation requirements of higher levels of training (Kozma, 2008). Although some institutions have coped with the task successfully, the insertion of another point of divergence in minority higher education institutions might entail the risk of students emigrating. This follows from minority status rather than the structure of training, as our research findings have failed to confirm the assumption that students from faculties where no master programme has been launched are automatically less motivated to continue their studies.

Since in the region's higher education there is an increased number of students coming from secondary technical schools as opposed to secondary schools providing general education, it inevitably raises the question what chances non-traditional students have of continuing their studies. We have come to the conclusion that in spite of their growing numbers students from secondary technical schools are in an obviously disadvantaged position in higher education. The phenomenon is still present after the exclusion of the impact of parents' education, which implies that the years spent in a secondary technical school orientate students towards other goals. We attribute that to the social impacts of the school rather than the different nature of the curriculum.

That leads us to the question of student embeddedness, which is represented by two sets of variables in our model. The first one refers to the dimension we call intergenerational integration. The impact of other variables having been excluded, the unambiguous and significant variables have drawn attention to the informal side of student-faculty relationships

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and made the impact of research and academic activity ignorable. Although the correlation systems of the trust in faculty and the credit of other public and university figures were already detectable with simple descriptive statistics, what we have found noteworthy now is that trust in faculty has such a marked and independent influence on planning one's further studies.

The analysis of explanatory variables (which control one another) reveals that a lecturer's efficiency best manifests itself in what we call the influence of mentoring. That is to say, the most powerful component of the student-faculty relationship is that students perceive their lecturers follow their personal careers with attention. Our survey uses the concept of intergenerational relationships in a broader sense, including extracurricular cooperation and informal interactions as well as lecturers' classroom efficiency. Our findings confirm that student success is essentially influenced by the form of lecturers' employment, availability, professional identity and attitudes towards students. In the future, these factors are likely to carry even more weight on campuses with an increasing number of disadvantaged students.

In search of a correlation between students' intragenerational embeddedness and academic persistence we have taken into consideration all kinds of activities that relate students to one another. Our results show that commitment to continue one's studies is definitely promoted by frequent participation in adult education courses offered by one's own institution, active community work within the institution and harmony between one's and one's fellow students' free-time activities.

We should keep in mind that the impact of intragenerational embeddedness is less significant than that of lecturers' personal attention. Besides, intragenerational interaction among students does not become a stimulating force in itself but in a meaningful context alongside some values and norms. When students take adult education courses together within the institution, which undoubtedly demands some extra effort from them, they mutually reaffirm one another's conviction that it is worth studying. Also, voluntary community work on campus - just like all investment into public good - is a stimulating force both at individual and public levels (Coleman, 1988). As for harmony with fellow students, it encourages students to persist in their goals by creating the impression of congruence.

As we did not intend to find a holistic answer to why bachelor students arrive at the decision to continue their studies and how the idea becomes a serious resolution, we did not aim to increase the fit indices of our model. Instead, we examined the functioning of those potential explanatory variables that could indicate students' embeddedness in higher education and were able to act as independent factors after other influences had been taken into account.

4.2. Job search and embeddedness

As regards the correlation between embeddedness in the higher education institution and job search, on the basis of Astin and Tinto's hypotheses and the theory of student integration we assumed that institutional embeddedness would result in decreased willingness to look for a job, because strong attachment to campus society obviously makes separation more painful. Our data has shown that there is a strong, significant correlation between embeddedness and job search, but, contrary to our expectations, just the other way round. Our two-variable analyses show that strongly overrepresented among inter- and intragenerationally embedded students are those who are prepared for employment. In contrast, less embedded, isolated students do not look for jobs, although their admittance into the master programme cannot be taken for granted. Moreover, they do not want either to start working or to continue their studies, which suggests that students who have fallen out of relationship networks even have difficulty coping with the planning of their future. All things considered, it seems that embeddedness into the society of the institution does not only support the individual in planning their further studies but also in their preparation for employment.

The formation of an image of work that gives high priority to social usefulness and public good (Pusztai, 2007) is promoted by different relationship aspects in differently qualified parent groups. Students whose parents have primary education tend to adopt this image if their free-time activities are centred around the campus community or if they practise their religion. For students whose parents have secondary education the factors contributing to the evolvement of an altruistic image of work are participation in extracurricular and free-time activities within the institution, belonging to permanent groups formed on the basis of religion or some cultural activity, as well as trust in faculty, intellectual partnership with lecturers and professional support from them. As for students with highly qualified parents, the formation of an altruistic image of work is stimulated by religious relationship networks, whereas out-of-campus free-time activities have the opposite impact. As we can see, student's social embeddedness is a complex but unavoidable factor.

Therefore we made an attempt to compare the factors influencing one's image of work. Although there is low explanatory value in models that assess the chance of the formation of an image that looks upon work as socially useful, performance centered and requiring responsibility and teamwork, the student relationship variables tend to have coefficients of similar direction and strength in the different models. Among social background variables, the majority of which remain ignorable, residence in big cities plays a negative, while minority status plays a positive role in the formation of a socially useful image of work. Among students' relationships within the institution the most powerful positive impact is exerted by their varied personal interaction with lecturers. The all-around attention from mentors even overshadows the influence of unidirectional trust in faculty, so its significance cannot be overemphasised. In order to enter into such relationships based on extensive communication lecturers need an extended role image, which may have an impact on students as a direct role model of doing altruistic, socially useful work. Two of the indices of intragenerational embeddedness (multiplex friendships and participation in free-time religious or cultural community activities) have proved to bridge the dividing line between society within and outside the institution. They are characterised by value and interest orientation that connects the individual to smaller or larger, but relatively stable communities.

Harmony with fellow students has a positive influence in this respect as well, but it is not a significant condition of aspiration for socially useful work. (Table 2)

Table 2.
Predictor coefficients of the formation of an altruistic image of work among students approaching the end of their bachelor studies (Exp (B) values)

	1.	2.	3.
Constant	1,344	1,261	,797
Student attributes			**,964**
Father's qualification	,971	,952	,964
Mother's qualification	,942	,952	,947
Secondary grammar school	,937	,933	,960
Residence in a big city	,720**	,694**	,709**
Financial status above average	1,011	1,016	1,003
Minority student	3,134**	2,758**	2,171
Intergenerational integration			
Perception of mentor attention		3,568***	3,237***
Trust in faculty		1,001	1,017
Intragenerational integration			
Multiplex friendships			1,074**
Religious - cultural community activity			1,430**
Harmony with fellow students			1,020
Decrease of -2LL	1,69	3,47	4,35

Source: (TERD) 2008. The significance of Wald statistics: ***: p<0,000, **: p<0,01, *: p<0,05. The fit of models is indicated by the decrease of -2* loglikelihood value in percentage.

5. Conclusion

We assumed bachelor students' embeddedness in the society of the institution helps them persist in their aspirations towards their goals in higher education, so it acts as a special campus-related source of social capital. Our findings have led us to the conclusion that during their series of interactions with various institutional co-actors students gradually identify with the norms and values of their immediate institutional environment and adapt to the formal and informal expectations of the community. Meanwhile they get confirmed that - although for different purposes - it is important for them to obtain a high qualification and develop a valuable vision of work. In campus communities intergenerational embeddedness had a more powerful and marked impact, whereas intragenerational embeddedness had relatively weaker influence. When comparing explanatory variables we found it noteworthy that it was the informal side of intergenerational relationships (involving lecturers and based on reciprocity) that proved to be very efficient, whereas the most prominent areas of intragenerational relationships were those based on the expansion of knowledge and attachment to a voluntary community or activity.

Our conclusion is that beyond students' original demographic, social, cultural and regional attributes there is a set of resources evolving from social experiences and contact with the main socialising agents within the institution during one's higher education. They seem to be able to have an independent and measurable impact on students' careers. Although the structure of these social experiences needs further analysis, it is clear that the institutional influences we have been trying to outline in this paper may receive considerable weight among recently more and more heterogeneous student groups, especially those with rather disadvantaged backgrounds. By exploring some essential indices of inter- and intragenerational institutional social context and surveying their impact on students' plans to continue their studies and on their visions of starting work our analysis took a major step towards putting students in the focus of attention again, as in recent times higher education research has ungenerously treated them as one-dimensional beings, either as consumers to be tempted or as labour market commodities. Our findings also encourage further research in order to identify independent subcultures in the world of higher education. Afterwards, the elements that influence students' academic careers are to be analysed further.

Acknowledgements

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