

SUMMARIUM

CHURCHES AND EDUCATION

The Hungarian and international literature from the nineties discussing the role of churches in education exhibits considerable differences in the topics raised, in their basic problems, in methodologies and volume of the undertaken researches, as well as in their general approach. In the Hungarian literature the main issues were the general agitation raised around the transition in the nineties, or the effects of the transformation of the education system on its environment, while the international literature dealt primarily with the effects of sectorial structure and with the interpretation and measurement of the characteristic images of the sectors, in the conditions of the existing stable and multisectorial educational systems. According to our interpretation, the approaches of the Hungarian writings were influenced by several well-determined factors. Nevertheless, an extremely important issue is how the researchers themselves interpret the concept of denominational schools. The disciplinary approach and the research methodology are also important, but even more essential is which period of the decade have the texts been written in: the period of zealous school-establishing movements and liberating, euphoria-driven pedagogic path-searching phase between 1989 and 1991, or in the years of „school-wars” between 1991–1997.

The ten studies included in this issue of *Educatio* examines the role of churches in education. The first article is written by Tamás Kozma (*Denominational schools – intercultural education*) and it foresees the future, while also looking at the past. It looks back to 1992, when the first issue of *Educatio: School and Church* was published. The aim is not only to evaluate and to compare, but also to place the topic into a wider international context. Furthermore, it looks into the future to determine the upcoming trends. The author states that due to globalization and the connected migration flows, as well as due to the Central European change of regimes, beginning from the 1990's Churches seem to undertake a new role in education, and the issue of education of religious communities and minority education intertwines. Ethnic minorities can claim educational rights on the basis of their self-identification, also as religious denominations. The response of educational policy to this aspiration is the neutrality of public schools, which, according to the author, could initiate radicalization as a reaction. His proposal as a possible solution to this problem is intercultural education. The educational role assumed by churches in Hungary is an important momentum in the process of democratization of the educational sphere and a sign of the appearance of a specific civil society. Denominational schools are an alternative form of education, and we can hardly state unequivocally whether they complement the public school system or on the contrary, they separate from them. According to the author, there are signs emphasizing both scenarios. The decree of the Constitutional Court which from the point of view of the financial support rendered these schools equal to minority schools, implies the minority status of denominational schools.

Anna Imre, in her article *Characteristics of denominational schools in the light of statistical data* uses indicators such as number of schools, number of students and teaching staff, characteristics of operational conditions, data about school registration, year repetition, and further education, to describe the sector in question. From her research approach she concludes that the conditions in

denominational schools are much better than those in public schools and mostly better than in private schools (supported by foundations). An important factor leading to this has on one hand the specific structure of the sector: larger rate of gymnasiums, more structurally changing classes, and a higher proportion of institutions with a clear profile than in the public sector. On the other hand, the social background of the students is also an important indicator. Compared to public schools, denominational schools operate in somewhat better conditions. They are smaller, the average number of students per teacher is also smaller and regarding human resources they are in better situation. Denominational secondary schools present a more positive picture also by their results. Regardless of school type, they have a smaller proportion of dropouts, and by the proportion of students planning further education they provide far best results than any other sector. The cause of these results can be found in the situation of schools, the social background and condition of its students, but can also be explained – according to the researcher – by other factors hardly measured by these statistical indicators, such as contextual effects, school atmosphere, and pedagogic work.

The study of Miklós Tomka (*Public opinion judgments of denominational education since 1989*) describes the social judgment of denominational schools, touching upon the most obvious problems around school appropriations and financial support. The author also discusses the reception of the Vatican Agreement, and concludes that if by the term public opinion we understand the opinion of the majority, the social judgment of denominational schools is obvious: people mostly demand their existence, even in a larger proportion than they actually exist, and they also consider the governmental support these schools receive natural. The above mentioned majority opinion has gained confidence since 1989. The author considers the appearance, along denominational schools, of civic organizations and groups which undertake a larger publicity a new phenomenon. He also believes that there are several opponents of the equal governmental support of schools among opinion leaders, and notes that related to denominational education this is the only topic discussed with wide publicity but never the pedagogic and social efficiency of these schools.

Gábor Neuwirth in his study *Indicators of efficiency and „added values” at denominational schools* discusses efficiency by indicators of higher education entrance examination results and national competition results. Between 1991–2004 students from denominational schools were continuously above the country average by the higher education entrance examination results. Since 1996 they have achieved even better results than students from centrally budgeted schools, thus gaining a leading position according to the type of supporting institution. Neuwirth characterizes institutional differences by percentages of institutional groups, average results of written examination and the percentage of students with foreign language diploma. In the analyzed time period denominational schools occupy the second place according to National Educational Competition for Secondary School Students results. According to results obtained in other competitions their position have declined from 2nd to 4th position since 1995. In the second part of the article the author analyzes the added value of schools with different source of support, trying to answer the question how strongly and in what way school-types influence student success. In the case of denominational schools, of gymnasiums and vocational secondary schools financed by the government, as well as vocational schools supported by the local governments of settlements, the schools have positive average added value, while generally mixed schools, as well as those supported by county-level local governments or by other maintainers (private persons) present a negative added value.

Jaap Dronkers and Péter Róbert also analyzes the efficiency of denominational schools in their study *Effectiveness of schools with different funding source: an international comparison*. Using the 2000 PISA Survey results, they employ an international perspective. According to data about the sociological characteristics of students and their parents, the social composition of schools, characteristics of management, teaching and learning practices, as well as about the attitudes of students and teachers regarding school climate, there is a considerable difference in efficiency between schools belonging to the state and private sector. Controlling the differences

by school structure, the (denominational) state-supported private schools are more efficient, while independent private schools are less efficient than public schools. According to the authors the background cause of this phenomenon is the favorable school climate. The position of independent and state-funded private schools in the educational system is well emphasized by the differences between the two types of private schools. The division line is not marked by whether the school belongs to the public or the private sphere, because state support or independence from it mostly relates to the adherence to national curricula: this adherence will tell whether the state supports a school or not. In the case of Hungary, the efficiency cannot be explained only by the favorable sociological composition of the institution. Researches have shown that efficiency is mostly related to the fact that there is a higher tendency to treat students with different social backgrounds equally in denominational schools than in public schools.

In her article *Social background and school career*, Gabriella Pusztai discusses the social background of denominational schools. She states that the most marking difference between the occupational structure of parents from denominational and non-denominational schools is, that in the case of the first category the upper and lower end of the occupational structure is thinner. Denominational schools are the institutions characteristic to the actively religious and churchy category, but they have a considerable proportion of students belonging to families where religious practices are not relevant, or to religiously mixed families. Based on the simultaneous study of these factors, denominational schools are institutions of highly qualified and religious or converting families, as well as of those who are losing their religiousness. Based on a study on first-year students from two counties in the Tiszántúl region the researchers concluded that students who attended denominational schools were overrepresented in the higher education of the region than researchers would have expected. According to the research, schools supported by churches and by county-level local governments were the most efficient in compensating for the students' social background. There has been a relationship between success in school and the intensity of religious practices. Students who had attended denominational schools or schools supported by county-level local governments practiced their religion more often than the average of their age-group, and intensive religious practice had a positive effect on the students' performance indicators as well. In the case of schools supported by settlement-level local governments certain indicators of religiousness presented a negative correlation with specific performance indicators. The author concludes that the different values and norms prevalent in different school communities as well as religious practices can influence the level of making good use of the available social capital resources.

Erika Kopp in her study entitled *Identity of Calvinist Secondary Schools* describes the specificities of the Hungarian Calvinist secondary schools, analyzing the declared aims of the institutions, their specific activities, contents and their relationship with the environment. Besides the declared similarity among their missions, these schools showed a relatively large dissimilarity on the level of school activities. They can be distinguished by the territory where the reformed character of the school is performed: some schools show this only on occasions connected to the specific worship practices, others perform it on the generally defined scenes of school-life; the reformed character can also be asserted in a more specific relationship between teachers and students; or school-life can be organized along more competitive or more cooperative attitudes. On the score of the differences, the author created three possible models for these schools: the institutions organized to preserve traditions; those organized along the principle of reinterpretation of traditions and for the third model the principle of educational efficiency had primacy. At the end, the author located each school in relation to the mentioned models.

In the article *30 kilometers – a few or a lot* Áron Ambróczy, Krisztián Katona, and Gergely Rosta compared the students of the humanities faculties of Eötvös Lóránd University and of Pázmány Péter Catholic University, and concluded that there are sharp differences among them in their recruitment, in the motivations of their institutional choices, religiousness, and set of norms. The most significant difference regarding religiousness is that in the frequency of church-going. The

proportion of students who go to church on a weekly basis, exceeds the average of the age-group at both faculties, however, in the case of ELTE this rate is just above the average while at PPKE is four times the average. At the same time it depends on the researchers' personal expectations and intentions whether they emphasize the differences or the similarities between the students of the two universities, as there is a fair number of common characteristics as well. For the authors of this article the analogies seemed to be more meaningful, especially regarding the intellectual family background, motivations concerning choice of career, and attitudes related to violation of norms.

The last two writings discuss an issue that has been relevant for several years now: the financial support of denominational schools. The problem is extremely topical and lately it has become an ideological and political issue. Several journalistic essays addressed the issue, however, impartial analyses by experts were hardly published. This justified the publication of two articles on this matter. Both articles – one written by Kornél Papp (*Funding denominational compulsory education*) and the second by István Polónyi (*A few economic specificities of denominational compulsory education*) – claim to analyze the issue from the experts' point of view, and still they provide different interpretations of it. According to Papp, the governmental funding of denominational schools and thus the complementary normative funding is based on the rule of law in force, and they emerge from the pluralistic nature of the education system, from the right to education and culture, and from the right of parents to freely choose the educational institutions for their children. By this, the state recognizes the public stakeholding function of the churches. Whereas Polónyi challenges the rightfulness of complementary normative funding, which, according to his argument, distorts the principle of neutrality of educational sectors. He believes that it is not fair to expect that this way the state should further support the religious activities of the churches. Even though other interpretations exist, we believe that by reading these two articles the reader can get acquainted with the major arguments of the debate and with the problems that are worth further analysis.

Summarizing: most articles in this issue focus on compulsory education, even though several denominational higher education institutions were founded in the last one and a half decades, where students can learn not only theological, but also lay specializations. Except one study, our articles discuss all denominations. The writings do not touch upon the issues of religious instruction, the pedagogic programs, the situation of teachers (lay or monastic, their denomination), neither do they discuss the educational policies of the state nor that of churches. We also had to pass over the historic perspectives, because of the thematic richness and timeliness of the issue. We recommend the articles not only because the important research results they incorporate, but also because they demonstrate that after the turn of millennium the research-based analyses are gaining ground in the Hungarian literature. By transcending the diagnoses based on everyday observational judgments, we engage ourselves to participate in the international professional polemics.

(Gabriella Pusztai & Magdolna Rébay)

KIRCHE UND SCHULE

Die Rolle der Kirchen im Schulwesen wird in der ungarischen und in der internationalen Fachliteratur charakteristischerweise sehr unterschiedlich behandelt – dies bezieht sich sowohl auf die untersuchten Themen und angewandten Methoden, als auch auf den Tonfall der einzelnen Publikationen. Das Hauptinteresse der ungarischen Wissenschaftler gilt den gesellschaftlichen Auswirkungen der Neugestaltung des Bildungssystems, während ihre westlichen Kollegen – bei Vorhandensein stabiler, mehrsektoriger (staatlicher, privater, konfessioneller) Bildungssysteme – sich eher mit den Sektorenwirkungen und der Interpretation und Messung sektorentypischer Eigenschaften beschäftigen. Unserer Ansicht nach werden die Annäherungsweisen der einheimischen Publikationen durch mehrere Faktoren geprägt. Erstens ist es außerordentlich wichtig, was