

University of Pécs
„Education and Society” Doctoral School of Education
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**Development history of upper commercial schools
in Hungary (1867-1945)**

Theses of Doctoral (PhD) Dissertation

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I. Topic and aim of research

The aim of the thesis is to show the fate of upper commercial schools and their students rarely examined by the researchers of education history in Hungary between 1867 and 1945. The thesis tries to show the creation and student body of the school type called „commercial” by those still living members of generations who graduated in upper commercial schools, and to show the fate of their teachers as an outlook. So one of the aims of this thesis is to highlight the attention to the fact that at the turn of the XIXth -XXth centuries the upper commercial school type giving more than 40% of school leaving students was „more” than a simple commercial school as regards its role filled on the contemporary school market, though regarding its popularity it fell far behind the secondary grammar schools. We examined the upper commercial school type on the one hand as a secondary school – under which schools giving graduation exams are meant – on the other hand as a vocational school giving a profession and providing direct step into the labour market after finishing, so we were curious about whether it really prepared for the commercial field as it occurs in its name.

1. We were looking for the answer during the research on the one hand what significance did the upper commercial schools have on the XIXth-XXth century secondary (mid-level) school market, how much did they comply to the needs formulated by the representatives of the commercial profession (chambers, enterprises) and to the aims appointed by education policy?
2. On the other hand we wanted to know what role the secondary commercial schools filled in the vocational training. That is in the beginning (1872) as regards to the privileges to the gentry middle class the school type giving a closing certificate equivalent to school leaving exam, then (1895) giving a (commercial) school leaving exam even in its name was a really similar vocational school to the secondary level industrial and agricultural schools?
3. What alternatives (qualifications, positions on the labour market, further education) did the secondary commercial schools for girls opening their gates at the beginning of XXth century offer beside the secondary schools for girls (public schools, high(er) schools for girls and secondary grammar schools) higher than the elementary?
4. Beside the above questions the topic of our examination was also to map which layers of contemporary society sent their children to upper commercial school, and those graduated there with the commercial qualification gained there, with school leaving exam – this latter, from further educational point of view, was not equivalent to the classical secondary grammar school leaving exam - with what chances and in which professions could find jobs, that is, what value this qualification had in the labour market of the examined period. What role did the upper commercial school play in the contemporary social mobility processes and elite

training, or as Viktor Karády worded, did this school type really “*mean a typical dead-end street*”¹ similar to the public schools?

II. Structure of the doctoral thesis

1. The first part of the thesis shows the secondary commercial schools mainly in, including, but not limited to, the German (Austria, Prussia, then Germany, Switzerland), French (France, Switzerland, Belgium) and the Southern-European and Scandinavian countries, influencing the development of Hungarian institutional commercial vocational education during the European outlook. So this part did not have the aim to show and analyse all branches of the European vocational education, neither the overall, all-detailed commercial training, but we thought this European overview necessary to get a picture about where the secondary Hungarian commercial vocational education was placed in the international scene?

2. Following the European overview we would like to give an overall picture about the national institutional vocational education unfolding in the second half of the XVIIIth century and the first half of the XIXth century, examining what way lead to the organization of the institutional frames.

3. During the detailed discussion about the secondary commercial vocational education in the era of dualism and then between the two World Wars we found it important to address in details how the laws and regulations brought by the state authority as well as the education policy atmosphere influenced the functioning of the Hungarian upper commercial schools. We surveyed the opinions and arguments of politicians significant from educational point of view in the era about the functioning of the school type and its possible changing, and we also wondered how the commercial school teachers saw their situation and that of the school type. A lot argued question of the contemporary functioning of the school type was the training of the commercial specialized teachers, the anomalies around which were in close relationship with the deficiencies of the contemporary secondary teacher training and in that the teachers teaching natural sciences.

4. Since the place, role and value of qualification of a given secondary school type on the school market was influenced by the further progress (possibly the social mobility) possibility provided by it - here it must be mentioned that the primary aim of the upper commercial school was to prepare for the labour market – so we found it important to examine the conditions and functioning of the creation of the commercial colleges, academies mostly preferred as regards to further education before the World War I.

¹ KARÁDY Viktor (2012): A diplomás értelmiség népi rekrutációjának alakulása 1945 előtt és után. (Development of folk recruitment of graduate intellectuals before and after 1945). In: Karády Viktor – Nagy Péter Tibor (szerk.): *Iskolázás, értelmiség és tudomány a 19-20. századi Magyarországon*. Wesley János Lelkészképző Főiskola, Budapest.128.

5. After these two overviews above and after the sketchy description of the contemporary social relations we examined the social composition of students (number of students, division by denomination, job of parents, guardians) in upper commercial schools with the help of national and other statistics first in a national destination and then in relation to capital city schools. With the help of available primary sources we try to give an insight into the career choosing strategies of students in upper commercial schools.

6. Finally a separate chapter is given to the female secondary commercial vocational education in the dualism era, the need for this we see first because the majority of works dealing with the so much liked and examined and thus for today quite well-unfolded institutional girl education of the dualism era devote only one or two sentences for the female vocational education, so often do not even mention female upper commercial schools giving school-leaving exam from 1909 and, even if only on a limited way, but beside the secondary grammar schools for girls offering possibility for higher studies.

III. Resource bases and methods

During our research we used primary and secondary sources as well. Part of the primary sources meant the processing of documentary material concerning our topic in three archives (National Archives of Hungary, Budapest City Archives, Fiume State Archives). The Budapest City Archives keeps the registration of 12 Budapest boy and girl upper commercial schools out of the 14 examined by us. From the registries of the certain schools we processed during the present research only 5 school years (1896/97, 1910/11, 1920/21, 1930/31, 1940/41). In sum, after the addition of data from the school notices we examined 12 887 boy and 5140 girl students. During data collection we concentrated on denominational affiliation and profession of parents.

Our research was made difficult by the fact that a significant part of the documents from dualism era in the National Archives of Hungary was destroyed. We reviewed 149 lots of mixed document material concerning commercial schools between 1916 and 1944. From the Fiume State Archives we only examined a small part of the Fiume upper commercial school and the export academy (a two-garde college).

Main part of our primary sources were the school notices collected and kept in the National Educational Library, these were our helps when there were missing data and they gave a complete picture about the number of students enrolled into schools by years, and on the basis of the data of these we made an overview statistics about the educational achievement of the students. Beside the school notices, mainly their celebratory brochures were the primary sources for examining career choices of students in the given schools. Unification of data was the biggest challenge, because these were often differently indicated in the certain brochures. While in the case of commercial academy, districts II and VIII village boy upper commercial schools the profession and its location were recorded precisely, in the case of districts I, VI, VII and IX institutions in many cases only the fact is listed

whether the graduate student got a job in the private officer, public officer, industrial, commercial or intellectual fields.

Difficulty appeared also in case of the detailed, diverse profession data their categorization, unification keeping in mind the comparison with the other data. Taking the classification in the statistics into account we endeavoured a sectoral classification mainly (industry, trade, insurance, financial institution, public service, post, railway, etc.), but we did not disregard the hierarchic division, either (independent wholesaler, industrialist, bank owner, manufacturer that is owner and other independent persons), mainly due to the officers (which is a very mixed category, but does not contain workers, maids, yeomen, day labourers).²

Besides, it should be taken into account that for example it is about profession data collected in a holiday brochure of a school appeared after its 25-year existence, which shows the actual professions at the time of summarizing, at best, or about the career choice wished by the graduated in the actual school year and shown in the notices of the given years, because it is doubtful that it was actually realized in a longer term.

Regarding the era of dualism we have name index data of rural upper commercial schools in case of the school of Kolozsvár (643 persons), Fiume (337 persons) and Miskolc (899 persons), while out of the capital city schools the Budapest Commercial Academy (3376 persons), the districts II. (930 persons) and VIII. (642 persons) village boy upper commercial schools. As for the period between the two world wars in case of boy schools in the districts I, II, VII, VIII we have name index (2183 persons), while at the institutions in the districts IX and VI only cumulated data are available (481 persons), similar to the female upper commercial schools (969 persons). To our data the Hungarian Statistical Yearbook and the Budapest Capital City Public Administration and Statistical Yearbook served as further additions.

1. Methods applied during the research

The basis of our research was mainly the traditional methods of historiography and education history, so opposite the inductive strategy based on direct observation, we used a deductive, analytical research. During our analysis in the first half of the works we chose the descriptive (beginnings of the history of vocational education in the XVIII-XIX centuries), the interpretative (interpreting laws, regulations in the given political, social atmosphere) and the comparative strategies (upper commercial schools in Hungary and in the West-European countries, school choosing strategies of boys and girls in commercial schools), seeking to explore the cause and effect connections.³ In relation to the mapping of social background and school choosing strategy of commercial school students and during the comparison of

² See the table summary of categories used for social professions in MAZSU János (2012): *Tanulmányok a magyar értelmiség társadalomtörténetéhez 1825-1914.* (Studies for the social history of Hungarian intellectuals 1825-1914.) Gondolat, Budapest. 43-44.

³ KÖVÉR György – GYÁNI Gábor (2001): *Magyarország társadalomtörténete.* (Social History of Hungary). Osiris, Budapest. 26.

commercial schools in the European countries we made an asymmetric, descriptive comparison and we wanted mainly to mark only the comparative reference points, so no analytical comparison took place in the frameworks of this work.⁴

During the introduction of facts, happenings influencing the social and education policy judgement of upper commercial school type we followed mainly the chronological sorting rule. But beside the diachronic, we tried also to keep the synchronistic⁵ approach in mind, so we extended our research to some problem junctions, too, during which we examined the possibilities of participation of women in institutional commercial education in the dualism era, and also their social background and career choosing strategies, compared to that of the men.

In the second half of the thesis, during the statistical analysis of data collected and organized into a database for the exploring of social background and career choosing of the students we included also the methods of quantitative research into our examination. Though one basis of our statistical analysis was the database made from the data related to the students enrolled and graduated in schools in the school years chosen by us, which database was examined according to different viewpoints, important for us, (these included denomination, job of parent, guardian, and the career chosen after school), it should be mentioned that our method does not match all scientific conditions required by the prosopographic method. Thus our statistical results are guidance, sometimes most likely not precise, they need further surveys and additions and in the future including other methods and more thorough analyses.

Beside the used sources and methods mentioned above we find it important to clarify the definitions often used in the thesis or at least to mark the discussions around the definitions. The most frequent expressions are the upper commercial school, commercial academy, secondary or upper commercial school, these all mark the secondary commercial school. The name of the school type can be originated from the German (Leipzig) Höhere Handelschule as a pattern for this school type, its teaching plan also served as the basis of the first school, but regarding the naming of the first domestic school the pattern was given by the Prager Handelsakademie in Prague. So the first secondary commercial school had the name and title of Pest Commercial Academy, while some of the schools opening their gates later had the name academy and others the upper commercial school. The use of mixed names secondary, high, higher often untraceable for the people of the era was to be regularized by the (44.001) regulation in 1895, which uniformly introduced the upper commercial name instead of secondary and allowed to keep the academy title only to those schools which started a college department, too.

Another important question is the definition of secondary school, under which the school type giving school-leaving exam and making it possible to enter into universities and colleges is meant, so in spite of its vocational school feature the upper commercial school can

⁴ TOMKA Béla (2005): Az összehasonlító módszer a történetírásban: Eredmények és kihasználatlan lehetőségek. (The comparative method in historiography. Results and unused possibilities). *Aetas*, XX. évf. 1-2. sz. 250.

⁵ KÉRI Katalin (2001): *Bevezetés a neveléstörténeti kutatások módszertanába. (Introduction to the methodology of education history researches)*. Műszaki Könyvkiadó, Budapest. 27.

be at the same time classified into the secondary schools, since the upper commercial school gave school-leaving exam, and though in a limited way, just as real schools, but made the higher further education possible. But the “literature” of civil era, legal and other regulation sharply separated the secondary level – that was placed between the primary and the university levels – from the secondary, but mid-level public schools and all types of vocational schools.⁶ But the “existence” of upper commercial school leaving exam sometimes would require to clarify students of which school types are included into the given circle, who we mean by graduated students (only those having a secondary grammar school, real school leaving exams, or everybody having gained a school-leaving exam), when speaking about secondary schools, graduated students. At the same time the question may arise that if we speak generally about those having a secondary school qualification in the era, is it right in all cases to ignore those having gained a school-leaving exam in commercial schools?

In the above lines the elite training was mentioned also, together with the definition of the school “elite”, but we emphasize that during our work we do not see the upper commercial schools as “elite” secondary schools, we only examined whether through the qualification and knowledge gained here the graduated students entered into the economic or knowledge elite (fulfilling high economic positions, or teachers etc.) and if yes, in what proportion.

The definition of school market should be mentioned, which refers in our work - as drawn up in many contexts by Viktor Karády as well – on the one hand to the school demand, as undertaking intellectual investment (tuition fee as a limit), on the other hand to the choice provided by supply, mainly the school level (elementary, civil, meaning school-leaving exam and further education) and the expectations related to them (certificate given by schools, social mobility), then the type (e.g. if giving a school-leaving exam then a secondary grammar school, real school, upper commercial).⁷

IV. Summary of results

Although our secondary commercial vocational education started with western bases, for the turn of the XIXth-XXth centuries it was transformed more and more, and while in the institutions of the western vocational education mainly the vocational training got into the forefront, in case of the domestic schools the emphasis was mainly on the general knowledge and they fulfilled a secondary school function. To all this it largely came that while the majority of European schools were founded and maintained by the economic interests in a bigger rate than the domestic, in Hungary from the beginning of the XXth century the state received a bigger and bigger role also in maintenance, beyond controlling, as well. Although with this, opposite the majority of European countries concentrating on vocational training, the domestic commercial vocational education was organized along a unified structure, but

⁶ MÉSZÁROS István (1988): *Középszintű iskoláink kronológiája 996-1948. (Chronology of our mid-level schools 996-1948)*. Akadémiai Kiadó, Budapest.

⁷ KARÁDY Viktor (1997): *Iskolarendszer és felekezeti egyenlőtlenségek Magyarországon (1867-1945)*. (School system and denominational inequalities in Hungary 1867-1945). Replika, Budapest.10.

the double fragmentation of the commercial vocational schools in the Western countries was not formed in Hungary, or more exactly the lower level apprentice education in Hungary was organized separated from the secondary training.

1. Creation of secondary (then upper) commercial school type in Hungary

The Pest Commercial Academy, the first domestic secondary commercial school created on the pattern of the German and Czech commercial academies was born by the economic needs and the demand for labour force with qualification higher than elementary, and the wholesalers belonging to the economically very active and wealthier layer of forming “modern” town citizenship, who, for the sake of providing their sons the status in society (to enter into the “genteel” middle class) encouraged and at the same time financially supported its creation. So during the debates around the foundation of the first secondary commercial school it could be perceived that though first the aim of the school was to educate well-trained salesmen, but beside this the general knowledge meaning an entrance into the genteel middle class was also important for the maintainers.

The domestic secondary, then upper commercial schools became so-called “secondary schools” with the 1883 law on qualification of public servants (law I from 1883), the law provided the same rights for those students who graduated from commercial schools with those graduated in secondary schools. The popularity of upper commercial schools could be thanked on the one hand to the fact that here, compared to the other secondary schools, students could get the school-leaving exam one year earlier, on the other hand that the social privileges going together with the school-leaving exam were almost the same as those received at the graduation from other secondary schools. Another unneglectable fact is that this school-leaving exam provided not only a social uprise but also relatively easy employment opportunities on the labour market of the era and also a good living for the youth. Taking into account also the student numbers the upper commercial schools filled a significant role on the domestic secondary school market, though their popularity fell behind that of the classical secondary grammar schools. The continuous approach of commercial schools to the secondary schools giving general knowledge and at the same time the duality of providing a theoretical and a practical commercial vocational education made it more difficult to accept and place this school type on the school market of the examined era, and this was not even made easy that it could be classified more into the secondary schools than the vocational schools, on the basis of the comparison with the school qualifications and teaching material content of the similar schools in the Western-European countries, while it was known that pursuant to the domestic laws and regulations it was seen as a vocational school.

2. Upper commercial schools in the crossfire of the education policy and the representatives of the labour market

The functioning of the upper commercial schools both in the dualism era and in the period between the two world wars was accompanied by the continuous debate of the education policy and the representatives of the commercial professions. These latter circles missed the actual practicality, often attacking the schools that they give their students few information needed to practical trade, while from the side of education policy the representatives of commercial vocational education emphasized that the school type's aim is not to educate traders, but – in accordance with the mentality of the contemporary policy - to launch young people with wide general knowledge and economic basic knowledge utilizable on many areas of the labour market from the school. The interest representation organizations of the given professions (bodies, chambers) also thought that commercial schools do not prepare for commercial careers, they mentioned a factor of the deficiencies of the training the professional and sometimes pedagogical unpreparedness of teachers, in the background of which partly the anomalies around vocational teacher training can be found.

Although regarding vocational training the upper commercial schools really had many deficiencies (equipment, preparedness of vocational teachers, providing practice), and they could only partly fit the aims (training of traders, then officers speaking languages and are experienced in economic fields) formed in the beginning (in the 1870s and 80s), but the defining role of the school type in the contemporary secondary vocational training (even if this mainly meant the training of officers than traders) was indisputable.

3. Regulation by decrees and laws of upper commercial schools and its place in the secondary school market of the examined era

The certain organizational regulations and teaching plans again and again tried to place the school type in the contemporary school market, emphasizing its role different from the other vocational schools. The first organization in 1872 classified the secondary commercial schools as vocational schools, forming all this as follows. Also the organization in 1884 declared this school type as vocational school, but this time it placed the subject giving general knowledge above the expertise subjects, the decree in 1895 did not change this, this organization even said that the main aim of the school is to prepare for commercial careers, while at the same time Gyula Wlassics declared that the upper commercial school is not exclusively a vocational school, "*but also to provide a literacy pervaded by national spirit for the suitable elements of the middle class.*"⁸

The organizations in 1920 and 1927 already emphasized the preparation for the economic careers requiring commercial qualification from the students as the aim of the school, while the regulation in 1930 again defined it as a vocational school, and finally it

⁸ VINCZE, 1935. 360.

became a secondary school in its name also with the law in 1938.⁹ In the middle of the 1930s significant representatives of commercial vocational training emphasized that the actual vocational training has justification only at lower and upper level, at mid level its main task is to educate to become man and citizen. Though in the name the school type kept the commercial adjective until 1938, but even at the end of the XIXth century it prepared more for official jobs than practical, business trader careers.

The place, role and prestige of upper commercial schools in the contemporary secondary education were also determined that until 1938 the state regulated them only by decree and not by law. Though the upper commercial schools got from the supervision of relevant ministries into the scope of VKM (Ministry of Religious Affairs and Public Education) already from 1872, but it is indicative that its direct supervision was first placed into the scope of public school superintendents and only after long fights was the directorate of upper commercial schools organized as the third administration of education body in 1895.

The state cultural policy in most cases ignored the requests, needs drawn up by the commercial profession and the vocational teachers and mistreated all the time this school type in spite of the fact that thanks to the state teaching plan policy its leeway was continuously extended (fitting into secondary grammar school, real school, school-leaving exam) and the prestige of this school type grew. With the concentration of teaching plans of the upper commercial schools to general knowledge subjects and at the same time intensifying the vocational feature of the commercial school type the aim was to insert the school type into the secondary school network, and with this to increase the number of non-denominational secondary level schools, in the meantime not ignoring the realization of the objectives of education policy trying to create the Hungarian national culture based on religious ethics, which served to keep more awake the Hungarian identity from the end of the 1930s. At the same time the political atmosphere changed after the World War I is indicated by the fact that while before the war the work in the upper commercial school was controlled by the National Industrial and Commercial Education Council delegates approved by the VKM, then from the middle of the 1920s the regular control of schools was confided by the VKM to specialist inspectors, and in 1935 the unified educational administration absorbed the so far independent administrative parts of vocational education.

4. Female upper commercial schools in the line of secondary girl schools

During our research beside the schools for boys we also looked out to the functioning of female upper commercial schools giving school-leaving exams for girls too, searching the answer that what alternatives the secondary commercial girl schools opening their doors at the

⁹ A négy évfolyamú felső kereskedelmi iskolák tanításterve és tanítás irányítására szolgáló módszeres utasítások.(Teaching plan of four-grade upper commercial schools and methodological orders serving for directing teaching). Egyetemi Nyomda, Budapest. 1920. 8. MNL OL VKM K503 – 1920 – 51. cs. – 18. t. – 99775. a. – 826. ikt.; Felső kereskedelmi iskolák rendtartása, 67.500/1927 VKM rendelete (Regulation of upper commercial schools 67.500/1927 VKM decree). Egyetemi Nyomda, Budapest, 1927. 5. MNL OL VKM K503 – 1927 – 109. cs. – 3. t. – 38597. a.

beginning of the XXth century offered in the line of secondary girl schools higher than elementary (civil schools, upper girl schools and secondary grammar schools)?

Although the number of secondary female commercial schools and their students fell far beyond the boy upper commercial schools even between the two wars, their creation at the beginning of the 1900s was an important step in the history of our institutional girl education. The female upper commercial school offered a so far non-accessible secondary further educational possibility for girls beside the civil school higher than elementary but not giving a secondary school qualification as well as the secondary grammar schools and the upper girl schools. Moreover, opposite this latter school, the (commercial) school-leaving-exam without taking any differential exams and, though limited, but further education on even a college or later a faculty of economics were made possible. According to the statistics of our examined era the intellectual, officer families having their daughters learn mainly on a secondary level preferred all along the secondary grammar schools, but from the mid-1920s the number of student studying in female upper commercial schools increased more quickly in their rates than all the other secondary schools. This and the number of teacher training schools, which number is, though a lot higher than that of the commercial schools, but stagnating and from the 1930s reducing, indicate that between the two wars beside the boys also among the girls the upper commercial school type became more and more popular.

5. Social composition and career choosing of upper commercial school students

Beside the above questions the topic of our examination was also to map which layers of contemporary society sent their children to upper commercial schools and what chances the graduated students had with the commercial qualification and school-leaving exam gained there and what kind of professions they could get, that is, what value this qualification had on the labour market of the examined era.

Examining the social background and previous experiences of boy and girl students of upper commercial schools it can be stated that in the era of dualism mainly Jewish families with civil school graduation (60%), independent trader and craftsman (50%) and Christian intellectual families (20%) and owner and primary producer families (14%) sent their sons to commercial schools. At the turn of the XIXth-XXth centuries, by examining the denominational composition of the six boy upper commercial school students in the capital city we can say that most of them – exceeding the 50% average of the commercial schools in the country –, an average of 66% belonged to the Jewish denomination, the rate of Jewish students was around 80% in the three privately maintained institutions. Regarding the social background of the parents of the students, most of them (40.5%) were independent industrialists, traders according to the national rates and 23.5% came from public and private servant families, and 9% from intellectual families.

Between the two world wars the social composition of upper commercial school students changed. The Peace of Trianon and then the numerus clausus and after introducing the entrance exam the continuous reducing of the number of Jewish students (from 32% to 16%) and the growth of Catholic students (from 50% to 63%) can be viewed. As regards to

the division by professions of the parents of the students in the 1920s the industrialist, trader (independent 18%) mainly (29%) employees, supporting staff and intellectuals (17%) sent their children to commercial schools. From the 1930s the rate of independent and intellectual layers significantly reduced (the latter from 17% to 3% by 1935/36) while the rate of public and private servants increased threefold (from 9% to 30% by 1935/36) and the rate of those filling “lower” social professions (supporting staff etc.) in 1931 was around 28% and in 1942 around 37%. With the reduction of Jewish students (in 1915/16 47%, in 1918/19 44%, in 1919/20 41%, in 1920/21 37%, in 1927/28 23%, in 1929/30 21%, in 1938/39 16%) and the increase of Christians, mainly Catholics the division by profession of the parents of the students somewhat changed, a similar tendency can be observed in case of the capital city schools, too.

The different school-choosing strategies of boys and girls well-known in case of secondary schools can be also observed at the upper commercial school type both in the dualism era and the period between the two wars. The upper commercial schools were less preferred by girls than boys, in the background it lies maybe that girl students were sent mainly to secondary schools by intellectual, public and private officer parents of Christian denomination and they preferred secondary grammar schools. The Jewish denominational families also cared about their daughters’ education and they mainly sent their daughters to civil schools and just then into secondary grammar schools then into upper commercial schools.

Examining the division by profession of the girls’ parents it can be said that just as in the case of boys the rate of independent industrialist, trader parents decreased from the earlier 50% to 30%, also in the case of girls the rate of intellectuals from the earlier 33% to 12%, while that of the public and private officers increased from 26% to an average of 33%. In spite of many deficiencies of the school type it can be stated on the basis of the available data that from the middle of the XIXth century the upper commercial school meant a new mobility channel for lower social classes beside the secondary grammar schools and the real schools, and it not only provided further education and filling certain offices by giving school-leaving exam, but also gave professions, that is, qualifications.

In the time of dualism the majority of sons whose fathers filled intellectual and employee jobs and had Christian denomination or were independent Jewish industrialists and traders and who enrolled into commercial schools in a significant rate did not enter into an independent trader career after finishing school (those who yet chose this mainly carried on the family business), but they chose (private) officer jobs. In the dualism era the average of 23% of students in schools in the country, while 29% in the four capital city institutions filled financial institution officer jobs, that is, the upper commercial schools trained the experts for banks and other financial institutions. The biggest difference was among those who chose an independent career, in case of students in the country an average of 5%, in case of capital city students this rate was 18%, that is, the students graduated in capital city schools had more chance to become independent or fill a higher position. As far as the positions higher than the average are concerned the Budapest Commercial Academy all along emerged out of the other commercial schools in the era, since while according to the national statistics the rate of those

graduated from upper commercial schools and chose financial institutional officer jobs with higher prestige was 25%, the rate of the students of the academy was 40%. In the labour market competition those having commercial qualification had a higher chance to get a job sooner than those wishing an intellectual-officer (mainly the economic-featured mid and low officer) career and graduated from secondary and civil schools from the 4th or 6th classes. Regarding the career choice the period between the two wars brought a little bit of change, beside the financial career (banker, bank officer) more and more students chose the private and public servant jobs, and compared to the era of the dualism much more students continued their studies on a higher level (mainly in the capital city where their rate was above 10%, while in the country below 5%).

Beside boys, those girls who successfully finished the upper commercial school and wanted to step into the labour market had a good chance to find a job. In case of the three examined schools only 6% of the students wanted to stay at home, so they undertook a job in a bigger rate than those graduated from civil or other secondary schools and this tendency continued between the two wars (in 1938 already 65% decided to have a job). In time of the dualism the majority of girls got a job in trade (shops) or financial institutions, insurance companies. Between the two wars, in spite of the too little data it can be stated that the girls with a background different from boy students received jobs less in commercial shops, but compared to boys much more in officer careers, though a part of them stayed at home, but those getting into the labour market after finishing commercial schools – even if not immediately as the boys but – probably in a short time found jobs. Thus the students of boy and girl upper commercial schools most likely filled officer, mainly private officer jobs.

6. Did any road lead from upper commercial schools to the economic elite?

Finally we were curious about what role the secondary commercial schools filled in the elite training, or as Viktor Karády worded “*whether they meant a typical dead-end street*” as compared to civil schools.

The school type all along the examined era (until 1938) had the adjective commercial in its name, but, opposite the upper industrial schools and upper agricultural schools, it was more a secondary school (secondary grammar school, real grammar school, real school) than a vocational school. It is also indicated by the fact that, though not in such a rate as from the secondary grammar schools, but also from the upper commercial schools a road led to the economic elite – even if in a lower rate (an average of 9% of those born between 1861 and 1890 and filled a leading position, and in the financial sector an average of 17.5%) – both in the era of dualism and in the period between the two wars. We must mention beside the financial sector the manufacturing industry as well, in the leading positions of which there were in a more and more rate those having a commercial school-leaving exam. Though out of the significant figures of the economic elite –Manfréd Weiss, Leó Lánczy, Sándor Hatvany Deutsch, Henrik Mauthner, Samu Zwack, Károly Légrády, Ernő Hornyánszky, Lajos Wolfner, Simon Krausz and many others – not a few went into a secondary commercial school/academy, but as regards to their rate the upper commercial school was not an elite

training school type, but their qualification also providing further education offered much more possibilities than the “dead-end street” civil schools. But the commercial schools, opposite both the classical secondary schools (intellectual careers) and the civil schools, gave another qualification, that is, they filled other functions, by this they prepared for other careers. The classical secondary grammar schools in our era all along kept the privileged status of the elite schools preparing for university further education.

In sum, it can be said that even at the turn of the XIXth-XXth centuries the upper commercial schools gave more than 40% of students with school-leaving exam and an average of 30% between the two wars and offering a newer mobility possibility they filled a determining role on the secondary (levelled) school market of the examined era. It is well-known that nearly half of the secondary school students studied further even at the turn of the century, so in fact from the schools giving school-leaving exam, after finishing these directly students with commercial school-leaving exam stepped onto the labour market. On the basis of our results summarized above we think that the upper commercial schools filled a non-ignorable role in the change of the national modern civil society, at the same time in the functional changing of the secondary school education, by giving mobility possibility for those not able or wishing to enter into classical secondary schools, for on the one hand a less wealthy layer on the other hand for modern employee groups. In the light of these statements we think that in case of certain secondary school examinations it is not good to ignore the boy or even the female upper commercial schools, as well as to see them as only vocational schools on the basis of the legal and other regulations and statistical classification of the era. This present work wished to provide newer, so far less known information to the secondary (vocational) education and at the same time the institutional girl education history, by calling the attention to the fact that it is worth examining the mobility possibilities given by the domestic secondary school market in a wider context, wider perspective beside the classical secondary grammar schools.

V. Further possibilities, directions of the research

Since the present research covers a large time interval, by putting the emphasis on the period of dualism, so hereinafter it would be necessary to thoroughly analyze the legislative decisions concerning the upper commercial schools between the two world wars, detailing the role and functioning of the Royal Directorate of Upper Commercial Schools in the commercial vocational education. Also further overall examination is needed on the one hand for the secondary commercial vocational teacher training – the very complex problem areas of which very much influenced the place and role of upper commercial schools on the secondary school market -, on the other hand the fate of the students of the teacher training, the development of their teacher careers. It would be also worth making an examination on the recruitment of those capital city schools in case of which we have detailed data concerning later jobs. This latter at the same time could be a part of the prosopographic examination giving the walk of life analysis of the given students, completed by the reminiscences of the students on their commercial school years (e.g. on the basis of Centropa, which includes

nearly 1300 walk of life interviews). The examination with the method of content analysis of the journals of the pedagogical press would also be interesting; this would well show the ideas of VKM and the private sector about the commercial and economic training. Among the tasks of the coming period we have to mention the overall comparative examination of the commercial schools and the secondary industrial and other vocational schools, as well.

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