

OTDK-dolgozat

2025

CORVINUS UNIVERSITY OF BUDAPEST
FACULTY OF BUSINESS AND MANAGEMENT

Társadalmi mobilitás elősegítése az inkluzív kiválóság útján

- A Szabó Kálmán Tehetségprogram mintájára épülő lehetséges
kezdeményezések a Corvinus Egyetem számára

Enabling Social Mobility Journey as a Way for Inclusive Excellence

Potential initiatives for Corvinus University based on the example of a Szabó
Kálmán Tehetségprogram

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Date of closure of the manuscript: 2024.11.27.

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I. Introduction

The first lines of the Corvinus University of Budapest (CUB) mission statement read as follows:

“In the service of society as a whole and of the cause of scientific progress, (CUB) aims to build on its scholarly achievements to educate socially and environmentally responsible young people (...)” (Corvinus University, 2024a, p. 12)

While the institution seems to consider itself as socially responsible and values diversity as part of an ecosystem of excellence, currently, social mobility itself is not on the university's flagship. While we can see some good efforts in this direction (such as establishing the Illyés Gyula Programme), the transformation of the university and the resulting huge tuition fee increases are an even stronger deterrent for students from non-privileged backgrounds.

Hungary is a low mobility country (Huszár et al., 2023) and has a highly selective education system (Qubit, 2022). Within this context, social mobility can take on different meanings, not only at the human level but also at the societal level. Generally speaking, it is linked to some kind of progress, or the possibility of progress at all.

One of the CUB's advanced colleges, of which I am a member, the Rajk College for Advanced Studies, launched a programme 12 years ago to fill the gap between some ambitious high school students and university studies, to give them the final push in that direction. To date, more than 100 students have benefited from the Szabó Kálmán Tehetségprogram (SzKTP), which include financial support and mentoring aspects as well. The programme is run on a voluntary basis by students with "adult" help from the legal side and I have been involved at several points in these processes. One of the most memorable experiences was when, as a member of the admissions committee, my peers and I were able to inform 15 ambitious high school students that we would like to support them on their "social mobility journey".

In such an alternative organisational operation, in fact, in the cooperation of a civil organisation and university students, what is stated in the mission of the CUB can really be realized. These students undoubtedly arrive with a significant disadvantage not only in terms of skills but also, for example, in terms of a safety net of contacts. However, what these students actually need, how one can make a real impact on their life even through such a talent/mentoring programme, is a hard-to-grasp and less researched topic. There are often visible factors of help, for example if someone can get access to a laptop with financial support, which then helps the student

progress in her/his studies, but much remains hidden. Consequently, in this thesis, my aim is to answer two research questions:

1. **How does SzKTP support social mobility via Bourdieu's thinking tools?**
2. **How can Corvinus University of Budapest better support social mobility via mobility initiatives?**

In the course of this paper, I would like to take the position of a critical researcher and analyse the issue from the paradigm of Critical Management Studies (CMS). This perspective stresses the need for social change and places greater emphasis on the experiences of the individual in general. In this context, and sharing the principles of critical performativity, I would like to point out the harmful or incorrect practises and propose solutions.

For the analysis, I used what Wacquant (1989, p. 50) calls Bourdieu's "thinking tools". Initially, I only wanted to consider the evolution of a student's capital structure over time, but relatively quickly I realised that in this specific case I could get a more comprehensive picture by including both the field and habitus concepts in my analysis. I conducted interviews with altogether 21 people, who were mostly SzKTP scholarship receivers, but I also talked with institutional actors as well, such as programme coordinators.

In the followings, I will introduce the main theoretical background for my research, which is composed by four big sections: I will lay down the foundations of the used paradigm (CMS), summarise Bourdieu's key concepts and his contribution to the educational and organisational studies research field. Thereafter I will give insights to how literature sees the role of business schools in general and provide a snapshot of the current Hungarian social and educational system. In the end, I will introduce my methodology in details.

To understand the context and within it the processes better, I start my analysis with the introduction of both SzKTP and CUB. Afterwards, based on the interviews, I map out a potential "social mobility journey" during a student's university studies, with the main constraints in it. Using Bourdieu's thinking tools, I will try to provide insights on how each of the SzKTP initiatives can help on this path and reduce the potential disadvantages these students face when entering the CUB. Finally, I will try to formulate options for improvement for the CUB that will not only mitigate the currently directly harmful practices of the university, but possibly also anticipate help.

II. Literature review

The theoretical background of the thesis can be divided into 4 major units, which I will present in the following order: first, I will outline the paradigm of critical management studies, in which I will examine the topic. After explaining why it is appropriate to use this specific sociological framework to answer the research questions, I will present Bourdieu's main concepts and introduce his main contributions to the educational field. I will also provide examples about how organisational analysis uses these “thinking tools” to understand better their way of working. I will then turn to another important theoretical section, namely the role of business schools as universities in enabling social mobility, and highlight the criticisms and possibilities for improvement of these institutions, concluding with possible applications of Bourdieu in this aspect as well. Finally, I will give an overview about Hungary’s social and educational background, in terms of a student’s opportunity, who arrives from a less-advantageous background.

II.1. Critical management studies

The conceptual framework of the thesis is critical management studies (CMS), which is based on the philosophical foundations of critical theory (CT) (Scherer, 2011). CMS was introduced by the pioneering work of Alvesson & Willmott (1992), in which they sought to diversify this type of management from the mainstream organisation studies by re-evaluating the notion of emancipation. In the followings, I will introduce the paradigm of and key ideas in CMS, which is the basic paradigm of my thesis.

II.1.1. The paradigm of CMS

When talking about social theory, several approaches can be mentioned. Burrell & Morgan (1979) aspired to categorize somehow these theories and came up with a matrix, with two dimensions. One refers to the nature of science (subjective-objective dimension) and the other refers to the “nature of society in terms of a regulation-radical change dimension” (Burrell & Morgan, 1979, p. 21). Each dimension contains several assumptions and every subcategory has its objective and subjective extremes.

The nature of science comprises questions about the ontological, epistemological, methodological nature and assumptions about the human nature. Regarding ontology, according to the objectivist perspective, reality exists “out there” and not connected to the individual. On the other hand, from the subjectivist perspective, reality is only the product of

the individual's consciousness. Epistemology describes a similar approach, in which one can analyse reality and gain specific knowledge about it (objectivist), or the opposite, reality is not independent from human consciousness and it is impossible to acquire tangible knowledge about it. Additionally, the two extreme assumptions about human nature are determinism – voluntarism and for methodology are nomothetic - ideographic. (Burrell & Morgan, 1979)

Concerning the other dimension, the authors base their theory on the order – conflict distinction and its characteristics provided by several other sociologists / thinkers. However, they propose another and, in their view, more applicable distinction of the notion of regulation and radical change. While the sociology of regulation is concerned with the status quo of the society and emphasize the voluntary consensus of opinions which leads to social order, the sociology of radical change underline the modes of domination within society and structural conflict, which eventually should be resolved with radical change. Based on these two dimensions, four social theory paradigms can be distinguished: functionalist, which is the mainstream paradigm in organisational studies; interpretive; radical structuralist; and radical humanist. Accordingly, the authors placed CT in the radical humanist paradigm. This theory seeks a radical change within society and claims that reality can't be interpreted with currently existing tools. (Burrell & Morgan, 1979)

However, Deetz (1996) considered this categorization not sufficient and outdated. He proposed another approach to the paradigms, considering two different dimensions: the relation to the dominant social discourse and the origin of concepts and problems. While the former makes a difference between consensus and dissensus, the latter emphasizes the contrast between local/emergent (involving the organisation member to develop concepts) and elite/a priori (concepts applied to organisation members) modes of constructions. Here, critical studies are perceived as a priori concepts focusing on unmasking domination and based on dissensus (Deetz, 1996). Figure 1 visualizes the comparison of the two approaches.

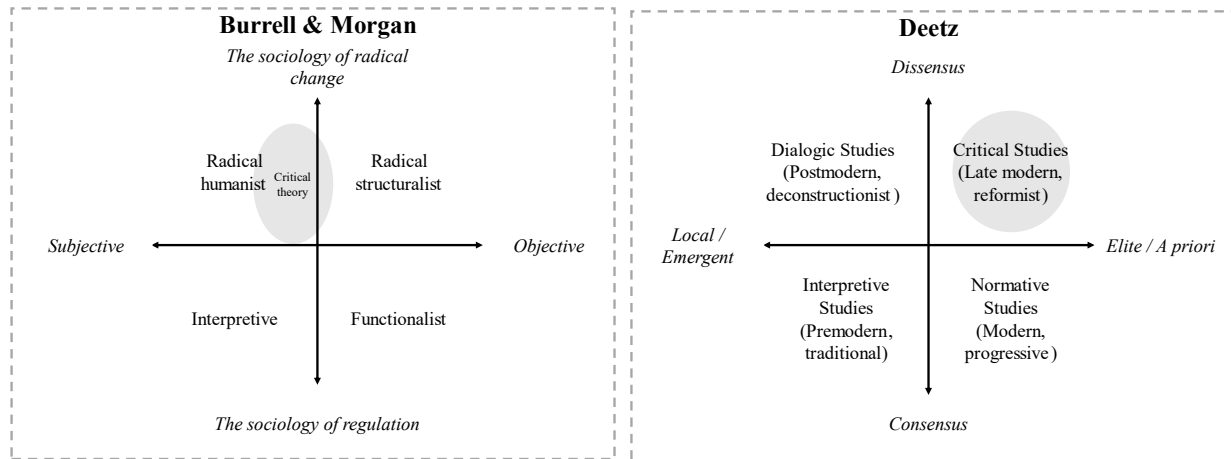


Figure 1: The position of critical theory & critical studies in different paradigm settings

Source: own graph based on Burrell & Morgan (1979, p. 22. & 29.) and Deetz (1996, p. 198.)

The common standpoint in both perspective is, that they oppose to the “mainstream” thinking, let it be functionalism or normative studies. According to these thinkers, the problem is how society (at all levels of society, e.g. an organisation) is organised, what principles guide its daily life, and they try to give a critical voice to these problems. Similar ideas can be discovered in the three key concepts of CMS as well. This field of studies focuses on *de-naturalization*, namely, to destruct, question taken-for-granted aspects of how things currently “work”. Furthermore, CMS is *anti-performative* in the sense that it rejects practices where hierarchical social relations are used solely to maintain a technically goal-oriented system, thus excluding any possibility of reflection. Building on this, *reflexivity* is also a key concept for CMS. This enables stakeholders to recognize and question seemingly unconventional practices within the organisation. (Alvesson et al., 2011)

Based on Alvesson et al. (2011), CMS scholars perceive their role about being critical essential in the field of management and organisation, since “dominant theories and practices of management and organisation systematically favour some (elite) groups and/or interests at the expense of those who are disadvantaged by them; and that this systemic inequality or interest-partiality is ultimately damaging for the emancipatory prospects of all groups” (Alvesson et al., 2011, p. 7). Correspondingly, CMS rejects the instrumentality of organisations, the prospect of achieving a common goal with all stakeholders (which is the normative paradigm’s approach). On the other hand, among its aim is to deconstruct or revoice seemingly underchallenged institutions or ideologies and inspire “social reform in the presumed interest of the majority and/or those non-privileged” (Alvesson et al., 2011, p. 14).

II.1.2. Critical performativity, alternative CMS

Many scholars criticised the overly destructive approach of CMS, namely, that these studies only make negative critiques about certain aspects of the organisation, without considering the potential positive effects of these methods. Specifically in the case of leadership practises, “ideological commitment supporting domination, legitimating elites and boosting managerial identity” (Alvesson & Spicer, 2012, p. 369) are highlighted as problematic features, but the potential emancipatory power of leadership is being avoided. Certainly, in order to make organisations function, it is valuable to emphasize certain values and thus influence the thinking of organisation members, instead of instructing directly as means of influence. However, (for critical thinkers), it is important to develop a suspicious, but also performative engagement with certain managerial concepts and for instance, “support successful ethical frameworks for leadership” (Western, 2008 in Alvesson & Spicer, 2012, p. 368). All in all, critical performativity provides both performative (by highlighting positive features and limits) and critical position (by investigating alternative solutions, which enable emancipation or at least less constraints). This exercise is best applied to specific situations, as these cases are generally not universal (Alvesson & Spicer, 2012).

Within the framework of the thesis, I would like to analyse the research questions in the light of the principles of critical performativity. My goal is to highlight the problematic features of higher education's, the business school's and in this case, specifically of CUB. From many viewpoints, the advantages of a higher education certificate are evident, but a student's “journey” until that stage isn't, especially for those, who come from a less advantageous background. Consequently, I aim to identify good and useful practices (based on the example of SzKTP initiatives) that can help these student. In other words, provide a performative perspective besides the critical one as well. For this, I am using Bourdieu's thinking tools in order to better grasp the situations analysed.

Using Bourdieu's key concepts in this thesis is supported by several factors. First of all, my (second) goal is to propose an alternative solution for CUB and according to Czarniawska (2016) combining organisational studies with other social studies (in this case, sociology) is highly supported. Both CMS and sociology deal with questions about organizing and the combination of the two perspectives enable a deeper insight to the topic (Parker, 2018). Secondly, like critical management scholars, Bourdieu's position was that “the role of researchers is to use scientific competence to produce a critical knowledge independently of

any ideology or interest” (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992 in Golsorkhi et al., 2009, p. 790) and to conduct empirical research in order to reveal hidden mechanisms which, for example, recreate certain structures. Last, but not least, one of his key focus areas was education in particular, where he analysed, among other things, how does the educational system reproduce social inequalities (e.g. the elite reproduces itself) and how certain characteristics (e.g. habitus, acquired capitals) provide domination for one agent and not for another (Bourdieu, 1984).

In a way, Bourdieu’s theory of practise contradicts to Burrell & Morgan (1979)’s categorization of organisational studies when it creates a certain bridge between objectivism and subjectivism (explained in more detail in II.2.1). The latter authors certainly make a difference according to the ontology, but it is also true, that they put critical theory in the middle of the axis (Burrell & Morgan, 1979, p. 29.). Based on this, it can be concluded, that Bourdieu’s theoretical literature exist in the same nature of social science as critical theory. In Figure 2, I tried to identify where Bourdieu can be placed in the two different matrix.

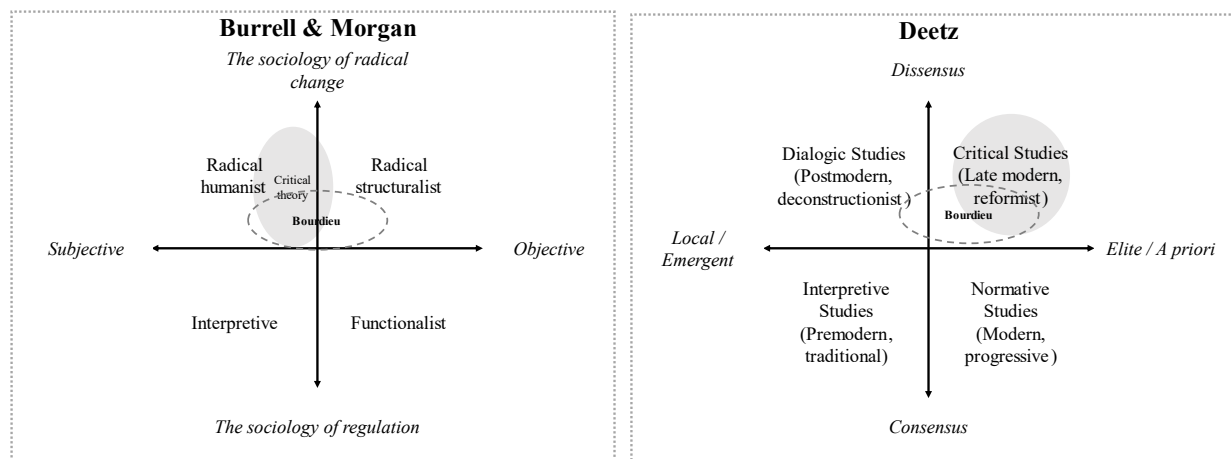


Figure 2: The potential positions of Bourdieu's key concepts in different paradigm settings

Source: own graph based on Burrell & Morgan (1979, p. 22. & 29.) and Deetz (1996, p. 198.)

II.2. Theoretical background based on Bourdieu

One of the most prominent sociologists and anthropologists, Bourdieu tried to analyse and connect the role of education (including universities) and social mobility, social inequalities. His critical thinking has been a major inspiration for organisational studies, and much organisational research has drawn on his theoretical background, including the concepts of fields, capital and habitus. In the following, I will elaborate on his work and introduce the most important concepts related to it. Afterwards I will highlight his main contribution to the research

of educational field. Lastly, I will provide insight about how this theoretical background relates to organisational studies, how did previous research use his ideas in organisational analysis.

II.2.1. The basics of Bourdieu

Bourdieu's theoretical trajectory was influenced by several factors, out of which his experiences in Algeria in the 1950s played a fundamental role (Medvetz & Sallaz, 2018). The French author is on common ground with the critical scholars, since he relies on the same thinkers (Marx, Durkheim and Weber) for his ideas on the structure of society. Similarly to Marx, Bourdieu was interested in how society is organised into classes and how this class system is reproduced. Additionally, he elaborated on Durkheim's ideas about classification and symbolic forms and these connections to social structures and Weber's thoughts on stratification and status (Brubaker, 2004; Fowler, 2000 Townley, 2014, p. 2).

In 1972 Bourdieu published his landmark study, the *Outline of a Theory of Practice*, in which he first described the limitations of objectivism, since it "constitutes the social world as a system of objective relations independent of individual consciousnesses and wills" (Bourdieu, 2013, p. 4). Bourdieu also argued that these objects of knowledge are constructed by us, rather than passively allowed to be formulated (Wacquant, 1989), furthermore, it is not possible to separate the material and social worlds because individuals are attached to both (Grenfell, 2008). Thus, in his view, it is not appropriate to choose between objectivism and subjectivism, but rather stick to practice, which lies "between the objectified and the embodied products of historical action, structures and habitus" (Wacquant, 1989, p. 43). As a way between the two, he proposed to apply the *theory of practice*, because it "puts objectivist knowledge back on its feet by posing the question of the (theoretical and also social) conditions which make such knowledge possible" (Bourdieu, 2013, p. 4). In other words, this is the precondition to understand both cause and effect, which interact back and forth. It is also worth mentioning that Bourdieu considered it important to create such a bridge between the two different epistemological ways of thinking in order to better understand empirical studies, for example in education studies (Grenfell, 2008).

Instead of constructing a theory, Bourdieu referred to his key concepts as "*thinking tools*", the use of which in practical problems tended to create "a phenomenally diverse set of objects" (Wacquant, 1989, p. 50). These tools are the habitus, field and capital, which can be integrated with practice, notably as a result of the extension of the previous three concepts in the following

way: [(habitus)(capital)] + field = practice (Bourdieu, 1984, p. 101). In the followings, I will introduce these three key terms in more detail.

Habitus

One of Bourdieu's most important concepts is habitus, which is perhaps the most cited but also the most misunderstood notion in his work (Maton, 2008). It is a disposition, both the structured structure and the structuring structure or in other words, the “strategy-generating principle” (Bourdieu, 2013, p. 72). Therefore, habitus sets a certain behavioural pattern and a set of available choices for an agent, based on past circumstances and experiences (historical trajectory) in an unconscious way (Maton, 2008). However, habitus is not deterministic, but an ongoing process that can be influenced by history-making mechanisms, but never in a fully conscious way (Maton, 2008).

Although taking up a disposition will not set in stone the agent's future positions, Bourdieu (1987) explained that people are more likely to find others of similar habitus more attractive to interact and form connections with – let it be something informal or formal relationship. This can be explained by the fact that as people encounter and experience similar things in their lives, they develop a certain “sense of one's place”. Bourdieu (1987) argues that this similarity of position taken in social space underlies the formation of social classes. It should be stressed, however, that *Bourdieu did not explicitly believe in the existence of social classes*, just “a social space, a space of differences, in which classes exist in some sense in a state of virtuality, not as something given but as something to be done” (Bourdieu, 1998, p. 12).

In a later work, Bourdieu (1998) emphasised the role of the family as the primary socialising unit, which constructs a disposition for the agent. In his view, family is a mental category which is again, both a structuring structure and a structured structure at the same time. While it seems natural, family behaves as a circle and helps reproducing the social order. On the other hand, there are other effects, which influence habitus later on and one of sociology's key question is (according to Bourdieu) to determine “what transforms impulses into specific interests, socially constituted interests which only exist in relation to a social space” (Bourdieu, 1998, p. 79).

While I acknowledge his position, in a way, I would like differentiate between with less and more advantageous backgrounds. Therefore, consistent with much of the literature, I will refer to people from the former background as “*working class*”, while the latter, which is mostly

distinguished in the literature by at least the term middle/upper class, will be collectively referred to as "*middle class*".

Field

One of the first most important statements of field theory explains, that societies are consisted of many autonomous microcosms, fields, which are defined and operated by their own rules and logics (Wacquant, 1989). Bourdieu defined the field as a network characterised by objective relations (Wacquant, 1989) or, more broadly, he described the social world as a space where several dimensions exist (i.e. the field is multidimensional) and the position occupied in this space is determined by the agent's capital structure (Bourdieu, 1985). In another seminal work of his, *Distinction*, Bourdieu tried to present the space of social positions based on the volume of an individual's capital structure and the composition of different types of capital (Bourdieu, 1984, p. 128). This inevitably implies certain distinctions, a gap between positions within a given field, e.g. "elite" and "populist" (Thomson, 2008). As Thomson (2008, p. 69) highlights, capitals are "both the process within, and product of, a field", so it is visible, that none of Bourdieu's concepts are dominant or causal to the other. Indeed, Bourdieu argues that capital alone makes sense together with the field (Wacquant, 1989). Similarly, an agent can navigate more comfortably within a field if its habitus inhabits that field, so that the agent feels like a "*fish in water*" (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992).

From Bourdieu's point of view, if we want to analyse a phenomenon in terms of the field, we have to think relationally, because, as Marx noted, the social world is determined by objective relations independent of the agent's consciousness. The relational aspect of the field can also be captured by the concept of *the field of struggles*. According to this view, the position in the field allows the agent to use a specific strategy to maintain or improve its current position. Therefore, the field can be described as a dynamic and competitive landscape formed by certain principles, which is highly stratified in order to upgrade the agent's position in the hierarchy present in the field. Moreover, capital within these social spaces holds a certain power and can influence one agent's dominant power over another. (Wacquant, 1989)

To conclude, Thomson (2008) tried to describe the essence of field theory through different analogies, which I aim to summarise in the following paragraph. According to her, Bourdieu drew parallel between the social life and games – both is characterised by its history, has its own rules and boundaries. In another analogy, the multi-dimensional aspect is emphasized in a way, that agents usually occupy several fields, which can be the economic or the education field

and they comprehend other subfields (for instance we can differentiate between primary schools and universities). However, there is a common social space, the field of power, which encompasses all the other fields. Consequently, there is a certain kind of interconnectedness between these social spaces and we can identify similarities between subdomains, such as when fields are made up with comparable set of capitals. In practice, we can use this interdependence to describe how capital acquired in the field of education can change position within the economic field. (Thomson, 2008)

Capital

When people in the business world talk about capital, they most often refer to the concept of material resources. Capital is “a collection of goods and skills, of knowledge and acknowledgments, belonging to an individual or a group that he or she can mobilize to develop influence, gain power, or bargain other elements of this collection” (Neveu, 2018, p. 347). The author also points out that Bourdieu in fact introduced several types of capital in his life, but usually three main forms are mentioned in the literature: economic, social and cultural capital. Bourdieu (2018) also elaborates on the embeddedness of capitals within the field and details the convertibility of different types of capitals into each other.

Generally, *cultural capital* can be acquired quite unconsciously and we can distinguish three further subcategories within it, namely the embodied, the objectified and the institutionalised state. Firstly, the *embodied state of cultural capital* is most closely linked to the individual and can only be developed by that person, which in most cases requires some personal cost, such as an investment of time. This can be done through self-improvement, but it is usually the hereditary transmission of capital that is most tangible in this case, namely, the initial 'package' of family socialisation is involved. For those from less privileged family backgrounds, this means that they need to invest more time if they are to shift position within the social field. (Bourdieu, 2018)

Secondly, the *objectified state* is highly interconnected with the embodied state, since it is only meaningful and effective as long as two comes together. It usually takes a material or cultural form, but the existence of this object presupposes the existence of an initial embodied or economic capital, so it has an additional meaning (to use my own example, if someone owns an expensive sports car, this has a number of underlying meanings, such as that he or she has significant economic capital). Bourdieu also stresses that the objectified state of cultural capital is only effective as long as it is used to engage in struggles within the field. (Bourdieu, 2018)

Last but not least, the *institutionalised state* refers mainly to the different types of qualifications that can be obtained in a legalised way (e.g. a university degree). Again, this is kind of a self-enhancing phenomenon - society only recognises a certificate, not self-taught learning, and by obtaining such a certificate the agent reinforces the belief in the value of the diploma. Furthermore, the cultural capital can be converted into economic capital (by giving monetary value to a certificate), so education is a fundamental element in this perspective as well. (Bourdieu, 2018)

The next type of capital is *social capital*, which “is the aggregate of the actual or potential resources that are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalised relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition” (Bourdieu, 2018, p. 84.). One of social capital’s characteristics is that it can never be completely separated from cultural and economic capital, since, assuming the agents are in the same network, they form a relationship based on certain similarities in their portfolio of capitals. Bourdieu (2018) also states, that agents (or groups) consciously or unconsciously join these networks of relationships in order to directly benefit (e.g. being provided by certain rights) in the short or long term from exchanges due to mutual knowledge and recognition of group membership. Additionally, the survival of the group, and thus of its social capital, is ensured by the continuous reinforcement and reaffirmation within its members, as well as by the group's efforts to create occasions, places and practices that provide a platform for members to come together. As Neveu (2018) explains, while scholars contributing to the understanding of Bourdieu’s work in America mainly focus on the outcomes of social capital (e.g. the social control of certain groups), Bourdieu himself was more interest in the social capital work. He sought to identify the main sources of this type of capital (institutions) and the investment strategies to be pursued individually (Neveu, 2018).

As Neveu (2018) points out, Bourdieu never really gave an in-depth definition for *economic capital*, besides it “is immediately and directly convertible into money and may be institutionalised in the form of property rights” (Bourdieu, 2018, p. 79.). Rather, in his work, he aims to show the plural nature of capital itself, guides sociology to question the common sense about wealth and resources and from a “Marxist” point of view perceives economic capital as social relationship (Neveu, 2018). In addition to all this, Bourdieu eventually considers economic capital as the source of the other types of capital and admits, that in certain conditions, both cultural and social capital can be converted into economic capital as well (Bourdieu, 2018). While the latter transformation seems to take more time, sometimes it takes a slower pace and more effort to acquire social capital with economic capital (Neveu, 2018).

II.2.2. Bourdieu's influence on education

As can be seen from the previous chapter, Bourdieu's basic concepts are already permeated by ideas about education. The sociologist played an influential role in defining the "new" sociology of education and contributed to the study of this field with a number of propositions (Grenfell, 2007). Within the framework of this thesis, in this section I would like to focus on how Bourdieu examined issues such as the roots of inequalities in educational outcomes or the reproduction of the social system facilitated by education (Grenfell, 2007). Among Bourdieu's fundamental works in this topic are *Reproduction in Education, Society and Culture* (1970), *Distinction* (1984) and *The State Nobility* (1996), but as Weininger & Lareau (2018) point out, his early writings should be distinguished from his later writings because after the 1970s, there has been a shift in his approach towards the opportunities in education for working class students.

According to Weininger & Lareau (2018), the high criticism towards and misunderstanding of Bourdieu's work on the overly deterministic reproduction of the social system and the exclusion of working class in (higher) education stems mainly from his early writings. The authors acknowledge that, inspired by the French education system of the 1950s and 60s, Bourdieu indeed emphasised the negative effects on the working class of self-selection and institutional selection in his initial ideas of reproduction. Critical thoughts themselves see the double exclusion of the working class in Bourdieu's ideas as follows: habitus leads to the self-selection (in this case elimination) of the individual on the basis of inferences drawn from the agent's social class (they don't enter "in the game"). This kind of projected subjective aspiration, based on the past of social class, is what Bourdieu calls the "causality of probable" (Weininger & Lareau, 2018, p. 257). In the meantime, the expectation of cultural capital accumulated as a result of various socialization processes (from family and previous schooling career) leads to institutional selection on the part of the educational system. These expectations, standards to enter for example higher education are set by the dominant class and the accumulation of cultural capital is basically the process to satisfy elements of this predefined success (Weininger & Lareau, 2018). It is the reason, why talent is not a "natural gift", rather the affinity between one's social class (with a specific cultural capital) and scholastic criteria (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1979 in Weininger & Lareau, 2018, p. 257).

The two exclusive mechanisms of habitus and cultural capital are influenced and supplemented by another notion introduced by Bourdieu & Passeron (1990), the linguistic capital. It is not only a language tool, but also provides "a more or less complex system of categories, so that

the capacity to decipher and manipulate complex structures” (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1990, p. 73). This basically means the ability of an individual to think and communicate in different ways and it is influenced mainly by the family background, but for example, the first few years of education also play an important role in its development (Grenfell, 2007).

As a consequence, Bourdieu & Passeron (1990) outlined the process of (de)selection as a logical progression: in order to progress from the working class to higher education, a student must acquire significant linguistic competence during his or her years of education. Since not everyone is able to do this, a natural dropout process takes place, so that by the time they enter higher education, there are already few applicants who can be subject to an unequal selection process. Furthermore, in the understanding of Grenfell (2007), given the characteristics of the current educational environment, an increase in the proportion of working-class students in higher education would mean a loosening of the selection process (the linguistic capital doesn’t provide enough handicap) and, as a result, to a deterioration in the quality of the higher education certificate.

In opposite to the critics, Grenfell (2007) argues that while education don’t replicate class structures solely by itself, it has indeed a certain effect on the reproduction of social classes. Indeed, seeing the changes in France in the following decades, Bourdieu tried to offer a more flexible, even cross-nationally generalised approach of the relationship between education and social mobility (Weininger & Lareau, 2018). As it is pointed out in *Distinction*, agents within the social field try to improve, but at least maintain their social position (Bourdieu, 1984). This happened with the children of fathers with occupations (such as tradesman) traditionally rich in economical capital. They started to invest more in educational capital in order to improve their position in the field of power, which became more determined by the cultural, instead of economic capital. Additionally, more and more working-class student entered the higher education as well (aiming for “upclassing”). As a result, due to the increased interclass competition, there had been a structural change between qualifications and jobs and this process led to the inflation of academic qualification (Bourdieu, 1984). While the dominant class was still able to maintain the relative distinction from the other classes by investing more economic capital into their education, many of its agents were exposed to “downclassing” (Bourdieu, 1984).

This new educational sociology is called the *scholastic mode of reproduction*, the specific contradiction of which “lies in the opposition between the interests of the class which the

educational system serves statistically and the interests of those class members (...), who are faced with *déclassement* for lack of the qualifications formally required of rightful members” (Bourdieu, 1984, p. 147). All in all, this can be summarised as the “theory of imperfect reproduction” (Weininger & Lareau, 2018, p. 265). Out of the two excluding mechanisms, Bourdieu softened the self-selection criteria and concluded, that students from every social class have the ability to enter “the game”, compete for educational credentials and gain upward mobility. However, dominant class students with high level of accumulated cultural capital still enjoy a significant benefit in their starting position, there is still a persistent class gap in their favour, but they are exposed to downgrading as well (Weininger & Lareau, 2018).

Similar ideas are being described in *The State Nobility* (Bourdieu, 1996), where Bourdieu first try to make a parallel between mental and social structures and calls educational institutions “cognitive machines”, which are both independent, but they have objective redistributive power. It is a principal effect, that “the educational system acts as an objectivated classification algorithm” (Bourdieu, 1996, p. 141) and assigns students from different social classes to educational institutions with internally homogeneous and externally heterogeneous characteristics. However, Bourdieu also describes education as the field of power and draws attention on the importance of debunking myths about “natural selection” and “being gifted”, because these are the notions through which the elite aim to legitimize and reproduce its power (Grenfell, 2007). This is due to structural changes and the scholastic mode of reproduction, namely that the direct transfer of wealth, economic capital is no longer sufficient to have a legitimating effect, because it would be assumed to be “nepotism” or incompetence (Weininger & Lareau, 2018). Rather, for the child wishing to inherit must navigate successfully the educational system, prove “achievements” via indirect transfer of capital. However democratic and merit-based the educational system is displayed, the race for educational credentials will always unequally serve in the favour of the dominant class (Weininger & Lareau, 2018).

II.2.3. Bourdieu in organisational analysis and management

In this section, my aim is to form a deeper insight regarding how this sociological perspective can be used within organisational analysis. According to Golsorkhi et al. (2009), this field of research has been using Bourdieu's concepts for more than 40 years. They highlight the study by DiMaggio & Powell (1991), who have already suggested the use of Bourdieu's framework for deepening knowledge in organisational studies. Additionally, Golsorkhi et al. (2009) emphasized the role and responsibility of scholars to share this knowledge, acquired via

reflexive practises in order to direct social progress. In their study specifically, they collected examples for domination practices and how does domination reproduce itself in organisational theory context (e.g. Roger Friedland's ideas about thought leaders in neoinstitutional logics).

In their recent work of *Pierre Bourdieu in Studies of Organisation and Management*, Robinson et al. (2021) aim to give a more comprehensive overview about using Bourdieu's concepts in their field, organisation studies. They mention, but also treat with reservation Sieweke (2014)'s work, in which the author tried to investigate and measure, which of Bourdieu's concept is the most commonly cited in management organisational studies articles (habitus) (Robinson et al., 2021, p. 6). They also point to the fact, that this study mainly focuses on the more generalist management journals and probably leaves out certain subfields, which can be equally relevant. These subfields can be for instance entrepreneurship, leadership, organisational governance, diversity and human resource management, organisational identity, education or healthcare management and many more (Robinson et al., 2021, p. 6). The authors emphasize the complexity of today's organisational context, but also admits, that Bourdieu's work can provide a more integrated approach to understand organisations more in detail.

Despite a growing number of literature, it is still debated what is the right approach or way of using Bourdieu. While Emirbayer & Johnson (2008) argue, that separating Bourdieu's concepts is a common mistake and it is only appropriate to apply his ideas systematically, Wacquant (2018), on the other hand, argues that the most can be gained by making deeper use of elements of these thinking tools (Robinson et al., 2021, p. 7). According to this perspective, Townley (2014) collected the main contributions within organisation studies dealing either with fields and institutional theory, social capital and network or strategy as practice studies. She concluded, that while Bourdieu described field as something dynamic and constantly changing, in the institutional theory framework scholars usually neglect this aspect, as well as the capital structure that is an integral part of the field (Townley, 2014).

In relation to social capital, two main trends can be identified within organisation theory: one, mainly emphasized by Coleman and Putnam, perceives social capital as "a web of cooperative relationships that facilitate the resolution of collective action problems" (Townley, 2014, p. 19). The other strand rather focuses on the individual and views social capital as a sum of relationships (resources), which can influence the agent's opportunities, so it is more in line with Bourdieu's ideas (Townley, 2014). In another, but very similar categorization, Adler & Kwon (2002) call these internal (or "*bridging*" forms of capital that focus on a group and its

structure) and external (or “*bonding*” *forms of capital*, focusing on the individual and its relations) social capitals respectively.

The validity of both directions is recognised, because each has its own benefit, e.g. to map certain hierarchical relationships in the social structure, or to understand the motivation, ability and opportunity of an agent based on his/her social relationships (Adler & Kwon, 2002, p. 23). However, in their perspective, organisational research has to align the two strands in order to reveal even more powerful results in the future. Of course it doesn’t mean, that external and internal social capitals are not intertwined to a certain extent – in organisational research, we can find examples of analysing both aspect (Adler & Kwon, 2002).

Bourdieu himself is critical of sociograms and so-called “network models”, which aim to map out social relations with nodes and linkages, but eventually neglect capital structures which can shape social structures (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992). Although obviating the social capital’s meaning, finding via these tools those actors who can “*bridge structural holes*” between networks can be beneficial, since they are able to identify the source of resources and transfer new ideas, opportunities (Townley, 2014).

It can be noted that while the use of Bourdieu’s theoretical framework is not uniform in organisational analysis, it has apparently been applied to a number of organisational problems and its use is validated within the framework of this thesis. The field, in which organisations operate is a dynamic and complex environment composed of subfields and it can define the opportunities and limits of an organisation. Via “social maps” the researcher may identify key actors, who can enable “bridging structural holes”. Social networks, and thus social capital, can be analysed both from the perspective of the individual and within the network, and important conclusions can be drawn from both. Using Bourdieu’s concepts will certainly generate deeper insights into how organisations work, no matter if this is only one, two or all of his “thinking tools”.

II.3. The role and the organisation of business schools

In this section, my goal is to better understand the connection between social inequality, the opportunities for social mobility and business schools (within the field of higher education). To do this, I will first summarise the studies discussing the specific role of universities in social mobility, and then turn to the critical voices and possible alternatives to business schools in the literature. Afterwards, I try to synthesize some studies specifically focusing on this topic and using Bourdieu’s key concepts. During this, I highlight Bathmaker et al. (2016)’s especially

relevant research and findings, including potential policy / program proposals to enable social mobility.

II.3.1. Universities' role in general and social mobility

The exact role and purpose of higher education has always been a much-debated issue. As Popkova et al. (2023) point out, there are high expectations towards higher education institutions and these can vary widely depending on whether we are talking about the government, corporate partners as future employers or students. Nevertheless, it should be a common goal to fight against social inequality and provide more platforms to social mobility (Popkova et al., 2023).

Internationally, there are also differences in the way universities define their responsibilities, influenced by a number of cultural or historical factors. For example in Hungary, the state defines higher education's goal as follows: "The aim of national higher education is to ensure the intellectual and economic development of the nation through the transfer of competitive knowledge for the common good, to provide transparent, competitive theoretical and practical education, to conduct basic and applied scientific research, to promote innovation and to train the next generation of teachers and researchers" (Eurydice, 2023a). Based on this, social mobility is not in the focus of higher education in Hungary. On the other hand, according to Haveman & Smeeding (2006) the more libertarian US's (public) higher education system's two main goals have been economic efficiency and social equity. Although there are tendencies to provide students from less privileged background an "even start" with their more affluent peers (for instance providing them below-cost tuition), but the income-related inequalities remained persistent throughout the years (Haveman & Smeeding, 2006).

From a sociological point of view, there are two opposing views of social dynamics, which can be projected onto higher education processes. These are the class-based (based on for example Bourdieu) and the meritocracy-based (as it is proposed by Young or Goldthorpe) (Haveman & Smeeding, 2006). As it was mentioned before, Bourdieu (1984) described university processes as "the scholastic mode of reproduction". This means that while the oppressed social class has the opportunity to move up the social ladder and enter higher education, the "rules of the game" are still set by the dominant class. At the same time, students from the dominant class is exposed to potential "downclassment" (Bourdieu, 1984).

On the other hand, Goldthorpe builds his ideas on Young's *The Rise of Meritocracy* and argues for an educational-based meritocracy. According to them, by focusing on ability rather than class, inequalities can be tackled, in a way that "a merit-based higher education system can offset the role of social class in determining economic outcome" (Haveman & Smeeding, 2006, p. 127). However, despite the positive expectations of meritocracy, even with institutions that are confidently meritocratic in their self-image seems to be defined by family backgrounds (Khan, 2011). Furthermore, privileged students are often blind to the fact that what is relevant and easy for them may not be obvious to their less well-off peers (Khan, 2011).

In the UK, there was a similar debate about the aim and focus of higher education. Here, opposing parties either claimed it a "right" to all and stated that it should be made available to everyone or asserted higher education as the "handmaiden of capitalism" and opposed towards a so-called Teaching Excellence Framework. This perspective aims for the highest level of teaching quality in order to provide "excellent employability" to students, to give them the skills which are required by corporate employers. The proposal admits the desirable nature of social mobility, but ultimately neglects it, since higher quality means charging higher tuition fees as well. (Bathmaker et al., 2016)

Consequently, social inequalities remain existent in higher education and people from less-privileged background have to face several limitations. During their higher educational careers, three spaces of inequalities can be observed, where students from every social group, but especially from lower-income ones often face obstacles (Hart, 2019). First, there can be inequalities in *access* to higher education, and then students can have significantly different *experiences* during their studies and face inequalities in labour market *outcomes* after graduation (Hart, 2019). Similarly, in their research among working- and middle-class students in two different types of universities, Bathmaker et al. (2016) followed through the students' 3 years of "Getting in", "Fitting in & Getting on" and in the end of their university studies, "Getting out". This kind of approach helps to give a comprehensive overview and framework about potential pain points and shared experiences.

Out of the three potential spaces of inequality, Haveman & Smeeding (2006) focus mainly on the barriers to entry to higher education faced by working-class students, which can be attributed to low family income. Due to the insufficiency of previous schooling experiences, which originates in the inability of these families to provide the costs of adequate level (elite) secondary or high schools, students from the working-class are prone to be academically less

prepared. They will also lack information about the available options for higher education institutes, their selection processes and such financial aspects as the exact cost of attending to a university and the options for financial aids. This can be compounded by the overall uncertainty about whether they will get into the university at all (Haveman & Smeeding, 2006). Once admitted, there is also a risk that the student will not complete their university studies. In the analysed pool of students by Haveman & Smeeding (2006), a considerably lower fraction of working-class students finished their degree compared to their middle-class peers and a similar drop-out pattern is shown in the study of Quinn et al. (2005).

In a different approach, working-class students may be perceived as “higher education proletariat”, since due to higher admission points or tuition fees in “elite” higher education institutes, they may choose “non-elite” universities. The uncertainty around the quality of this “mass education” and acquired skillset make these students less appealing for employers compared to their elite peers and most probably they will get low-status jobs afterwards. This approach questions the “class journey” of working-class students and the successful equalizing function of higher education, because apparently, these people may finish their studies more unequal, than before. (Alvesson, 2013)

II.3.2. Critical voices towards and alternative organizing ways of the business schools

Business schools are usually a part of universities, which can also have other departments, such as other social or natural sciences. It's a key condition, since by aligning or forming the values and norms of the whole university, this department has the possibility of “academic respectability” as well (Alvesson et al., 2011). Business schools are integrant parts of the society in current days, however, compared to other field of studies, this is a relatively new area in the higher education. Business itself changed substantially in the past one and a half century and so did the stakeholders and target groups, societies around business schools as well (Parker, 2018). There are also a number of criticisms of them, for example about what subjects they teach and how they teach them, consequently, how business schools organize their education (Steyaert et al., 2016).

In critical management studies, the business school is mainly being criticised due to its narrow, one-way orientation towards the values of capitalism and that it aims to teach based on the combined needs of students and future employers (Parker, 2018). However, the fact that business schools are usually the “cash cows” of the wider higher education institution,

complicates the situation. The reason is, that besides tuition fees, universities rely on patronage and demand of corporate partners (Alvesson et al., 2011).

In order for business schools to thrive again, they have to revitalise the founding ideas of the university of the future. These are “ideas about the universality of knowledge, the quest for truth, the unity of culture and a central role for the university as a champion of culture and a healthy society” (Delantey, 2001 in Starkey & Tempest, 2008, p. 383). Similar ideas can be found in the liberal learning outlook, which stresses the importance of acquiring the skills and competences that will enable the student to better understand the processes of society (Colby et al., 2011). Eventually, these reinventing ideas end up with the focus on humanities and social sciences.

Not only should business schools incorporate these fields into the academic journey of students, they also have to give up on thinking about these fields as complementary to classic economic studies and acknowledge the fact, that humanities and social sciences both determine and influence business thinking (Steyaert et al., 2016). In accordance with this argument, based on Starkey & Tempest (2008), there is a need for a new, more inclusive business school narrative, compared to two currently existing ones. These have a very economic, one-way focus orientation and neglect the potential of business schools to create a bridge between different domains of knowledge (such as humanities and social sciences) or between the economic and social system. With a new approach, business schools can take responsibility also in sustainability and create a new value terminology, including such values as “wholeness, posterity, community, appropriate scale, diversity, quality, dialogue, spiritual fulfilment, and a new philosophy of common purpose and common ground” (Starkey & Tempest, 2008, p. 388).

In my conclusion, the organisation of university life mainly provides guidelines for the transfer of appropriate knowledge and subjects. As for other organisational processes, such as how a student’s life is being organized, they neglect instructions. There are attempts, for instance, Parker (2018) proposes a “school for organizing” instead of how business schools are currently being structured. I acknowledge the importance of incorporating diverse knowledge into business school education and shape the thinking of students, since in the future, they will not only be member of corporations, but also governmental and third sector, civil organisations (Alvesson et al., 2011). Going further with this assumption, my aim is to explore from a different perspective the possibilities of using terms commonly used by sociologists to influence students' live and map out the opportunities for schools to act like “bridging actors”.

II.3.3. Bourdieu in studies of higher education management

In connection with section II.2.3., a specific type of organisational problem is connected to education and its management. This is a complex field with several levels and stakeholders, but in this thesis, my aim is to focus on higher education specifically and its organisation.

It can be stated, that education researchers were always keen to find answers to different questions, such as Rivera (2015)'s study about what is the effect of formal credentials, such as education on applying to certain elite business firms (Weininger & Lareau, 2018, p. 254). Since Bourdieu and his specific interest in the field of education (which can be associated as a field of struggle (Wacquant, 1989)), more and more study connected one or more of his thinking tools in different ways.

Franceschelli et al. (2016) conducted several, so-called “therapeutic narratives” with such adults, who were previously working-class students and tried to uncover hidden injuries arising from their higher education experiences focusing on mainly habitus. Hart (2019) integrates Bourdieu's concept of capital into Sen's concept of capability, and with this Sen-Bourdieu analytical framework, the author presents a possible way to map practices that are useful for students from less privileged backgrounds to transform capital into capability in the future. In this context, capability is “the ability or knowledge of how to use their capital commodities effectively to achieve (...) the valued functioning of being well-liked” (Hart, 2019, p. 591). Bathmaker et al (2016) conducted a comprehensive three-year study with working- and middle-class students from an 'elite' and a 'new' university in the context of the Paired Peer project, with a focus on the change in capital structures of students. However, they agree with Vryonides (2007), that measuring these tools, such as different types of capital levels (especially social and cultural) can be very problematic when approached with quantitative methods. Instead, both Bathmaker et al. (2016) and Vryonides (2007) make their conclusions based on qualitative research.

Although these studies tend to focus more on one instrument, as we see in the work of Bourdieu (1984), these concepts are never completely independent of each other. As he stresses in *Distinction* (Bourdieu, 1984), an agent's position within the social space is characterised by the volume and the variety of all three types of capital and the way in which the agent can change them. Additionally, participation in higher education doesn't necessarily provide legitimacy to a student's social mobility: acquiring and using the appropriate capitals and habitus plays an important role in how others perceive each other (Loveday, 2015).

The role of habitus is better introduced by Bourdieu & Wacquant (1992), regarding when an agent's habitus matches the main characteristics of the field in which (s)he moves, the person will feel like "*fish in water*". The opposite can be said about working-class students in higher education setting: they can feel like "not fitting in" their new environment or have a strong sense of misplacement. Based on Loveday (2015), the field of higher education is dominated by middle class culture and thus, due to their different behaviour or preferences, working-class students are being usually reminded of their class (Loveday, 2015). This kind of habitus dislocation thus can be described as a "*fish out of water*" feeling (Franceschelli et al., 2016). Altogether, this feeling might not only hindrance the overall educational experience of these students, but also result in *hidden injuries* as well, such as not feeling at home neither in their old or new class (Franceschelli et al., 2016). It can be one of the reasons why working-class students are more likely to drop out compared to their middle-class peers (Quinn et al., 2005). To prevent all these, students are already eliminating, during the application process, potential universities where they might face similar inconveniences and choosing higher education institutions that they think might be a better "fit". This will lead to the stratification of higher education, with higher-ranked universities targeting middle-class students and lower-ranked universities targeting working-class students (Boliver, 2013 in Bathmaker et al., 2016, p. 82.).

As it was emphasized before, not only habitus, but capital plays an important role in defining one's place in the social field. Bathmaker et al. (2016) applied Bourdieu's concepts when following the educational journey of working- and middle-class students, so in the following section, my aim is to summarise their finding in detail.

The different educational journey for working- and middle-class students

In this subsection, I build on the work of Bathmaker et al. (2016), *Higher Education, Social Class and Social Mobility*, in which they evaluated the so-called "Paired Peers" project. All ideas taken from other places are referenced accordingly.

The "Paired Peers" project was carried out by the authors between 2010-2013 with initially 90 and by the end, 70 students. The research was focusing on two different universities in Bristol. The first is University of Bristol, which is a traditional, "elite" institution with research-focus, high entrance requirements, and over-applications (UoB). The other is University of the West of England, a modern organisation, strongly connected with local businesses, with a huge campus including a student village and a lot of international students (UWE). Both middle- and working-class students attended both universities, approximately in the same proportion.

Subjects of the research were interviewed every six months and during the 3 years, three different stages were monitored: the “Getting In”, the “Fitting In & Getting On” and the “Getting Out” phases. The research tried to analyse the students’ experiences; their initial capital structure and how these changed during their university; additionally, they attempted to draw the conclusion that, how, on this basis, each university promotes social mobility (Bathmaker et al., 2016, p. 9).

During the “*Getting In*” phase, when considering their future education, working- and middle-class students had different motivations and influences. The “graduate premium” was a common motivational factor, but especially for working-class students, who looked for better job prospects (compared to their parents) or perceived university as a way “to escape” and get a chance, that their parents didn’t have. At the same time, when choosing between institutions, they had to face the dilemma about being a “fish out of water” in a more elite university, or stick to “knowing their place” and apply for UWE, which was a more popular choice among working-class students. Another reason to choose UWE was to have better grades at a not so prestigious university than worse grades at an elite university.

On the other hand, middle-class students faced more the influence of their school and family and it was more “taken-for-granted” to continue their studies after high school. Furthermore, during their education, they were endowed with the skillset to “play the game” in university. Among their motivations, the goal to “meet so many different people” or to delay their decision about choosing a specific job or career path appeared. To conclude, both the influence of school and family plays an important role in the choice of the university and “middle-class young people and their families can normally draw on an array of capitals to their advantage, while those from the working-classes tend to have to rely on personal resources and determination, backed up by emotional support from their families, rather than access to dominant cultural capital” (Bathmaker et al., 2016, p. 71).

The *Fitting In & Getting On* phase showed similar, even more visible differences between the experiences of the two groups. For working-class students, especially during the Fitting In phase, the difference in habitus (thus, the feeling of “fish out of water” both in UoB and UWE), social and cultural capital played a significant role. They couldn’t engage with their middle-class peers’ code of conduct about shared experiences and language acquired in elite high-school institutes. In a different elite university setting, Loveday (2015) points on visually marked differences (e.g. what kind of clothes do middle-class students wear) and that they

embrace a certain kind of “snobbishness”. Thus, working-class students needed to be especially reflexive and work hard in order to fit into this new environment. Subsequently, the adjustment process was social rather than intellectual, but since initially during the entry phase they had to take more initiative, it made this specific process easier. Although it has occurred that students have not mixed their groups of friends at home and at university and have become multifaceted, which means that they have learned to navigate in both communities, they have also been critically reflective of the cultural norms of the “new class”.

Besides these factors, the most significant constraint to engage into extra-curricular activities (e.g. volunteering, sport teams, or, in my understanding, student organisations) or academically better, even non-paid internship is the lack of economic capital (Bathmaker et al., 2013 in Bathmaker et al., 2016, p. 80.). Many students needed to work in order to make their living somehow, but financial independence from parents played an integrant role as well. However, without these activities, they could not build their social or cultural capital (or, more practically, their CV), which could, after their studies, have been transformed into better job prospects, which their family could not provide either way because of the lack of family connections.

Compared to them, most middle-class students felt like “fish in water” in this new environment, both at UoB and UWE. There were of course exceptions, when couple of them at UWE felt a misalignment between their and the overall university’s habitus. Most importantly, they could exploit their existing capitals, originating mainly from their family background: they had opportunities to build their CV or ensure job positions via family connections. The authors call the phenomenon of transforming different kind of capitals and generating even more the “hyper-mobilization” of capital.

As for the *Getting Out* phase, several chosen paths and determining factors could be observed among students in both classes. The trend of high accommodation costs, highly competitive labour market and the notion of “a degree is not enough” and further elements are required in their CV did characterize everyone’s life (Bathmaker et al., 2013 in Bathmaker et al., 2016 p. 100-101.). The different paths after their bachelor degree included studying further, being on track to their initial job aspirations or pushing towards to them. However, more negative or disillusioned approaches, such as drifting or a deferred career (e.g. taking a one-year break before applying for jobs) could have been observed as well. By studying further, many middle-class students tried to differentiate themselves somehow from their working-class peers and preventing themselves from downward mobility. They certainly had the benefit of economic

capital and this way higher education became an instrument of class maintenance. Finally, the authors found more problematic the fact that employers and recruiters are more likely to hire UoB graduates than UWE graduates, which undermines the equalization efforts of universities.

To conclude, “higher education apparently does not function as a successful equalizer” (Alvesson, 2013, p. 91). Student’s “class journey” faces a lot of obstacles, not just during the application to higher education, but also during their studies and after, on the job market as well. These differences are collected based on Bathmaker et al. (2016) in Table 1. Furthermore, Alvesson (2013) is sceptical about the success of comprehensive reforms, as in many places only a degree from an elite university is of explicit value. Since working-class people often choose the newer, less prestigious universities (also because of the arguments of Bathmaker et al. (2016)), they end up in the same place at the end of their studies because their degree is worth relatively less than that of elite universities.

Based on their findings, the authors made several policy proposals in order to improve social mobility in higher education institutions. Couple of the key problems being identified based on Bourdieu’s concepts are that working-class students not only feel like a stranger in higher education setting and lack certain kind of capitals, but neither they can extend this capital base or transform them into other forms of capital (e.g. economic or social capital). To resolve differences in habitus, the university can provide *social mixing* by, for example, dissolving practices that are fundamentally segregated (e.g. “mixing” classes in housing) or establish new mechanisms.

Providing working-class students *financial support* is of course a crucial factor that can set out the uncertainty about applications and further living costs. Higher education institutes therefore could provide scholarships to students arriving from less affluent high schools or living in bad family conditions. This kind of support could not only be applied to bachelor level, but also during further educational advancements, such as master degree. Additionally, in order to ease up these students’ financial burdens, universities can reach certain arrangements with partner companies and ensure paid internship positions to working-class students. This way, they can also boost their CV and middle-class students won’t gain advantage just because they can work for less financial compensation.

Stage	Getting In		Fitting In & Getting On		Getting Out	
Class	Working-class students	Middle-class	Working-class students	Middle-class	Working-class students	Middle-class
Economic capital	Promise of better job prospects or an escape		Need for economic capital and thus working during their studies	"Hyper-mobilization" of capitals Family support	High cost of accommodation forcing students to return home Unable to finance master program	Potential to further study
Social capital	Relying on personal growth, taking initiatives by their own Emotional support from family	Family connections	Lacking high-school network Separating old and new friendship networks Due to working, no networking opportunities in extra-curricular activities No family connections	High-school friends Family connections Exploiting existing relationships		More possibilities to start working through built-up connections
Cultural capital		Better previous schools Support of family	Transition from old to new learning techniques is hard for everyone Lack of planning, writing and studying skills Due to working, lack of CV building	Using specific words, actions, visual differentiations Spoon feeding		
Habitus	Inner debate about "Fish out of water" vs. "Knowing their place"	Usual middle-class choice Sense of "playing the game"	Work hard to fit in, but critically reflexive towards middle-class habitus Feeling comfortable at UWE	Feeling as "fish out of water" or academically thriving at UWE Privilege as "taken-for-granted"		

Table 1: The main difference between working- and middle-class students in terms of Bourdieu's thinking tools in different stages of the university

Own design based on Bathmaker et al. (2016)

On the other hand, universities also have to provide adequate support and integrate these students into the “organisational culture”. This point is supported by the Sen-Bourdieu Analytical Framework, which claims, that the crucial element in an agent’s life is HOW can they transform first commodities into capabilities (well-being freedom) and afterwards capabilities into functionings (well-being achievements) (Hart, 2019). As a solution, higher education institutions can arrange *mentoring* on different levels and connect for instance freshmen students with their senior associates. This practice probably leads to a more socially-oriented relationship, where working-class students can generate social and cultural capital. Another type of mentoring can focus on *academic or professional support*. Career-planning and ideas about progression after higher education studies could be crucial all during a student’s education, their final year and also in the first year after finishing their degree (during which time they are either in their first full-time job or looking for their first full-time job).

These supporting initiatives could help disadvantaged students to mitigate the price of their social mobility and make university a more inhabitable environment for them. While supposedly, the lack of certain capitals from family background can never be compensated, they can at least decrease the inequalities to a certain level. Within this thesis’s context I support Robertson (2016)’s notion, that education on every level should be a “part of the solution and not the problem” (Robertson, 2016, p.22. in Bathmaker et al., 2016, p.158.).

II.4. Social mobility in the Hungarian education system

Higher education is, in fact, the last stage of public education, so when an educational institution is being analysed, we cannot ignore the economic, social and political processes in the country concerned, which in this case is Hungary. In this chapter, I would like to present an overview about Hungary’s current social mobility situation in general and briefly explain the main characteristics of the public education system, which, in most cases determines a student’s first eighteen years.

II.4.1. An overview about social mobility in Hungary generally

Based on OECD data, Lőrincz & Antal-Fekete (2022, p. 207.) states, that “Hungary has low social mobility in income, education and occupational dimensions” as well. Various studies tried to analyse how social structures were formed after 2010 (since when the current political regime has been in place), either the differences between occupational classes (Huszár, 2022) or the intergenerational class mobility (Huszár et al., 2023). One of the results was, that in 2019, the average income gap between higher level intellectual jobs and skilled or unskilled workers

was 171,3%, that is, on average, one person from the former class earned 1,7 times more, compared to a person from the latter group (Huszár, 2022, p. 165). This number is lower compared to the 2015 level, which was the highest since 1982, but as Huszár (2022, p. 166.) points out, the inequalities are not only substantial between classes, but also within them. In addition, occupational group only explains 16% of one person's income. Meanwhile, Huszár et al. (2023) list several studies, according to which mobility indicators in Hungary are constantly decreasing and these lead to deepened class distinctions and are connected to the persistence of the main patterns of social mobility.

Huszár et al. (2023) makes a difference between absolute and relative mobility. While absolute mobility “mainly reflects the degree and direction of the changes in class structure across generations”, by contrast, relative mobility “helps explore the mobility chances of individuals coming from different backgrounds, irrespective of structural transformations in the society” (Huszár et al., 2023, p. 849). Regarding the first case, after 1990 a downward mobility pattern could have been observed with the declining trend of upward mobility in the society and Hungary remained a low mobility country. In the case of relative mobility, the authors applied OECD's definition of sticky floor and sticky ceiling. The former describes society's tendency to hinder people from lower classes to move upward, despite their efforts, while the latter points to the reproduction of higher (middle) social classes by allowing the transmission of advantages between generations (Huszár et al., 2023). Ultimately, the “the ‘floor’ is less sticky than the ‘ceiling’” (Huszár et al., 2023, p. 850), namely, that less / non-privileged people are more likely to move upward, than their privileged peers moving downward in the social field.

Clearly, the education and social system have a deep interdependency: one can be used as a tool to form the other one. The education system can help either to increase or decrease social mobility, but also to keep the current social structure as it is (Lőrincz & Antal-Fekete, 2022). Comparing different countries and thus different social systems, the non-deterministic, unidirectional impact of social inequality on education can be measured, for example, using different indicators, such as the Gini-coefficient and the level of selectivity between schools (Radó, 2018). Based on these data in 2015, according to Radó (2018), in the case of Hungary, the current unequal nature of the education system doesn't necessarily lies in the characteristics of social system, rather how the education system itself is being constructed.

Currently, there are efforts to help social mobility to different ethnic- or social groups. Facilitating social mobility in Hungary is, however, usually done by non-profit, non-

governmental organisations (NGOs) (Boros et al., 2021). In their study about first-in-family graduates among Roma students, Boros et al. (2021) tried to categorize several programs that aim to ease up the burden of (Roma) disadvantaged students. These are:

1. The ‘intellectual family model’ (extracurricular schools)
2. Patronage/mentoring model
3. Scholarship model (which can have a symbolic value in a way, that studying is valued financially for the first time)
4. Intellectual community, professional mentoring and social networking model (for instance joining a college for advanced studies)
5. Talent nurturing model (such as János Arany Talent Development Program).
6. Second chance school’s model
7. University entry preparation program (e.g. the former Kurt Lewin Foundation’s program to help disadvantaged students to access higher education and support them during their studies). (Boros et al., 2021, pp. 85–87)

Altogether, these actions can enable to “heal the hidden injuries of class mobility” (Skeggs, 1997 in Boros et al., 2021, p. 96), ease up financial and emotional burdens, offer opportunities to mix with peers from different backgrounds and build relationships.

II.4.2. A student’s educational journey before entering higher education in Hungary

A student has to come a long way by the time he or she enters higher education at the age of 18 or over. In Hungary, primary and lower secondary education are usually integrated into an eight-year framework and children enter the education system at the age of 6. Upper-secondary level education is more complex and gives a wide-range of options for students: 4, 6 or 8 years long high school education (upper secondary general schools), upper secondary vocational schools (with artistic profile), special vocational schools, technicums and vocational schools. Regarding vocational training, the latter two are the most common type. However, while vocational schools prepare their students for 3 years for a profession, technicums provide a “quality” vocational education for 5 years, with an upper-secondary school leaving exam (this does not apply in the former case). The upper age limit for compulsory education is 16 years. (Eurydice, 2023b)

Inequalities within the education system in Hungary is a much-researched area, especially when it comes to ethnic minorities such as the Roma culture (such as the book edited by Fejes &

Szűcs, 2018, or the study by Boros et al., 2021). A certain amount of selection, which is the “differential participation of students from different backgrounds in different types of educational institution” (Radó, 2018, p. 31), undeniably, is present in every education system. However, critical voices about the Hungarian education system claim, that not only within Europe, but also in the OECD countries, Hungary has one of the highest level of selection (Qubit, 2022). While selection is institutionalised and consequently well measurable, it can be tracked back to several, usually hidden, but institutionally present processes, defined as selectivity by Radó (2018, p. 31.). Examples for these mechanisms are the differences in measured performance of students; the unequal distribution of resources within the country (e.g. human resources – teachers); the characteristics of the school structures and the choices of parents (Radó, 2018, p. 34).

With the introduction of the new public education law, the underlying structure of public education in Hungary changed substantially after 2011. The new, centralized system meant that public schools had less professional autonomy (Lőrincz & Antal-Fekete, 2022), since teachers had to follow a national curriculum and they could only teach from a selected range of books (Fejes & Szűcs, 2018). Another determining feature is the centralized financing of public schools, which eventually led to their reduced or even out opportunities, but also a relative funding advantage for church-owned schools (Radó, 2018). Accordingly, church-owned and private schools seem like more appealing opportunities, which is supported by the significantly increased amount of students within these institutions (for instance, in high schools, students enrolling to church-owned institutes increased from 9% in 2010/2022 to 16,7% in 2018/2019) (Lőrincz & Antal-Fekete, 2022, p. 214). This shift however, resulted in a further mechanism of differentiation between classes: more affluent families in the countryside chose to rather send their children to the more-value adding institutes of church-owned schools (while in the capital, people from higher social classes chose private schools) (Fejes & Szűcs, 2018).

While Hungary is able to keep disadvantaged students within the education system for a long time, compared to other, mainly Northern European countries the quality of this scholastic journey is far worse (Radó, 2018). They “tend to be steered in a certain, less value-added educational path” (Radó, 2018, p. 32). Elaborating on this, currently, vocational training is organized by the Chamber of Commerce and Industry according to the labour demand set by them (and additional key players on the market, such as future employer organisations) (Köllő, 2020). As a result, and as a problem with this approach, during its 3-years period, vocational school neglects improving key competence areas (besides specific professional ones) or those

social skills, that could be improved later on for students. Consequently, not only that these students already at this point lose the opportunity to gain access to higher education (but of course, they can start working sooner, which may be appealing for them at that point), they will most probably stay as blue-collar workers later on (Mártonfi, 2019).

This is supported by the distribution of students from different family backgrounds in post-secondary education between 2010-2019, presented by Hajdu et al. (2022). They use the law-defined definition for both disadvantaged and cumulatively disadvantaged students, based on which in 2019, more than 15% of the students belonged to one of these categories (Hajdu et al., 2022, p. 29). While 80% of non-disadvantaged students attend to educational institutes at the end which they receive high school diploma and have to take upper-secondary school leaving exam, this number is only 40% for disadvantaged students (Hajdu et al., 2022, p. 207). Furthermore, changes such as lowering the age limit from 18 to 16 of compulsory education and decreasing the length of vocational trainings (in the case of vocational schools) from 5 years to 3 eventually resulted in a higher level of early school leaving (Hermann, 2019 in Lőrincz & Antal-Fekete, 2022, p. 218).

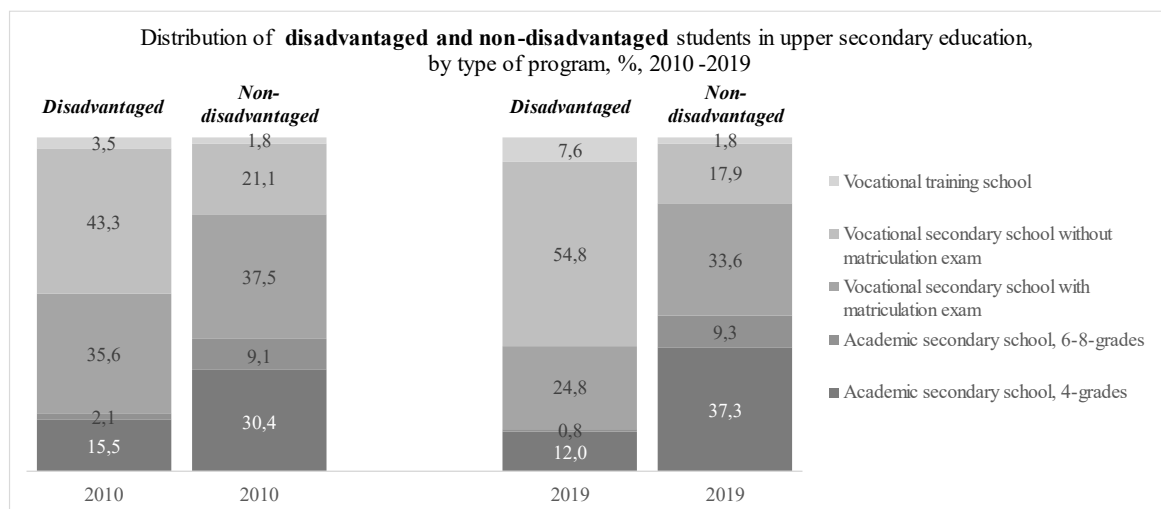


Figure 3: Distribution of disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged students in upper secondary education, by type of program, %, 2010-2019.

Own graph based on Hajdu et al. (2022, p. 208)

This chapter provided a deeper insight into the foundations on which higher education can build to promote social mobility. There are a number of selection processes in the Hungarian public education system that promote drop-outs and contradict social mobility until the final school leaving examination. This may partly explain why only around 3% of disadvantaged students enrol in higher education alone, and only 4% of all students admitted to higher education are

from this group (Hajdu et al., 2022, pp. 209 & 211). In the followings, I will introduce shortly the current situation of higher education in Hungary and highlight potential factors, that could hinder the application process for working-class students.

II.4.3. An overview of Hungary's higher education scene

According to the Act CCIV of 2011 on National Higher Education, it is possible to distinguish between higher education institutes based on their maintainers, which can either be the state or other organisations (church, business or foundation, trust, public foundation or religious association). There are currently 41 universities and 23 colleges in Hungary, out of which 5 and 1 are maintained by the state as of 2024. In order to enrol to one of the higher education institutes, a student must take a matriculation exam. (Netjogtár, 2024)

During this exam, a student can achieve 500 points in total and after aggregating the final results, universities set a point limit, above which a student gets accepted. The calculation method will change in 2024: students can collect 200 points based on their last 2-years' results in certain subjects. Additional 200 points are given based on the result of 2 subjects from the matriculation exam and there is a difference in points between medium and intermediate level exams (only 2/3 of the achieved medium-level exam's points are being accepted). The distribution of the remaining 100 points is set by the specific higher education institute to which the student apply (it should be noted, that points can be given based on the disadvantaged situation of the student) (Kurucz, 2023).

When applying to a program, students usually can choose between nominating both the scholarship and the tuition-paying version of it. In the latter case, based on program types and locations, there are significant differences in the paid amount of semester: a student can pay 200.000 HUF, but also 800.000 HUF in different institutions (Csik, 2022). Further difference between universities / colleges is the admission score: the level, above which a student is being accepted varies not only between programs in the same higher education institutes, but also between the same program, but in different institutions (Pénzcentrum, 2023).

II.5. Concluding remarks

To conclude the literature review, I examine the thesis from the paradigm of CMS, which rejects the current status quo of the world (dissensus) based on the Deetz matrix, and uses an elite/a priori approach in terms of construction method. Within this, by applying critical

performativity, my goal is not only to use criticism during the research, but also to formulate alternative proposals.

Given that it rests on common theoretical foundations and also addresses organizational issues, the application of Bourdieu's concepts is appropriate. These "thinking tools" are field, habitus, and capital. Within the latter, we distinguish between economic, social and cultural capital, which can typically be converted into each other. All in all, these tools are closely related to each other and are difficult to separate from one another. For this reason, there is also a contradiction in the organizational studies: one direction approves the separation of the use of tools, while another only recognizes their joint use.

Bourdieu strives to learn about social processes and with varying weight over time, but he claims that the dominant social class in the education system not only reproduces itself, but students from the working class also have to face double exclusion mechanism (regarding habitus and cultural capital). Similar processes can be observed in the Hungarian education system, which has one of the most selective education systems among the OECD countries. Disadvantaged students continue to drop out at various milestones in the education system as they progress by age, so basically only a few students with such a background even make it to university admission. Conditions are complicated by the fact that social equality in Hungary is fundamentally big, but not insurmountable (the floor is less sticky than the ceiling).

Various studies point out that, during university studies, students from the working-class face differences in the "getting in", "getting on" and "getting out" phases compared to those from the upper classes, of which the first is usually the most decisive. Of course, it is not the job of universities, and business schools within them, to solve problems at the social level, but it should definitely be in their interest to help these students instead of hindering them. They have many opportunities for this, such as financial support and mentoring, but indirectly, social sensitization should also play a big role in the education of future leaders.

III. Methodology

In this thesis, my research questions, building on each other, are the followings:

1. **How does SzKTP support social mobility via Bourdieu's thinking tools, especially in terms of different capitals?**
2. **How can Corvinus University of Budapest better support social mobility via mobility initiatives?**

In order to provide answers, my aim is to conduct a critical research according to the underlying framework of this thesis, based on Alvesson & Deetz (2021)'s guidelines. They perceive the task of critical researcher in parallel with the notions of critical performativity. The researcher has to investigate social phenomena within an organisation; create a more open discourse, a bridge between internal and external stakeholders; and draw attention on hidden aspects of dominant practises. These can enable the offering of alternative practises and develop thoughtfulness (Alvesson & Deetz, 2021).

According to Alvesson & Deetz (2021), a comprehensive critical research incorporates gaining *insights*, form *critique* and based on them, develop a *transformative redefinition*. Therefore, the first task is to "investigate local forms of phenomena" (Alvesson & Deetz, 2021, p. 33), and gain understanding about what kind of local knowledge exists in a specific entity (e.g. an organisation) and how does it formulate. While it helps to avoid (unnecessary and probably false) totalizing, forming critique is also essential to avoid narrow-mindedness. However, while analysing organisations and setting up critical statements about "taken-for-granted" practises is on the micro-level, every institution exists within a broader social context. Consequently, familiarizing with the underlying aspects of a society's political, economic or historical feature eventually deepens the understanding about dominating practises. Eventually, the last task of the critical researcher is to achieve real change, synthetise what was learned in the first two points and prove alternatives to the way things are now. It must be taken into account though, that this type of change can take time (Alvesson & Deetz, 2021).

As I have pointed out in the literature review, Bourdieu has not only contributed to the field of social mobility, but his "thinking tools" are widely used to analyse education systems. Thus, my aim was to use his key concepts, especially capital to gain deeper insights about the topic and interpret the experiences of students facing social mobility. In order to answer my first research question, I focused on a program facilitated by Rajk College for Advanced Studies,

the *Szabó Kálmán Tehetségprogram (SzKTP)*¹ (in English, Kálmán Szabó Talent Programme). The aim of the programme is to enable social mobility for a number of high school students about to enter higher education. I found the analysis of this scholarship programme valid, since Rajk College is one of the student organisations in Corvinus and one of the conditions of application for the programme is that the student must nominate Corvinus (or ELTE ÁJK) in the admission application. This feature enables to gather insights for the second research question as well. Another, but a relatively new programme offered by Corvinus University itself is the *Illyés Gyula Programme (IGyP)* (in English, Gyula Illyés Programme). They have different target groups, but the selection criteria for these programmes suggest that the students receiving grants are applicants who experience some form of social mobility. My aim was to get to know their “journey”, what were their main takeaways from the university (Corvinus), how did the specific programme helped them and what made them struggle the most.

Based on the paradigm’s characteristics, “all knowledge is socially constructed”. (Duberley & Johnson, 2011, p. 345), and critical research uses mainly qualitative methods. As Alvesson & Deetz (2021) points out, conducting loosely or half-structured interviews is an adequate method to access information. Interviews can be used not only to explore the personal internal processes of the interviewee in the analysed environment, but also to gain valuable insights into the external world itself (Alvesson & Deetz, 2021). During the interview process, there is also the possibility of digging deeper and deeper into different topics. However, it is important to keep in mind the factor that interviewees may be unintentionally biased about certain statements, so it is important to be especially cautious about what the researcher takes as certain when examining the results (Alvesson & Deetz, 2021).

In my opinion, conducting interviews best suited my research process, complemented by the fact that I also have participatory experience of the SzKTP, having been involved in various elements of the programme. Prior to the discussions, I created interview outlines (Appendix 1), matched with the role of the specific interviewee. These questions were mainly baselines for me and helped the interview process, when the other person got stuck and didn’t know how to progress further in his/her storyline. In interviews with students, I asked them about how did they end up in their high school where they studied, how did they get into university, what were their family background (especially during that time). How did they meet with SzKTP / IGyP, what were their memories about the programme and how would they improve it if they had the

¹ In the thesis, I will use the Hungarian version for abbreviaton in the case of both programmes

opportunity. I also asked them about their university experience, how they lived, what did they do (and with whom), what was the role of working in their life. Overall, how they were feeling during these times and also now. I've purposely chosen students who already finished the programme and could interpret their experiences from a retrospective perspective.

All in all, I conducted interviews with *21 involved people* between 26th March – 10th April: with 15 former SzKTP students and 1 former IGyP student (it should be mentioned though, that the programme had so far only 1 cohort, who finished the programme). To gather better insights about the programmes themselves and their operation, I interviewed a representative of SzKTP, the present and previous Chief Coordinators of SzKTP, the programme coordinator of IGyP. Last, but not least, I was also interested the university's opinion and had a short interview with the Strategic Director of CUB as well. Some of them happened in person and some online, while the length of the interviews varied between 30 to 120 minutes. (Appendix 2)

Being a critical researcher, I also wrote a reflectional diary during the process, keeping in mind my assumptions and potential biases. As I am currently a member of Rajk College for Advanced Studies, it was easier to reach out to those scholarship receivers who were members of Rajk as well. However, I wanted to ensure the diversity of the pool and among the in total 16 scholarship receivers, 8 were never members of this organisation. In order not to control the interviewees' thoughts too much, I did not reveal to the scholarship receivers that I was using Bourdieu's theoretical concepts (especially for those about whom I knew that they learnt sociology beforehand).

I used NVivo software to analyse and code the interviews. Among these, I tried to break up larger groups and to relate elements that typically go together. My aim to visualise these codes is attached in Appendix 3. These helped a lot for me to see the potential connection between specific elements and how they can induce each other or could be related to one of Bourdieu's key concepts. Additionally, this has been the most helpful in the process of understanding what role mentor figures can play, how they can be "bridging actors".

Given that this is an exploratory study, I had no explicit preconceptions about the research questions. I had assumed that money would play a big role in SzKTP and that the university would have opportunities that were readily available and required greater collaboration.

IV. Analysis

In order to answer my research questions, I will first describe the organisational background of SzKTP and CUB. Afterwards, I will turn to my first research question and analyse the potential effects of SzKTP on a student's life. The last section of the analysis is the formulation of criticisms of current operations and I outline potential suggestions for improvement.

IV.1. Introduction to Szabó Kálmán Talent Programme

The Szabó Kálmán Talent Programme (SzKTP) was established by Rajk College for Advanced Studies², the oldest among its peers in Hungary. Professionalism, community and social responsibility are the cornerstones of the institution's functioning, and many initiatives have been taken by the members of the College in these directions over the 50 years of its history. One such initiative was the SzKTP, established in 2012. (Rajk College, n.d.)

When in 2011 the state announced that there would be (almost) no state-funded places in economics or law university programmes (Ilyés, 2022), "a few young people decided to have a say in how society was shaped and tried to shape the world in the way they imagined it should be" (Aradi et al., 2022, p. 7). Rajk sees the diversity of its membership as an important asset and has always seen social mobility as a core value (Ilyés, 2022). Besides supporting the scholarship receiver students' higher education studies, the programme increases the self-esteem of the College students and can indirectly create value for society as a whole (Chikán, 2022). This aspect was also highlighted by Patricia and Quentin, who framed it in such a way that at least Corvinus' social diversity channel could be strengthened and the programme could socially sensitise the students.

The institution is aware that serious social and equal opportunity problems cannot be solved with this initiative by itself (Chikán, 2022). Consequently, as was stated by Taylor, *the target group of the programme are Hungarian students who are just a few "steps" away from getting into an elite university in Budapest* and it is not currently designed to, and cannot, target students from extreme poverty. Between 2013-2023 altogether 103 juniors were members of the programme and scholarship receivers arrived mostly from the countryside (SzKTP, 2023, p. 2). According to Taylor, the number of students who can be admitted to the program has slowly increased over the years and this limit is currently 15 people. One important condition, however, is that the program only provides the scholarship in the case of admission to Corvinus or ELTE

² In the followings, I will refer to every College for Advanced Studies as „advanced colleges”

ÁJK (Aradi et al., 2022). In order to ensure that this happens, after admission, SzKTP supports students with preparation for the matriculation exam (Aradi et al., 2022).

In the history of the programme, two milestones can be identified so far in connection with other student organisations. In 2017, the Heller Farkas College for Advanced Studies joined Rajk in the organisation of the SzKTP. Another milestone was the launch of SzKTP at ELTE Faculty of Law (in Hungarian: Állami és Jogtudományi Kar, ÁJK) by Bibó István College for Advanced Studies in 2020. Here, the main idea was to take over the programme as a “franchise” and then promotion is done jointly by the three organisations. (Aradi et al., 2022)

IV.1.1. The structure of the programme

In this section, I will describe how the programme is currently structured, who the main actors are, and what events and tasks are involved based on the insights I received from Patricia, Quentin and Taylor. The former two are the previous and current Chief Coordinators of SzKTP Committee in Rajk, while the latter person basically participated in every role in connection with the programme and currently is the Organising Executive of SzKTP Foundation.

Organisational framework

In order to gain more autonomy in terms of programme opportunities, the SzKTP Foundation was established in 2017 and became a public benefit organisation in 2019. Compared to a general civil organisation, it shares the decision-making role with the dormitory assemblies of the participating advanced colleges. Generally, it has no day-to-day contact with the SzKTP Committees, but it can comment on and review action plans. The Board of Trustees proposes the number of people to be admitted to the programme depending on the amount of funding received and is also responsible for formally adopting the accounts and the budget plan.

Since 2023, the different tasks of the Executives in SzKTP Foundation are divided into two branches, one managed by the Fundraising Executives and the other by Organisational Executive. The fundraising process is carried out by the 3+1 *Fundraising Executives* and they loosely connect to the internal organisation processes. Over the years, the programme has tried to keep pace with the increasing tuition fees at Corvinus and expanded the amount of scholarships accordingly. In the academic year of 2022/2023, the 17 scholarship holders received almost 17 million HUF in total (SzKTP, 2023, p. 8).

The program's strengths, but at the same time its challenges, have always included the fact that students carry out the operational (and partially strategic) tasks, which group of students typically changes every year, and the entire student body changes every 5 years in the advanced colleges. Creating continuity was therefore a necessity, and the *Organisational Executive* can help the SzKTP college Committees to achieve this important factor. This position is currently held by Taylor, who has more than 10 years of experience with the programme and can provide students with valuable information and structure of the overall programme. Furthermore, because there are projects spanning several years between the different Coordinator Committees, the Organisational Executive ensures that the newly developed action plans are coordinated.

From the colleges' side, currently there are 2 *SzKTP Committees*, one at CUB (managed by Rajk and Heller) and one at ELTE ÁJK (managed by Bibó). Each committee has its own Chief Coordinator and 4 Coordinators³, who are elected by the advanced colleges' Student Councils for a year. In the case of Rajk, in 2023, the "Grand SzKTP" model was introduced, in which new members are elected in November and work with the "old" Coordinators until February, ensuring a smoother transfer of knowledge and a better sharing of the workload. These committees are responsible to carry out the everyday operational tasks (business-as-usual), developing action plans and engage with the college students, who form an important base for volunteer work. SzKTP Committees also support the work of the *Admission Committees*, whose student members (4 in each cases) are elected in November by the general assemblies of the advanced colleges. The Coordinators look after and select the one external member (who is usually someone familiar with the civil sphere) for their own Admission Committee. Figure 4 visualizes the current organisational chart.

³ If it is not necessary to emphasise the role of the Chief Coordinator, I will refer to all of them as Coordinators in the following, as the former is also involved in operational tasks

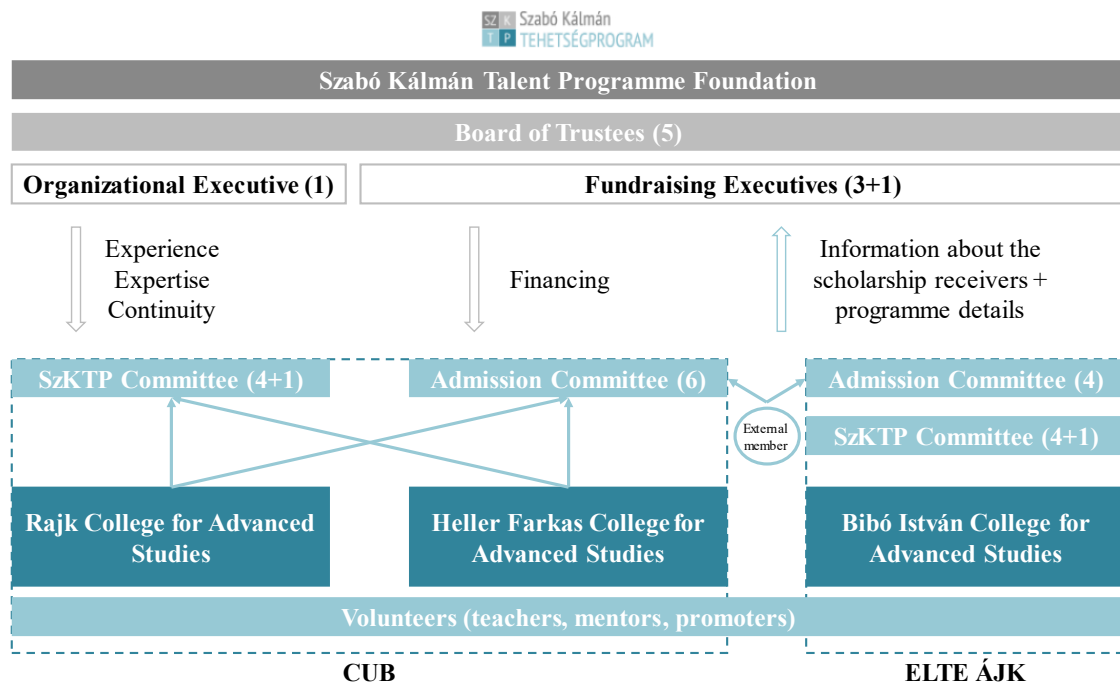


Figure 4: The organisational framework behind SzKTP

Own design based on information gathered from the interviews

The programme works together with a couple of partner organisations, including student, civil or for-profit organisations and is constantly looking for potential new partners. The most important partners currently are Studium Generale (SG) and Arany János Talent Programme (AJTP). The former is a student organisation at CUB focusing on tutoring high school students and preparing them for the matriculation exam. AJTP is a comprehensive 4+1 years long programme (starting with a language preparation year) for talented high school students and is currently present in 21 high schools in Hungary (Oktatási Hivatal, 2023). During this programme, most of the students live in a dormitory and receive a lot of benefits, including monthly scholarships and for example they can get their driving license and language exam for free.

This organisational framework currently enables 15 students a year to start their higher education studies with support. The interaction with the programme, especially the role of Coordinators, gives the participating students an insight into the workings of an NGO, creating value through the new knowledge they accumulate. Furthermore, the possibility to participate in the creation of strategic abstractions and in everyday tasks not only increases students' social awareness, but also gives them a sense of responsibility through these situations. Being a non-governmental organisation, volunteers are not paid for their work, except for financial staff, the

executives and teachers on contract. In the following, I will describe the specific programmes that arise in the course of the year.

Business-as-usual tasks for the SzKTP Committee

Despite the changes in the organisational framework and participants in the programme, the foundations of SzKTP remained the same. Based on SzKTP (2023, p.2.), these pillars are the followings: (1) *Financial support*; (2) *Mentoring*; (3) *Talent management*; (4) *Community*. The peculiarity of the programme is that the SzKTP committees are changed every year and the foundations are rethought annually, when the strategy and action plans are drawn up, creating a very inherent operation with many incremental improvements.

The day-to-day running of the programme can be described as a yearly cycle, which roughly fits in with both the university and high school academic year. In Rajk College, the mandate of the Coordinators lasts for 1 year and 4 months, from February to November as a "small" SzKTP and from November, with the new members being added, as a "large" SzKTP". After the launch of the "small" SzKTP Committee in February, the Coordinators *develop the action plans* for the year, which they formulate based on the feedbacks they receive in the upcoming month. During the rest of the year, besides the business-as-usual tasks, they execute these plans.

Due to the workload throughout the academic year, the Coordinators have time in the summer to deal more intensively with the action plans. This is the period when they can gather follow-up information about the scholarship recipients who were accepted earlier as well. In the end of July, the admission points for every higher education institution are being announced and SzKTP will see who has been accepted to one of the CUB or ELTE ÁJK programmes. From this point, they are considered the actual scholarship receivers of the programme and the new cohort is formulated. There could be a potential mentor-mentee meeting for the newest cohort until September, but afterwards, the most important event is the *Diploma Ceremony*, where students formally become scholarship holders in a formal ceremony.

The SzKTP Committee does not only channel the social responsibility pillar into the operation of the advanced college through the running of the programme. For instance, every year, it organises a series of events called "*Stargazing*" in August, during which college students go away for a weekend to listen to lectures and take part in workshops on topics mostly related to the civil society. Here, students from every participating advanced colleges mix together.

There are two promotional periods during the year, one in the spring and one in the autumn, to coincide with the school year. During this time, the coordinators, with the help of college students, travel to high schools in the countryside to present and *promote the programme* to 11th or senior classes. There are some schools that these teams visit almost every year, and there are usually new institutions on the list as well, because college students are encouraged to at least return to their former high school to promote. In a year, students visit around 80-100 schools (Aradi et al., 2022, p. 11) and the trips often have a team-building effect.

The application period for the programme typically starts in early autumn until the end of November, and students have until mid-December to upload the necessary documents via the appropriate platform. During this period the Coordinator team can organise community or academic events for the new cohort as well.

In November, the Admissions Committee is elected by the College Assembly and the number of Coordinators is expanded by the newly elected members. Together with the "big" SzKTP, they now process and make the admission materials available to the admission committee. At the end of December and beginning of January, the dates for the *oral and written tests* are organised and the sample tests are requested from Studium General. The admission itself typically lasts a few days, with Coordinators involving other college students in the reception committee and in the supervision of the written admission. At the end of all this, after the admission decision, applicants are notified of their acceptance into the programme, followed by an *Orientation Weekend*, typically in early February. During this weekend, high school seniors have the opportunity to come up to Budapest, stay in the dormitory and meet their cohort mates. The coordinators also organise a variety of professional and social activities for them. This is the last shared project with the "big" SzKTP, after which a new Chief Coordinator is being elected by the Student Council in the advanced college(s) and the work of the "small" SzKTP begins again. Figure 5 describes how an academic year is usually structured for the SzKTP Committee.

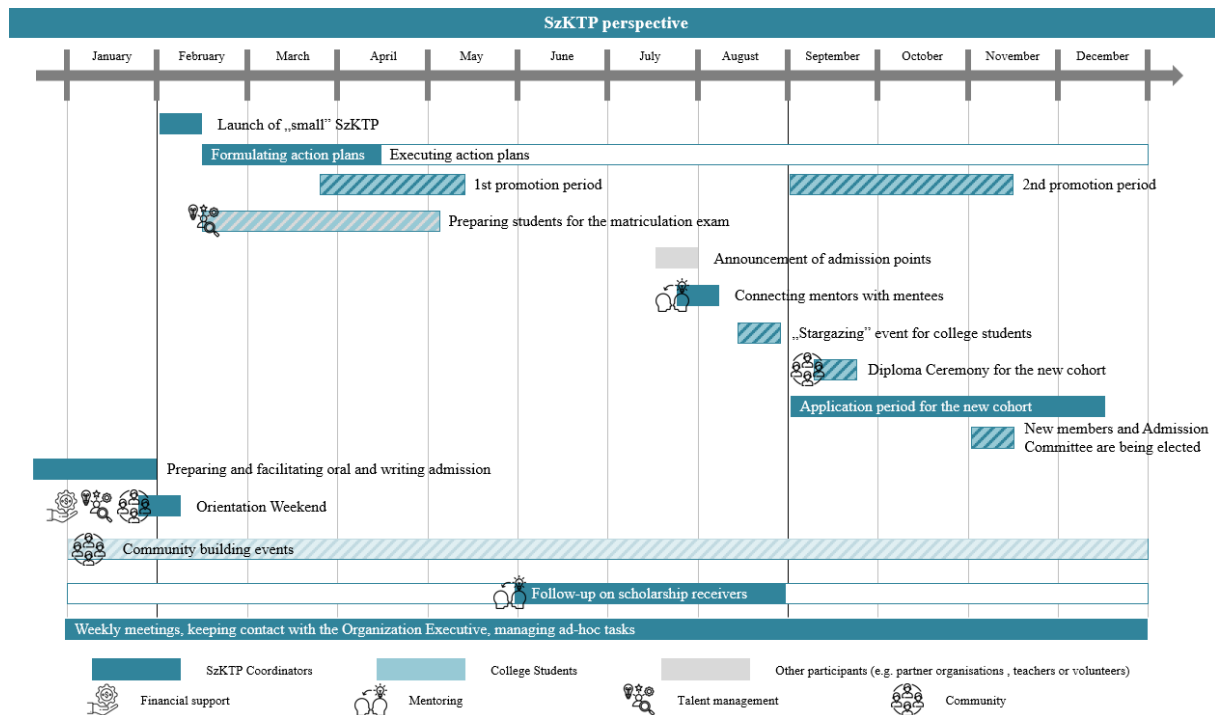


Figure 5: The distribution of business-as-usual tasks for the SzKTP Committees

Own design based on the interviews with SzKTP Chief Coordinators

IV.1.2. Benefits for the SzKTP scholarship receivers

In this section, my aim is to describe the programmes that the scholarship receiver will benefit from under the pillars of the SzKTP. I will then summarise how such a student's journey with the programme is structured in general terms, and what the main points of contact are.

Admission to the program has 3 main parts from the students' side: they have to submit various official documents by the middle of December, which are meant to prove their financial and academic background. After that, there is the Oral and written admission part in January, where students have to appear in person at one of Rajk or Bibó Advanced Colleges and write an intermediate and advanced matriculation exam in two subjects of their choice. Besides this, there is a half-hour discussion with Admission Committee, in which, via questions, they try to identify the student's ambition and family background.

The most basic part of the scholarship programme is the *Financial support*. Starting from 2024, scholarship receivers will get 750.000 HUF per semester in the first two years of their university studies. They receive this amount in one sum, always at the beginning of the semester. No one keeps track of what they spend this on, it is completely up to them. An important change is that CUB started to support the programme financially and covers half of the scholarship in the second year (confirmed by Samuel). Additionally, students can learn about their opportunities

regarding available scholarships at CUB and ELTE ÁJK and receive information and assistance on the possibilities and conditions of student loans.

College students are increasingly enthusiastic about *Mentoring*. The Coordinators try to match college students as mentors with scholarship receivers, based on their university programmes and identified areas of interest. These mentor-mentee pairs maintain a rather informal contact for a year, starting from August. Currently, there are some guidelines for the mentors, how should they interact with these newcomer first-year students, but there is no specific socialisation process for them. As part of the mentoring process, it is also important that the coordinators are aware of the progress of the scholarship holders, what they need help with potentially. This also helps to establish the element of the programme that has probably changed the most over the years, which is best described by the concept of a *professional mentor*. On the basis of interest, the Coordinators aim to find a former college student or an “outsider” professional who are already working and who could potentially help as much as possible for the scholarship receivers to advance in their career. This element was realized in several forms during the existence of the programme, sometimes in the 2nd, sometimes in the 3rd university year for the mentee, most of the time on a voluntary basis.

The *Talent management* pillar of the programme is the most difficult to grasp, because it is up to the individual student to make the most of it and it has to be tailor-made to a certain extent. This is further complicated by the fact that students typically come from different backgrounds with different knowledge sets and are pursuing different courses. There are elements of the programme that try to make an impact accordingly, but these are currently more about tutoring, and developing students' English language skills. One of SzKTP's most important partner, Studium Generale provides tests for the writing part of the admission process, free preparation materials, tutoring, and the opportunity to participate in their spring preparation camp for the matriculation exam. The tutoring is usually carried out by college students, but during the spring period, if more serious help is needed, the Coordinators look after and hire professional teachers for the scholarship receivers. After the beginning of the university studies, they are provided with a range of preparation materials and platforms too, including Mateking, which allows them to develop their maths skills. Whenever needed, requesting English tutoring is also an option and they can seek help from the Coordinators or their mentor. Additionally, throughout the year, the participating advanced colleges open up several of their professional events, such as skill courses to the students.

The *Community* pillar is also difficult to grasp in terms of that it can't be forced onto the student. The success of building a tight-knit community varies from year to year, it depends on the affinity of the cohort and also on the extent to which the coordinating team is committed to community building as a project. Recurring annual community-building events include an Orientation Weekend and the Diploma Ceremony. During the Diploma Ceremony, they can also meet with their cohort members and upper-year SzKTP scholarship receivers, and interact with college students. The extent to which a sense of community develops among all mentors and mentees also depends on the affinity of the participants in a given year. Mentor-mentee pairs typically organise activities for themselves only.

During *checkpoints* throughout the year, students are required to report on their achievements, experiences in connection with the university and the mentoring. In this, they can also give feedback regarding the programme elements, what and how would they develop.

There is currently no definite end to the program for students. After graduating from the university, they will in principle be members of the alumni, which is also not a well-defined community, without any kind of institutional framework. Many of them have joined one of the advanced colleges in SzKTP at the end of their first university year and they have the opportunity to take on a professional mentoring role in the future as professional mentors. They also have the opportunity to support the organisation and be a donor in the future. The touching points with SzKTP in a scholarship receiver's perspective is visualized on Figure 6.

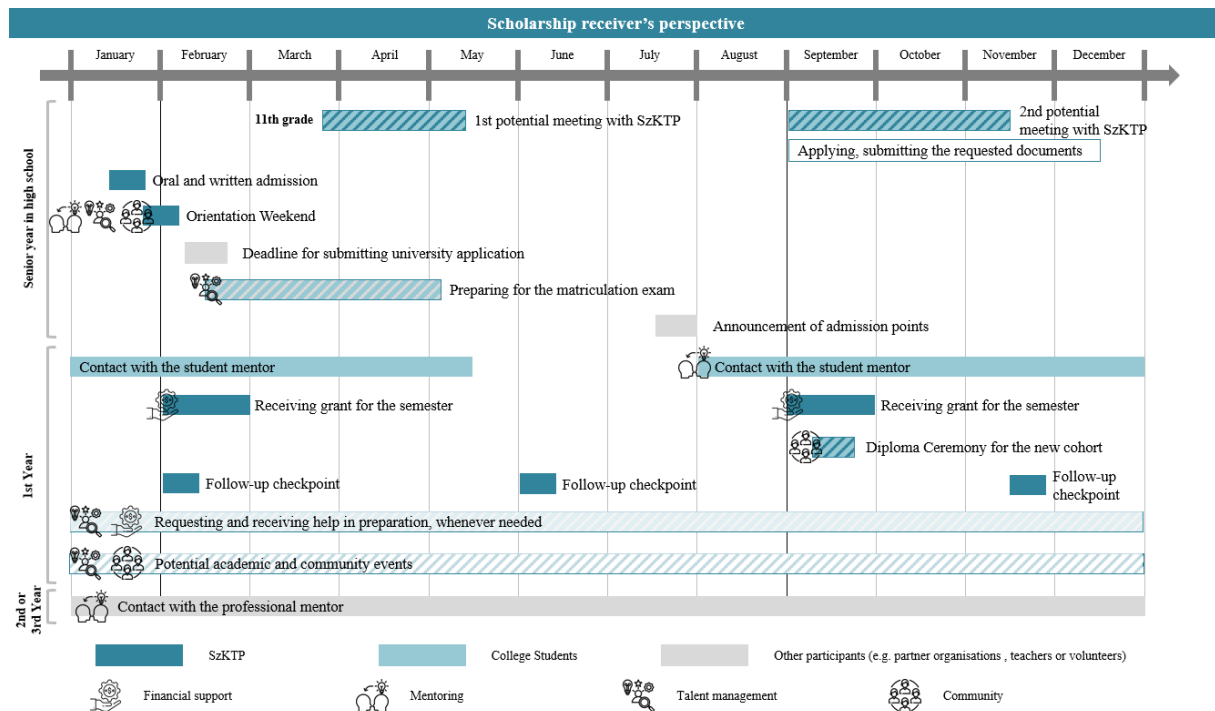


Figure 6: A student's main points of contact with SzKTP

Own design based on the interviews with SzKTP Chief Coordinators

The current operating framework is now relatively stable, but changes somewhat every year. With its 12-year history, the program has encountered many situations and questions, and the actors are also aware of the limitations of its operation.

IV.1.3. Current limits of the programme

In designing the programme, the Rajk students had to answer a number of questions for themselves, such as: Who should be the target group? How deep can we reach down and help school children? What can we do to help the most, what will have the most impact? What is really needed? (Aradi et al., 2022, pp. 16–17). These are legitimate questions and although answers have been given, they still arise today.

The programme was never intended to reach out to children living in extreme poverty, but to give the final push to ambitious students who are just a few 'steps' away from university. This obviously reduces the number of potential applicants, but given the financial constraints and the constantly rising tuition fees at CUB, taking this into account is a question for the much more distant future. However, the small size allows for much more opportunities and amplifies the mobilising power of the programme for admitted students. Considering that during the interaction points with SzTKP the scholarship receivers typically meet students a few years

older than them, so they can feel relatively close to them, the character of SzKTP is more like a mentoring than a scholarship programme.

The current institutional frameworks not only give financial, but “human resources” constraint as well. Being run by college students is not only an advantage but also a disadvantage, because it makes the success of the programme dependent on the availability of a sufficient number of enthusiastic "volunteers" willing to help with the implementation of the events.

While the checkpoints and feedback forms are good initiatives, the Coordinators can never be sure about what kind of events are really useful and very much so needed for them. In the past couple of years, there has been some follow-up conversations with some already graduated SzKTP scholarship receivers about this topic. As a result, for example, the connection with a professional mentor was moved from the second to the third year.

The programme is currently considering its expansion options into several directions. These options include formulating stable partnerships with even more partner organisations or scholarship programmes for high school students. These initiatives could create more continuity by encouraging these organisations to promote SzKTP, thus giving the student some kind of continuity and extend the mobility channel in front of them. Another kind of opportunity would be to work with a (non-governmental) organisation that could channel teachers or other resources into the programme.

In this thesis, my goal is closely related to the problem described above: "What initiatives help students the most?". Although my aim is to propose thereafter potential solutions for CUB, based on the fact that I am actually doing a follow-up with former students of the programme, I think that the results will be useful for the SzKTP in the future.

IV.2. Introduction to Corvinus University of Budapest

Corvinus University of Budapest (CUB) is one of Hungary's 41 universities (Netjogtár, 2024). With a focus on economic and social sciences, it is a medium-sized university by European standards, with more than 10,000 students, about a fifth of whom come from abroad and an increasing amount of English programmes (Corvinus University, n.d., a).

Recently, in 2019, the organisation changed its legal status from state-owned to *public-benefit private higher education institution*, which in practice means, that currently the maintainer of CUB is Maecenas Universitatis Corvini Foundation (Corvinus University, n.d., a).

The fact, that *CUB is a business school* is supplemented by the university itself. Business degrees are high on the list of courses offered by the university, both at bachelor and master level. The University is particularly proud of and places particular emphasis on its rankings in various international ranking lists of business schools. (Corvinus University, n.d., a)

IV.2.1. Organisation

The maintainer of CUB, Maecenas Universitatis Corvini Foundation (MUC) is an asset management foundation, which type of legal entity was created and founded by the Hungarian Parliament in 2019 and is focused on (in this case) educational activities (EUA, 2023). The shift can also be seen as an attempt at modernisation, giving higher education institutions more financial freedom than if they continued to be funded by state maintenance, which is burdened by bureaucracy (EUA, 2023). This kind of flexibility is managed by MUC, which is ensured by the dividends received from the 10-10% shareholding in Hungary's 2 largest listed companies, transferred by the state at the time of its establishment (Corvinus University, 2023). In 2023, CUB received almost 36 billion HUF after its shares (Corvinus University, 2023).

The foundation is responsible not only for the financial functioning, but also for the everyday institutional operation and the implementation of strategic goals of CUB (Corvinus University, n.d., b). The university had its first strategic development phase until 2023 and published its upcoming Institutional Development Plan for the next 4 years in 2024 (Corvinus University, 2024a). Under MUC, there are further governing bodies and the organisation itself is divided into the academic and service area, under the current rector and president respectively (Corvinus University, n.d., c). These areas are further divided into smaller units, for instance the academic management which comprises several institutes and the Center for Talent Management and Colleges for Advanced Studies are also located here (Corvinus University, n.d., c).

CUB claims itself a vibrant student life and indeed, besides joining the Student Council, these young adults can enter to at least 37 student organisations in various fields and topics or apply to one of the 7 Colleges for Advanced Studies. These organisations can provide further community to the participants and insights to several aspects of how these kind of establishments work. (Corvinus University, n.d., d)

Students have the opportunity to apply for dormitory accommodation as a Campus Service within the university's service area (Corvinus University, n.d., c). CUB has 4 dormitories in Budapest (Tarkaréti, Kinizsi, Ferenc Földes and the newly opened Gellért Campus Dormitory)

and 1 dormitory in Székesfehérvár (which is managed by Óbudai University) (Corvinus University, 2024b). Altogether, these facilities can reside approximately 1100 people (Corvinus University, n.d., e), which is ~10% of CUB's current students. Depending on the dormitory and the number of roommates - everyone (regardless of whether or not the student is in receipt of Corvinus scholarship) has to pay between 35.400 and 80.000 HUF per month (Corvinus University, 2024b, p. 7.).

IV.2.2. Current strategy of Corvinus

The leadership of CUB published the Institutional Development Plan for 2024-2027, which is based on the following principles: excellence and quality for regional leadership; tradition and intellectual diversity; innovation; academic freedom; transparency; sustainability; involvement and trust (Corvinus University, 2024a, pp. 6–7). Additionally, the university states that “*in the service of society as a whole... (it aims to) ...educate socially and environmentally responsible young people*” (Corvinus University, 2024a, p. 12).

To achieve its strategic goals and mission, CUB developed the Corvinus Excellence Ecosystem, focusing on Value-creating partnerships, Committed colleagues and Excellent students (Corvinus University, 2024a, p. 13). To further support these initiatives, the university developed additional functional strategies, including the Strategic Framework for Talent Management, in which the institution aims to develop a complex and comprehensive talent management system (Corvinus University, 2024a). As it can be concluded from the strategic outline and according to Samuel, *social mobility is not amongst CUB's current focus areas*. However, Samuel also confirmed, that the current plan is to include within this framework, next to the Colleges for Advanced Studies, programmes that can be associated with social mobility, such as the institutionally managed IGYP.

The *Illyés Gyula Programme* was initiated by CUB's former rector, Dr. Előd Takáts in 2021 “with the aim of providing the University with a structured framework to support talented students who have encountered obstacles in their access to higher education” (Corvinus University, 2022a). In order to tackle social inequalities, in this 10-month scholarship programme, the university prepares students for the next admission period who have previously failed to gain admission to a higher education institution (Koncsek, 2022).

CUB allocates 40 million HUF per year to this programme, and provides a monthly scholarship of 150.000 HUF (the exact number corrected by Fiona), free dormitory residence, public

transportation seasonal tickets, daily warm meal and tools for education for these students (Koncsek, 2022). The creation of the IGYP was a carefully prepared process involving many stakeholders and experts, and was finally launched in 2022/2023 with 8 students (Corvinus University, 2022a). During the 10 months, the preparation includes intensive maths and English classes for a total of 30 hours per week, with the support of the IGYP coordinators, the Centre for Foreign Language Education and Research and Studium Generale (Corvinus University, 2022a).

According to Fiona, an important pillar of the programme is that students are not working while studying, and that they are surrounded by helpers and mentors close to their age (including volunteers from Studium Generale). Additionally, they study together with foreign students, which aspect further helps them in acquiring English-speaking skills and competences (Interviewee6). Another important feature in connection social mobility is that starting from 2024, students participating in IGYP will receive the maximum *100 institutional points* during their application to CUB and 40 out of the 100 points if they were receivers of either Luca Pacioli Excellence Award or SzKTP (Corvinus University, 2024c).

The internationalisation efforts of the university are reflected not only in the number of foreign students and the growing English-language portfolio, but also in the university's tuition fees. In order to improve the brand value of CUB, the institution aims to reach the level of tuition fees at Bocconi or Warwick by 2030 (Corvinus University, 2020). Currently, the university is at the halfway point: European students who do not receive a Corvinus scholarship pay between HUF 700,000 - 990,000 per semester for a BA and HUF 850,000 - 1,350,000 per semester for an MA, depending on the specific type of programme. These numbers for students arriving from non-European countries are 2500 – 3300 EUR and 3600 – 5400 EUR respectively (Corvinus University, n.d., f).

CUB offers the *Corvinus Scholarship* in place of the state-funded programmes that existed before the university was transformed. This has similar conditions, however, however, it is also true that the reclassification is only done annually and the number of places funded by the university remains constant throughout this process. According to the university's statement, in 2023, almost 70% of bachelor level and 90% of master students received the Corvinus Scholarship. (Corvinus University, n.d., g).

There are also many *other scholarships* for which students can apply based on their social or educational background. These differ not only in the amount of the grant and the frequency of

the transfer, but also based on the specific activity of the student. A non-exhaustive list is collected in Table 2, on the basis of calls for proposals for the 2023/2024 academic year. CUB also aims to raise awareness of other possible scholarships provided by the state, such as Bursa Hungarica (specifically for students from more disadvantaged backgrounds) or the New National Excellence Programme (ÚNKP). It is important to note that, in general, especially in the case of scholarships based on social-need, it is not possible to apply for a scholarship if the student is enrolled in a self-financed programme. (Corvinus University, n.d., h)

Type	Scholarship	Payment frequency	Amount (HUF)
Self-financing scholarship	Corvinus Scholarships	Per semester	700.000 - 1.350.000
Scholarship based on social-need	Regular Social Scholarship	Monthly	26.680 - 133.400 ⁴
Scholarship based on social-need	Extraordinary Social Scholarship	Single	100.000 - 150.000
Scholarship based on social-need	Dormitory Social Scholarship	Monthly	26.100 - 62.525
Merit-based scholarships	Student Organisation Scholarship	Single, monthly	Based on student organisation and activity
Merit-based scholarships	Public Scholarship	Single, monthly	Based on organised public university activities
Merit-based scholarships	Study Scholarship	Monthly	Max. 70.000 ⁵
Merit-based scholarships	Academic Scholarship	Single	30.000 - 200.000
Merit-based scholarships	Study Abroad Scholarship	Single	Based on activity and destination
Merit-based partner scholarships	MNB Excellence Scholarship	Monthly	50.000
Merit-based state scholarships	National Scholarship for Higher Education	Monthly	40.000
Academic state scholarships	New National Excellence Programme	Monthly	100.000

Table 2: Scholarships offered by CUB

Source: Own collection based on calls for proposals at Corvinus University (n.d., h)

In conclusion, CUB aims for excellence in several aspects and by 2030 it wants to be “among the leading universities in the region in business, economic and social sciences” (Corvinus University, 2024a, p. 12). Its Excellence Framework focuses on several aspects. Besides aiming to improve the brand value of the university (via increasing the tuition fees for example), CUB also emphasizes the importance of talent development and management. This means that students who do well in their community and academically can not only study for free, but can also apply for more scholarships based on their social needs or performance. Social mobility is

⁴ CUB has a Campus in Székesfehérvár, where students can also live in a dormitory. There, the amount for Dormitory Social Scholarship is 11.650 HUF

⁵ Additional information gathered from Corvinus University (2022b)

not currently a focus for CUB, but we can see some efforts by the institution in this direction. Such examples are the establishment of Gyula Illyés Programme or the 40 or 100 institutional points allocated for participation in various mobility programmes in the university admission process.

IV.3. The SzKTP's effect on student's life in the framework of Bourdieu

The analysis of institutional frameworks provided the first insight for the research and in the followings, using Bourdieu's framework, I aim to answer the first research question, namely, *how does SzKTP support social mobility via Bourdieu's thinking tools?* First of all, I have to emphasize my first conclusion: as much as I would have wanted to focus on capital, it became clear during the research that in this case it is really not possible to separate these instruments and a much more comprehensive picture is given by the inclusion of field and habitus

Based on the insights I gathered from the conducted interviews, I will first describe the field which affects the operation of SzKTP and the educational journey of the students. Afterwards, I try to define what social mobility means to this specific community, what are biggest constraints to enter and later on move along in their university studies. I will then outline how the elements of the SzKTP can help to reduce the disadvantages of scholarship receivers, what types of capital they help to acquire and how they influence habitus. As a final conclusion, I outline a potential social mobility pathway based on interviewees' experiences, emphasising the role of mentors as catalysts.

IV.3.1. Initial situation

In my understanding, the social field in which the student has to make the appropriate steps in order to tackle social inequalities is, as it was highlighted by Bourdieu (1985), indeed multidimensional. The *domestic and institutional environment outlined above can be identified as a good approximation to the field* and the student has to move in and recognize his/her position in it. Micro-dimensions, such as the labour market or the field of (public) education, are closely interlinked and one can confidently identify the elements of individual capital that can help to change position, because they are widely recognised as “great steps” (e.g. choosing the “right” and “elite” high schools).

After primary school I had 3 paths ahead of me: humanities (which would have given me Hungarian), maths (which was always the top class in our high school), and the 3rd path was AJTP, which is for the disadvantaged - I don't say that I felt below my belt, but I felt I wanted to go into maths, I knew it would be difficult, but let's do it. (Carl)

I wanted to go to an even better high school, like Lovassy in Veszprém or Győr, but my parents wouldn't let me because it was too far away (they were also member schools of AJTP). It's been part of my life ever since, that no matter how hard I try to not just collect status symbols, I always end up here. (Hugo)

This is a given factor that has developed and became accepted in society over many years, and it would also take a long time to change it in any meaningful way. Unfortunately, the Hungarian education system has a high attrition rate and a number of pitfalls, where a less than optimal choice can leave a student having to work much harder to catch up. The situation is made more difficult by the fact that there is a vicious circle, caused by the fact that the initial position in the field can already impose a path dependency towards “wrong steps”. So, all in all, the student must first find a place in the field of public education (possibly private/church education) and then find out about the field of university (in this case CUB).

The only option was the best, which is Corvinus, which still has the best reputation (...). Abroad was out of the question due to financial circumstances, renting an apartment abroad or paying tuition fees was out of the question, so I decided to stay at home, but I wanted the best here. (Ulrich)

I didn't have a role model in front of me, but "Corvinus is the best university in the country" was the mantra I heard. (Grace)

One of the social field's aspect is, that (in Hungary at least) the added value of a CUB degree on the job market compared to any other economics or business school in Hungary, is commonly agreed among the interviewees. However, it is also widely known that a student can only get into one of CUB's programmes with relatively high scores. Additionally, CUB is perceived as a quite “elitist” institution, with a lot of “affluent” or “upper-class” family children, who have been educated in an “elite” high school in Budapest.

It is true that I was an advanced maths student, but I arrived at a big disadvantage compared to people from high school in Pest. I was good at professional things, but in everything else I could not compete with an elite high school student, I had to take it upon myself. (Noah)

The elitist attitude of Corvinus was also quite negative. You could form rather superficial relationships, people talking about completely different experiences, which you didn't have as a child. (Grace)

Thus, the field can also be interpreted along the *Budapest - Countryside axis*, which in most cases affects these (SzKTP) students, because they typically do not come from the capital. These contexts offer a different reality for those living in them, and may also present different levels of understanding for the young adults who are new to them. It can be concluded, that

going to university is a big shock for all students, regardless of their social class or family background.

Despite the many common points and factors, it became clear during the interviews, and was explicitly stated by some of the interviewees, that within this field, *social mobility* means different things to different people, not only in terms of its extent but also in terms of its content. I have compiled a collection of the responses to this question from the SzKTP scholarship receivers in Appendix 4.

It's my way to having a job and a life with a kind of security. Or I think there is a social aspect of how I start to feel and define myself as an intellectual. (Anna)

People usually compare their situation to their parents' or wider family's in terms of job (opportunities), values, way of thinking and lifestyle and in some cases, they want to "break out" from it, have something different.

Because of differences in values, I really disagreed with my parents' way of life, I knew I didn't want that, I knew that not many people in the family had a high school diploma. I knew I wanted a degree, I wanted to go to Corvinus, I wanted opportunities. (Victor)

The usually recurring images on an individual level are "*upward movement towards a goal*", *steps (or in some cases, ladder)* and on the society's level *the ability to improve one's lifestyle* at all.

Another widely associated term with social mobility is *ambition*. This inherent feature is something, that cannot be separated from an individual. Without ambition, no matter how many guidelines and supporting hands are in front of the person, he or she won't be able to make the necessary steps or recognize the importance of them. Although it can also be personality-dependent, an individual's level of ambition is greatly influenced by the family and educational background they come from, which surrounds them for the first 18 years of their life. How much one wants to learn and move forward in life can be motivated and pulled backwards by family figures and patterns.

My aunt was the role model whose career I wanted to follow, but honestly it wasn't that that motivated me the most, it was her personality, her determination. (...) Finding and getting a place at college was difficult because my mum was living with her current partner at the time and couldn't get the necessary paperwork in the short window of time. Parental neglect. (Daniel)

Additionally, besides family members, *supporting figures* could be teachers as well in the student's the environment.

My parents supported me, if they couldn't go, at least let me go. I had the skills and my teachers encouraged me as well (that's why I went to high school, it was a straight path from there). (Anna)

Due to these internal and external factors, in my view, ambition is closely related to habitus. Based on these two dimensions (the level of supporting environment and ambition) I tried to identify which students are really the target groups of the programme (highlighted in Figure 7).

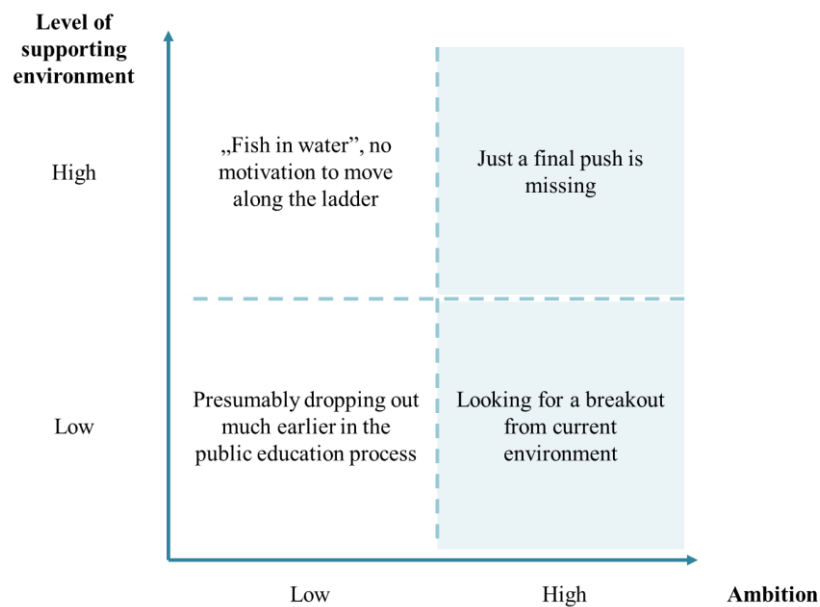


Figure 7: Potential features of a student, on which SzKTP can and aims to help

Own figure based on the conducted interviews

My aim here is not to "box" these people and set up extreme categories along each dimension. However, it is necessary to be aware that students from different supporting environments may need different kinds of help to progress. Some may need just a little push, while others bring more burdens with them that hinder their further educational journey. All in all, the visualisation of the path of "social mobility" can be described in Figure 8.

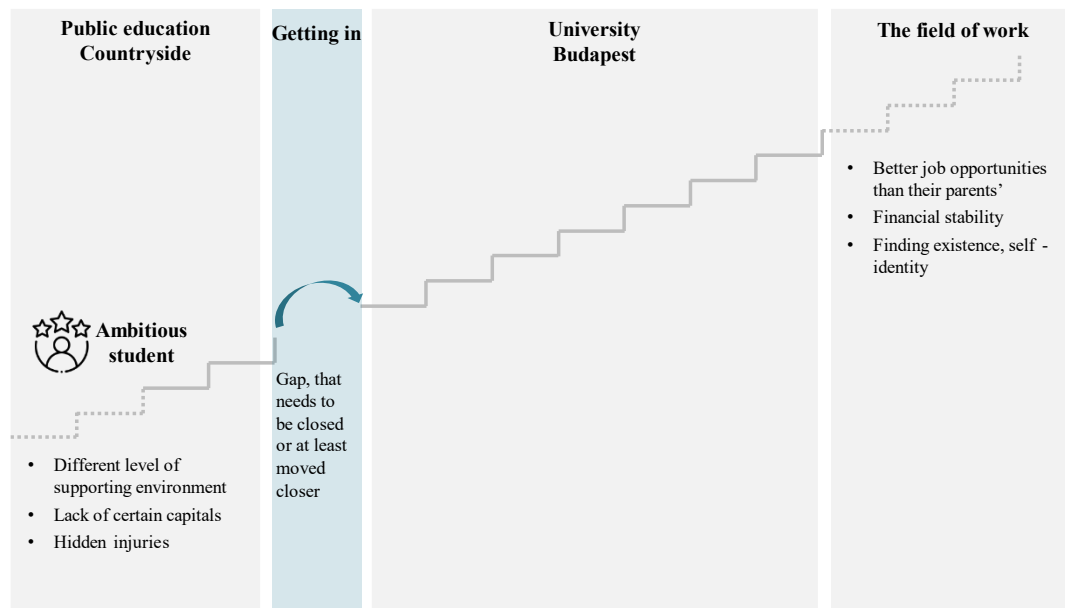


Figure 8: The starting and end points for social mobility for an SzKTP scholarship receiver

Own figure based on the conducted interviews

Out of the 3 highlighted stages by Bathmaker et al. (2016), namely the Getting In, Fitting In & Getting Through and the Getting Out phases, SzKTP is mainly involved in the first two and can have the biggest impact on the Getting In process. This is a crucial milestone, where students with less advantageous family and educational background (and in most cases coming from the countryside) face the “widest gap” compared to their middle-class peers. This gap is multidimensional, but can be better approached using Bourdieu's thinking tools. In Table 3 I have tried to summarise what this gap might include, based on the interviews with previous SzKTP scholarship receivers.

The most frequently mentioned and most visible constraints to the SzKTP scholarship receivers were the *financial fear*, the *lack of guidance* and the *missing skills*. No matter how supporting one's environment is, if the parents in the family live on minimum wage or, even worse, only one parent supports the children, the extra expenditure of a few tens of thousands of forints a month can make it questionable to apply for higher education. In this context, the exceptionally high tuition fees at CUB are a particularly strong deterrent.

As the application for dormitory is only available after the announcement of admission points in August, there is also continued uncertainty around housing until then. Without connections in Budapest (basically because of the lack of social capital), if something comes up and the student can't get into the dormitory, the family has to look after an accommodation in a short period of time. This would normally be a multiple of the amount the student would have to pay

for dormitory accommodation (35.400 HUF per month, given that first-year students can only apply to Tarkaré Dormitory). On top of all this, there are the day-to-day costs that the student has to take into account (e.g. travelling). These are significant disadvantages compared to someone who lives in the capital and doesn't have to worry about these costs. Additionally, partly because there is a kind of anxiety about loans in the family due to previous "traumas", many of the applicants do not even think about using student loans to support their studies.

Besides financial aspects, the less tangible factor is the lack of guidance about higher education and living in Budapest in general. These students are mostly first graduates in the family, so they can't turn to their parents for advices regarding university programmes. Since most of them have not had any prior exposure to economics or social sciences (including law), they often cannot put a practical side behind the information about the courses, and see what they can ultimately do with it. Consequently, they may be unsure about what programme to select, what is the best match for them. They are also uncertain about various university processes, such as what "credit" is, how courses are taken, how different application processes (e.g. for dormitories) are carried out.

Missing skills may relate to various academic skills, but also to social skills. The fact that they did not go to "top" high schools often meant that there were differences in knowledge levels, but there is also a "luck" factor in this. Even in a "worse" school, the student can find a *mentor teacher* who would then give them extra lessons, maybe even take them to competitions, so they could achieve a higher level of knowledge.

“...my Hungarian teacher helped me from within, she was my mentor teacher ... she helped me to get the "National Young Talent" scholarship, that was also a big help, she looked at the application, we wrote it together” (Carl)

Afterwards, this advantage could last even in the whole first university year. However, there are opposite cases as well, when the student lacks certain, usually Math or English skills. Less visible factors are social skills, which are also connected to the habitus. Despite the curiosity of the student and the motivation to live in Budapest, the “fish out of water” motive was a frequently returning aspect. Many noted the frequent artificiality or “snobbishness” in their fellow students' behaviour, which was an unusual and uncomfortable factor for them. They often felt a lack of information on common realities or on specific topics, such as public life, politics, economy and travelling.

These differences in habitus can lead to *hidden injuries*, which may later be supplemented by additional elements as the student moves away from his or her previous environment. These are the most difficult factors to grasp and thus to resolve, which can be made more difficult by the fact that in many cases these injuries are only recognised by the students after, for instance, finishing with the university studies.

Aspect	Gap
Economic capital	Financial fear about high tuition fees and high living costs in Budapest Uncertainty about getting in the dormitory and rent costs
Social capital	Most relationships are located in the home region In most cases, there are no friends, relatives or any supporting person in Budapest
Embodied cultural capital	Lack of guidance about university programmes, processes Missing skills in major subjects (e.g. Math) Lack of linguistic capital Lack of international (e.g. Erasmus) or travelling experiences
Objectified cultural capital	Lack of advanced technological tools (e.g. laptop, mobile)
Institutionalised cultural capital	Not arriving from an "elite high school"
Habitus	Hidden injuries "Fish out of water" feeling Uneasiness about certain behavioural aspects

Table 3: Constraints between high school and entering higher education in the perspective of SzKTP students

Own collection based on the conducted interviews

IV.3.2. The role of SzKTP in boosting progress in the social mobility journey

It is in this life situation, that students in their final high school year encounter the SzKPT, which in many cases they don't realise is a mentoring/talent programme rather than a simple scholarship programme. Considering that financial barriers are the strongest disincentive, many people do not expect (initially) anything else from the programme, especially students who feel that they have no deficiencies in other areas (e.g. skills).

Obviously the money, undeniably, is what gave the most. (Noah)

You can't take away the fact that a trump card is money. (Eric)

I was surprised that such a scholarship programme could create such a community, when I applied I didn't even know it was such a programme. (Isabella)

Regardless of this, they may be affected by elements of the programme that have no specific function in terms of the 4 pillars (Financial support, Mentoring, Talent management and Community). I have tried to collect these potential benefits of the programme in Table 4. These really only serve as guidelines, as it varies from individual to individual as to how and how much they can withdraw from the program

Based on the conclusions drawn from the gap analysis, one of the most important added values is the increase of economic capital through the scholarship. Without exception, this financial support means the *final push*, that releases the uncertainty and financial anxiety for students and their families, and they apply to one of CUB's programmes (usually putting a "safety option" in the 2nd or 3rd place as well). Later on, for some students, this is still only a "relief" in that they have to work less, but regardless, they are still forced to work, even with other scholarships (e.g. social and academic). Most of the time, these arise from family factors: either they need to support those at home to some extent or they do not receive any other support from home at all.

I worked in the first year. I went to university, then to work in the afternoon. There wasn't really time for fun, hanging out with classmates, I went home a lot in the first year because the dorm room was empty, there was never anybody in there. (...) The first semester was hard and demanding, by the second semester it got to the point where I could only go to the compulsory classes because of family stuff. (Grace)

However, for many, this support means that their time is completely freed up, which they can spend on developing themselves, not only in terms of academic skills, but also in building their self-identity.

It was then that I decided that I would get it not only to cover my own needs, but also for my own spiritual well-being, to have a decent standard of living. To be able to come to the city and explore, to be able to go out drinking with your friends, to buy clothes for MYSELF, all of that came from that. *This scholarship has really helped me to make a turnaround in my personality (by also starting to become more independent and improve my standard of living).* (Carl)

In practice, this means that they can participate in extracurricular programs that they would not normally do, e.g. professional, worldview-expanding lectures or community events where they can build relationships.

Pillar	Programme element / Initiative	Habitus	Embodied cultural capital	Objectified cultural capital	Institutionalized cultural capital	Social capital	Economic capital
-	Oral and written admission	Travelling to Budapest	Insights about their current level of progression in terms of preparing for matriculation exam			Getting to know students a few years older than they are	
Mentoring, Talent management, Community	Orientation weekend	Discovering Budapest and CUB Myth busting Wider perspective	Different academic events Information gathering about university programmes and processes			Networking with other scholarship receivers Networking with college students	Easing uncertainty about financial burden Information gathering about scholarship and student loan opportunities
Talent management	Preparing for the matriculation exam (including tutoring and SG preparing camp)	Trust Opportunity to ask Motivating environment	Additional knowledge for matriculation exam	Mateking or Studium Generale guidebook access for free	Indirectly helping to achieve a great result in the matriculation exam	Networking with college and fellow student	Saving money on tutoring
Mentoring	Student mentor	Myth busting Trust Opportunity to ask Moving around in Budapest	Getting information about university processes and advanced colleges			Networking with the mentor (college student)	
Financial support	Receiving grant for the semester	More time and opportunity to get used to the new "field" Focusing more on self-identity	Opportunity to study without worrying about working for living	Opportunity to buy more advanced technical tools (e.g. laptop)	SzKTP Diploma	Opportunity to engage in more social events instead of working	Easing financial fear
Talent management, Financial support	Tutoring opportunities	Asking for help					Saving money on tutoring
Talent management	Academic events	Wider perspective Building self-identity	Building social and professional skills			Networking opportunity with students	
Mentoring	Professional mentor	Myth busting	Information gathering about further career development opportunities		Opportunity to work in a professional environment	Networking with a "professional" Better connections and later job opportunities	
Community	Community building events	"Fish in water" engagements				Networking with peers	

Table 4: The added value of SzKTP programme elements in terms of Bourdieu's thinking tools

Own collection based on the conducted interviews

During the interviews, SzKTP scholarship receivers usually mentioned, that tutoring for the matriculation exam was useful, but this element became a stable benefit in the programme only a few years ago. Later on, talent development elements, such as free access to tutoring opportunities (e.g. English lessons in small groups) were nice-to-have additions during their education, but they weren't the most influential experiences. Assessing the usefulness of the pillar is also made more difficult by the fact that various professional events arise irregularly not only within a year, but also between years. However, those events that can be connected to specific companies (factory visits of supporting partners, for example) or people (skills seminars held by a mentor at school) are mostly memorable for students.

(...) there was a joint programme with the year group, e.g. a visit to a factory. (Kylie)

There was also a factory visit at Waberers, you could try things out, it was nice to go to a site like that. Since then I don't know that there has been another one. In addition to that, another supporter came to talk to us (he was another guy coming up from a disadvantaged background). (Daniel)

Another critical pillar of the programme is the Community, which closely relates to social capital. This pillar understandably always depends on the people participating in the given cohort. In some cases, the programme gives a great opportunity for some students to build friendships, especially if students are aiming for the same university programme. Building on this social capital, they can take the same classes, participate in the same groupworks. It is also an option share the same room in the dormitory, maybe even apply together later on to the same student organisations or advanced colleges. This is more of an extreme situation than what students usually follow. Most people who come to university with, say, 1-2 acquaintances and/or stick to their old friendships and/or find their new environment very quickly, do not require such deep community building attempts.

(On the way to freshmen's camp) there were 5 of us at a time at only one cashier, we just started talking, the rest I think is history. That was it and then I was basically done for the bachelors. (Eric)

Friends from (my hometown), I hung out with them the most. Some people from (my hometown) also came to Corvinus, and there were some who came to Pest, but not to Corvinus. In the dormitory too, there were some groups. (Ben)

Regarding institutionalised cultural capital, the programme rather has indirect effect on a student's educational or social mobility journey. Tutoring can help to achieve better results in the matriculation exam or mentoring can eventually help the student to get a better, more professional workplace in the future. However, in the light of the current changes to the higher

education admission process, the *SzKTP Diploma will also have a stated value in the admission process to the CUB*, name the 40 points out of the 100 institutional points.

For me, the most surprising result was that the second most important added value, besides the financial support received, was the added value related to changing or influencing habitus. They are best captured by the triad of *trust*, *safety net* and *myth busting*, which altogether ensured another push in the social mobility journey of these students. The fact, that they became members of SzKTP, that this programme and this community believes in them gave them reassurance, that they can indeed progress forward.

It helped a lot with socialisation, it was good to have such a safety net. (Lily)

(It helped) in the financial support, and in the fact that even before I went to university I already felt an opportunity in this, or that there was a kind of affirmation that I could mark it and get it. (Anna)

This was further supported by the fact that they had SzKTP as a constant safety net behind them, knowing that they had someone to turn to for help during a very intense time of their life, the time of entry to university. Perhaps most importantly, they have also had myths busted by the people they have met through the programme that they would otherwise have found frightening, or at least uncertain. They could get information about those previously missing factors as the pros and cons of certain university programmes (in certain cases giving them the final guide, which one should they apply for). They had someone to talk about general university processes, such as applying for scholarships, subjects, student organisations or how is it to live in a dormitory. It has brought them closer to reality, not only by meeting students who are a few years older than them and have gone through the same processes as they did, but also by meeting with already adult graduates. They could become *role models* or *mentor figures* in their life later on.

What I needed most, I got it, I saw what it would look like, what kind of people would be there, what kind of people would be good? It was very important then to have a handhold and I got that. I had a benchmark from then on. In fact, *what I think they did, unwittingly or unknowingly, was to destroy myths that I think live as fear in the minds of freshmen and to bring people and the university closer together*. (Eric)

As a conclusion, I agree with Hart (2019) and Bathmaker et al. (2016) that *catalyst factors such as mentors or communities acting as mentors can help students' integration and progress in general*, not only in certain points of the higher education, but long before that, during public education as well. For an SzKTP scholarship receiver, this can be a *mentor teacher*, who supported his or her high school studies and application to the programme. The student mentor,

whom I would rather call a “*buddy*”, which describes better this role: sitting down for a coffee, talking about current and past experiences, discovering places in Budapest together, getting invited by him/her to a certain event (usually organized by one of the advanced colleges). The *professional mentor*, who, in the case of a great match regarding career profiles, can help the student in advancing in her/his career. The *SzKTP programme* itself, which can provide trust and several opportunities in order to somehow reduce her/his disadvantages. In some cases, this may lead to or involve *joining an advanced college*. This, according to the concerned interviewees, ultimately gave them the most, both in terms of opportunities and worldview.

The fact that I got into the SzKTP was definitely a helping factor: it helped me financially, and it was one of the factors through which I found Rajk. The 5 years here were more decisive than the SzKTP. (Anna)

I got a lot of perspective when I moved up to Pest, just by mixing with students from elite “faces” from Budapest. We all had our own deficits, it gave us a lot and widened our possibilities, especially Rajk. The university showed us, Rajk made us believe that it was possible to achieve (this wider perspective). (Noah)

Those students who took this step later helped in some way in the program's processes: they promoted the SzKTP, became Coordinators, Chief Coordinators, and were elected as members of the Admissions Committee. Ultimately, as an alternative, twisted version to the fact that the middle-class reproduces itself within the framework of higher education, and shapes the entry processes to its advantage, here, *working-class students help other working-class students to progress in their social mobility journey*. I need to emphasize though, that half of my interviewees were members of advanced colleges, which otherwise is not a general motive among SzKTP students.

During the interviews, lot of additional values or milestones were mentioned, which later became an important part of their social mobility journey. These are not necessarily connected to the programme itself, but rather to its initial notions or they are something that got available at all due to the removed obstacles. In Figure 9 I aimed to highlight these milestones or most influencing factors, providing a more comprehensive picture about the social mobility journey.

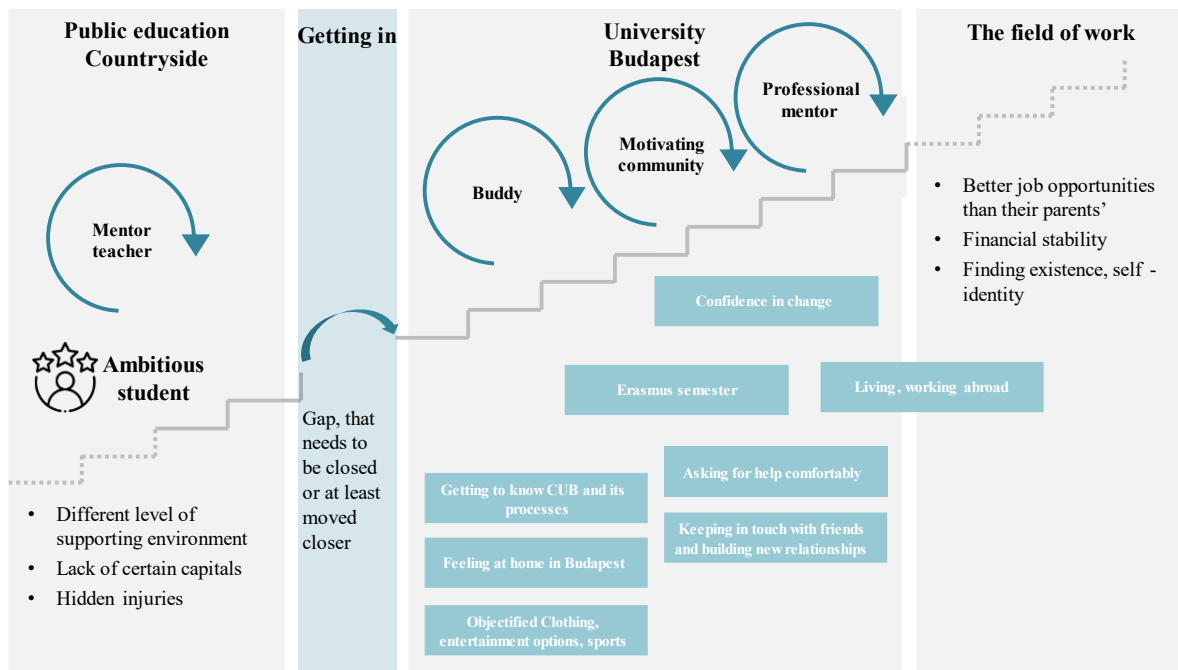


Figure 9: The potential social mobility journey of an SzKTP student

Own collection based on the conducted interviews

The program can therefore help the progression in many way, either directly or indirectly. But there is much that the programme itself cannot necessarily give students, at least, not in its current form. For example, it cannot provide an exact solution to treat hidden injuries. There were attempts in the history of the programme, such as talking about self-awareness in group sessions and indirectly encourage the student to dare to ask for help.

I remember an event where I was talking with a drama teacher about situations, who comes from what situation, what's going to happen now. We had to (tell each other), who sees themselves how in the community. It was very interesting and a very good conversation in the sense that it was a condensed program where I was talking to people who were coming from similar situations. (Lily)

I didn't do any extracurricular activities, I was happy that I could focus on my studies and my friends. I was a bit depressed at the time, but I didn't know how to deal with it systematically. (Hugo)

According to Kylie, it would be important to introduce psychological counselling or something similar, because often people coming from similar circumstances "don't think for a long time about what THEY want because they have had different priorities".

What the programme also does not necessarily ensure is that the initial boost is maintained later on. Students only come into intensive contact with the SzKTP in their first year, with possible contact points in their second or third year of the bachelor programme. It may not be able to

help them find the right career path or job opportunities in the long term, or even to ensure, that these students will continue their studies in a master's degree, even that they will not “slip back” on their ladder/steps of social mobility. Additionally, the lack of a formal closure of the programme or a definitive transition to alumni is a drawback of the way the programme currently works.

IV.4. Critical thoughts and development areas for CUB

Most of my interviewees are already finished their studies at CUB and they have various takeaways about their experiences. To a certain extent, everyone shares that even if CUB does not help social mobility, it should certainly not hinder it. In this chapter, I will first introduce those factors, that are directly hampering the social mobility journey (critique). Afterwards I aim to suggest solutions based on the insights I received from the interviewees, thus giving answer (transformative redefinition) to my second research question: *How can Corvinus University of Budapest better support social mobility via mobility initiatives?*

IV.4.1 Decreasing barriers

Students vary in terms of when and how they first encounter CUB, some with a long-established plan, others who only run into the possibility later. In line with the university's current "excellence framework", high school students face not only *extremely high tuition fees* but also *high admission points*.

We knew that the admission point for the state-funded version was crazy high, above 465. It was evident, that I will choose that, I couldn't have afforded the self-funded one. (Carl)

One concerning factor is that tuition fees will only continue to increase as development plans are progressing. Regarding admission points, student from less “elite” high schools may have to learn harder and improve their skills. The most frequently mentioned skills, which usually need to be advanced are Math and English, and this is emphasized by Fiona as well, who is the programme coordinator of IGyP. Math skills, for example, can be developed with the help of Studium Generale volunteer students (besides History and Economics) and it is definitely to the credit of CUB that on the admission page for high school students (Corvinus University, n.d., i), joining the Studium Generale tutoring opportunities have a great promotion / placement.

However, improving English skills is an unresolved factor. Of course, not all disadvantaged students will face the same level of hindrance due to this factor, but for some, full courses in English might be frightening at first. Thus, they won't consider applying for, for instance, Data

Science in Business, no matter how much they would be interested in the topic. CUB could take the practice currently followed by the IGyP as a starting point, where scholarship holders study English with foreign students. Furthermore, according to Ryan, they used the language frequently in the dormitory, also in their interaction with foreigners. In my opinion, this could be a great way to link up with the international efforts of the university and even connect foreign students with high school students who would like this kind of tutoring opportunity. The university could encourage such tutorings, even to existing student organisations, whose profile could include such initiatives (e.g. ESN). These initiatives could be supported by student organisation scholarship. Another way of promoting the development of all kinds of academic skills could be to work with NGOs that are specifically involved in such activities.

Regarding high tuition fees, regardless of how much CUB emphasizes that 70% of BA and 90% of MA students are studying with Corvinus Scholarship (Corvinus University, n.d., i), the students need specific reassurance, that they can finance their studying, no matter in what format and how long they will remain in the higher education system. A positive factor is, that on the same page, CUB lists not even its own scholarship options, but state-funded ones as well. This is a good initiative; however, uncertainty could be further decreased with additional information about student loans.

Until August, when the application to the *dormitory residence* starts, students face a great level of uncertainty regarding where and for how much they can live. Due to administrative issues or the negligence of parents, students may miss the opportunity to apply in one of the facilities (Tarkarét) or *get rejected for some reason*.

I messed up my dorm application, so I commuted from home for 2 months. Finally, the SzKPT Coordinators called the Tarkaréti dorm director, there was a bed available, and they put me in it. This was a great help, because otherwise I couldn't study, commuting was terrible. (Hugo)

It would definitely be an improvement to make sure, that at least those students, who received an SzKTP scholarship (or any other similar scholarship) will get a place in the dormitory for sure. Given that it can currently accommodate around 1,100 students, the university really shouldn't have a problem securing a place for these few students. According to Ryan, the fact that they lived together with other IGyP students helped a lot to form some kind of a community between them as well. For example, the SzKTP could then strongly recommend moving in with fellow scholarship receivers at Tarkarét College to those students, who didn't arrive with previously set roommates.

Last, but not least, a recent development from CUB's side was *the cancellation of replacing the missing documents during the application process for social scholarships*. In some cases, this only meant a decrease in the received amount, but there are instances, where students didn't even receive anything due to this change. A minor, but very important change could be to bring back this opportunity and let students explain or replace when something is missing.

Now the university is beginning to distance itself explicitly from the lower social classes. For example, currently it is impossible to replace missing documents in the social scholarship and that they are raising tuition fees. I feel that the issue of social mobility is a decoration and they are moving towards the richer children. (Mia)

IV.4.2. Mapping unexploited opportunities

Despite all kinds of support, many students are forced to work alongside the university, in the framework of which *they often undertake essentially non-professional jobs due to the more favorable salaries there*. As Bathmaker et al. (2016) also points out, these can later result in falling behind compared to students who are able to take on professional work for less pay, which will look better on their CV later. The university could provide some application advantage for certain jobs based on social background (for which, for example, a good starting point could be whether the student received one of the SzKTP or IGyP, or perhaps the score determined later during the social scholarship). CUB can provide this in the easiest way in its own institutional assistant positions, but it can even enter into this type of agreement with certain corporate partners.

CUB could somewhat solve the factor that SzKTP, for example, could not: it could offer *free counseling to students*, be it psychological help or coaching. Again, this should not only be provided to the participants of the programme, it can also be provided based on the scores determined during the social scholarship.

Finally, I will elaborate on three potential solutions, that were mentioned by Samuel. Firstly, CUB could *support financially advanced colleges or student organisations* in this regard. These communities have the enthusiastic students, who can help their younger peers along their journey. Fiona emphasised the importance of this aspect, namely, learning from and engaging with students close to their age. Additionally, SzKTP support 17 students with 17 million HUF, while CUB allocated 40 million HUF for IGyP (and eventually mentored 8 students in the first year). In my opinion, if excellence is important to the university, which could be significantly

influenced by diversity, the 10-10% share equity in Hungary's top companies could presumably be used also to support additional students

Secondly, since the dropout process starts way earlier in public education system, CUB could try to "reach back deeper" and *indirectly effect students, via their mentor teacher*. By offering them various incentives, such as trainings, ultimately, it could be ensured that students start their social mobility journey sooner and receive initial support and trust.

Last but not least, CUB could also introduce a type of communication that would set up *success stories and examples for students coming from similar circumstances*. It could and should be certainly promoted by students close to their age.

(The university) has to introduce campaign videos and go to school more often. We shouldn't expect people, let's say, to come to Educatio from anywhere, but before they do, universities should send students to rural schools to promote, to bring them closer to people, to tell them what a university student does in their everyday life. (Victor)

In this way, they would be able to give quasi-guidance as to what is at the "top of the stairs", how it can be reached, and perhaps even pointing out what steps to take. The proposed solution initiatives to CUB are listed in Table 5.

Directly hampering factors	Proposed solution	Affected thinking tool(s) of Bourdieu
High admission points	Promote Studium Generale better in case of Math, History and Economics matriculation exam tutoring.	Embodied cultural capital, Habitus
BA programmes in English	Encourage tutoring in English for a) international students; b) student organisations or work together with relevant NGOs.	Embodied cultural capital, Social capital, Habitus
High tuition fees	Give additional information about student loans	Economic capital
Uncertainty about dormitory residence	Provide residence for those students for sure, who received SzKTP (or similar scholarship) previously	Economic capital
Cancellation of replacing the missing documents for social scholarship	Open up this option again	Economic capital
Untapped opportunities	Proposed solution	Affected thinking tool(s) of Bourdieu
Providing career development, social network improving opportunities	Priorities students arriving from less advantageous backgrounds in certain job opportunities	Embodied cultural capital, Institutionalised cultural capital, Economic capital
"Healing" "hidden injuries"	Provide access to skilled specialists, including psychologists or coaches for free	Habitus, Economic capital
Support the advanced colleges or student organisations financially, who have the human resources to facilitate this kind of programmes	Support financially these talent / mentor programmes in order for them to take more students and give them this final push	Habitus, Cultural capitals, Social capital, Economic capital
Find the key mentor teachers and provide trainings, support for them	Start the whole social mobility journey earlier and motivate / reward those teachers who support their students along their journey	Habitus
Provide students role figures arriving from the same background as them	Promote CUB with positive social mobility journeys and highlight, that this progress is indeed an opportunity for them	Habitus

Table 5: Proposed initiatives for CUB in order to improve social mobility

Own collection based on the conducted interviews

V. Discussion & Conclusion

“Marrying different ideals can easily lead to a rather rosy picture of a contradiction free social reality, where all the good things in life – autonomy, democracy, equality, creativity, productivity, profit, quality and environmental protection – are seen as being fully supportive of each other.” (Alvesson & Deetz, 2021, p. 36). In line with this idea, in my thesis I have tried to take a critical perspective and examine how, in practical terms, a talent programme (SzKTP) can impact the lives of its scholarship receivers. In my analysis, I have taken Bourdieu's key concepts into account and then I have tried to formulate the most hindering factors in the current functioning of CUB in relation to a student's social mobility path. Following these criticisms, I have tried to propose solutions through mobility initiatives.

My first and foremost conclusion was that not only is habitus also an important concept among Bourdieu's key concepts (alongside capital, on the basis of which I intended to conduct the research), but I also agree with Emirbayer & Johnson (2008) who advocated treating the tools together. It is important to understand that the environment, the "social field" in which such a programme seeks to make a difference, is multidimensional. It is true that there are profound social inequalities in Hungarian society, but as Radó (2018) emphasize, educational inequalities do not fundamentally stem from this factor, but from the way the education system is designed. Public education in Hungary is highly selective, with disadvantaged pupils dropping out at a much earlier stage in their educational journey and do not even make it to university application. In this context, it is clear that one actor alone cannot bring a society-level change, but that a larger coalition is needed, presumably including public, private and NGO actors.

(For applying to IGyP) you need a letter of motivation, need a letter of recommendation. The experience is that people who get a letter of recommendation from an NGO are easier to work with, and they may be our target group. These organisations also have a better idea of where the student is coming from, they can see behind their studies. (Fiona)

That said, it can be argued that the university should not be a hindrance but a facilitator as far as possible. My findings are similar to those of Haveman & Smeeding (2006) in terms of what disadvantages working-class students face when applying to university because of their family and educational background. Because of their lack of economic capital, they face financial fear regarding high tuition fees and living costs in Budapest. This is further supplemented by the uncertainty of accommodation, the question whether they will get into a dormitory or not. In this context, they often lack social capital, so they cannot be helped in the relocation process by

family members or friends. Often, they are the first graduates in the family, so they may not be able to ask for information about university studies or relevant processes.

At that time I already knew that I would get money from the SzKTP, I knew that there would be a social scholarship, but how to apply for it, what papers I needed, how to apply for a dormitory... Then came the question of how we were going to move to Budapest, because we didn't even have a car, things like that. I'm the older brother, the first one to go through this, so it was the first time my mom had to go through this process as well. (Carl)

In addition, there may be a kind of fear of (student) loans within the family, so they do not know about this possibility or they consciously ignore it. Due to the fact that they did not attend "elite" high schools, they often lack basic professional skills (e.g. maths or English), so they arrive at a disadvantage from the point of view of cultural capital. All of these can be supplemented by factors such as concerns about the uncomfortable, "fish out of water" feeling in a new environment.

The SzKTP appears in this situation in the students' lives and can help ambitious students who only need a few steps, a final push for their university progress. The program is run on a voluntary basis by students from 2 Advanced Colleges in CUB and 1 in ELTE ÁJK. Based on 4 pillars, the program tries to support and start the scholarship receivers' social mobility journey: Financial support, Mentoring, Talent management, Community. They are present in the student's life with different elements, in varying degrees of emphasis and help overcome disadvantages in various ways. These initiatives are mostly in line with Bathmaker et al. (2016)'s proposals, regarding social mixing (by for example connecting advanced college students with mentorees), financial support, mentoring, academic and professional support.

The scholarship certainly helps decreasing one's financial fear. However, while for some this means complete independence from the family, some still has to work beside their studies. Students mostly appreciate the talent development activities that help them to develop their professional skills (and thus embodied cultural capital), especially the tutoring and the free opportunities (e.g. Mateking). Additionally, they may be able to recall events of a point-by-point nature that they can relate to a specific person/company (e.g. visits at donor companies), but these are usually not the most memorable points for them. Regarding institutionalised cultural capital, the most important added value of the programme is that it enables to receive a CUB degree, which then makes them a more appealing candidate in the job market. Furthermore, with the introduction of the new institutional 100 points system in the university admission process, the 40 points received after the SzKTP Diploma can have additional value.

It is a difference rather than a generality that a strong community is forged within the cohorts, since it depends on person and group affinity. Community-building events are, for example, the Orientation Weekend or possible mentor-mentee meetings. Often it is not necessarily these, but the programs involving various advanced college students that actually build social capital (e.g. skill seminars held by advanced colleges). The different mentors (“buddy” and professional mentor) can also have positive effects regarding social, cultural capital and habitus.

The most surprising result for me, which I did not necessarily expect at the beginning of the research, is how much trust and safety net this support gives the scholarship recipients. Fiona's statement found justification, because by seeing through the example of their peers a few years older than them that it is indeed an option for them to succeed, they gain a high degree of confidence. And by providing them with information that they don't necessarily know when entering higher education (e.g. which major they should major in and what opportunities they will have later on), SzKTP busts significant myths in front of them.

What was perhaps less emphasized in the literature, even though we could even call them bridging actors based on Townley (2014) and Adler & Kwon (2002), are the mentor figures who catalyze upward progress. Mentor teachers play a significant role in developing the students' various professional skills before they enter the university. In many cases they were the actors in the lives of SzKTP scholarship recipients who drew the children's attention to the program (thus “bridging” the network of high school and university players). In the case of a suitable match, the buddy can even cause the scholarship receiver to join to an advanced college, which the involved interviewees later experienced as the institution that added the most to their development. Similarly, with the right professional background, a professional mentor can even connect the mentee with his or her future workplace, thus helping his or her career development.

Overall, the program not only supports these students on their social mobility journey, at the end of which the students typically see themselves in a job and life situation different from their parents. It also helps to socially sensitise the volunteers as well. Of course, SzKTP is not perfect either. It plays a strong role in providing the initial push, but it is not absolutely able to ensure that the students do not “slip” back after their later journey. Development points can be the creation of some formal closure of the program and the better and more organized development of the alumni themselves. This could build the Community pillar of the programme better. By building a better mentor socialization process, it could be ensured that the mentee can get more

out of the relationship. The currently not very strong Talent development pillar could be strengthened, for example, through programs organized by donor companies.

Regarding the second research question, I first highlighted the currently problematic elements of CUB's operation, which directly hinder the progression of disadvantaged students, but afterwards I also offered improvement options. In order to reduce the skill differences resulting from the educational institution background in terms of high admission scores, the university should better promote tutoring programs. With regard to the Studium Generale, this is already present at a certain level, but on the one hand, it could also strengthen this footing. On the other hand, it could even encourage other student organizations and foreign students to engage in similar activities, even through the incentive of student organization scholarships.

Differences in economic capital could be reduced by providing students with more information about student loan options (if they are already constantly increasing tuition fees in order to achieve strategic goals). The university can reduce housing anxiety by providing fixed dormitory residence for certain students, even on the basis of the points received for the social scholarship. An easy step to secure at least a place in the Tarkaréti Dormitory for students receiving SzKTP or other similar scholarships. A further, necessary step is also to ensure the recently abolished document-replacing option for the social scholarship.

In addition to all this, based on the interviews, I tried to outline untapped areas for the CUB, where it has additional opportunities to increase social mobility. Such is the preference given to disadvantaged students during certain professional internship positions through currently existing partnerships or within the university itself. Another option is some kind of treatment for hidden injuries that are not necessarily treated by the SzKTP, even through psychologists or other specialists. Based on Samuel's ideas, it might be worthwhile to financially support the SzKTP itself or similar initiatives or ensure the motivation of those mentor teachers who can at least get the students to university. Last, but not least, CUB could set up similar mentor figures for the students, who could be looked upon as role models, and told about their own journey. Another development point could be some kind of connection between IGyP and SzKTP, which would presumably require a joint consultation process on the part of the two organizations.

VI. Summary

In this thesis I tried to analyse the impact of the elements provided by a specific talent program (SzKTP), and then to formulate proposals for a specific university (CUB) based on the social mobility journey of the interviewees participating in the program. Examining the questions from a critical paradigm, I did not aim to formulate generalizations for other organizations. As Bourdieu's key concepts point out, the possibilities of a given individual are strongly determined by the context in which she or he is present and the habitus and capital structure she or he possesses. In this case, the elements of the multidimensional field are provided by the Hungarian social and educational system, as well as the CUB itself.

However, it is possible and worthwhile to take examples from other, alternative organisations. CUB, as a business school, can take an example from SzKTP based on Parker (2018). On the one hand, the program belongs to its own institutional framework to some extent (since the students of the vocational college under it perform voluntary work in it, and from next year it will also participate in its financing). On the other hand, as a non-governmental organisation with different values and goals (giving needy students the "final push" for their university career).

In addition to pointing out the excessive “functionality” and exclusive nature of the “excellence framework”, the purpose of the thesis is to provide development points that can potentially have a real impact on a student's life. By raising barriers for students from disadvantaged backgrounds and taking further meaningful initiatives, the university can achieve a healthier level of diversity. By involving students from more advantageous background (which can also happen by including additional subjects for this purpose in the curriculum), CUB may be able to increase the social sensitivity of future leaders.

One of the future development points of CUB and therefore a further research direction could be how it can help in the social mobility journey of individual students in an earlier or further stage. The former could include working together with appropriate civil organisations (e.g. AJTP), while the latter could involve providing “anchor points”, which would eventually prevent these students to “slip back” (e.g. setting up a coaching center).

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Appendix

Appendix1: Interview outline for conducted interviews with SzKTP students

University Application

- Tell me a bit about yourself
 - Where are you from?
 - Which high school did you attend?
 - What were your family circumstances at the end of high school?
 - What do your parents do?
- What motivated you to enter higher education? Who inspired you, who is your role model?
- What helped or hindered you most during the university application process?
- Please tell me how you became part of the SzKTP / Corvinus community.

University Years

- What did you imagine university to be like and how did it turn out in comparison?
- What did a typical day look like for you as a freshman?
 - How did this change compared to high school?
- What uncomfortable situations did you encounter during your university studies?
 - Due to your financial situation?
 - Due to a lack of certain skills?
 - How did you deal with these challenges?
- What study methods did you use?
- Who are your friends, how would you describe them?
 - Do you feel a difference between your old and new friends?
 - What topics do you discuss when you get together?
 - How has your circle of friends changed over the years?
 - What activities do you do together?
- How do you relate to your current circle of acquaintances?
- How comfortable did you feel in your university environment?
- What extracurricular activities did you engage in, what student organisations did you join?
- Tell me about the role work played during your university years.
- What did you learn most during university? / What is the most important lesson you will take with you?
- How has your worldview changed?
- In what aspect do you think you have changed the most in terms of opinion?

SzKTP

- What were the best experiences during the program?
- What other elements of the program can you list that specifically helped you?
- How did you experience mentoring?
- How did you experience talent development?
- How can this be improved?

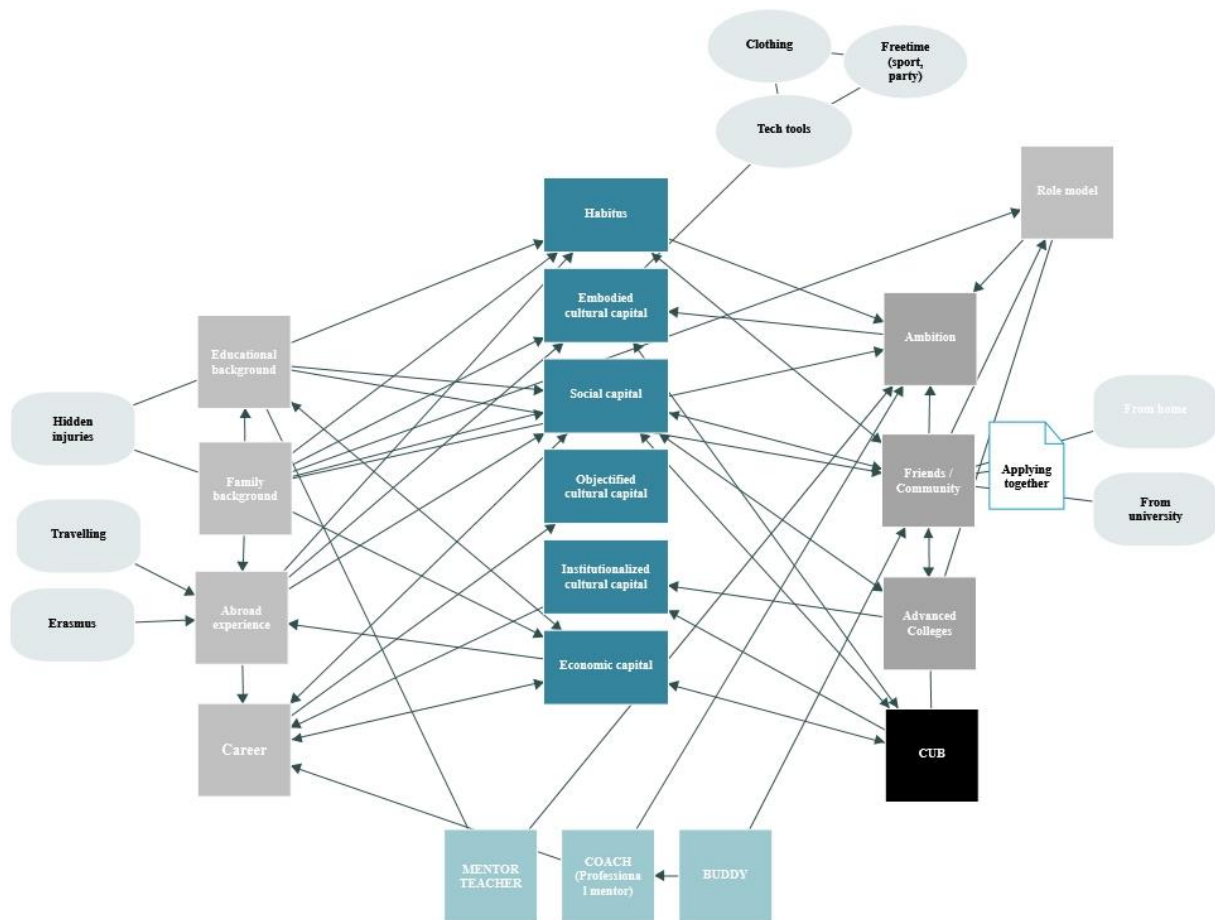
- What was your relationship with the other SzKTP participants like?
- How do you see the university's role in promoting mobility?

Post-University Career

- How do you see yourself now compared to X years ago?
- What do you see as the key to your future success?
- How do you feel now?
- What does mobility mean to you?
- What do you see as the greatest added value of the university / SzKTP in where you are now?

Appendix2: List of the conducted interviews

Code	Role	Gender	Year of receiving the scholarship	Member of Rajk College?	Format of the interview
Anna	SzKTP scholarship holder	Woman	2017	Yes	In person
Ben	SzKTP scholarship holder	Man	2016	Yes	In person
Carl	SzKTP scholarship holder	Man	2018	No	In person
Daniel	SzKTP scholarship holder	Man	2013	Yes	In person
Eric	SzKTP scholarship holder	Man	2018	No	Online
Fiona	Coordinator of IGyP	Woman	-	Not relevant	Online
Grace	SzKTP scholarship holder	Woman	2015	Yes	In person
Hugo	SzKTP scholarship holder	Man	2017	Yes	In person
Isabella	SzKTP scholarship holder	Woman	2014	No	Online
Jacob	SzKTP scholarship holder	Man	2014	No	Online
Kylie	SzKTP scholarship holder	Woman	2016	Yes	In person
Lily	SzKTP scholarship holder	Woman	2015	No	Online
Mia	SzKTP scholarship holder	Woman	2022	Yes	In person
Noah	SzKTP scholarship holder	Man	2013	Yes	In person
Patricia	Chief coordinator of SzKTP	Woman	-	Not relevant	In person
Quentin		Man	-		
Ryan	IGyP scholarship holder	Man	2022	No	Online
Samuel	Head of Strategy of CUB	Man	-	Not relevant	In person
Taylor	Organisational Executive of SzKTP	Woman	-	Not relevant	Online
Ulrich	SzKTP scholarship holder	Man	2014	No	In person
Victor	SzKTP scholarship holder	Man	2020	No	In person

Appendix3: Mindmap about the potential connections among the used codes

Appendix4: What (social) mobility means to SzKTP scholarship receivers

Code	Definition for mobility
Anna	It's my way to having a job and a life with a kind of security. Or I think there is a social aspect of how I start to feel and define myself as an intellectual.
Ben	This is the way I got from where I was to where I am now. It's unique and totally different for everyone, some people have travelled a much shorter distance, but it's also a level of mobility, some people have travelled a longer distance.
Carl	It makes me think that it's a very broad thing, not just that I earn X thousand HUF more in the countryside or in the capital, but a much more complex thing.
Daniel	Social mobility can be achieved if there are people who want to be mobile. The supportive environment that these programmes can provide is very important, but these can only work if they are fuelled by people who want to break out of the social environment. (...) Lack of mobility is when one wants to break out of one's environment, but cannot do so because there are no other social fabrics to support it (you can be purposeful, but you cannot pull yourself out).
Eric	It is the lack of access to information that is the cause of the dispute. (...) Now that's immobility, you can do whatever you want, it won't be any other way and at least the minimal opposite of that is mobility.
Grace	You are making a social progress compared to your parents, e.g. if they are manual workers, you are doing intellectual work or perhaps you are moving up to a managerial position, or you are breaking out of the intellectual or material background in which you started life. You can now live in a city, own property that your parents didn't have. Complex things that are interrelated, obviously with a better job you can create a stable existence. I think the way we use it colloquially is more like labour market mobility.
Hugo	To be able to move without remorse into a social class that puts you in a better position in life. Obviously you need to put energy into this, but don't have barriers that make the process very difficult, you can do it more freely.
Isabella	It is a multifaceted thing, it can be understood in many ways. In relationships, how open you are, at work, how versatile you are, how far you can go out of your comfort zone, and obviously physically, getting out of your hometown. Some people go abroad, they want to have a broader experience, they want to gain skills, not just in their profession, but directly or indirectly.
Jacob	Ideally, I am thinking of social mobility, which would mean that the same amount of effort could achieve the same result for anyone.
Kylie	I believe that you can help people, you can build incentives at a systemic level, but that motivation is part of the person is very important. You have to see that you have something to fight for, something to pull for. At a societal level, we also need to think about where we want to go in the future. I believe that differences are not disadvantages or advantages, stereotypes are a distortion.
Lily	Moving from one standard of living and social environment to another social and living standard.
Mia	Creating opportunities is the main thing, but also to not just give opportunities, but to give you a crutch and a helping hand on how to use them. Most people need more than opportunity.
Noah	I have no exact definition, it's not a binary thing. If you think in terms of individuals, it's the possibility that gates open and you start climbing upwards (...) For me it's a ladder where you go up levels, you have to hold on, some people fall back, but some people break forward.
Ulrich	For me, it's a super thing, to try new things, to try something completely new (...) That's the key to the future, for people to take the opportunity, for people to leave the villages, to go in that direction.
Victor	Being able to say you have a degree or diploma is a big thing, plus a lifestyle change. We are becoming more open to the world, we see the possibilities. Leaving that narcissistic, toxic environment behind. Because unfortunately it is.