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## Jewish Over-Schooling Revisited: The Case of Hungarian Secondary Education under the Old Regime (1900–1941)

Data available on denominational-group-specific enrollment frequencies in contemporary elite education regularly show that Jewish students demonstrate a much higher representation in most schooling tracks in societies under modernization whenever there are *no* artificial hindrances such as discriminatory recruitment or *numerus clausus* measures detrimental to Jews. Hungarian data concerning such quantitative inequalities of educational opportunities and efforts are particularly revealing in this respect, since they are reputed for their reliability and precision, and cover various types of secondary schools over the last decades of the pre-socialist regime (both before and after 1918). I have already put to ample use some of the treasures accumulated on matters educational by the outstanding pioneers of Hungarian statistical literature.<sup>1</sup> This is an occasion to elaborate and summarize the major findings accessible in this respect thanks to the—technically rather complex—mobilization of all accessible national indicators related to the global quantitative participation of Jews in contrast to non-Jews in Hungarian secondary education during the final period of the Old Regime. This period was marked, first, by the collapse of the historic, liberal nation-state, as well as the drastic diminution of its territory and population after the Trianon Peace Treaty, and second, by the temporary recovery of some of the latter by 1941 thanks to the alliance with Hitler's Third Reich. The latter event, as is well known, entailed—among other things—the implementation of a number of legislative or administrative anti-Jewish measures from 1938 onwards (date of the first so-called 'Jewish Law' in Hungary). These included the extension of the existing academic *numerus clausus* to secondary education from 1939/40, which limited to 6 per cent the proportion of Jewish pupils among all newly enrolled beginners at secondary school.

I will therefore try to report here on the evolution of Jewish educational attainments at three historic junctures, which amounted to the progressive sharpening of the political and social pressures imposed upon Hungarian Jewry, from (i) the Liberal pre-First World War decades to (ii) the 'Christian Course' of the Horthy regime, up to (iii) the eve of the Second World War leading up to the *Shoah*. This essay has the dual ambition of demonstrating the extent and historical limits of what former studies have duly qualified as Jewish 'over-schooling', and also of serving as an experiment to test a number of new indicators constructed here for the first time and applicable to other types of schooling inequality. It tries

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<sup>1</sup> See the relevant chapters of my recent book, *Iskolarendszer és felekezeti egyenlőtlenségek Magyarországon (1867–1945)* [School system and denominational inequalities in Hungary, 1867–1945] (Budapest: Replika könyvek, 1997). As for publications in English and other languages related to the narrow problem area under discussion, see: 'Jewish Enrollment Patterns in Classical Secondary Education in Old Regime and Inter-War Hungary', in *Studies in Contemporary Jewry* I (Bloomington, 1984), pp. 225–52; 'Juifs et Luthériens dans le système scolaire hongrois', *Actes de la Recherche en Sciences Sociales*, No. 69 (Paris, 1987), pp. 67–85; with S. Vari, 'Facteurs socio-culturels de la réussite au baccalauréat en Hongrie, quelques hypothèses', *Actes de la Recherche en Sciences Sociales*, No. 70 (1987); 'Assimilation and Schooling, National and Denominational Minorities in the Universities of Budapest around 1900', in *Hungary and European Civilization*, ed. Gy. Ránki (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1989), pp. 285–319; 'Jewish Over-Schooling in Hungary, its Sociological Dimensions', in *Bildungswesen und Sozialstruktur in Mitteleuropa im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert*, ed. V. Karády and W. Mitter (Köln–Wien: Böhlau Verlag, 1990), pp. 209–46; 'Social Mobility, Reproduction and Qualitative Schooling Differentials in Old Regime Hungary', in *History Department Yearbook 1994–1995*, ed. A. Pető (Budapest: Central European University Press, 1995), pp. 133–56; 'Die Juden als Bildungsmacht in der Moderne', *Österreichische Zeitschrift für Geschichtswissenschaft* (1997), pp. 347–61; 'La République des lettres des temps modernes. L'internationalisation du marché universitaire en Occident avant 1914', *Actes de la Recherche en Sciences Sociales*, No. 121 (March 1998), pp. 92–103.

to take an original approach to its problem area in various ways.

Thus, probably for the first time, all those institutional forms of schooling will be scrutinized which are liable to involve young males of 10–18 years of age, that is, the *gimnázium* ('grammar school', which taught Latin), the *reáliskola* (the Austrian *Realschule*—without Latin),<sup>2</sup> the *kereskedelmi középiskola* (commercial high school),<sup>3</sup> the *polgári iskola* (the Austrian *Bürgerschule*),<sup>4</sup> and the *tanítóképző* (teacher training college or Normal School).<sup>5</sup> For the last period, the distinction between the classical humanist *gimnázium* and the *reálgimnázium* will also be applied.<sup>6</sup> The new schooling provision of *mezőgazdasági* and *ipari középiskolák* (agricultural and industrial secondary schools), built up in the 1930s and at that time attracting very few pupils, are clustered together with the commercial high schools. Former studies have generally neglected the pupils of these 'less noble' educational tracks and concentrated on the *gimnázium* and the *reáliskola* alone. This was to forget that all the above mentioned institutions were objectively competing with one another in the virtual global market of post-primary education, although they corresponded to rather different career expectations and group-specific strategies instrumental in the conversion of educational certificates into assets of socio-professional mobility.

The second original aspect of the study is its strict recourse to gender-, age-, and social-class-specific indicators of school recruitment, whenever it appeared possible on the strength of available raw data. This made possible an attempt to neutralize at least some of the main hidden factors which mar the intelligibility of most of the evidence relevant to the comparison of overall Jewish and non-Jewish educational performance: the different educational choices and conduct of *boys and girls* (which have hitherto not always been systematically distinguished), *age differentials*, and the *diversity of the professional stratification* of the denominational groups compared. Other independent background variables of divergent educational achievements—such as *degrees of urbanization* (proximity and physical accessibility of schooling provisions for the denominational clusters studied) or *varying family size* proper to Jewish and non-Jewish populations—will also be taken into account, although only incidentally.

Finally, the study tries to overcome the lack of some of the essential data concerning the last period of the Old Regime (particularly for the years 1920 and 1941). This era's data

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<sup>2</sup> The *gimnázium* [grammar school] and the *reáliskola* [*Realschule*] were, in Hungary as in Cisleithanian Austria, the outcome of the absolutist reform of secondary education dating from the 1849 *Entwurf*. They led to the *Matura* or *érettségi* [school-leaving examination] which, taken in a *gimnázium*, entitled one to enter all universities and institutions of higher education and, taken in the *reáliskola*, gave access to the Polytechnic University, the Commercial Academy, and some other technical colleges.

<sup>3</sup> The *felső kereskedelmi* [commercial upper school] was founded in 1868 and transformed into the *kereskedelmi középiskola* [commercial high school] in the 1930s. It was accessible after 4 years of *gimnázium*, *reáliskola*, or *polgári* ['civic school' or *Bürgerschule*] education, and normally reserved for boys (and girls) of 15–18 years of age. It offered a *kereskedelmi érettségi* [commercial school-leaving examination], one of the access criteria to enter a higher Commercial Academy.

<sup>4</sup> The *polgári* was initiated by the liberal law on the extension of obligatory primary education in 1868, together with its institutional counterpart, the *felső népiskola* ['higher primary school']. But while the *polgári* gave rise to a huge decentralized network, the latter declined after a short development and practically disappeared before the First World War. In 1914, there remained only two, as against 201 *polgári* for boys. See *Magyar statisztikai évkönyv* (Budapest, 1914), p. 262. The few data concerning the *felső népiskola* will be amalgamated in this study with those of the *polgári*. The intake of the *polgári* was drawn from the age group of 10–14 years (with a possible but rare extension to students up to 16 years of age) competing with the first four years of the *gimnázium* and the *reáliskola*.

<sup>5</sup> The Normal School enrolled students of around 15–18 years of age after the *polgári* or 4 years at a secondary school. It constituted an educational dead-end since it led to no other brackets of further education, except for the training college for *polgári* teachers (located in Budapest, then, after 1928, in Szeged).

<sup>6</sup> Introduced after 1924–25 the *reálgimnázium* emphasized the sciences and modern languages and offered less Latin and no Greek, unlike its classical counterpart, the name of which remained *gimnázium*.

concerning pupils and the indispensable background evidence related to the composition of the parent population have not been published due to the post–First World War (or the pre–Second World War) predicament of the statistical services.

The first problem of data construction in comparative educational research is to ‘purify’ the indicators as much as possible from the effects of the mostly different educational participation of young males and females, as well as of generations belonging to different age brackets. This has been attempted in Table 1 for boys, although not all the data concerning enrollments and certificates in the various institutions could be related due to the imprecision of the statistical source materials, exclusively to boys or to the age brackets to which pupils and graduates actually belonged.<sup>7</sup> The remaining bias appears nevertheless to be fairly insignificant here.

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<sup>7</sup> Thus, if only boys’ schools are taken into consideration here, they could include, occasionally, a negligible number of girls liable to be enrolled as exceptional, non-attending ‘private pupils’ [*magántanuló*], when the local or regional school market did not supply comparable training for girls only, the strict *absence* of coeducation being the rule in most secondary institutions, unless otherwise indicated (as in the case of some *polgáris*). Similarly, our age-specific indicators refer to the ‘normal age’ of attending the various schools or taking certificates, even if it is well known that some of those concerned were actually older or (more rarely) younger than the ‘norm’. *Matura* or *érettségi* could, for instance, be taken from 17 to 20 years of age on average, but also even later. The indicator used here compares nevertheless the number of *érettségiző* [those taking the school leaving exam] to those of 18 years of age.

Table 1

*Frequencies of Enrollment and Graduation of Jewish and Non-Jewish Boys in Hungarian Secondary Education as a Percentage of Age Groups (1900–1941) (%)*

	1900		1910		1920		1930		1941 <sup>8</sup>	
	<i>Jewish</i>	<i>Other</i>	<i>Jewish</i>	<i>Other</i>	<i>Jewish</i>	<i>Other</i>	<i>Jewish</i>	<i>Other</i>	<i>Jewish</i>	<i>Other</i>
1. <i>Gimnázium</i> pupils among 10–17-year-olds	13.7	3.0	15.2	3.4	20.3	4.3	24.6	7.7	11.9	5.2
2. <i>Reáliskola</i> pupils among 10–17-year-olds	5.5	0.45	5.0	0.5	7.8	0.9	6.8	1.3		
3. <i>Felső kereskedelmi</i> pupils among 14–17-year-olds	7.3	0.4	12.0	0.6	13.0	0.7	11.2	1.7	4.4	2.8
4. <i>Polgári</i> pupils among 10–13-year-olds	17.6	2.5	22.3	2.55	30.2	6.8	40.0	18.4	11.8	10.3
5. <i>Tanítóképző</i> pupils among 14–17-year-olds	0.6	0.7	0.4	0.7	0.2	0.7	0.8	1.0	0.1	0.2
6. All pupils in various secondary schools among 10–17-year-olds	32.7	5.2	37.9	5.9	49.8	10.0	53.8	17.5	20.2	11.8
7. Graduates ( <i>érettségi</i> ) of <i>gimnázium</i> and <i>reáliskola</i> among 18-year-olds	9.6	1.6	11.8	2.3	18.9	4.0	23.2	5.3	13.9	4.3
8. Graduates ( <i>érettségi</i> ) of <i>felső kereskedelmi</i> among 18-year-olds	8.9	0.46	11.5	0.65	12.3 <sup>9</sup>	1.9 <sup>10</sup>	12.0	1.5	5.1	1.4
9. All graduates ( <i>érettségi</i> ) among 18-year-olds	18.5	2.1	23.3	3.0	31.2	5.9	35.2	6.8	19.0	5.7

Sources: Data concerning the size of pupil populations are taken from the annual editions of *Magyar statisztikai évkönyvek*. The dates used for pupils relate always to the first term of the academic year (for example 1920 for 1920/21), except for 1941 when they refer to 1940/41, the census for the temporarily enlarged population having been taken in January 1941. Data for age groups have been constructed, except for 1941 (when they were estimated as described in note 7) from the census reports published in *Magyar statisztikai közlemények*. The 10–13 and the 14–17-year-old brackets are simple proportional adaptations of the 12–14 and the 15–19-year-old brackets used in the census by taking one-third of the first and one-fifth of the second as the equivalent of one generation (1 year of similar age). Thus, for instance, the number of 10–13-year-olds (4 generations) has been estimated by the addition of one-third of those aged 12–14 to the number of 12–14-year-olds given in the census report.

Within these limitations, Table 1 offers the most complete available set of indicators of schooling frequencies for Jews and non-Jews in Hungary, exempt from the bias due to the differences in the age composition of the two clusters. We must stress that age-specific indicators show in this connection only the numbers out of every 100 young males involved in formal training, or graduating at various times, without any reference to the socio-historical

<sup>8</sup> There are no published data on the age pyramid by denomination derived from the 1941 census. Age groups used here are thus, by necessity, only broad estimations, based on the unique available source relative to a limited sector of the population concerned, that of Slovakian territories returned to Hungary in 1938. See *Magyar statisztikai közlemények*, 108, 14\*. The reliability of this estimate is connected to the unverifiable hypothesis that the age composition of this population of barely one million (out of which 515,000 males) reflects approximately that of Trianon Hungary and other temporarily recovered territories combined, as registered in the 1941 census. Hence, indicators referring to this hypothetical age structure can only be approximations of the real values, although the population of the Southern *Felvidék*—or ‘Upper Land’—as it was called in Hungary, extending from the easternmost to the westernmost parts of old Hungary (and thus hosting both ‘Eastern’- and ‘Western’-type Jewry), including agricultural parts of the Great Plain, as well as more industrialized cities in the mountainous northern regions with a mixture of Magyar majority and Slovakian, German, Ruthenian (Ukrainian), and Jewish minorities, appears to be more or less representative of the population of the country in 1941.

<sup>9</sup> Some girls are also included in the count

<sup>10</sup> As above.

‘causes’ of their relative frequencies in the educational tracks cited. This may therefore serve as an overall measure of Jewish over-schooling.

Our findings are, in this respect, impressive enough. With close to one-third of all Jewish boys in one secondary education institution or another, and with as many as one-fifth of the relevant generation actually graduating at the turn of the century, the Jewish investment in what was regarded as elite schooling at that time surpassed already by *at least six times* that of the non-Jews. This overall gap or inequality was to grow by 1910 and continue to be maintained, though on a diminishing scale, up until 1941. It narrowed down to a relative Jewish over-representation of one to five in the interwar years (only one to three for graduation at 18 years of age) and collapsed by 1941, although without losing its markedly distinctive character. Even at this late date (1941), young Jewish males, even if they attended Hungarian elite schools on the whole much less often than forty years previously, they still did so four times more often than non-Jews and even graduated over three times more often.

The major finding recorded in Table 1 is the confirmation of an extremely marked overall Jewish over-schooling as compared to non-Jews, but also the final decline by 1941 of the apparently continuously mounting curve of the distinctive Jewish schooling effort up to the 1930s.

It is easy to account for this considerable but only relative decline on the eve of the Second World War, which was shared—as shown in the Table—by the non-Jewish population as well (although obviously, at least in part, for different reasons). From fall 1939, a 6-per-cent *numerus clausus* implemented by ministerial decree drastically curbed the enrollment of new Jewish pupils in secondary schools. A similar effect was achieved by the sudden worsening of the living conditions of large sectors of the Jewish population following the reduction (down to a maximum of 6 per cent of the local work force) of Jewish employment in many professional clusters which had previously served as economic strongholds or preferential career tracks precisely for those ambitious Jewish members of the middle classes (liberal professionals, private executives, managers, and so on) who had hitherto offered their children entry opportunities into secondary education on a massive scale. In addition, between 1938 and 1941 Hungary was enlarged by the recuperation of many territories lost after Trianon and hosting a population whose general level of certified education and educational requirements proved to be much lower than in the ‘Trianon mainland’. This must have been true of Jews and non-Jews alike, all the more so because the various newly recovered populations were heavily burdened in educational matters by the incorporation in the potential school clientele of a large portion of traditionalist ‘Eastern Jews’ indifferent to secular scholarship, together with Christian peasants, and other lower class groups with limited educational assets—although detailed denominational data are lacking in this field. In any case, the overall data clearly confirm the significantly lower level of educational achievements of the new populations in pre-Second World War Hungary. While in 1930 already 5 per cent of males in Trianon Hungary held a graduate degree from a secondary school [*érettségi*] or a higher academic qualification and another 5.2 per cent had attended a secondary school for 4 or 6 years,<sup>11</sup> among males only 4.2 per cent of the extended population were secondary or higher graduates in 1941 (and 5 per cent with 4 or 6 years attendance).<sup>12</sup> Since the educational qualifications of the population of Trianon Hungary must have continued to develop significantly between 1930 and 1941, the gap cannot but be attributed to the relative under-qualification of the population of the territories recovered between these two dates. This is partially demonstrated in the topical information concerning the newly regained northern regions (Southern Slovakia). In the latter, only 2.9 per cent of males held a secondary or higher graduate degree and another 4.8 per cent had attended a

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<sup>11</sup> According to data in *Magyar statisztikai közlemények*, 96, 18. sq.

<sup>12</sup> For relevant data see *Magyar statisztikai évkönyv* (Budapest, 1942), pp. 13–14.

secondary school for at least 4 or 6 years, according to the 1939 regional census.<sup>13</sup>

In such circumstances, the relative decline recorded for both Jews and non-Jews for 1941 is not surprising. But educational indices for the preceding four decades describe an almost constant and direct line of progress for both groups, although very differentiated in terms of schooling tracks and religious clusters. In this way, we can trace the specifically stronger and weaker points of the general Jewish over-investment in assets of elite schooling.

In fact, the only undoubtedly weak point in this respect is teacher training, where Jews appear to be systematically under-represented throughout the whole period under scrutiny. The lack of interest in public (state supervised) Normal Schools is understandable if one bears in mind the structure and historically changing (mostly diminishing) functions of Jewish public primary schools in this period. One must take into account the fact that Jewish teachers were *de facto* excluded from positions in Christian schools and remained more or less tacitly discriminated against (less before 1919 and more ever after) in terms of employment in municipal or state-run primary schools.<sup>14</sup> Before 1919, employment expectations of Jewish Normal School graduates were doubly limited, due to the continued competition of Jewish public schooling with, on the one hand, the network of unofficial (and officially opposed) *kheders* (often called ‘secret schools’—*zugiskola*) of the traditionally Orthodox Eastern Jewry, and, on the other hand, the more and more overwhelming option open to urbanized Jews—especially in Budapest and the larger cities—of non-denominational public primary schools within the framework of their assimilationist social strategies.<sup>15</sup> Thus, the employment market for Jewish Normal School graduates could only remain narrow or shrink over time. This is why the relative extent of Jewish participation in this bracket is always below that of non-Jews. It appears to be conspicuously marginal (much more so than among Christians), especially when compared with the huge investments made by their co-religionists in other educational paths. Although this indicator is technically imprecise (since it combines participation in various schools reserved for different age groups), those attending Normal School represent, on the whole, a mere 1.8 per cent in 1900, and even less (around 1.5 per cent) in 1930, of all Jewish secondary school pupils, while they make up as much as 14 per cent in 1900, 12 per cent in 1910, 7 per cent in 1920, and still some 6 per cent in 1930, of the comparable Christian pupils. These decreasing proportions show that the overall Christian participation in secondary education also became more and more *upgraded* historically at the expense of Normal Schools—which were operated as an educational dead end, since they did not lead to any further studies—with the multiplication of choices for a track complete with *érettségi* [school-leaving exam], without ever reaching the same depressed level peculiar to Jews.

Higher commercial schools can be contrasted with Normal Schools. Here, the Jewish presence was always marked, particularly before 1918, when Jews regularly filled over one-half of the benches, and in the most prestigious of them, such as the Budapest Commercial Academy (which operated as a secondary school before it was upgraded as a post-*érettségi* college), even more, accounting for around two-thirds of all pupils. The commercial track was conducive to the free market (as managers and private employees in trade, banking, transportation, and industry), which was the most common channel of upward social mobility for the first and second generation of Jews in the process of assimilation after leaving their

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<sup>13</sup> *Magyar statisztikai közlemények*, 108, 14\*–15\*.

<sup>14</sup> In 1914, out of 35,250 primary school teachers only 3.9 per cent were Jewish and among the latter only a qualified majority (57 per cent) was active in Jewish public schools. See *Magyar statisztikai évkönyv* (Budapest, 1914), p. 264. By 1930, this situation had evolved significantly. Only 2.9 per cent of teachers were Jewish and more than two-thirds of them (68 per cent) were active in a Jewish or, exceptionally, in another type of private school. See *Magyar statisztikai évkönyv* (Budapest, 1931), p. 239.

<sup>15</sup> In Budapest already in 1910 most Jewish children attended municipal primary schools, while there were altogether only 10 Jewish primary schools operating.

closed communities or even, for many, while remaining in them. Indeed, for a number of upwardly mobile Orthodox youth, the higher commercial schools constituted a lesser compromise with modernity than other forms of public schooling, precisely because they could ‘remain among themselves’ (given the Jewish majority or at least strong participation in most institutions) and rejoin some of the more traditional markets of *embourgeoisement* (such as trade, management, or finance). At the same time, the commercial *érettségi*, if not conducive to further studies (except commercial ones), was endowed with almost exactly the same institutional social privileges of the gentlemen’s class [*urak*] as the classical *érettségi*: shorter ‘voluntary’ military service, entitlement to become a ‘reserve officer’ in the army, a mark of distinction even for a rank and file soldier [*karpaszomány*], the right to fight duels [*Satisfaktionsfähigkeit*], and at least a chance of being admitted to middle class society [*Salonsfähigkeit*]. Thus, Jews could easily be attracted by commercial schools on the strength of their efficacy both for upward mobility in traditional Jewish economic markets and self-assertion in middle class social life. It is understandable that no comparable function was performed by commercial schools for Christians. Their social needs were better fed by the classical educational track and they could often feel themselves alien and not well-adapted to the capitalist activities (as *nicht standesgemäss*) for which *felső kereskedelmi* schools prepared their pupils. Hence the inverted participation of Jews and non-Jews in commercial upper schools. For the former, they were a major option for elite education up to 1918, as shown by the high figures of graduation (comprising around one-tenth of 18-year-olds), strictly equivalent to the quantitative level of classical *érettségi* achieved by Jews. This strong presence of Jews would not decrease in absolute terms even in the interwar years, although at that time commercial schools no longer served as a major educational option for them. For Christians, this had been an utterly marginal choice, indeed an insignificant one, as compared to that of the *gimnázium*, with fewer pupils involved even than in Normal Schools before 1918. Later on, Christians started to attend commercial schools somewhat more often as part of the upgrading and modernization process of their educational options, so much so that by 1941 the gap between the age-specific participation of Jews and non-Jews appeared to be close to disappearing. Favored by Jews and neglected by Christians until later on, commercial schools can be regarded as a focal point of the diverging educational and social strategies of the two groups corresponding to the ‘double structure’ of the Hungarian middle classes, as suggested by Ferenc Erdei’s illustrious study.<sup>16</sup>

The *reáliskola* [*Realschule*] can also be placed, in this respect, between *gimnázium* and commercial school, all the more so because its official function was also somewhat in-between the two tracks. It offered *érettségi* but of a lesser value than that of the *gimnázium*, although it did facilitate admission to a much larger and prestigious circle of institutions of higher education (Polytechnic University, College of Mining and Forestry, and so on) than the commercial *érettségi*. It also gave access to managerial careers as graduate executives or higher employees, mostly in private business. It must be noted, however, that the *reáliskola* network was doomed to stagnation from the beginning of the century, only to be transformed into *reálgimnáziums* in the late 1930s. Thus, age-specific participation indicators could not grow, as in the more classical *gimnázium* track, the supply of which did not cease to increase throughout the decades under scrutiny in the global educational market place. The gap between the Jewish and non-Jewish presence there remained considerable, although with a diminishing trend, up until the end of the period. It was always much larger (around double) than the gap between the age-specific participation of Jews and Christians in *gimnáziums*, although the development of the relevant indices ran essentially parallel (at least for Christians) to those in *gimnáziums*. Here again, the above cited ‘double structure’ of the

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<sup>16</sup> See F. Erdei, ‘A magyar társadalom a két világháború között’, I-II [Hungarian society between the world wars], *Valóság*, 1976/4, pp. 25–53 and 1976/5, pp. 36–58.

middle classes can easily be traced in the highly divergent degrees of interest expressed by Jews and non-Jews, for this non-classical educational path mostly oriented people towards careers in the free market economy (whether directly or indirectly, via further studies in applied disciplines).

The main educational option within overall demand for elite schooling was, and remained until the end of the pre-socialist regime, the *gimnázium* (with Latin). Although here too the disparity between relative Jewish and non-Jewish attendance was large, it never attained the same level (at least before 1918) as in other educational paths. From a gap of more than 4 to 1 at the expense of Christians, the difference between age-specific enrollments in *gimnázium*s narrowed to almost half that extent by 1941. Until the interwar years, this was by far—relatively speaking—the most popular schooling track for Christians, who seem to have flocked into it while neglecting all other possibilities. After 1918, its attractiveness continued to grow, probably *doubling* between 1920 and 1938 in Trianon Hungary (if we extend the line of progress marked by the age-specific Christian indicators from 1920 to 1930 in Table 1), but by that time the *polgári* [*Bürgerschule*] had started to surpass, statistically, the attraction of the *gimnázium*, as the dominant path of grass-roots upward mobility. The *gimnázium* remained, in fact, as shown by the social background of its pupils, dominantly the preserve of the traditional national elite [*úri osztály*] and of those intent on integration in this class, in contrast to all other secondary educational options. Although the limits of the *úri* class are not easy to trace, it is significant to note that, even as late as 1930, only 13 per cent of those in humanist *gimnázium*s and 14 per cent in *reálgimnázium*s originated from the ‘manual’ working classes, as against 17 per cent in the *reálskola*, 20 per cent in Normal Schools, 21 per cent in the *kereskedelmi*, and as much as 45 per cent in the *polgári*.<sup>17</sup> The reasons for this middle class preference—both Jewish and non-Jewish—are obvious. The *gimnázium* represented the in-built prestige capital of the classical college system going back mostly to Jesuit, Piarist, other Catholic, or Protestant foundations.<sup>18</sup> It offered Latin and Greek, regarded as a traditional intellectual status symbol of the traditional national elite [*úri osztály*]. It performed an exclusive gate-keeping function in respect of the most coveted higher educational tracks, such as the law faculties and academies, medicine, and the faculties of arts and sciences. It granted the most complete set of symbolic insignia and social entitlements attached to elite training (via the classical *érettségi*). For Jews, it was specifically attractive for the ‘assimilationist social capital’ it secured thanks to the properly ‘Christian’ status and the hegemonic presence of Christian pupils in most of the institutions concerned. For non-Jews it remained the golden gate to middle class professional success in the higher civil service and elsewhere (possibly complemented by a law degree).

The last network we have to deal with is that of the *polgári*. Manifestly—as may be clear from the above cited data related to the large-scale presence of lower class children—the *polgári* differed from the *gimnázium*, more than any other less intellectually demanding institution, in the structure of the school market by virtue of its social recruitment. The *polgári* catered to the rank-and-file population eager to achieve low-level mobility via a smattering of post-primary education.<sup>19</sup> The *polgári* proved to be a success story in the modernization

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<sup>17</sup> Calculated according to data in *Magyar statisztikai évkönyv* (Budapest, 1931), 268 sq.

<sup>18</sup> Before 1867 there were only church-run *gimnázium*s and *reálskolák* in Hungary, and they continued to dominate secondary school market until the interwar years, despite the growing share of institutions built and run by the state. In 1900, there were 59 state secondary schools out of 197 (30 per cent); in 1914, 80 out of 229 (35 per cent); and by 1930, some 42 per cent were directly run by the state—with the exclusion of the so-called ‘royal Catholic *gimnázium*s’ placed under state control, but retaining a Catholic character. (Data from *Magyar statisztikai évkönyvek*)

<sup>19</sup> Indeed, most *polgáris* provided four years of study after the completion of four years of primary education. It could be extended to six years, but very few pupils benefited from this possibility. The graduates would mostly enter the job market, but could also study further in a commercial high school or a Normal School, although they



process of schooling provisions commenced after the 1867 Compromise. It developed so rapidly that, after 1900, it hosted more pupils than the first four forms of the classical track.<sup>20</sup> For our purposes, however, this story has two rather distinct sequences. Before 1918, Jewish preponderance, in age-specific terms, remained paramount, exceeding that in *gimnáziums*. In the interwar years, Christians also started to invest heavily in *polgári* training, so much so that by 1930 there were notably more Gentile pupils in the *polgári* than in all other secondary institutions put together. Manifestly, the *polgári* took on the function of the main vehicle of grass-roots social mobility for Gentiles and to some extent for Jews as well. Hence the ever increasing participation of the lower classes, nearing one-half of all enrolled.<sup>21</sup> If Jews also developed their participation, they did not do so with the same intensity, given their different (much higher) mainstream schooling options. By 1941, Christian participation in the *polgári* almost equaled that of Jews, though at that date it displayed a dramatic decline (especially for Jews) compared to Trianon Hungary.

On the whole, one can conclude this study of age-specific school options with two remarks. First, Jewish over-schooling can be demonstrated throughout our period in every track, except teacher training, although, especially after 1938, in a somewhat declining manner. Second, the gap between Jewish and non-Jewish educational efforts appeared to reach its height in the less classical or less ‘noble’ paths, such as the commercial schools, the *realiskola*, and (until 1918) the *polgári*.

Thus, while Jews apparently sought to exploit the whole range of educational options available on a large scale. This means that their investment (although obviously varying according to their social class position, among other things) was, from early on, very heavy in all levels of education. In other words, a measure of educational mobility characterized more or less all Jewish social strata from the very lowest to the upper echelons. This was not so with Gentiles, who invested preferentially in the most classical track, the *gimnázium*, neglecting (particularly before 1918) all other channels. The implication may be that for Gentiles the main function of secondary schooling was above all the *reproduction of the traditional national elite via classical studies* (with Latin) and much less the fostering of upward mobility from the lower strata. This setup underwent some modification in the interwar years with the growing educational demand ‘from below’, but the Christian pattern did not change fundamentally as compared with the Jewish strategy which can be defined—with the benefit of various research results exceeding the scope of this paper—as not only more comprehensive, but also as much more rational in view of its intellectual efficiency. Jews must have more regularly sent their poor performers to lower level schools, such as *polgári*, or directly into active life (as apprentices, shop assistants, assistants in family businesses, and so on), reserving *gimnáziums* and other advanced elite schooling for the best performers. Such an in-built trend of ‘rationality’ in respect of educational options can be demonstrated by the certified excellence of Jews in the classical track, especially at the level

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did not have the opportunity to go—in the best case—beyond the Academy of Commerce. As late as 1910, 54 per cent of those leaving a *polgári* for boys opted for further studies. See *Magyar statisztikai évkönyv* (Budapest, 1911), p. 365. By 1930, this proportion had dropped to 37 per cent. See *Magyar statisztikai évkönyv* (Budapest, 1931), p. 254. Practically speaking, the *polgári* provided rather limited scope for upward mobility.

<sup>20</sup> The number of *polgáris* grew from 111 in 1900 to 201 in 1914, and in Trianon Hungary from 101 in 1919 to 141 in 1936. (Data from *Magyar statisztikai évkönyvek*)

<sup>21</sup> From 1925 to 1935, the proportion of pupils of working-class origin actually grew from 37 per cent to 49 per cent, but in this change the share of urban lower class brackets—such as industrial manual workers (growth from 9.2 per cent to 13.5 per cent), petty employees in trade and transportation (growth from 10.2 per cent to 12.6 per cent), and servants, doorkeepers, and attendants in the civil service or attached to the free professions—was preponderant (at the expense of the rural poor). See J. Asztalos, ‘Polgári iskoláink fejlődése az utolsó évtized alatt’ [The development of our *polgári* schools during the last decade], *Magyar statisztikai szemle*, 1937/3, pp. 160–61.

of *érettségi*,<sup>22</sup> and in *felső kereskedelmi*,<sup>23</sup> as against the general mediocrity (around average) of those in the *polgári*.<sup>24</sup> Gentiles, on the contrary, must have tended to remain at all costs in the noble track of the *gimnázium*, even if this was not justified by their marks. An additional proof of this is the fact that—in spite of their significantly lower mean grades—Christian pupils took the *érettségi* in *gimnázium*, *reáliskola*, or *kereskedelmi* as often as Jewish ones (if not more often), as witnessed by their identical dropout rate (which can be estimated by the comparison of the age-specific proportions of graduates and pupils in the various schooling channels). Beyond being defined by birth, gentlemanly status and careers were apparently less based on certified excellence than on the nature of the social experience of education defined by the kind of school attended (classical *gimnázium*, preferably a Christian one, as against the ‘less noble’ tracks and state-run schools).

Having said all this, the main question arises as to how the sources of Jewish over-schooling can be identified in socio-historical terms. This question can be reduced, without marked simplification, to an alternative hypothesis, which asks whether *internal factors* proper to collective Jewish skills, competences, and strategies, or only *external ones* linked to the given socio-historical position of Jewry in contemporary society, were responsible for the remarkable educational achievements recorded in our data. There is no space here to revise the in-depth analysis of all the variables operating in this matter which has been attempted elsewhere.<sup>25</sup> We can, however, try to push further an essential line of investigation by means of elaborating indices of denominationally differential, group-specific school enrollment *exempt* from the effect of commonly recognized general socio-demographic factors of access to elite education. If these indicators permit a positive proof of Jewish over-schooling, one is entitled to conclude that the special Jewish schooling efforts cannot be attributed to external factors but to in-built mechanisms operating *within* the social condition of Jewry proper, independently of others which affect all denominational clusters indifferently.

The main variables at play in this respect are differences in *socio-professional stratification* (a fundamental issue, since a more middle class denominational group, such as the Jews, can, for a number of reasons, be expected to develop a much larger educational demand than groups with a lower class composition); in *family size* (defining the *per capita* costs of educational investments in the household); and in *degrees of urbanization* (determining the residential accessibility of the schools). I will try to present and discuss some *decisive empirical findings neutralizing the effect of social stratification on enrollment* in the various educational paths and offer some suggestions based on data less systematically worked out relative to the impact of family size and urbanization.

The technical details of the production of the indicators used in Table 2 have already been presented in one of my earlier studies on this question.<sup>26</sup> The complex procedure of

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<sup>22</sup> For the decisive survey results see my study, cited in note 1, ‘Social mobility, reproduction and qualitative schooling differentials’.

<sup>23</sup> In commercial schools, too, Jewish excellence appears to have prevailed throughout the period according to my as yet unpublished survey results on the qualifications, careers, and backgrounds of students in the Budapest Commercial Academy, which was started as a secondary *felső kereskedelmi iskola* [commercial upper school]. But national statistical data also confirm such results, at least for the interwar years. In 1927/28 Jewish male pupils had an average mark of 2.57 in commercial schools as against 2.70 for Gentile pupils on a scale ranging from 1 (highest) to 4 (failure). In commercial schools for girls the comparable average marks were 2.03 for Jews and 2.13 for others. Calculated according to data from ‘Felső kereskedelmi iskoláink az 1927/28-as tanévben’ [Higher commercial schools in 1927/28], *Magyar statisztikai szemle*, 1929/4, p. 358 (unsigned).

<sup>24</sup> Jews revealed themselves as poor performers in a number of surveys concerning *polgári* pupils (both boys and girls) in central districts of Budapest, as compared to Christian pupils, according to unpublished research in progress.

<sup>25</sup> See especially the first four studies cited in note 1.

<sup>26</sup> See ‘Jewish enrollment patterns in classical secondary education’, cited in note 1. For a version of this study in Hungarian see my book, cited in note 1, pp. 145–65, particularly p. 158.

elaboration is based on five more or less heavy empirical operations.

1. *Identification* in national statistical sources

- a) of the *denominational composition* of the student bodies concerned;
- b) of the socio-professional setup of the parents of all those enrolled in the various schools *indifferently in respect of their denominational composition* (all these data being regularly presented in *Magyar statisztikai évkönyvek*);
- c) of the size of socio-professional categories in the whole population or at least among active males;
- d) of the same by denominational groups (the two latter kinds of information belonging to census data published in the *Magyar statisztikai közlemények*).

It is important that data (b), as well as (c) and (d) should, as far as possible, refer to the same dates and to the same categories, even at the price of regrouping some of the categories which appear with different details in various sources.

2. Calculation of percentage frequencies of all pupils (independently of denomination) belonging to the relevant socio-professional categories through the division (social class category by category) of data (c) by data (b).

3. Application of the social-category-specific general enrollment percentage obtained above to the size of each category *within the denominational clusters concerned* (data (d)) through the multiplication of the latter percentage (social class category by category) by the relevant numbers in each denomination.

4. The numbers thus obtained, when added together, equal a *theoretical* or *expected number* of pupils pertaining to each denominational group in the (hypothetical) case that enrollment probabilities (or frequencies) are the same in every social class category in each denomination.

5. Sum totals of these theoretical or expected (conditional) numbers in each denominational group are then compared to the real number of pupils (data (a)) by means of the division of the latter by the former. If the result is below 1 or 100 (if expressed in round numbers, achieved by the multiplication of the result by 100 for simplicity's sake), then we can speak of the *under-representation* of the denominational group in the schooling track studied. If the result exceeds 1 or 100, it demonstrates *over-representation* or *over-schooling* proper, once the 'class effect' is neutralized.

The outcome of all these operations is summarized in Table 2. Because of the complexity of the calculations only Jews and Catholics—which in any case make up the bulk of most student bodies—have been taken into account. The absence of some indicators in the pre-1918 period is due either to the non-existence at that date of a given school type or to the unavailability or lack of some of the indispensable data involved (mostly related to the social extraction of the student body). One should remark that the indices here refer to an *average* equal to 100, to which each denominational group contributes in proportion to its share in the various student bodies. For this purely technical reason the denomination-specific indicator proper to Catholics must have been closer to 100 than that of any smaller denomination (such as Jews), since Catholics at that time already filled the majority of school benches, given their demographically dominant position in the population (over two-thirds in 1930).

The opposition between Jews and Catholics appears to be clear-cut in Table 2, especially before 1918. Indeed, Catholics are systematically under-represented before Trianon in two of the three types of schooling for which indices could be elaborated. In the *polgári*, the Catholic representation was dwindling until 1920 (from a high of 132 to a low of 80), before an upsurge in 1930. But besides the exceptional case of the *polgári*, Catholics remained throughout the period close to the average, in the form of either a limited under-representation or (after 1918) of a modest over-representation in every educational path.

Table 2

*Indicators of Relative Enrollment Frequencies of Jewish and Catholic Pupils in Various Hungarian Secondary Schools after the Neutralization of the Social Stratification of Parent Populations (1900–1930)*

A) Catholics

	<i>Gimnázium</i>	<i>Reálgimnázium</i>	<i>Reáliskola</i>	<i>Felső kereskedelmi</i>	<i>Polgári iskola</i> <sup>27</sup>	<i>Tanítóképző</i>
<b>1900</b>						
Expected number	22 378		4 310		8 818	
Real number	21 555		3 939		11 664	
Percentage representation	<b>96</b>		<b>91</b>		<b>132</b>	
<b>1910</b>						
Expected number	28 006		4 953		16 423	
Real number	26 868		4 634		19 040	
Percentage representation	<b>96</b>		<b>94</b>		<b>116</b>	
<b>1920</b>						
Expected number <sup>28</sup>	21 785		4 700	3 541	23 443	1 548
Real number	19 774		4 554	3 851	18 632	1 419
Percentage representation	<b>91</b>		<b>97</b>	<b>109</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>92</b>
<b>1930</b>						
Expected number	8 314	16 762	4 954	4 642	15 445	2 107
Real number	8 642	17 191	4 708	4 144	23 688 <sup>29</sup>	2 269
Percentage representation	<b>104</b>	<b>103</b>	<b>95</b>	<b>94</b>	<b>153</b>	<b>108</b>

<sup>27</sup> Together with a small number of pupils in *felső népiskola* [higher primary school].

<sup>28</sup> Expected numbers could not be calculated directly, since no data were published for 1920/21 for the social stratification of parents. This has been estimated according to the *relative proportions* (in percentage terms) of social class categories published for 1925/26 (*Magyar statisztikai évkönyv*, Budapest, 1926, p. 215) and applied to the number of pupils observed in 1920/21 in the various school types.

<sup>29</sup> The number of male pupils of coeducational schools have been estimated following the relative size of boys' *polgári* as compared to girls' *polgári*, that is, by a proportion of 43.5 per cent of all pupils of boys' and girls' *polgári* according to data from *Magyar statisztikai évkönyv* (Budapest, 1931), p. 267.

B) Jews

	<i>Gimnázium</i>	<i>Reálgimnázium</i>	<i>Reáliskola</i>	<i>Felső kereskedelmi</i>	<i>Polgári iskola</i>	<i>Tanítóképző</i>
<b>1900</b>						
Expected number	9 490		2 152		3 259	
Real number	9 681		3 869		6 334	
Percentage representation	<b>102</b>		<b>180</b>		<b>194</b>	
<b>1910</b>						
Expected number	10 358		2 331		5 177	
Real number	11 731		3 830		9 190	
Percentage representation	<b>113</b>		<b>164</b>		<b>178</b>	
<b>1920</b>						
Expected number <sup>30</sup>	6 526		1 783	1 465	4 036	280
Real number	7 890		3 011	2 511	5 774	44
Percentage representation	<b>120</b>		<b>169</b>	<b>171</b>	<b>143</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>1930</b>						
Expected number	1 914	4 258	1 241	1 202	3 649	351
Real number	1 106	4 310	1 493	1 567	3 255 <sup>31</sup>	109
Percentage representation	<b>58</b>	<b>101</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>130</b>	<b>89</b>	<b>31</b>

As to Jews, their very strong over-schooling trend before 1918 is sharply demonstrated in Table 2, although again, much more in the ‘less noble’ institutions than in *gimnáziums* proper. While the *reáliskola* and the *polgári* contain in 1900—and even in 1910—close to twice as many Jewish pupils as expected following the social class composition data, the size of the Jewish clientele of the *gimnázium* is only slightly above average, even if they are distinctly more numerous than their Catholic counterparts. This confirms the suggestion made above concerning the relative concentration of Christians in the classical track, while Jewish educational demand is much more balanced among the other available schooling options. In 1920, this demand is maintained as strongly as ever, including *kereskedelmi*, but with the exception of the Normal Schools. While advanced commercial education seems to be a stronghold of Jewish educational demand, teacher training is confirmed to have been the unique ‘lame dog’ in this connection, for the reasons already mentioned. But a change is clearly marked in the trend by 1930, as demonstrated in Table 2. A decade after the introduction of the *numerus clausus* in Hungarian universities, Jewish demand for classical secondary schools reached a historic low ebb, especially for *gimnáziums* with Latin and—more astonishingly—for *polgári*. Schooling efforts appeared to be concentrated henceforth on the other paths (except teacher training). In 1930, too, there is a gap between Catholic and Jewish enrollment frequencies at the expense of the former in the *reáliskola* and the *kereskedelmi*. The relative neglect of the *gimnázium* by Jews may be interpreted as a response to the *numerus clausus*, which brought about a drastic devaluation, specifically for would-be Jewish candidates, of the classical *érettségi* as an institutional springboard for further studies. The same obviously does not apply to the *polgári*. Here, Jewish relative representation suffered somewhat from rising urban Christian lower class demand.

If, on the whole, these *social class neutral* indicators thus display signs of a rapid decline of Jewish over-schooling in the interwar years, which, superficially considered, could be explained merely in terms of the anti-Semitic predicament in a period of rampant fascism,

<sup>30</sup> As in note 27.

<sup>31</sup> As in note 28.

one has to go one step further in this empirical study of educational indices by introducing an additional variable, that of the denomination-specific patterns of *family size*. Indeed, if family size differed greatly between Catholics and Jews, the data in Table 2 (which are not age specific) may be subject to highly significant alterations.

The growing disparity between Jewish and non-Jewish birthrates since the end of the nineteenth century is a commonplace indicator of the process of demographic modernization in Hungary (as elsewhere). But this may not be true class-specifically, and the differential decline of birthrates may well reflect only differences in the social stratification of Jews and non-Jews in the country. Malthusian attitudes often emerged first in the middle classes. Birthrates offer an indirect but good approach to the estimation of family size, but to my knowledge there have so far been no studies for Hungary concerning the impact of denominational status on the number of children in households, independently of social class. Now, thanks to a test similar to the one applied for Table 2, but focussing on birthrates in Budapest in 1930, the conclusion is clear that, by the interwar period, Jews produced only around *half as many children* as Catholics who constituted the local majority in the population. The relevant indicator of the representation of Catholics among children born in 1930 was 101 (showing a very slight over-representation) and *as low as 54 for Jews*.<sup>32</sup> This offers an insight into the veritable demographic depression experienced by contemporary Jewry.

On the strength of the generalization of this difference between Hungarian Jewry and the country as a whole (which can be justified, among other things, by the fact that about half of Trianon Jewry lived in the capital city), one can say in practical terms that all the class-neutral indicators of Jewish schooling in Table 2 must be regarded as crass under-estimations. The real Jewish schooling frequencies were *largely greater than their formal values*, since the size of the statistical basis (the number of boys concerned) was, in each social bracket, on average much smaller proportionally, among Jews than among Catholics. A much smaller Jewish cluster of young people generated this high level of educational demand as compared to an overall lower demand emanating from a Catholic cluster of a much bigger mean size in corresponding strata and age groups. Hence, the intensity of Jewish over-schooling must be re-evaluated upwards, and the gap between Jews and non-Jews defined as significantly more extended than shown in the indices used for this period. For earlier times—like the turn of the century—this demographic argument could not yet be applied for a more precise estimation of collective schooling efforts (or, at least, carried much less weight), since the Malthusian modernization of family building strategies was just starting. Thus purely denominational differences in birthrates were still mostly attributable to differences in the class structure of the religious groups compared.<sup>33</sup>

Recourse to the demographic argument offers, at the same time, a cue for understanding such excessive educational disparities between denominational groups. If, by the interwar years, Jews had secured for most of their sons a measure of secondary education, while only a minority of non-Jews could achieve the same, this was also because the reduction of their family size allowed a proportional increase of educational investment for each child, while maintaining the same costs. The cost of the overall investment in schooling could thus be smaller in a single household, even with a growing demand for advanced schooling.

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<sup>32</sup> This result was produced in the course of unpublished work in progress on demographic modernization in Budapest, based on published demographic data from *Budapest székváros statisztikai évkönyvei* and from the *Budapest statisztikai közleményei* series, as well as on survey materials emanating from birth and marriage records in the Budapest City Archives and in the archives of both the Jewish Orthodox and the Neolog communities of Pest, and of other local Jewish communities (in Buda, Újpest, Kőbánya).

<sup>33</sup> The indispensable statistical indicators for the demonstration of this hypothesis have not yet been worked out.

Finally, to complete this summary attempt to explore the main ‘objectifiable’ social factors related to specific Jewish elite educational frequencies, mention must be made of the possible impact of Jewish over-urbanization in Hungary. If Jews were more usually city dwellers than non-Jews, they also, *ab ovo*, had easier access to schooling provisions, since elite schools were mostly located in the towns. Here, due to lack of space, I shall refrain from citing empirical evidence, but it is important to draw attention to the issue.

First, the connection may have been true in the early period of the expansion of the school network, but it became less and less so, following its progressive large-scale decentralization and the establishment of provisions to help outsiders to attend school (scholarships, dormitories, other boarding facilities). Second, relative Jewish over-schooling proved to be much more significant in the ‘non-noble paths’, such as the *polgári*, the commercial schools, and the *reáliskola*, which formed a smaller network before 1918 than that of *gimnáziums*, and so—paradoxical as it may seem—more concentrated in the cities. But the *reáliskola* network, for one, did not grow in the interwar years, while Jewish over-representation among its students actually diminished. Urbanization, in this instance at least, hardly played a role in the process. Third, since urbanization—in Hungary as elsewhere—was strongly connected to Malthusianism, the number of young Jewish city dwellers must have dwindled over the course of time, depriving, by the same token, the trend of over-schooling of its demographic basis. Fourth, if urban residence generally provides better educational opportunities for all, those social strata which demand elite training above all others—members of the entrepreneurial bourgeoisie, private executives, civil servants, free-lance professionals, intellectuals, or (with a historically growing demand for the *polgári*) the urban proletariat<sup>34</sup>—dwell mostly in cities in any case, whether Jewish or non-Jewish. Fifth, urbanization should be considered in many cases as probably *as much of an independent determinant as a dependent variable* proper of educational demand. Many families—perhaps more typically Jews than non-Jews—actually settled down in cities in order to provide a better education for their offspring. Finally, in the best case, differences in the degrees of urbanization could only contribute to the influencing, but not clearly the determining of the disparities in the educational efforts of Jews and non-Jews, since the gap between their respective levels of urbanization was never as large—at least not before the interwar years—as that marking their differential schooling investments. Thus, urbanization is at best a factor of dubious effectiveness for the interpretation of denomination-specific schooling differentials.

Our conclusion can be put forward without ambiguity as applicable to the socio-historical sources and nature of observed Jewish relative over-schooling in Old Regime Hungary. None of the commonly efficacious factors of participation in elite training—such as predominantly middle class stratification, Malthusianism, or over-urbanization—can be regarded as fully responsible for the highly distinctive Jewish educational investment. Hence, this must be attributed above all to other, uncommon and Jewry-specific, factors. These may be, on the one hand, rooted in the *cultural heritage* of the group (including skills of literacy, values of ‘a people of the Book’, and dispositional habits connected with religious intellectualism, multilingualism, and so on), and, on the other hand, associated with *strategic collective behavior* (not without links—obviously—with the social condition of Jewry in Hungarian society). This includes, among other things, the search for complementary assets for professional mobility in the ‘dual structure’ of middle class markets, investment in ‘assimilationist goods’, a more ‘rational’ use of the intellectual potential of children via the preferential choice of schooling track, the compensation of social handicaps due to discrimination, self-assertion as ‘good Magyars’ mastering the symbolic credentials of borrowed nationalism in a nationalist environment and as members of the traditional national

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<sup>34</sup> See note 21.

elite [*úri osztály*] in a society obsessed with post-feudal status.