

## THE ROLE OF SOCIAL CAPITAL IN AVOIDING OVER-EDUCATION

BLANKA BALINT \*

### ABSTRACT

In post-socialist countries, overqualification is a current and relevant issue, but despite its importance, this topic is not sufficiently addressed in the literature, especially in the post-communist region. Starting from the theory of professional reorientation strategies, one can assume that the lack of social capital may be one of the causes of overqualification. In this study, I will investigate this hypothesis. The analysis of the issue was performed on the database of the “MOZAIK®2001” sociological survey. The long period of time that has lapsed since the collection of the data requires the verification of the assumptions on a much more recent database, namely the Cultural Consumption Barometer 2010. In order to identify the necessary workplace educational training, I used the occupation classification method. Overqualification was determined by comparing the educational training acquired with the occupation performed. Although the importance of relational resources on the labour market is discussed in several studies in the field, the research was only partly able to prove the positive role of social capital in avoiding overqualification.

**Keywords:** over-education, social capital, young graduates of university studies.

### INTRODUCTION

The transformations that took place in 1989 brought significant changes to the inhabitants of Romania. One of the most important facts was the massive loss of work place, the rate of employed inhabitants decreased dramatically that led to a high level of unemployment. In parallel, attending universities took a rapid growth, and the expansion of the higher education continues even today.

In these circumstances analyzing the conditions of finding a job by young graduates<sup>1</sup> represents an important field of research. One of the important aspects of the issue is analyzing job-matching, a term which refers to the relation between

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\* Correspondence address to Blanka Balint: lector – Sapientia Foundation – Sapientia University, Miercurea Ciuc; e-mail: [balintblanka@sapientia.siculorum.ro](mailto:balintblanka@sapientia.siculorum.ro)

<sup>1</sup> By graduates I mean those who have graduated any of the higher education institutes.

school qualification and working conditions, where matching depends on the level of qualification acquired (Galasi, 2004a). One type of mismatch is the so-called over-education, when the employee has a higher educational degree than it is required for performing job.

In principle, education has a favourable influence from the point of view of success on labour market. In Romania, highly educated employees have better chances in the competition for jobs, than those who are less educated or uneducated, since labour market analysis carried out in the country reveal a significant demand for highly educated employees. Higher educational level means better chances for employment (Dostie Sahn, 2006), and it also involves better income, that hasn't been tempered even by the increase of demand for highly qualified labour force (Andren Earle Sapatoru, 2004). According to results of Andren Earle Sapatoru (2004), the returns of education are not strictly related to certain economic fields, but they are widely spread and continue to grow<sup>2</sup>.

In spite of more favourable labour market conditions a significant part of highly educated people are employed for a job that can be performed without having university degree, in other word, who are over-qualified<sup>3</sup>.

In this paper I try to find an answer to what extend can over-education be explained by the differences in social capital among university graduates.

According to the theory of reconversion strategies (Bourdieu, 1998), the exploitation of high educational degree (cultural capital) in strongly interconnected with social capital. In lack of social capital, young people with university degree can only hold jobs that are below their educational level.

In order to attain my objectives I used secondary analysis of data referring to young Transylvanians with university degree of the MOZAIK<sup>©</sup>2001 survey<sup>4</sup>. The

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<sup>2</sup> Voicu (2004) and the Paternostro – Sahn tandem (1999) also report on the earning advantages of higher education, the increasing income of school graduates.

<sup>3</sup> According to 2002 census data, in Romania 15.8 percent of employees holding university degree are overeducated for the work they perform. At the same time two tenths (18.9 percent) of the employees working in positions that require university degree do not have the necessary educational level, and an overwhelming majority of them (89.2 percent) have, at most, secondary degree, and only 10.8 percent hold a post-secondary degree.

<sup>4</sup> The investigation is part of a comparative youth research covering four countries. The title of the research is: *Hungarian Young People in the Carpathian Basin*. The date of surveying: October-December 2001. The survey was performed in Transylvania taken at large in the 16 counties listed below: Arad, Alba, Bihor, Bistrița-Năsăud, Brașov, Cluj, Covasna, Harghita, Hunedoara, Caraș-Severin, Maramureș, Mureș, Satu-Mare, Sălaj, Sibiu, Timiș. The survey has been carried out jointly by the WAC-Center for Regional and Anthropological Research (in Harghita and Covasna counties, and the eastern half of Mureș county) and the Max Weber Foundation for Social Research in cooperation with the Department of Sociology and Anthropology of the Babeș-Bolyai University (for the rest of counties). Individuals taken into the sample were selected according to multistage sampling method, the sampling error being reduced in every stage through stratification. Primary sampling units consisted of localities (stratifying variables: county, type of locality, population number, distance from major city, accessibility) while ultimate units were the young individuals themselves (stratifying variables: gender, age groups). A more detailed description of the international survey is to be found in the volume edited by Szabó et alii (2002).

questionnaire research focused on mapping the material and cultural resources, life-style and scale of values of young people. (Main topics of investigation: social mobility, school carrier, existential situation, labor market characteristics, working abroad, health, attitude towards sports, religiosity, system of values, IT skills, culture consumption etc.) The target group of the survey consisted of youth aged 15 to 29 years of Hungarian ethnicity living in Romania (sample size 1950 individuals), but beside them a separate subsample of youth belonging to the majority of Romanian ethnicity has been inquired as well (sample size 750 individuals). In this study I used the contracted sample.

I verified a part of the hypotheses regarding social capital on a more recent database. For secondary analysis I used the questionnaire-research database of Barometer of Cultural Consumption 2010<sup>5</sup>. The research focuses on domestic and public consumption, consumption preferences, cultural resources as well on the level of cultural consumption<sup>6</sup>.

#### MEASURING OVER-EDUCATION

In the speciality literature over-education/undereducation is defined by comparing the individual's acquired education level and the level of education required educational level to perform a job. Based on this we distinguish three groups: overqualified, underqualified employees or ones properly trained. An overqualified worker is a person with a level of education higher than needed for his/her job. An underqualified employee is one who has lower education level than would be necessary for a job. A person is properly trained if possessing the qualification corresponding to requirements of a given job (Galasi, 2004).

Measuring over-education is problematic since the evaluation of the education level required for performing a given job is not unequivocal. Researchers have elaborated various alternative methods to measure it<sup>7</sup>.

We can distinguish three fundamental methods:

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<sup>5</sup> The data survey has been carried out by Gallup Romania on the request of Centre for Research and Consultancy on Culture. Date of survey: December 2010 – January 2011. When referring to his research in my study I use the abbreviation BOCC-2010.

<sup>6</sup> The survey was aimed to investigate the youth age group of 15 years and older of the Romanian population. The number of units in the representative sample consisted of 1100 individuals, which was completed by an additional sample of 900 individuals from Bucharest. Selection of the research subjects was made in a similar way by probability based multistage sampling. In first stage, stratification was done by developmental regions, which was then followed by random selection of counties. The second stratification criterion was the size of localities. Within localities households were selected according to the nominal election registries, and where there was no such registry, there the random walk technique was applied.

<sup>7</sup> The measuring processes are presented by the following authors: Chevalier (2000); Green, McIntosh, Vignoles (1999); Groot, Maassen Van Den Brink (2000); Hartog (2000).

Some analysts use a technique based on worker self-assessment (e.g. Alba-Ramirez, 1993; Allen, Vries, 2004; Büchel, Mertens, 2004; Battu et alii, 1999; Dolton, Vignoles, 2000; Green, McIntosh, Vignoles, 1999; Sicherman, 1991; Sloane, Battu, Seaman, 1999). The essence of this definition is that the individuals participating in the survey estimate themselves the minimal level of education needed to perform their job. These so called “subjective” methods (Groot, Maassen Van Den Brink, 2000, 150) in most of the cases question the educational level necessary for employment, which then later is considered to be the qualification level required for work.

Other researchers – harnessing usually labour market specialists’ data from the classification of occupations – utilize so-called “objective” methods (Groot, Maassen Van Den Brink, 2000, 150) to evaluate required schooling level. They approach required education level to occupations, starting from the idea that any given profession-groups comprise the required level of schooling. This method was used also by Berg, 1970; Burris, 1983; Lucas, 1977 and Rumberger, 1981. The procedure is often called “expert” definition (Chevalier, 2000, 3) or job analysis (Hartog, 2000, 132; Verhaest, Omey, 2004, 8) and also occupation classification model (Alpin, Shackleton, Walsh, 1998; Groot, Maassen Van Den Brink, 2000; McGoldrick, Robst, 1996). I will use this latter term in my study.

The third method was elaborated by the Verdugo, Verdugo (1989) tandem. The essence of this method is to approach required education by the average or modal schooling levels necessary for employment, and deviations from the model are considered over/undereducation (Clogg, Shockey, 1984; Groot, 1993; Patrinos, 1997; Rubb, 2003; Galasi, 2004a). Measuring over-education by this way is called “statistical” method (Dolton, Silles, 2001).

Along these three basic measurement (subjective, job-classification and statistical) methods a fourth alternative is offered by the model applied by Gottschalk, Hansen (2003), which starts off from the idea that jobs requiring higher education are those occupations where college educated workers get a perceptible wage premiums. This method is used by Péter Galasi (2004b) as well.<sup>8</sup>

All these different measurement methods have both their advantages and drawbacks (for a detailed discussion see Dolton and Vignoles, 2000; Hartog, 2000; Verhaest, Omey, 2004), and as a consequence different methods are often used concomitantly for a best possible approach of the issue of over-education (Alpin, Shackleton, Walsh, 1998; Chevalier, 2000; McGoldrick, Robst, 1996; Verhaest, Omey, 2004).

Starting from the available data, in this study I used the so-called job classification method to assess the qualification level required for employment.

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<sup>8</sup> However, applying the measuring method based on wage bonus in Romania would pose validity problems (part of the grads is employed in the public sphere for relatively low wages (Preotesi, 2004, p. 19), salaries in education are also humble (Stoica, 2006, p. 1)).

Based on the definition of occupation<sup>9</sup> I approximate schooling level required for employment to professions<sup>10</sup>. Over-education is defined by comparing the observed and the required education level.

In Romania, the classification of occupations was published with the occasion of the 2002 census according to COR (RCO: Romanian Classification of Occupations) system. RCO comprises 10 major groups, built up from 27 groups, while these groups contain 125 further minor groups. Two aspects were considered in forming the major occupational groups: the determining criterion was training level on the one hand, respectively – in the case of two major groups (“Legislators and managers” and “Armed forces”), the character of tasks and duties on the other hand (Veres, 2004, p. 45). Considering these we can say that, mainly in major group 2 (science and intellectual professionals), there are occupations, which require skills acquirable decisively in the higher education system. Beside these, in my analysis I considered the occupations belonging to major group 1 (Legislators, senior officials and managers) as professions requiring higher education.

A further argument in favour of this kind of occupational classification would be that according to Valér Veres, in Romania the hierarchy of occupations comprises schooling level hierarchy as well (Veres, 2003, 92). In his study, the author presupposes that major occupational groups may be accorded to occupational status groups described in social stratification theories or to social strata by others’ terms (Veres, 2004, p. 45).

In the MOZAIK<sup>®</sup>2001 survey chosen for secondary analysis occupations were registered through open question, which enabled utilizing the six-digit RCO code-numbers for the classification of occupations.

Within the frame of BOCC-2010 research also the interviewed subjects have been explicitly asked about their occupation which enabled the use of RCO used during the census from 2011. In this case also the classification of occupational groups has been done according to the same principle since one of the classification criteria has been the educational level required for obtaining a certain job. Thus, an occupation could be considered an occupation requiring university degree if it was listed in the first two main groups (legislators, senior officials and managers; professionals).

The occupational classification method used for measuring over-education has its limitations – just as the rest of the methods used in the specialty literature (described in detail by Verhaest, Omev, 2004) – but the available data did not allow applying any other processing method.

At the same time, the advantage of this method – as evident from its name – is its objectivity (Dolton, Siles, 2001, p. 4) and its reliability.

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<sup>9</sup> “By vocation we mean an activity performed by the employee, regardless of the economical branch in which this activity is performed and regardless of the vocational relation.” (Klinger, 1996, p. 88).

<sup>10</sup> This is a frequent approximation in the speciality literature. According to Galasi (2004b) job requirements are easily approachable with vocation (*op. cit.*, p. 6).

The occupation classification method has further advantages. For example, Chevalier (2000) has worked out a brand new method for measuring over-education, which is based on the satisfaction/unsatisfaction over the matching of job and qualification (*op. cit.*, p. 4). The method elaborated by him and the occupation classification method brought similar results in regard to the extension of this phenomenon. At the same time, he found the highest correlation between these two methods in overqualified/underqualified group formation. Occupation classification is considered a good method also by Burris (1983) (*op. cit.*, p. 457). Verhaest and Omey (2004), after testing different measurement models, have also found this method as most proper. According to their findings, among the different tested methods the occupation classification model produced the most consequent results (*op. cit.* p. 22).

Measure of mismatch usually depends on data availability but the occupation classification method is advisable even when the researcher has got total freedom in designing the survey. Supposing that required schooling is a meaningful variable in job characterization, the merit of this method depends on the level of occupational group aggregation, on the temporal delay of observation as well as on the precision of procedure (Hartog, 2000, p. 133). These criteria have been successfully met in this study, in my opinion.

#### THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

The theory of reconversion strategies is linked with the name of Bourdieu (Bourdieu, 1978). According to this theory the different types of capitals (economic capital, cultural capital, social capital) are mutually transforming one into the other. For example, cultural capital as well as the social capital may be converted, under certain conditions into economic capital, while economic capital may be directly converted into money.

The form of occurrence of the different types of capitals depends on the area of use as well as on the costs of transformation (Bourdieu, 1998, p. 157).

From the theme's point of view, out of the types of cultural capitals the institutionalized cultural capital is of outstanding importance. The institutionalized cultural capital objectivates in the form of titles – e.g. title of school qualification –, which confers an institutionalized recognition to the cultural capital held by the respective person. Thus, a comparison of holders of different titles becomes possible. The comparison is connected to the financial value, for which it can be exchanged on the labour market, while these titles spring from the conversion of economic capital into cultural capital. Material and symbolic profits guaranteed by school qualifications depend on their special value, so the invested time and effort might be less profitable than expected. Strategies aiming conversion of economic capital into cultural capital have influenced educational processes like education expansion or the inflation of scientific titles (*op. cit.*, p. 165).

Thus, in case of returns of educational investments, social capital has a significant role, while the economic and social benefits of school qualification titles depend on the social capital on which they had relied (*op. cit.*, p. 159).

In this respect – as D. Horváth (1991) has also pointed out –, practically, cultural capital can be profitable only for those who have social capital. From the point of view of over-education this means that in lack of social capital young university graduates are more likely to access jobs that require lower qualifications.

The lack of convertible capital also manifests itself in the level of incomes, leading to “huge” differences between the different holders of the same type of diplomas, according to Bourdieu (1978), even if their income comes from wages. In case of people whose wealth consists of cultural capital, wages represent the income received for the cultural capital expropriated by companies, as opposed to university graduates whose powerful position inside a company is possible due to economic and/or social capital. In this case, the wage, quite apart from educational qualification, is a hidden way of obtaining profit (*op. cit.*, p. 367).

Nowadays, a university degree in itself is not enough; university graduates possessing just cultural capital can only access jobs that ensure lower incomes and lower prestige (D. Horváth, 1991, p. 11–10).

Granovetter’s (1981) thesis can also be connected with the theory of reconversion strategies. The author starts from the fact that in order to evaluate the competences of applicants the employers use their personal relationships when deciding upon hiring labour force. In his opinion, not only the employers but the employees themselves also prefer to use information coming from their personal acquaintances (social connections) when searching on the labour market. They provide more reliable information and in the same time are less expensive than data coming from impersonal sources (*op. cit.*, p. 23).

As long as employers select their future employees based on personal recommendations, employees also have to rely on their own set of relationships if they want to be successful during the process of job search. So the question is in what way do resources inherent in social connections influence job accommodation; with this approach we get closer to the concept of social capital in Bourdieu’s terms.

#### EXPLOITING SOCIAL CAPITAL IN CULTURAL CAPITAL

According to the over-education hypothesis deductible from the reconversion strategy theory *young people with less social capital are more likely to become overqualified than university grads with greater social capital*<sup>11</sup>.

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<sup>11</sup> Flap and De Graaf (1998) also formulate a similar hypothesis, however not in the aspect of over-education. The authors analyze the impact of social capital in respect to achieving the acquired occupational status. They presuppose that greater social capital permits getting better jobs and getting them sooner, as well as make more probable to keep jobs for a longer period (*op. cit.*, p. 130).

When checking this hypothesis regarding social capital however, we face serious hardships, since there is no agreement in the specialty literature in conceptualizing the term.

The term “social capital” was first used by Hanifan to describe everyday interactions, attachments, sympathies. Jacobs, in his wake, used “social capital” in analyzing urban life and neighbourhood relations (quoted in Orbán Szántó, 2005, p. 56).

Spreading of this term on a larger scale may be connected to Loury (1977). According to him social capital is a set of resources inherent in family relations and community social organizations (quoted by Coleman, 2001, p. 99). Individuals differ in regard to resources available to them, which may provide significant advantages to individuals in developing their human capital.<sup>12</sup> A somewhat similar conception of social capital is that of Coleman’s (2001), who states that social capital materializes in human relations (*op. cit.*, p. 104). These relations might be social relations, power relations, trust relations and norms. Information potential inherent in social relationships is an important form of social capital, since information has a significant role in facilitating action, but acquiring it is very costly. Effective norms and power relations constitute another form of social capital. Besides, social groups may also form social capital (p. 111–114). Different variants of social capital are characterized by two common traits: each is an aspect of a certain social structure, at the same time each facilitates certain actions of agents within the structure (Coleman, 1998, p. 14).

Coleman stresses the action-facilitating aspect of social capital for individuals, admitting however that most forms of social capital are public property and very special to the social structure into which the individual is embedded. Like Bourdieu, Coleman (1998) recognizes the convertibility of social capital, by which social capital plays a significant role in production of human capital (*op. cit.*, p. 37).

In contrast to the presented approaches both Putnam and Fukuyama stress the public property aspect of social capital. On social capital Putnam (1995) means characteristics of social life: networks, norms, reliance, all of which make possible for participants the collective, effective action for their shared causes. For him, social capital refers to social relationships, respectively to the afferent norms and trustfulness. In this sense social capital is closely related to civil courage (commitment), by which he means the individuals’ bounds to various communities. According to the author civil courage and social reliance are closely correlated terms (*op. cit.*, p. 664–665).

Social capital thus means those characteristics of social organization, such as networks, norms and social trust, which facilitate mutually profitable coordination and cooperation (Putnam, 2006, p. 208). According to this concept, affiliation to an organization grows social reliability: the greater the organizational member density in a given society, the higher the reliance expressed by its citizens (*op. cit.*, p. 212–214).

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<sup>12</sup> Bourdieu is using the term „social capital” in a similar meaning.

Social capital, according to Fukuyama (1997) is a certain ability originating from the trust persisting in a society or some of its parts.

Subsets of social capital is spontaneous sociability, the capacity of humans to associate, form new groups, and collaborate with other members within these groups. According to Fukuyama, the capacity to associate depends on to what extent the community values and norms are identical, and to what extent people are able to subordinate personal interests to the interests of the greater groups. Shared values give birth to trust, and trust holds a great and measurable economic value (*op. cit.*, p. 23). Trust, is based on shared values and norms; thus social capital is produced and transmitted by cultural mechanisms (religion, tradition etc.). Communities depend on mutual trust, without which they cannot come into existence spontaneously. Social capital is thus a collective property that is not acquirable for single individuals through rational investment; the group as a whole must accept these shared norms (*op. cit.*, p. 45–47).

In the literature of speciality there is argument over the theme, it is questionable whether the concept may be named capital whatsoever, or use of another term would be advisable.

Róbert Angelusz and Róbert Tardos (1998) call to prudence in using the term, advocating the distinction between the expressions “social network resources” and “social capital”. The authors opine that the term “social capital” should be drawn closer to its original interpretation, in aspects like investment, proceeds, conversion, and accumulation; while the “social network resources” formulation is advisable when speaking of types of relations. According to the authors, by this approach we can get closer to those variants of social network resources, which can contribute to some element of personal social status. They call the attention that the exact operationalization of this approach is a rather difficult task (*op. cit.*, p. 238).

Endre Sík (2004) argues at the same time that in the case of “modern capitals”, thus in the case of social capital as well, do not lack the two elements applied in the definition of “classical” capitals: their generation requires investment for surplus gains, and they increase the individual’s productivity, which may lead to surplus income (*op. cit.*, p. 129). Orbán and Szántó (2005) are similarly defending the term “capital”, because with the help of such capitals society can be built, or ruined, just as with the help of the physical, material capital (*op. cit.*, p. 57).

In Romanian context we must mention Sandu’s (1999) study sparking a vivid professional debate. According to the author the components of social capital are network capital, institutional trust and the so-called diffuse trust. This latter is the most important component of social capital and it manifests primarily in interpersonal trust, ethnic tolerance, respectively, in interactions with other persons (*op. cit.*, p. 124).

Not only is there disagreement concerning the conceptualization of the term<sup>13</sup> in the specialty literature, but there is also argument over the operationalization of social capital. Annamária Orbán and Zoltán Szántó (2005) view as one of the weak

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<sup>13</sup> Iluț (2010) also writes about the importance of conceptualization of social capital.

points of the conception is that there is no agreement in respect to measurability. According to them there are two comprehensive approaches in measuring social capital; one is based on the number of groups and group members, while the other is based on the extent of social trust and civil organizations (Orbán, Szántó, 2005, p. 62).

Problems in measuring different capitals are mentioned by Endre Sík (2004) as well. The author deals with the analysis of various types of “modern” capital (human capital, health status and social capital), which according to him represent significant elements of an individual’s position on the labour market. In the author’s view, the cause of the immeasurability of various capitals is to be found in the deficiencies of empirical experience, in regard to the indicators of various types of capital (*op. cit.*, p. 129)<sup>14</sup>.

In spite of the conceptualization and measurement difficulties of the concept, it is worth investigating how it affects the probability of avoiding over-education, even if the indicators of social capital used by me aren’t incontestable.

Bourdieu (1998), in contrast to other authors (Putnam, Fukuyama), stresses the private character of social capital. In his view, social capital is a sum of sources based on affiliation to a group. The sum of capital owned by a group offers an advantage to all members of the group. Social capital is the result of investment strategies performed by individuals for developing and maintaining social networks. Such groups may be: the family (family of origin, as well as own family), various organizations, religious communities. Starting from this idea, I will investigate how affiliations to these groups, as indicators of social capital, do affect job matching.

#### FAMILY OF ORIGIN

Investigating the influence parental family has on the status achieving process is a key part of the special literature dealing with social stratification. The basic issue of these researches is to what extent the origin influences the achieved job, the later success. According to social reproduction theories class of origin influences the achieved social status through school qualifications, education plays an intermediary role in the reproduction of social statuses between generations (Bukodi, 2000, p. 13). Thus, origin – parents’ job, educational level – is one of the milestones of the status achieving process (Róbert, 1994).

Besides the indirect effect we also have to take into consideration the direct effect of origin, which influences through channels independent from school qualification.

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<sup>14</sup> Sandu (1999) also construes the measurement problems of social capital.

The majority of empirical researches show that the indirect effect of origin has a more significant impact on the achieved status than the direct effect of parental family. The growing number of university graduates – although it doesn't ensure real equal chances – raises another issue, namely, besides equal educational levels to what extent does the family of origin determine directly the status achieved on labour market.

Researchers have demonstrated in Greece the positive role of social-economic background in avoiding over-education. According to Patrinos' (1997) data over-education is characteristic to young graduates who come from families that can be characterized by having a relatively low social-economic status (*op. cit.*, p. 217). In his opinion, the decision of university graduates to establish themselves in jobs below their qualification may be explained, partially, by the disadvantaged family background. This manifests itself in two ways. On the one hand, as a negative example, especially in cases where parents work as self-employed, which means uncertain working conditions. As an answer to this, during the process of job search, young people prefer safe jobs (*op. cit.*, p. 212). On the other hand, young people with disadvantaged family background have a heavy burden on them that urges job finding. Finding a suitable job means, on one hand, longer period of search, for which they need the family's financial support, on the other hand it requires a wide social network capital, which is indispensable for successful and profitable job hunting (search) on an informal labour market. Young people with less privileged family background have neither financial support nor social network, so they are more probable to quit the process of job search and accept a job unsuitable for their qualification (*op. cit.*, p. 214).

The structural elements of family (number of parents, children/parents rate)<sup>15</sup> are usually used as indicators of family social capital (Pusztai Verdes, 2002, p. 95).

During the analysis of family structures I differentiated groups of young university graduates according to the number of living parents<sup>16</sup>. According to the results of MOZAIK<sup>®</sup>2001 research there is no difference between over-qualified young people from the point of view of mono/biparental family background. Two, thus the monoparental family background does not determine the job mismatch.

Another element of the family structure is the children/parents rate. In order to analyze the relation between explaining variable and over-education I used the analysis of children/parents rate average on the database of MOZAIK<sup>®</sup>2001 research. According to my results there is no significant difference between the average family size of the over-educated people and the average family size of people whose jobs match their qualification.

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<sup>15</sup> Family structure as a general indicator of social capital is also used by Gyula Szakál (2004) (*op. cit.*, p. 12).

<sup>16</sup> According to Péter Róbert (2004b) the mono parental family background represents processable data in the theoretical frame of social capital (*op. cit.*, p. 198).

The existence of sisters and brothers may also be used as quantitative indicator of social capital. According to the results of MOZAIK<sup>®</sup>2001 research neither the existence of brothers and sisters nor their number is relevant in avoiding over-education in Transylvania.

The same conclusion has been drawn by Flap and De Graaf (1998) too, although the authors focused only on elder brothers and sisters. According to their results the existence of elder brothers and sisters has no influence at all on achieving occupational status in the Netherlands (*op. cit.*, p. 143).

The cultural and economic capital of the young graduates' parents is also an important factor in analyzing the social capital according to origin. In Bourdieu's terms the social capital held by the individual does not only depend on the wideness of his/her social network, which they can actually put into practice, but rather on the extent of the economic, cultural capital held by those with whom they are connected (*op. cit.*, p. 167).

The term *cultural capital* is not a simple one either, Bourdieu (1998), for example, differentiates three forms (incorporated, institutionalized and materialized). From the issue's point of view the institutionalized cultural capital is the most important, which objectivates in forms of titles like school qualification. So I approached to the cultural capital of the interviewed people's parents<sup>17</sup> by focusing on the highest finished school qualification<sup>18</sup>.

According to the results of MOZAIK<sup>®</sup>2001 research there is no significant difference between over-qualified people from the point of view of contracted<sup>19</sup> school qualification of their father, mother or parents<sup>20</sup>.

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<sup>17</sup> Blaskó (2008) too considers the parents' school qualification a measuring criterion for family cultural resources.

<sup>18</sup> For measuring school qualification I used a nine-level scale which included the categories: elementary school, vocational school, vocational secondary school, theoretical high school, technical school, post-secondary school, college, university, master's degree, PhD or other post-university trainings. (Each category represents the highest graduated school qualification.) This made possible not only the analysis of effect of certain qualifications, but also the formation of different qualification types like low – high (e.g. Patrinos (1997), intermediate vs. lower (e.g. Kogan Unt, 2005 cited by: Blaskó, 2008), superior vs. non-superior qualification. The different processes led to the same result: there is no difference between over-educated/adequately educated young graduates from the point of view of mothers' or fathers' school qualification.

<sup>19</sup> I elaborated the contracted variable using the method of social stratification research (e.g. Róbert, 1986). If both parents had the same educational level the contracted variable received the common code value, if the difference between the parents was "one step" the variable received the higher code value. In case the difference was "more steps" the variable expressing the common educational level received the higher minus one code value (*op. cit.*, p. 45).

<sup>20</sup> On the contrary, author tandem Kogan and Unt (2005) have demonstrated in three Eastern European countries (Hungary, Slovenia and Estonia) that children of educated parents have bigger chances in finding a job matching their qualification (cited by: Blaskó, 2008, p. 32–33). According to their results children of parents with at least intermediate education are less probable to work as over-educated than children of less educated parents.

According to the results of the BOCC-2010 research however, we already find more prominent differences between over-educated and properly trained from the aspect of the mother's educational level: children of university graduated mothers turned over-educated in a lesser rate (13.5 %) comparing to the offspring of mothers with lower educational degrees (20.2 %), still the difference is not significant. We find similar results in respect to the contracted variable of parents' qualifications, but the difference is even less significant (15.5 % vs. 19.9 %).

Besides cultural tensions the financial situation of parents may also be significant since financial possibilities influence the length of the job searching period. Children of wealthier parents have less urge to find a job immediately than those coming from poorer families. Thus, better financial situation diminishes the urge for earning money, offering the possibility to find the suitable job.

I approached the economic capital of young graduates' parents<sup>21</sup> by focusing on the number of durable consumer goods (MOZAIK<sup>®</sup>2001 research)<sup>22</sup> Using the explaining variable average for analyzing the relation between financial situation and job match, I have not found any differences between the groups of young graduates: in both groups the number of durable consumer goods is around eight.

I continued my studies using the logistic regression investigation method to analyze the conjugate effects of variables<sup>23</sup> from the point of view of family background (MOZAIK<sup>®</sup>2001 research). I included in my method the following variables: number of living parents, contracted school qualification of parents, main activity of father and mother, number of brothers and sisters, secondary activity of mother as well as the gender and age of the interviewed person as control variables. (Job match is a dependent variable with the following attributes: 0 – over-qualified, 1 – properly qualified). According to my results neither the model nor the included variables are significant in avoiding over-education. Consequently we can state that in Transylvania family origin background has no direct impact on job match<sup>24</sup>.

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<sup>21</sup> According to Bourdieu (1998) economic capital is a resource directly convertible into money. The operationalization of this type of capital may be done in different ways.

<sup>22</sup> We asked young people which of the 15 listed consumer goods they possess. I weighted the total number of goods – based on the method used by Veres (2005) – according to the brand and age of cars. Cars made in Romania or other post-socialist countries received 1 point, cars made in other countries got 2 points. I multiplied it with a value from 1 to 3 according to the age of the car. (Cars younger than 10 years got 3, cars between 10–19 years old got 2, while the even older cars got 1 point). The weight resulted from this could raise the maximum value of 15 of the consumer goods with maximum 6 points.

<sup>23</sup> The approach I have studied is similar to the one used by Péter Róbert (2004b) for measuring family background. The criterion of family background in the study: job and level of education of parents, number of brothers and sisters, mother's job, mono parental family (*op. cit.*, p. 202).

<sup>24</sup> The fact that young people with more favourable background could improve their position using their close relationships could not be proven among young people in Hungary, even though young people having better financial situation lean on their family and close kinship when searching jobs (Blaskó, 2008. p. 131).

We can find similar results regarding Germany in the study of Büchel and Pollmann Schult (2001). Although according to the descriptive analysis, the group of over-qualified young people having parents with low school qualification (measured by the number of classes graduated by the father) is over represented among over-qualified, but in the binary model this variable had no effect (*op. cit.*, p. 12).

The same results have been reached by Battu, Belfield, Sloane (1999) in their investigation made in the United Kingdom. The authors took into consideration the family background too, but they did not find any significant connection with over-education. According to their conclusion family background manifests itself through other variables (*op. cit.*, p. 25).

### CONJUGAL RELATIONS

Beside family support, families founded by young people represent for the individual a relation that might create a social capital through the spouse. The social capital characteristic of marriage/conjugal relations is emphasized by many authors. According to Angelusz Tardos (1998), family status points to the social resources of the married individuals (*op. cit.*, p. 252). According to Putnam (2006) family represents the basic form of social capital, be it a nuclear or a wider one. (*op. cit.*, p. 214). Fernandez Kelly (1998) considers the existence of family and emotional ties also important from the point of view of social capital (*op. cit.*, p. 247). According to Coleman, systems based on mutual trust represent one form of social capital. Marriage relation is one example for this (Coleman, 2001, p. 108).

For measuring the quantity of social capital Flap and De Graaf (1998) used the existence of father-in-law besides elder brother/sister and close friends. In their research they analyzed to what extent social capital contributes to the prestige of the acquired job. Finally, friends were not taken into consideration, while almost everybody had good friends. The existence of elder brother/sister had no impact at all. The existence of father-in-law however had a significant contribution to prestige of jobs (*op. cit.*, p. 143)<sup>25</sup>.

The empirical analysis of this type of social capital is problematic, while the issue of temporality between the variables is ambiguous. In order to eliminate the problem, I considered married couples only those who married before the starting date of their present job (or in the same year)<sup>26</sup>. This way I could ensure that the presumed cause preceded the effect in time.

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<sup>25</sup> A database of this study does not include data regarding the existence of father-in-law, but there are data concerning family situations, which could be a good approach to the variables analyzed by Flap and De Graaf (1998).

<sup>26</sup> This is not an obligatory constraint, while marriage relations might help in getting out from the status of over-education too. At the same time, before marriage the future spouse (fiancée) may represent a social capital. I performed the analysis without time restriction too, but it also led to insignificant differences between over-qualified people from the point of view of family status.

I studied the relation between family status and over-education by using bivariate method on the database of MOZAIK<sup>®</sup>2001 research. According to my results, in case of married people, the rate of over-education is lower (20.0 percent) than in case of unmarried people (29.9 percent), but the difference is insignificant<sup>27</sup>.

We find similar results by analyzing the data-sequences of the BOCC-2010 research: the singles are represented in a higher rate among the over-educated (20.6%) than the married or those living in relationship (17.1%), however, the difference is not significant.

### ORGANIZATIONAL MEMBERSHIP

According to Bourdieu (1998) social capital is the totality of resources, which are based upon belonging to one group. Thus, beside family relations, belonging to different organizations may represent a social capital for the individual.

Social organizations founded in order to reach certain goals might facilitate other goals, becoming social capital for the user (Coleman, 2001, 114). Social connections and civil associations influence not only communal life but also the personal prospects of the individual. Thus, social capital can manifest itself in forms of civil organizations (Putnam, 2006, p. 209)<sup>28</sup>.

I analyzed the connection between organizational membership and over-education by using bivariate method (MOZAIK<sup>®</sup>2001 research). Results show that those who belong to a certain organization are less probable to become over-qualified (18.2 percent), than those who do not belong to any kind of organization (31.2 percent). The major difference between the two groups is probably insignificant though because of the low number of elements ( $N=188$ ;  $\chi^2 = 3.68$ ;  $p=0.05$ ).

In turn, I could demonstrate correlations between belonging to an organization and job-matching from the data of the BOCC-2010 survey. According to the results, the members affiliated with various organizations succeed to find jobs matching their qualification (and thus avoid over-education) in higher rates (87.3 %) than those grads, who do not belong to any organization (79.1%). ( $N=408$ ;  $\chi^2 = 3.92$ ;  $p=0.04$ ).

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<sup>27</sup> Data refers to “de jure” family statutes. I performed the analysis on “de facto” family statutes too, without taking into consideration age at the moment of marriage. According to this we included individuals who are legally married but de facto living separately into the group of singles, while those living in marriage into the group of married. I didn’t find any significant differences between the two groups in this case either.

<sup>28</sup> Organizational membership, as an indicator social capital is also highlighted by Gyula Szakál (2004), who analyzes the influence of social capital on education and health.

### BELONGING TO RELIGIOUS COMMUNITIES

Belonging to religious communities – likes belonging to a group – may also represent a social capital for young graduates. So I continued my analysis focusing on whether this form of capital has an impact on avoiding over-education.

According to the results of MOZAIK<sup>®</sup>2001 research there is no significant difference between groups of young graduates from the point of view of belonging to religious communities. Religiousness though has different levels, belonging to a religious community is just the first level of it. This level does not reflect religious commitment, while belonging to religious communities often begins with birth or eventually marriage, but in most cases it is not a matter of choice. The next level is worship which can be identified by religious commitment. Worship takes forms in directly observable activities, like attending religious ceremonies, praying etc. (Jarvis & Northcott, 1987, p. 821).

The frequency of church attendance is an indicator not only for religious culture but also for social capital (Putnam, 2000; Szakál, 2004)<sup>29</sup>.

I analyzed the frequency of ceremony attending of young graduates grouped according by using bivariate analyzing method. According to the result frequent of MOZAIK<sup>®</sup>2001 research church-goers (weekly or more frequent) are less probable to become over-qualified (17.5 percent) than those who attend religious ceremonies a few times a month or even less frequently (30.5 percent). The difference though is insignificant ( $N=188$ ;  $\chi^2 = 3.4$ ;  $p=0.06$ ).

In contrast, the results of the BOCC-2010 research do not show any differences between over-educated and properly educated in respect to the frequency of church attendance.

### VISITING CULTURAL INSTITUTIONS

From the point of view of cultural capital we may highlight the importance of cultural activity of the individual, while frequenting these institutions offers the possibility of interacting with other people. Referring to different research results Gyula Szakál (2004) emphasizes the importance of cultural activity as a social capital indicator besides association membership and frequenting churches.

Regarding cultural activities information may be provided by the frequency of visiting different cultural institutions. For an aggregated analysis I combined the variables representing the frequency of visiting cultural institutions with principal component analysis (MOZAIK<sup>®</sup>2001 research). The aggregate analysis of the

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<sup>29</sup> Idler and Kasl (1997) have studied the relation between regular church-going and keeping contact with kinship as well as the number of friends. According to their results frequent church-goers have more friends and they meet their kinship more frequently (cited by: Pikó, 2004, p. 52).

12 variables was not an outstanding success; only after leaving out certain variables could I find an acceptable principal-component. The elaborated principal-component includes the following: frequency of visiting theatres, libraries, concerts, exhibitions/museums, book shops, National Parks (see *Figure 1*)<sup>30</sup>.

*Figure 1*

Scores, communalities of variables constituting the principal-component

Name of variable	Factor scores	Communalities	Eigen value	Explained variance
THEATRE	0,570	0,325	2,45	40,88
LIBRARY	0,606	0,367		
CONCERT	0,718	0,515		
EXHIB-MUZ	0,762	0,581		
BOOKSHOP	0,571	0,326		
NAT.PARK	0,583	0,340		

Source: own calculations based on MOZAIK®2001 research.

I investigated the connection between the compound variable showing the frequency of visiting cultural institutions and over-education by analyzing the average of the explaining variable (see *Figure 2*). According to my results there is a significant difference between over-qualified and adequately qualified people from the point of view of visiting cultural institutions: over-qualified people generally visit these places less than those who are adequately qualified.

*Figure 2*

Average of visiting frequency of cultural institutions in relation to job accommodation (match) and the results of t-tests

	Average	Standard error	Number of element	t-value	df	Level of significance
Adequately educated	0,11	0,98	136	2,719	184	0,007
Over-educated	-0,32	0,96	50			

Source: own calculations based on MOZAIK®2001 research.

In a similar way, I have created an index representing the frequency of visiting cultural institutions on the data of the BOCC-2010 survey. However, according to the results there is no significant difference between over-educated and adequately educated as regards the frequency of visiting such institutions.

<sup>30</sup> The value of the KMO indicator is 0.774, the variables included in the analysis are not uncorrelated in pairs, the variables comply with the minimum criteria for factor analysis, and the significance of Bartlett-test is 0.000.

We have to be careful when dealing with the relation between these latter indicators of social capital (organizational membership, attending religious ceremonies, visiting cultural institutions) and job accommodation (match), because the issue of cause-effect is problematic. While analyzing the relation between the variables the criteria of temporality cannot be controlled. Under these circumstances the following question arises: to what extent does cultural capital determine job matching, as well as, to what extent does adequate qualification determine the indicators of social capital? Though it is not necessarily a unidirectional causal relation, the correlations between the frequency of visiting cultural institutions and job matching (MOZAIK<sup>®</sup>2001 research), respectively between organization membership and job matching (BOCC-2010 research) are significant.

### IMPACT OF SOCIAL CAPITAL ON AVOIDING OVER-EDUCATION

In order to determine the relation between social capital and job accommodation I analyzed the joint impact of the different indicators of explaining variable by using the binary logistic regression method (MOZAIK<sup>®</sup>2001 research). I looked for an answer to the question whether social capital – with its indicators presented above – has an impact on avoiding over-education<sup>31</sup>.

Beside the explaining variables associated with social capital (see *Figure 3*), I included in the binary logistic regression model the following control variables: gender, nationality, age, regional classification as well as dwelling, eliminating this way the distortion the different social-demographic composition of the two groups may cause.

*Figure 3*

Parameters of the independent variables built in binary logistic regression model

Name of variable	Meaning of variable	Measuring level, attributes
FAMBACK	Mono-parental family background	dichotomous variable (0 – monoparental, 1 – non-monoparental)
PARENTSEduc	Contracted educational level of parents	Categorical variable
SIST/BROTHER	Existence of sister/brother	dichotomous variable (0 – no, 1 – yes)
FAMSTATUS	Family status	dichotomous variable (0 – single, 1 – married)
CULTURAL	Principal component for expressing frequency of visiting cultural institutions	Continuous variable

<sup>31</sup> Job matching is a dependent variable with the following attributes: 0 – over-qualified, 1 – adequately qualified.

ORGANIZ	Organizational membership	0 – not belonging to any organization 1 – belonging to a certain organization
RELCOM	Belonging to religious communities	dichotomous variable (0 – no, 1 – yes)
CHURCHGO	Frequency of visiting religious ceremonies	0 – less than once-twice a month; 1 – weekly or more frequent

I performed the logistic regression analysis by successive exclusion of explaining variables (Method = Backward LR), which helped me establish a model in which the variables included proved to be significant individually too. But the model comprised only three variables: gender of interviewed and variables expressing frequency of visiting cultural institutions and participating in religious ceremonies (see *Figure 4*).

*Figure 4*

Significant logistic regression model with its variables

Variable	coefficients (B)	Wald	significance	R	Odds Exp (B)
GENDINTER	0,85	5,71	0,01	0,13	2,34
CULTURAL	0,53	7,71	0,00	0,16	1,70
CHURGHGO	0,82	4,01	0,04	0,09	2,29
Constant	0,44	3,02	0,08		

Source: own calculations based on MOZAIK®2001 research.

The impact of the variables of this model can be followed below. The value 2.34 of the Exp (B) belonging to the gender of the interviewed means the advantage males have in avoiding over-education compared to females. Keeping the impact of the other variables constant we can assert that if a young graduate participates in religious ceremonies weekly or even more frequently has 2.29 times higher probability to avoid over-education that those young graduates who frequent these places twice – three times a month or even less frequently. The unit growth of frequency of visiting cultural institutions increases the chances of young graduates of finding an adequate job with 1.7 times. Out of the partial odds ratio the one belonging to the cultural index is the lowest, the investigation of the partial R value shows that it has the same impact as gender and a bit bigger impact than the variable of participating in religious ceremonies.

I performed a similar analysis on the data available to me from the other database (BOCC-2010 research). I included into the logistic regression model both explaining variables (mother's educational level, marital status, time since dwelling in present domicile, frequency of church attendance, organizational affiliation, and frequency of visiting cultural institutions) as well as control variables (gender, age, dwelling classification, domicile in capitol city).

I executed the logistic regression analysis again by successive exclusion of explaining variables (Method = Backward LR). The final model, in which the variables proved to be significant also individually contained only two variables: one representing the age of the interviewed subjects and the other showing the frequency of visiting cultural institutions (see *Figure 5*).

*Figure 5*

Significant logistic regression model with its variables

Variable	coefficients (B)	Wald	significance	R	Odds Exp (B)
OLD	0,08	18,59	0,00	0,20	1,08
CULTURAL	0,27	3,70	0,05	0,06	1,32
Constant	-1,18	3,77	0,05		

**Source: own calculations based on BOCC–2010 research.**

The 1,08 value of Exp (B) pertaining to the age of the interviewed means that every growth in age raises in the same extent the probability of being employed for a job that matches the education level of the subject. One unit growth in the frequency of visiting cultural institutions increases the chances of avoiding over-education with 1.32 times.

The issue of temporality between variables of the significant model and the variable of job mismatch is not obvious, though, most likely, it is not over-education/adequate education that determines the frequency of participating in religious ceremonies (MOZAIK<sup>®</sup>2001 research) or visiting cultural institutions (MOZAIK<sup>®</sup>2001 research, BOCC-2010 research). The criterion of temporality cannot be proved, so we have to treat the empirical results carefully. Although there are data regarding the importance of social capital in avoiding over-education, based on the results obtained we cannot accept the hypothesis regarding this, at least not in this form of measuring social capital.

Before excluding this hypothesis we have to take into consideration, beside operationalization difficulties of the notion of social capital, the fact that belonging to religious communities as well as the frequency of visiting cultural institutions represent mainly weak ties. Although the well-known Granovetter hypothesis has not been supported by representative researches among employees (Bartus, 2003, p. 7), restricting the analysis on high status jobs the studies prove the force of weak ties as opposed to strong binding ties (Wegener, 1991; cited by Bartus, 2003, p. 7). Although it is disputable whether the impact of different networks on the evolution of labour market can be called social capital or social network resources (Angelusz

Tardos, 1998), the impact of personal relationships on avoiding over-education on the Romanian labour market might be worth to be analyzed in detail<sup>32</sup>.

## CONCLUSIONS

In the present paper I analyzed the correlation between school qualifications and job requirements among qualified people as well as the lack of it. I used the occupational classification method to identify the qualification level necessary for performing work.

This approach to job match is not the only possibility since the formal school qualification is just one element in defining the aptitude of the individual. In a country in which the rate of qualified people is low<sup>33</sup>, and there is an intensive migration of young graduates<sup>34</sup>; the inadequate exploitation of skills and knowledge might cause great losses.

Analyzing over-education is significant not only from the point of view of human resources but also because of the different negative consequences that may result not only in the decrease of individual productivity (Tsang Levin, 1985) but also in generating job discontent (Burris, 1983; Kalleberg Sorenson, 1973). Job mismatch is most likely to end with turnover (Jovanovic, 1979). The importance of analyzing over-education is supported by expected future tendencies too; since Romanian labour market analysts forecast further increase of over-education. (Hritcu, 2008)

Analyzing over-education is an important and topical issue on a labour market that is characterized by the increasing offer of graduated workforce and the occupational structure does not comply with requirements of modern market economy.

In this paper I tried to find an answer whether the possible deficiencies of social capital (theory of reconversion strategies – Bourdieu, 1978) restrict or not the chances of finding a job corresponding with the level of qualification.

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<sup>32</sup> According to the results of Bartus Tamás (2003), although informal social networks do not automatically lead to obtaining a better job (this depends to a great extent on the characteristic of the network too), in general, “better” networks lead to “better” jobs by generating more favourable job opportunities (*op. cit.*, p. 22).

<sup>33</sup> In 2007 the rate of adult population aged 25 to 64 with university degree is the lowest among EU countries (Simion, 2012).

<sup>34</sup> Although we have no exact data regarding this issue, the different empirical results seem to support it. See the analysis of D. Gy. Bálint (2004) about the migration aspiration of young people in Székelyland. Considering Transylvania we can rely on the analysis of Kiss Csata (2004) who summarizes research results of different migration potentials, as well as the study of Gödri (2004), who takes into account the characteristics of the population immigrated into Hungary. This is also supported by Pănescu’s (xxxx) and Stanilă’s (2012) studies calling the attention on the importance of brain-drain.

While checking the hypothesis I encountered many difficulties in using the databases of the MOZAIK ©2001 research, respectively the BOCC-2010 research, in spite of the fact that due to their extensive surveys of data they are suitable for explaining over-education among graduates. One such problem was the number of elements, which originated in the fact that the survey had targeted not only graduates. Another problem rising from the use of the databases was the scope of the analyses, because the surveys did not focus primarily on the determining factors of the labour market situation, and did not include data that would have made possible a more complete analysis of the social capital (e.g. friendship relations)<sup>35</sup>. Before excluding the hypothesis regarding social capital, the difficulties arising from secondary analysis would be worth taking into consideration. I partially succeeded in confirming the positive impact of the extensive social capital on job match. In my opinion, a survey targeting over-education would confirm the positive impact of extensive social capital on avoiding over-education. The much the more so as there are many studies dealing with the role of resources connectable to relationships on Romanian labour market, be it about hiring strategies (Pîrciog, Ciucă, Blaga, 2006; KAM, 2001; Voicu, 2004, Bálint Gy., 2009), acquiring a job (Bálint et alii, 2004; Biró, Gagyí, Túrós, 1995; Macri, 2001, Bálint Gy., 2009) or money earning practice of unemployed young people (Hancz, Péter, 2004). This might designate a further research direction in analyzing over-education of young Romanians.

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<sup>35</sup> Voicu (2008) also argues for the significance of friendships in measuring social capital.

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