

Institute of Sociology and Social Policy

RÉSUMÉ OF THE PHD THESIS

Luca Kristóf

Reputation in the Hungarian Intellectual Elite

Academic Advisor:

Dr. Imre Kovách, CsC

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I. Research Antecedents and Motivation

My dissertation is a study about the reputation of the Hungarian intellectual elite. I seek to answer the following question: How does one become a well-known and respected intellectual who moulds public opinion?

My analysis focuses on that group of Hungarian intellectuals whose self-perceived and socially acknowledged function is to participate in public affairs and influence public opinion. This group can be labelled as ‘public intellectuals’. I study the elite of this social group, i.e. the best-known and most respected public intellectuals. The starting point of my analysis is that the elite of this group is best defined by reputation, rather than by institutional or positional criteria. The reputational definition is based on the opinions of group members about whom they consider to be their most respected and influential fellow group-members.

I argue that phenomenon of reputation is fundamental for a proper understanding the functioning of cultural fields, including the field of intellectuals. In fact, it is an organising mechanism whose breakdown would jeopardise the very survival of culture. I believe that a detailed analysis of the production of reputation helps us better understand the functioning of the field of intellectuals. The goal of my thesis is to contribute to this analysis and understanding.

The problem of the reputation of elite intellectuals can be approached in two ways. The analysis of individual life-paths based on in-depth interviews could perhaps have revealed what combination of personal traits, individual decisions, career paths and life situations is likely to lead to success and reputation. In addition to social factors, personal talent and the capability of utilising one’s talent play an enormously important role in the recruiting of all elite groups. Obviously, this is also true of the elite group of intellectuals.

The second approach – the one my thesis follows – emphasises the structural mechanisms of the production of reputation, rather than personal merit and individual decisions. In particular, I approach public intellectuals as a social group through the broader group of the cultural elite. I argue that the elite group of influential public intellectuals belongs in the cultural elite.

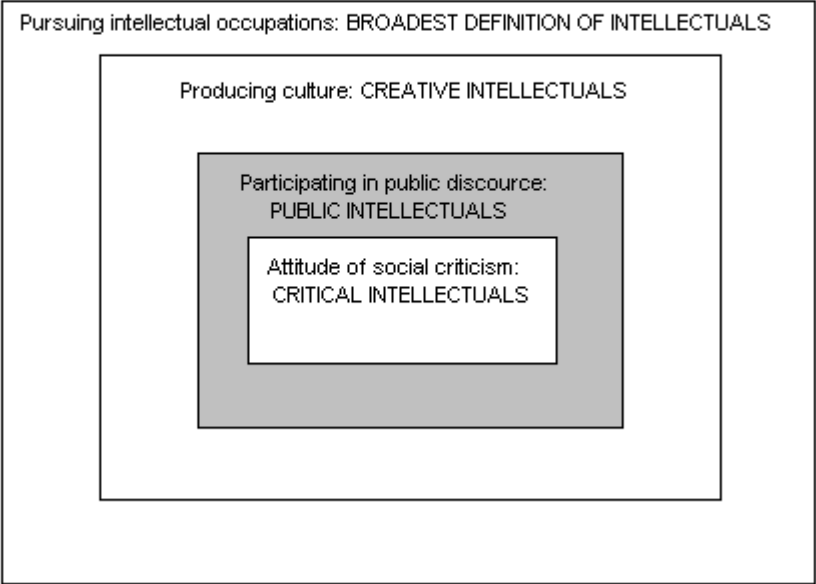
In the first chapter of my thesis, I identify the notion ‘intellectual’ as a set of social roles. I rely on the numerous definitions of ‘intellectual’ in the literature for a differentiation of the various social roles of intellectuals (Graph 1).

The broadest definition of intellectuals includes all those members of society who are highly educated and pursue intellectual occupations. A somewhat narrower definition comprises of those who participate in the production of culture in a creative way. Creation is usually understood in a broad sense to include not only scientists or artists but also innovative engineers, schoolteachers etc.

An even narrower definition focuses on participation in public discourse. Most highly educated and creative people – who could by and large be called ‘professionals’ – do not participate in open public discourse, relying on their intellectual reputation. Only a minority of intellectuals do this, who can be labelled as ‘public intellectuals’.

Finally, the narrowest definition of intellectuals assumes that the attitude of social criticism is an essential element of the role of intellectuals. This definition restricts that term ‘intellectual’ to a subgroup of public intellectuals, sometimes called the ‘critical intellectuals’.

Graph 1. Definitions of Intellectuals



The last definition equates the ‘true’ public intellectual role with social criticism. However, I follow the broader, less ideology-laden definition of public intellectuals, which simply requires the formation of opinion about public affairs and participation in public discourse. Of course, many public intellectuals (so defined) are very critical of the social status quo.

A public intellectual can only function as such if he is able to make his views on public issues known to an audience which is broader than his circle of personal acquaintances. The means to this goal has always been provided by the press.

In sum, I use the term '*public intellectuals*' for that group of intellectuals **who generate and/or distribute ideas and influence public opinion by expressing their views about public affairs in the public sphere (the media).**

After discussing the various roles of intellectuals and introducing the above definition of public intellectuals, I review theories that discuss intellectuals as a social group. Several theoretical traditions can be distinguished that deal with the position of intellectuals within the structure of society. *Class-based theories* focus on the relationship of intellectuals to classical social classes (e.g. Gramsci 1965, Mannheim 1975). Some of them attribute to intellectuals the goal of obtaining class power (Konrád – Szelényi 1974), while others stress symbolic dominance, i.e. they argue that intellectuals strive to preserve their social status through cultural hegemony (Gouldner 1979). I place Bourdieu's well-known and widely cited capital theory in the group of class-based theories (Bourdieu 1997). His theory of convertible capital influenced studies of social inequalities, social structure, including the elite, as well as the sociology of culture. In the analysis of East European societies, it proved especially productive in explanations of the post-communist regime change (e.g. Szelényi et al. 1995, Eyal et al. 1998, Szalai 1998). I have found that the most useful concept of class-based theories is *cultural capital*. It is the most important resource of intellectuals as well as a structuring factor of the inner hierarchy of intellectuals.

Some concepts and arguments of *elite theories* have also strongly influenced the sociological study of intellectuals. Regarding intellectuals as members of the elite has a long tradition. Elite theories usually define the elite as comprising those members of society who participate in decision-making with consequences for the entire society (Higley et al. 1991). Decision-making should not be understood in a narrow formal sense. The earliest elite theories noted already that influence in the elite works through channels other than the formal decision-making procedures (Pareto 1963). Since the moulding of culture affects all society, the elite of intellectuals should properly be considered as part of the elite of society. This is reflected in the usual distinction among political, economic and cultural segments of the elite. I review those arguments of the major elite theories which are necessary for clarifying the concepts of elite, cultural elite and the elite of intellectuals. The most important lesson that can be drawn from elite theories is that an elite group of intellectuals as well as a (narrower) *elite group of*

public intellectuals can actually be assumed to exist at the apex of a hierarchy structured by cultural capital.

Besides class-based and elite theories, the third major theoretical approach to intellectuals is the *theory of social fields*. Field theory differs from the other two approaches insofar as it focuses on the internal structure and functioning mechanisms of intellectuals rather than their relationships to other social groups. Therefore, field theory is of special importance for my thesis. I derive the concept of the *field of intellectuals* from Bourdieu's field theory and use it as the analytical framework for grasping the boundaries and internal organisation of intellectuals as a social group.

In the second chapter of the thesis, I review the most important theories about Hungarian intellectuals in the 20th century. Class-based, field and elite theories have all heavily influenced scholarship about Hungarian intellectuals. The best-known theory about intellectuals in the era of Communism is at the same time one of the most influential works in new-class theory: *The Intellectuals on the Road to Class-Power* (Konrád – Szelényi 1989). However, the post-communist regime change was most fruitfully analysed by theories which interpreted regime change as elite change. I focus on those models which dealt with the outstanding role of intellectuals in elite change (Szelényi et al. 1995, Szalai 1998). Turning to scholarship about intellectuals after Communism, I review those studies that specifically dealt with social groups that fulfilled the roles of public intellectuals (Bozóki 1994, Körösnéyi 1996, Pokol 1994). Scholars tend to agree that a key feature of this era in Eastern Europe is the waning dominance of intellectuals. I argue that, some characteristic aspects of East European history notwithstanding, these perceived changes ultimately result from the same fundamental dilemmas of the role of the intellectual that lead to perception of a 'decline of public intellectuals' in Western Europe and North America. I close the chapter by summarising two important studies about the internal structures of intellectuals in Hungary (Szalai 2007, Kapitány – Kapitány 1998). I conclude that the field of social theories provides a fruitful framework for the analysis of the internal relationships among Hungarian intellectuals.

After spelling out a general theoretical framework and reviewing scholarship about the field of Hungarian intellectuals, in the third chapter I turn to the concept of reputation. Field theory assigns an outstanding role to reputation. According to Bourdieu, reputation measures the state of competition for goods in a social field dominated by cultural capital. In other words, it

shows the position of an individual within the field. Besides its fundamental role in structuring the internal hierarchy of the field of intellectuals, reputation also serves as the basis for opinion formation and influence in the public sphere. That is, reputation has an ‘external’ function, too. It is one mechanism that connects the field with its social environment.

I discuss the concept of reputation in general and review the literature which deals specifically with the function of reputation in culture. I conclude that reputation is an essential prerequisite of a proper functioning of cultural fields. Each field has its special mechanisms that are responsible for the production of reputation. I analyse the production of reputation in the fields of science, literature and, finally, intellectuals.

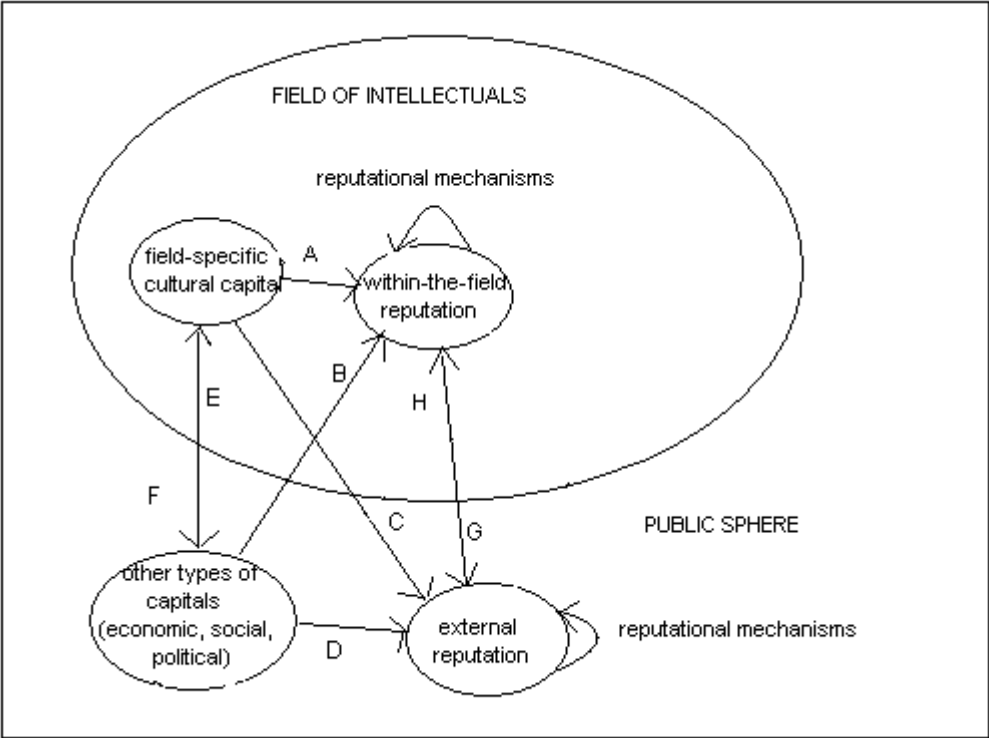
The autonomy of a cultural field is shown by the independent, internal production of reputation within the field. In fields such as science and the so-called high culture, the group of those who participate in the production of reputation can be identified relatively easily and reputational mechanisms are largely determined by the community’s internal system of norms. However, meritocratic reputation can be distorted by the lack of competition, which might be due to excessive hierarchy or centralisation within the field. Distortion may also result from an external (economic or political) force that restricts the autonomy of the field. For example, the intervention of political power may decouple official and informal reputation in the sciences or the arts.

Since the field of intellectuals is open to the public sphere, I find it useful to distinguish two types of reputation: internal reputation among the intellectuals themselves (Kadushin 1974) and external reputation in the public sphere (Posner 2001). The internal reputation of intellectuals is similar to internal reputation within the field of science or the ‘high arts’, according to the internal norms of the respective field. As in the sciences and the arts, journals and publishers act as gatekeepers for public intellectuals. The field’s hierarchy depends on the relationships between creators (authors) and legitimators (editors, critics). Field members with the greatest reputation act as creators and legitimators at the same time.

The development of the external reputation of public intellectuals resembles the ways other actors (‘celebrities’) produce their reputation in the general public sphere. Internal reputation obtained within the field of intellectuals plays here only a partial role. Intellectual performance is evaluated by different criteria in the media (*fast thinking, celebrity intellectuals*). Differences between the norms of the media and of the field of intellectuals lead to reputational inconsistencies, which may in turn create tensions within the field of intellectuals similar to the best-seller phenomenon in literature.

Drawing on the theoretical considerations about reputation, I propose a model of reputation production for public intellectuals. The model links theories of reputation to Bourdieu’s concept of field-specific capital (Bourdieu 1983) (Graph 2).

Graph 2. The production of reputation in the field of intellectuals



Internal reputation within the field shows how successfully field members have used their field-specific capital to achieve a level of performance which is acknowledged by fellow field-members. Reputation is the manifestation of individual performance as evaluated by others according to the internal norms of the field. At any point in time, reputation can be understood as the ‘sum’ of past acknowledgements. However, reputation is also used as a forecast of future performance. Therefore, reputation itself becomes a resource that can serve as field-specific capital and be used for improving one’s position in the field.

The field of intellectuals is a type of cultural field. A fully autonomous field of intellectuals would be characterised by an undisturbed path from field-specific cultural capital to internal reputation within the field, which would also signal the individual’s position in the hierarchy in the field (relationship A in Graph 2). However, no cultural field is entirely independent of its social environment. Although a cultural field is dominated by cultural capital, other types of capital influence it, too. An example of not field-specific capital affecting within-the-field

reputation (relationship *B* in Graph 2) is a scientist using his political connections to obtain budgetary support to scientific activities with legitimate results by purely scientific standards. In such an instance, political capital is used to enhance one's internal reputation within a cultural field.

Relationships *E* and *F* in Graph 2 represent the convertibility of field-specific and not field-specific types of capital, as argued by Bourdieu (1997).

The more autonomous a field, the more clearly its members' positions are determined by their internal reputation. However, no cultural field exists without some sort of external reputation. As for the field of intellectuals, external reputation in the media plays an especially important role. The norm of a cultural field dictates that external reputation should be based on internal reputation. The most respected members of the community are entitled to reputation beyond the field (e.g. through a Nobel Prize) (relationship *G* in Graph 2).

However, external reputation is often (heavily) influenced by not field-specific types of capital (relationship *D* in Graph 2). An example involving economic capital may be the following: a writer's first book may become a bestseller thanks to massive advertising, which may make him very well-known, without obtaining reputation within the field of intellectuals. A further link may also exist between external reputation and field-specific capital. In the case of a *celebrity public intellectual*, for example, field-specific capital may directly lead to external reputation, without the establishment of internal reputation. (relationship *C* in Graph 2).

External reputation, whether legitimate or not according to the internal norms of the field, may also influence internal reputation (relationship *H* in Graph 2). When a public intellectual is widely known, this may affect his evaluation by his peers.

External influences (*E*, *B*, *H*) distort the production of meritocratic reputation according to the norms of the field. Therefore, the more autonomous the field of intellectuals, the more it is capable of 'breaking' these external forces.

The scheme of the production of reputation includes reputational mechanisms that are independent of individual performance. These affect both internal and external reputation building. One of the most important such mechanism is the accumulation of initial advantages: the Matthew effect or snowball effect. A rational herd effect may also be at work: if information about actual performance is limited, an individual may act rationally by simply following other people's evaluations. Moreover, intellectual may become 'stars' in the sense that they serve as 'focal points' for the shared experiences or identity of a group of 'fans'. This stardom effect may also contribute to the concentration of reputation.

Similarly to external influences, these reputation generating mechanisms also modify the basic production process of meritocratic reputation. The strength of these mechanisms depends on the characteristics of the given cultural field, especially the measurability of individual performance. Since the performance of an intellectual is ‘soft’, subjective and hard to measure, such reputational mechanisms can be assumed to have great significance.

In the empirical chapters of the thesis, I test the above model of the production of reputation for the field of Hungarian intellectuals. I use the findings of a quantitative empirical analysis. My empirical research is closely related to two studies about the reputation of public intellectuals in the United States. Kadushin (1974) elaborated a precise method for the reputation-based identification of elite intellectuals. Having identified the group of elite intellectuals, he examined what I call internal reputation within the field. Kadushin found that the reputation of intellectuals was formed by intellectual journals and circles around these journals.

Posner (2001) discussed the external, i.e. media, reputation of influential elite intellectuals. As a consequence of the ‘rise of academia’, most public intellectuals now rely on their academic reputation when they utter their opinions in the media. Posner examines why there are stars among public intellectuals. He argues that a reader expresses and strengthens his membership in an intellectual community by reading the same intellectuals as others who hold similar views. An intellectual stars often personifies the commonly held beliefs of a group.

Hungarian antecedents include previous research on intellectuals (Huszár 1978, 1986, Fónai 1995) as well as the cultural elite (Szelényi et al. 1995, Csurgó – Kovách 2003). Csité (2001) is one study which focused on the reputation of public intellectuals. His results show that the perceived credibility of public intellectuals is related to people’s habits of media consumption. My previous research (Kristóf 2005) examined the strategies elite public intellectuals use to maximise their internal and external reputations. I found differences in the organisation and self-perceived roles of public intellectuals on the ideological Left and Right.

II. Methods Used

My empirical analysis is based on data derived from a research project on quantitative elite studies, directed by Imre Kovách at the Institute for Political Sciences of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences. My thesis relies mostly on data from an elite survey conducted in 2009. The composition of the sample is data is shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Sample composition of the elite survey, 2009¹

Quota	Planned (Actual)	%
Members of the Academy of Sciences	50 (50)	10%
Heads of research and cultural institutes	50 (52)	10%
Heads of electronic media	27 (27)	5%
Rectors of universities, colleges	17 (15)	3%
Editors-in-chief of daily newspapers	6 (8)	2%
Editors-in-chief of weekly and monthly newspapers and journals	50 (52)	10%
Winners of artistic and scientific awards	150 (150)	30%
Popular musicians	27 (25)	5%
Bestselling authors	23 (22)	4%
Reputational elite	100 (100)	20%
Total	500 (501)	100%

The category of the reputational elite (100 people) was created by asking all the other members in the sample the following question: *‘Who do you think are the 5 most outstanding living figures of contemporary Hungarian culture?’*

In order to analyse the reputation of elite intellectuals, I selected those members of the cultural elite who conform to my definition of ‘public intellectual’. This definition includes the expression of opinions about public issues in the public sphere (several members of the cultural elite engage in no such activities). Survey data could be used to make the subgroup of intellectuals within the cultural elite operational. Public intellectual engagement was measured by the following question: *‘Do you regularly publish in or give interviews to (daily, weekly or monthly) newspapers or journals about important social, cultural or economic issues beyond your narrower field of expertise?’* 46 % of the cultural elite sample (230 people) answered yes. These respondents were identified as the elite group of *public*

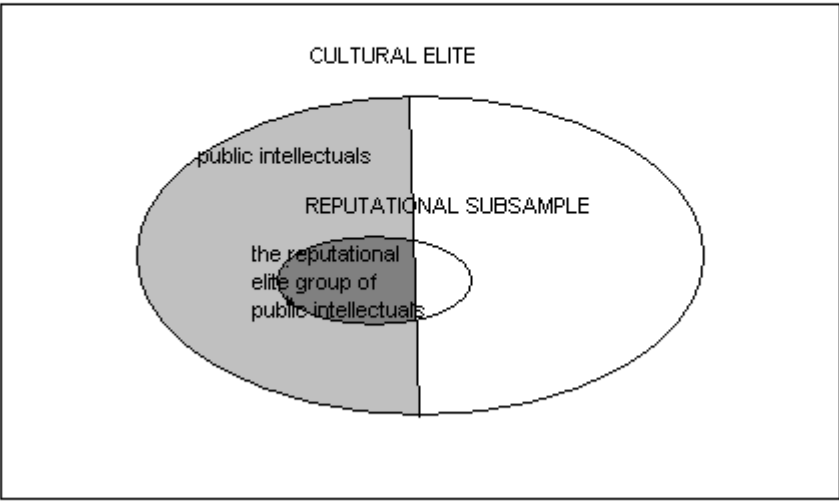
¹ The survey was carried out by Median Opinion Poll and Market Research Institute using both personal and online interviews (320 personal interviews, 161 self-filled online questionnaires).

intellectuals. This operationalisation of the definition of elite intellectuals is of course not beyond criticism. Public intellectuals of great reputation might be found outside the cultural elite as identified by the survey. However, the sample intended to be comprehensive and arguably covered all important cultural fields. In particular, the category of the reputational elite brought into the sample people with no formal positions but considerable intellectual influence. Thus, the cultural elite sample appears to be an appropriate underlying population for the analysis of the elite of public intellectuals.

As noted above, reputation within the group of elite intellectuals was measured by the following question: *‘Who do you think are the five most outstanding living figures of contemporary Hungarian culture?’* The reputational subsample thus created consisted of 100 people. However, only 65 people in this subsample reported to express opinions about public issues in the public sphere. This smaller group consists of the most respected public intellectuals. I refer to this group as the **reputational elite group of public intellectuals**.

The positions of public intellectuals and the reputational elite of public intellectuals are represented in Graph 3. It is noteworthy that the share of public intellectuals is larger (65 %) in the reputational core of the entire cultural elite than in the whole of the cultural elite (46 %).

Graph 3. Public intellectuals and the reputational elite group of public intellectuals within the cultural elite



I use the data to test hypotheses derived from the proposed theoretical model of reputation production (Graph 2). The hypotheses in the fifth chapter of the thesis concern the resources

(types of capital) that help an individual to obtain reputation as a public intellectual. In the sixth chapter, I calculate reputation rankings based on the ‘votes’ of the public intellectual elite group. The analysis of these rankings helps to identify the effects of the social environment of the cultural field – including politics and the media – on the production of reputation.

I used SPSS for statistical analysis (contingency tables, variance analysis, linear and logistic regressions).

III. Main Results

1. *Members of the public intellectual elite tend to be highly-educated men, born in Budapest to high status families.* Cultural capital is the most important determinant of the elite status of elite public intellectuals. A university or college degree is clearly a prerequisite of elite membership. Most members of the public intellectual elite hold arts degrees. Leading universities in Budapest (Eötvös Lóránd University, Technical University, Corvinus University) play an important role in (re)producing the elite: more than half of the entire elite have been educated at these institutions. Public intellectuals of high reputation are especially likely to have graduated from Eötvös Lóránd University and the major artistic schools (Music Academy and the University of Theatre and Film). In addition to the institution of education, the chosen profession also influences reputation. Artists have an advantage in the contest for general (not necessarily intellectual) reputation because they can become well-known without engaging in public intellectual activities.

Cultural and social capital accumulated in families is a further important resource for members of the elite. A very large percentage of the cultural elite are born to families with high social prestige. Elite members are often born to highly educated parents and grandparents, who living in cities (especially Budapest). That is, they are born into very favourable social circumstances. Cultural elites tend to be relatively closed; entry from lower social ranks tends to be difficult. The Hungarian cultural elite is no exception.

The reputational elite group of public intellectuals do not significantly differ from the whole of the cultural elite in terms family status and social capital (parents' and grandparents' occupations, parents' education, prominent friends of parents). The only significant difference is that members of this group are much more likely to have been born in Budapest than the entire sample. However, this also holds for all public intellectuals, not just their reputational elite. Birth in Budapest also makes studies at an elite university more likely. So it seems that the high status of one's family is an important factor that facilitates elite membership but does not really influence reputation within the elite. However, the family status effect might work indirectly through making the accumulation of resources along one's life path easier.

2. *Elite public intellectuals are always characterised by strong ideologies convictions. Like their Western counterparts, the Hungarian intellectual elite are dominantly on the political Left. However, a markedly right-wing group of public intellectuals exists as well.*

Almost half of the cultural elite place themselves on the ideological Left. The other half of the elite are divided between the political ‘Middle’ and the Right. Leftist views are overrepresented in comparison to the economic and political elites, too. The elite of public intellectuals lean even more to the Left than the whole of the cultural elite (although this difference diminished from 2001 to 2009). It is noteworthy, however, that the higher percentage of left-wing views characterises all public intellectuals as compared to those members of the cultural elite who are not public intellectuals. That is, the most important dividing line in terms of the distribution of political views runs between those who are public intellectuals and those who are not, rather than between public intellectuals with and without outstanding reputation. The reputational elite of public intellectuals are not more leftist than the rest of public intellectuals.

The higher percentage of leftists among public intellectuals is not due to a lower share of rightists but to the fact that fewer of them choose the political ‘Middle’. In other words, they are more willing to express their political views openly.

Besides the dominance of left-wing views, data reveal the existence of a characteristically right-wing group of elite public intellectuals. An interesting observation is that members of this elite group tend to exhibit relatively high values for network-indices. Compared to their left-wing peers, their perceived subjective distance from the political and economic elites tends to be smaller, too. These results corroborate previous research findings. For the left-wing intelligentsia, a clear distinction from the political and economic elites is an important element of self-definition. By contrast, right-wing politicians are legitimate actors in the public sphere of right-wing public intellectuals.

3. In the cultural elite, reputation and public intellectual activities are closely linked: artists and scientists who regularly express their views in the public sphere tend to enjoy greater reputation than those confine their activities to their field of expertise.

A very large part of the Hungarian cultural elite (almost half of them) engage in public intellectual activities, i.e. express opinions about public issues in the public sphere. This engagement is perhaps related to strong historical tradition of public engagement that is said to characterise Eastern Europe.

The role of the public intellectual is usually – although far from exceptionally – assumed by humanists and social scientists. Natural scientists are much less common among public intellectuals.

Members of the cultural elite have accumulated enough capital on their way to the elite to make them interesting for the media. It is almost only a question of will whether they start a public intellectual career or not. All they need is to have an opinion to share. Left-wing elite members have a higher propensity to share their views with the public.

However, reputation enjoyed in the field of intellectuals is a different matter. Forming opinion is not sufficient for the attainment of such reputation. Elite members who joined the elite a longer time ago tend to have greater reputation. Moreover, different groups within the cultural elite have different chances to build reputation. Artists enjoy an advantage because the nature of their profession may make them well-known even in the absence of pronounced public intellectual engagement.

Nevertheless, public (and political) engagement may also help them to turn a narrower reputation in their field of expertise into a wider, more general reputation. For scientists, however, public intellectual activity is a must if they want to achieve public reputation (with the exception of presidents of the Academy of Sciences).

4. The reputation of public intellectuals takes a long time to build but is a very durable good.

Long years of hard work are needed to get into the reputational elite so its members tend to be relatively old. Data show that members of the reputational elite of public intellectuals joined the elite a significantly longer time ago than intellectuals with lesser reputation. The higher age and longer elite membership clearly reflects the fact that the accumulation of reputation takes time. Once reputation is accumulated, it erodes very little: a change in the intellectual canon usually takes generations. Thus, the Hungarian elite of public intellectuals are a stable and closed group. It is difficult to get into this group but it is also difficult to get out of it. Table 2 shows the top rankings of public intellectuals in 2001 and 2009.

Table 2. Rankings of public intellectuals in 2001 and 2009

2001	Votes	2009	Votes
Péter Esterházy	21	Péter Esterházy	77
Miklós Jancsó	9	Péter Nádas	33
Elemér Hankiss	7	Imre Kertész	25
Csaba Gombár	7	Imre Makovecz	16
Gáspár Miklós Tamás	7	Sándor Csoóri	15
Péter Nádas	6	Anna Jókai	8
Ágnes Heller	5	György Spiró	8
Domokos Kosáry	5	Miklós Jancsó	7
György Spiró	5	György Konrád	7
Árpád Göncz	5	József Pálinkás	7

The canon hardly changed in the decade between 2001 and 2009. Four people in the top rankings of 2001 also appeared among the top ten intellectuals in 2009 (Péter Esterházy, Miklós Jancsó, Péter Nádas and György Spiró). Imre Makovecz, placed 4th in 2009, would have got into the 2001 top ten but for one vote. Similarly, Ágnes Heller and Gáspár Miklós Tamás only missed the group of top ten by a single vote in 2009. These seven people enjoy a robust and permanent reputation. The only person among the 2009 top ten who received no votes in 2001 was József Pálinkás, president of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences in 2009. (In 2001, the presidency was ‘represented’ by Domokos Kosáry.)

5. In addition to reputation based on personal intellectual performance, another type of reputation is present in the cultural field: reputation tied to an institutional position. This institution-based reputation is much less durable than performance-based reputation. According to the views of the cultural elite, the single most respected institutional position is the presidency of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, which is a typical example of what Bourdieu called ‘institutional reputation’. Presidents of the Academy often join the reputational elite when they enter office and remain in the group for a few years after their retirement. By contrast, Péter Esterházy has enjoyed the greatest reputation for at least a decade. His reputation is clearly of the personal type, which is more legitimate according to the norms of the cultural elite.

6. The intellectual canon is very strong. Top rankings of public intellectuals were also constructed according to the votes of the political and economic elite groups. The rankings are very similar to the rankings by the cultural elite. This signals that the canon is well-known not only by actors in the cultural field but also by other elite groups. The only difference is that the votes of the cultural elite completely ignore representatives of popular culture. In fact, the similarity of rankings even raises the question whether the political and economic elite groups should really be considered as external groups with respect to the production of public intellectual reputation. It is clear, however, that both elite groups have precise knowledge of the intellectual canon.

7. Reputation is very concentrated among public intellectuals: the most respected intellectuals are stars to a narrower social circle in the same way as leading figures of popular culture are

stars for a wider audience. Although the reputation of public intellectuals is clearly tied to high culture, its production is, in a certain respect, very similar to the production of reputation in popular culture or the market economy. Beyond a certain level, the reputation of a public intellectual generated itself. The greatest intellectual stars are points of reference that strengthen the identity of a community. The analysis of data reveals that the concentration of reputation among public intellectuals is largely due to concentration among artists, but not among scientists. Intellectual stars are artists. This should come as no surprise since star cult is first of all a characteristic of arts rather than sciences.

8. *The reputation of public intellectuals is politically determined: almost all of them are respected by those who hold similar political views.* The importance of the political bias effect is shown indirectly by the lower reputation of intellectuals without clear ideological affiliations. This draws attention to the fact that, although professional reputation is fundamentally important, the expression of political views does affect one's reputation within the cultural field.

Although the reputational rankings contain a slight majority of leftists, they do not receive significantly more votes than others. At the same time, appearance in the written media is heavily influenced by political views. Left-wing intellectuals are more often mentioned by the press and they publish more in newspapers and journals. This results in an active left-wing intellectual discourse in the press. The right wing of the public intellectual sphere lacks such an active discourse.

The analysis of data reveals that artists who are known to belong to the Left enjoy greater reputation than those who are known to belong to the Right or have not stated their political views. Therefore, the public exposition of political opinions is closely linked to reputation among public intellectuals.

In sum, the figures of Hungarian culture who enjoy the greatest reputation are artists who assume the role of public intellectuals, hold left-wing political views and regularly appear in the media. At the apex of reputational hierarchy sits Péter Esterházy, who is a true point of reference, a cornerstone for the identity of left-wing intellectuals.

9. *The reputation-generating mechanisms are different among left-wing and right-wing elite public intellectuals.* It is only to be expected that both political sides have their own stars. However, stardom is much more concentrated on the Left than on the Right. Although there are more than twice as many leftwing public intellectuals in the sample, the greatest left-wing

star received five times as many votes as the top right-wing public intellectual. In other words, right-wing public intellectuals were unable to ‘produce’ a star whose reputation would approach Esterházy’s – not even within their own circle. In fact, the reputation of the left-wing writer-intellectual trio Esterházy – Nádas – Kertész radiates to the Right. The right-wing and left-wing circles of public intellectuals seem to be organised differently. As noted, intellectuals on the political Right feel themselves close to other (political and economic) elite groups. They are members in a dense network that cuts through the boundaries of different segments of the elite. This blurring of boundaries – especially between politics and culture – prevents the intellectual Right to organise themselves as an autonomous field of public intellectuals. This is probably linked to their relative failure in the production of reputation as they are unable to raise outstanding stars either within their own circle, or in the whole of the cultural elite. A tentative conclusion is that right-wing intellectuals perhaps look to politics for figures who can serve as their points of intellectual reference.

The more populous and culturally more successful Left can more easily produce reputation which will be acknowledged by the whole of the cultural elite. The milieu of left-wing intellectuals is broader and apparently more autonomous. It is less closely linked to other segments of the elite. Moreover, left-wing intellectual discourse is much more developed and serves as a major channel of reputation production.

Different degrees of autonomy correspond to different internal norms within elite circles. Its greater degree of autonomy gives an advantage to the left-wing intellectual elite circle inasmuch its internally produced reputation is considered more legitimate outside their circle, too. This may explain why the legitimacy of the reputation of left-wing intellectual stars is also accepted on the Right. Right-wing intellectuals seem to accept that this reputation reflects performance judged according to appropriate (autonomous cultural) norms. My empirical analysis suggests that the same process does not work in the other direction, i.e. from the Right to the Left.

The broad reputation of left-wing intellectual stars is probably bolstered by information cascades in the media that present their performance in a favourable light. There can only be so many intellectual focal points. Therefore, the number of stars does not grow proportionately with the size of the population who pay them respect. Instead, the individual reputation of a more or less given number of stars increases as their audience grows. In sum, left-wing stars, who enjoy the advantages of a more populous and active discourse in the media, are propelled to stardom not simply by their outstanding performance but certain structural mechanisms of reputation production.

IV. Main References

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V. List of Author's Publications

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