

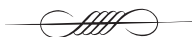
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Youth Services Participation of Youth – Youth Policy in Hungary (2006–2012)

Abstract

Hungary's youth context changed in 2006, before the world crisis, and recession has spread since then. Youth institutions have gone through constant changes which are difficult to follow, after six years almost none of them are left. Youth resources have decreased both on the local and on the national level, due to mutually reinforcing economic and political effects. During the examined period, the proportion of youth tolerating more violent behaviour has increased, as well as those longing for strong leaders and those disillusioned with capitalism. Nowadays, apart from lobbying, demonstrations, elaborating independent political alternatives, a new, rational behaviour appears among youth, the phenomenon of leaving the country.

Keywords youth policy, recession, political crisis, youth services, youth resources, activity



Introduction

For the first time after the change of regime (1989) the governing parties were reelected in the spring of 2006. After the general elections, in the autumn of the same year, came the local elections. Between these two events a speech of the reelected prime minister, who had been the minister of youth affairs between 2003 and 2005, was revealed. This speech was held in front of his party's MP group in which he emphasized the necessity of reforms, talked about program points left unrealized while lying to the public all the time. The publication of his speech has had long-lasting consequences. The era of Hungarian political cold war began.

Youngsters growingly accepted postconventional patterns of political behavior. On 19 September, after an evening demonstration, a group of a few hundred people wanted to read up a petition in the Hungarian Television (MTV), but it was not possible. After that a spontaneous demonstration broke out followed by arson and vandalism, and the mob, mostly young people and football hooligans, forced the defending police squads to retreat, broke into the building of the television and left. Hungarian media informed the people of Hungary immediately, mediums of the opposition spoke about 'revolution', while government channels about 'hooligans'. Twelve days later the local elections resulted in a huge win of the opposition. On 23 October (the 50th

anniversary of the 1956 Revolution) the peacefully celebrating crowd of the opposition got mixed with the reoccurring groups of hooligans in the city center due to the mistakes of the police. (The hooligans even started a tank previously installed on the square as a part of an open exhibition). Police forces dispersed the crowd by using rubber bullets, tear gas and mounted police attacks. Several hundred people, mainly youngsters, suffered injuries and received medical treatment. The bleeding head of an MP of the opposition was shown as evidence of state brutality and as a sign of oppositional provocation at the same time. Such events had not been recorded and broadcasted to citizens since 1956. The situation made everybody to speak out, it defined public speaking while making the opposite political sides and their intellectual, economic background actors unable to communicate with each other. A sudden, inevitable polarization of Hungarian public life took place.

This polarization meant the followings in the sphere of youth policy:

Public political debates on professional matters ceased to continue from the summer of 2006. According to the opposition the government was not legitimate and went against its own nation, therefore any dispute was meaningless. Different political actors were not willing to discuss youth matters. A nationwide survey carried out among 15-29-year-old youngsters in 2008 showed that 'government vs. opposition' and 'left wing vs. right wing' were seen as 'the most significant conflicts of Hungarian society' among youth (LAKI – SZABÓ 2012).

As a result of the above-mentioned events radical thoughts and behaviors became legitimate ways of political actions especially among youngsters. Radical right started to gain ground. A university student association called Right-Wing Youth Association (Jobbik) evolved into a party and its radicalism contained anti-Semitic, -Roma and -European attitudes. The party's representatives first were elected to the European Parliament in 2009 then they got 17% of the votes during the general elections in 2010 which automatically meant several memberships in the National Parliament.

Young people who kept distance both from the government and the opposition articulated their own left-wing, ecopolitical ideas finally within the sphere of a new party (Lehet Más a Politika – Politics Can Be Different) which got 2,5% of the votes during the 2009 EP elections, then they were elected to the National Parliament in 2010 with 7,5% of all votes.

In the meantime unrealised reforms manifested in lack of economic growth, serious budget problems while still suffering from an outdated state structure. Then came the waves of global economic and social crisis in 2008. Gyurcsány was forced to form a new minority government and to make a deal with IMF to avoid bankruptcy. After his resignation in the spring of 2009 Gordon Bajnai became the new prime minister for a one-year period with a crisis-tackling plan and the ruling socialist party behind his back. They managed to avoid state bankruptcy, but the symptoms of political cold war did not smooth. In 2010 the opposition, the FIDESZ-KDNP alliance, and its leader, Viktor Orbán won the elections and more than two thirds of all the seats at the Parliament which meant constitutional majority. During the autumn elections nearly all important positions were won by the new ruling alliance's members in local governments (KERN–SZABÓ 2011).

Expectations of youth policy (and all other) experts were clear. No prime minister has ever been so powerful as the new one. If he considers something important, it will definitely flourish, mainly those horizontal policies which can not be easily governed due to different inner circle, central and local interests; it is also true in the case of youth policy. The Federation of Young Democrats (FIDESZ) came into being at the end of the 80s as an alternative youth body

against the communist youth alliance and became FIDESZ-Magyar Polgári Párt [Hungarian Civic Party] around the millennium. These elements of the change of regime are still the vivid parts of 35-40-year-old citizens' memories. Youth policy experts also remembered that the Ministry of Youth And Sport was established during the first FIDESZ government in 1999.¹ Here was again an opportunity to close the era of political hesitation between 2006 and 2010 and to surpass the results of the 1999–2002 period. It would have been more comforting if the program of the party had mentioned youth policy, but it did not happen. The program of the new government (The Programme of National Cooperation) contained some youth-policy purposes without really mentioning the means. Actors expected these means and directions to take shape through practice, but all they got was a bitter disappointment. The deconstruction of the sector of youth policy did not stop, moreover, it gained momentum, while, horizontally, we can see an ad hoc sequence of actions. The government does not reveal any means by which one of the most saddening statistical data of the last twenty years could be remedied: half of Hungarian youngsters plan to leave the country for a while to find a job abroad.

Widespread research has shown that active participation in decision making, elections and political organisation has been decreasing for some decades, while the opposite can be detected in case-oriented and civil participation processes (DALTON 2008; HARRIS 2009, INGLEHART 1997; KRIESI 2008; NORRIS 2002; KLINGEMANN–FUCHS 1995; KOVACHEVA 2005, PATTIE et al. 2004). Some researchers have come to the same conclusion regarding Hungary (JANCSÁK 2009; LAKI–SZABÓ 2012; SZABÓ–OROSS 2012).

Our study is about this phenomenon concerning the institutional background, resources and the relationship of youth and democratic values.

Youth Policy 2006—2012

System of Youth Institutions

2006 was the last year when a unified youth institute, Mobilitás, founded in 1999, operated in the sphere under the supervision of the youth division of the ministry. The reelected government contracted most of the institutes and integrated them into the Ministry of Social and Family Affairs. The same happened to background institutes and agencies. Mobilitás, which was responsible for research, participation, service development, informing and resource allocation, was cut into pieces by the beginning of 2007 probably for financial reasons, the institute lost its independence, institutional and human resources were cut while research was moved elsewhere. The organisation was integrated into the Employment and Social Office, workmates became civil servants. After the formation of the crisis-tackling government and the IMF deal, to avoid bankruptcy, the structure remained the same, though financial and human resources started to vanish, not to mention institutional autonomy. A further integration happened in 2010 when the new government formed so-called peak bodies from different ministries. The human sphere now belongs to the Ministry of Human Resources (EMMI), youth and drug affairs are under

¹ The ministry has had several names and has gone through different transmutations: Ministry of Youth and Sport (1999-2002), Ministry of Child, Youth and Sport (2002-2004), Ministry of Youth, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities (2004-2006), Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (2006-2010), Ministry of National Resources (2010-2012). Nowadays youth affairs are coordinated by two ministries: the Ministry of National Resources and the Ministry of Public Administration and Justice.

the supervision of the same division. Mobilitás was moved to the National Family and Social Policy Institute (NCSSZI) and it is now one of the seven directorates, its workmates became public servants which status means lower salaries. After twelve years of successful cooperation, in 2010, the information office of Mobilitás and Eurodesk both moved out of the European Youth Centre *Budapest and moved in the* National Family and Social Policy Institute. In 2011 a new actor came into the picture, the Ministry of Public Administration and Justice, while the director general of the deputy prime minister became responsible for the strategic planning of youth policy as a commissioner sharing the responsibilities with the social minister of state. The new youth policy framework programme of the new government was published in 2012 titled *For The Future Of The New Generation* and a new body, the New Generation Centre Ltd. was founded to take the Zánka Children Camp, a former scout camp, then the biggest pioneer camp of the communist regime and a youth centre after 1989, immediately under its control. The realisation of the framework programme is the responsibility of the Ministry of Public Administration and Justice which means that youth policy has been managed by the deputy prime minister from this year as well as the regional services of Mobilitás, while the institutes, namely the Children And Youth Fund and the Youth in Action Programme, created between 1995 and 1999 to enhance dialogue and resource distribution are controlled by the social ministry of state.

Mobilitás, due to constant reorganising and shrinking sphere of autonomy, simply cannot fulfill its mission: to be the Hungarian centre of youth work. It has gradually lost its capability to influence and develop local initiatives and to keep in touch with the actors of the youth sphere. None of the three governments running between 2006 and 2012 has been able to find and stabilize its institutional position and role which may refer to the indefinite position of youth affairs within the whole system.

The Lack of Youth Act

There is no operative youth act in Hungary. The former act was passed in 1971 under the communist regime. Several bills have been presented since the millennium, in 2001, 2006 and 2009, but none of them has ever been passed. The Parliament, almost unanimously, passed a resolution in 2009 about the National Youth Strategy 2009-2024, then the government passed another one about the Strategy's action plan concerning a two-year period in January 2010. After the inauguration of the new government both the Strategy and the action plan lost momentum. The minister of administration and justice appointed a commissioner to manage the formulation of a new strategic document (*For The Future Of The New Generation*) and an action plan in 2011. The content of the new document was discussed as a part of a national road show going on from June 2011 by the representatives of different organisations, then the government resolved the publication of the document as the basis of the new framework programme of youth policy in December 2011. The new programme was proclaimed on 18 January 2012 which can now be considered as the official youth policy of the government both from a legal and a political point of view.

The way this document looks at active participation of youth (ARNSTEIN 1969, HART 1992, SIURALA n.d.) we can say that it considers youth as decoration.

The document has a similar structure as the previous ones, it raises problems and spheres of intervention without setting any deadlines or responsible persons. The four main topics are citizenship, home and family, career and living, leisure, sport, entertainment and consumption of culture. The realization of two programmes is set as a priority, the programmes, 'Ifjusag.hu

– for a successful generation!’ and ’You have someone to turn to!’, are planned to be financed from the structural fund of the EU.

A common feature of the last fifty years of public life of Eastern Europe is that administration and politics only see those policies and objectives which are either identified on the level of law-making or supported by a leader (Byzantine effect). In Hungary it means if there is no law, there is no institutional background. A lot of government papers and background studies have been written about different target groups without any real effect. The institutional system was able to reflect on itself during the first half of the studied period, but since then it only has been able to compensate inadequacies.

Self-Governmental Youth Work

All we can know about the actors of the local level of the youth service system is based on application reports. Data were collected by Mobilitás until 2006, moreover, they edited regional youth status reports, but their practice has gradually lost momentum. Since support and data collection based on central resources have decreased drastically, it is not clear how many youth rapporteurs are employed by self-governments. There were 87 partly state-financed employees in 2006 (somewhere around 160-170 is a more plausible number - source: Nemzeti Ifjúsági Stratégia 2008) on 75 settlements assisting the youth service system consisting of 154 local youth offices and information points. We know little about the current state of the system, e. g. how many offices have survived since then. There have been no available data about the number of active local youth councils since 2007. Towns, mainly county towns and bigger cities, with a higher educational institution have been able to maintain their youth service systems through universities and associations, while youth services have disappeared on smaller settlements. According to Mobilitás nowadays around 350 persons take part in youth work locally as full- or part-time rapporteurs or notaries. The numbers of different periods, however, cannot be compared due to clear methodological differences.

Settlements have been suffering from the problem of wandering for at least ten years now, but this meant only inland moving and was in connection with urbanisation. Municipalities tried to tackle the problem by, for example, giving parcels to residents for free. The response of the government to the problem of migration was the student treaty in which the student accepts the obligation of staying in Hungary for the double of the time spent with studying in tertiary education (3-6 years). After the millennium several outstanding examples have been set within the sphere of youth work both in the capital and the countryside. Central funding of local youth work vanished as a result of the economic crisis. Shrinking resources resulted in the marginal status of youth work and tasks (which are not obligations due to the lack of a youth act) on a municipal level. The second Orbán government keeps municipalities on a short leash (several decisions and scopes of duties have been handed to the regional government offices). These are unable to renew Hungarian youth work in the years of shrinking funds.

Youth Resources 2006—2012

State Resources

Eastern European cultures’ problem solving has always been based on the lack of resources. In Hungary the question was how to organise an operable state in times of war, crisis and necessity. On local and regional levels even a promise of financial support can make a huge difference in

the attitude. In Hungary there is an ongoing economic crisis which strengthens this tendency.

Resources allocated to youth organisations, youth work and policies have traditionally not been handled separately, not even after 1989. Organisations of three different kinds often took part in the same tenders and sometimes even covered similar spheres. Palpable resources appeared in the following order:

Central subsidies from 1989

Children and Youth Programme – separate fund – from 1995

EU resources – from 2004

Companies and private persons as founders – after 2006.

The formation of Regional Youth Services and Youth Councils (RIT) in 1999 was a very progressive step even on a European scale. In 1999 direct subsidies were 1,3 billion HUFs, 2004-ben az EU csatlakozás évében 3,4 billion HUFs in 2004, the year of our EU accession, only 1,2 billion HUFs in 2007 (Böröcz 2008) and a few hundred million HUFs in 2012.

Children and Youth Programme (GYIA) is a key actor of the system, because it has been the only human fund which allocated regional resources to the regional youth service system. 70% of all the resources available between 1999 and 2010 were distributed by Regional Youth Councils (RIT) and the remaining 30% by the central Council (GYIA). In 2011-2012 only the central body invited entries for competitions which put an end to the system of Regional Councils. Regional Youth Offices will also disappear as a result of a new edict and the system of county offices will be reestablished which means a return to the practice exercised before 1999. In the meantime, resources in 2012 only add up to one third of the nominal value of the resources in 2006. The following chart shows the decline of financial resources and tenders in the sector.

	CENTRAL - GYIA (MILLION Ft)	REGIONAL - RIT (MILLION Ft)	TOTAL (MILLION Ft)
2006	138,8	323,9	462
2007	83	195	278
2008	62,7	146,3	209
2009	55,8	132	187,8
2010	36,3	84,7	121
2011	135	0	135
2012	150	0	150

TABLE 1
Youth Resources 2006–2012 ✧
1 Euro = 280 Ft; Source: Mobilitás

A sad consequence of the evaporation of resources is that it has become extremely difficult for youth organisations to get to resources, because they cannot compete for structural fund resources of the EU due to their role and function.

A new resource distributor has appeared in 2012 under the supervision of the Ministry of Public Administration and Justice, the National Cooperation Fund (NEA), whose distributional body runs under the name „Új nemzedék jövőjéért” Kollégium. Federations, associations and foundations were invited in March 2012 to compete for a total sum of 376 671 883 Ft to cover their costs. A new round was invited in June to promote the professional programmes of federations, associations and foundations. The total sum was 190.632.000 Ft. The programmes should be realised between May 2012 and February 2013. A month later both available competition sums were cut by 10%. In August 2012 the supervision of these two competitions was transferred to a body of the Ministry of Human Resources (EMMI), to the *Human Resources* Subsidy Management. Until the closing date of the formulation of this study (15 Oct. 2012) none of the winning competitors have received their money.

Organisations, in this situation, could only abandon their projects or take loans to finish them. As a result of the disappearance of youth resources out-of-organisation youngsters cannot get central support to finance their initiatives, while helpers can reach resources easier if they look at youth in a wider context (education, culture etc.).

EU Structural Resources

The financial influence of our EU accession on the human sector could only be seen after 2007, the starting date of the first full EU budget period, when the European Structural Funds and the Cohesion Fund became available for Hungarian applicants after making the Hungarian National Development Plan. It contained an independent construction to support youth services. That huge amount of resources has not ever been available for such a few actors. Instead of smaller subsidies available to many, only a few actors, with the proper organisational capacity, can now get to the resources.

	Number of submitted competitions	Required sum (Ft)	Number of operative contracts	Total sum of operative contracts (Ft)	Number of payments	Total sum of actual payments (Ft)
TÁMOP-5.2.5/A-10/1	29	1.507.997.584	6	263.768.182	6	87.560.638
TÁMOP-5.2.5/A-10/2	78	3.856.826.047	28	1.254.808.049	28	524.865.763
TÁMOP-5.2.5-08/1	339	6.077.234.817	132	2.351.466.496	129	2.122.552.207

TABLE 2 Utilizing the resources of the youth measure of the Hungarian National Development Plan ❖ Source: www.nfu.hu; 2012.10.10.)

Between 2005 and 2011 out of the 447 applicants 166 could sign a contract. In the case of low-threshold resources more than 4000 applicants could sign a contract in 2006. It is clear that nominally 4 billion HUFs mean a serious amount which makes the stability of certain services possible, but youth organisations cannot reach these resources and service providers with a smaller capacity cannot absorb tens of millions of HUFs at once. Rural youngsters and their organisations have become more vulnerable concerning availability.

The dramatic shrinkage of national resources cannot be compensated by the abundance of EU resources, furthermore large, professional service providers have gained ground at the expense of smaller ones. The financing of youth organisations have become problematic at the same time.

Rural settlements, with less than 5000 residents, have started to build up a newer form of getting to low-threshold resources based on the cooperation of local governments and the civil society. The appearance of integrated community and service spaces (IKSZT) meant a new opportunity to rural communities. Although the resources are rather restricted, it is a new form of subsidy, assisting both human and physical infrastructure, which has not been available to smaller settlements. The objective of these spaces is to rise the living standard of rural settlements through securing the provision of community, cultural, social, health, informations and administrative services.

Methodological development was the aim of a group of experts of community and rural development when they wrote and edited a companion focusing on youth (DITZENDY 2010). This form of subsidy cannot be considered as a directly youth-oriented one, but mainly youngsters are the beneficiaries of these investments.

In conclusion it can be stated that the state withdraws from the financing-cooperating model which characterized the last twenty years until 2010, namely distributing smaller amounts of money based on the principle of subsidiarity, rather it supports services with large sums from EU resources. That is why the sector turns more and more to private enterprises and individuals.

Companies And Individuals As Supporters

The Hungarian firms of international corporations had already built their systems of support by 2006. An important part of the new government's 'unorthodox' economic policy is taxing these actors mainly within the energy, the bank and the retail sector. Although they have significantly reduced their level of support, they still play an important role in financing youth projects.

The donating role of civil society has become more valuable in the years of crisis. The Hungarian taxation system has given the right to every taxpayer to dispose of 1% of their income-tax for the good of an NGO since 1997. This sum was 9,5 billion HUFs in 2008, 10,06 billion HUFs in 2009, 9,8 billion HUFs in 2010 and, 57% of all taxpayers disposed of 1% of their income-tax, 7,23 billion HUFs in 2011. Between 2009 and 2011 there was a 30%-cut in 1% offerings. It is due to the introduction of the flat income-tax system. By 2012 the sector will have lost around 40% of 1% offerings. Exact data are not available in the case of youth projects.

A unique example is the Alliance For Youth Programme which has been realized through the cooperation of three different sectors and it is the only youth project dealing with social responsibility. Északi Támpont Association represents the civil sector, Mobilitás the administration and ALDI Hungary the business sector in this Alliance founded in 2010.

The human resources to reveal resources and develop cooperation is far too insufficient. Hungarian fundraising activities are coordinated by two NGOs. The ABC work team of Nonprofit Information and Training Centre Foundation (NIOK), which recruits its member from the representatives of different organisations, set off in 2011. The Hungarian Fundraising Association (ADOK) was founded at the beginning of 2012, its members are individuals. Youth organisations are not represented as their members yet, while they still do not have any fundraisers working for youth organisations.

Democracy And Youth

Both the European Union and the Council as well as many others stress two main aims of youth policy: to actively involve youth in the constant development of democracy and to reduce social integrational impediments especially in the labour market. It is therefore useful to review how youngsters have related to democracy, participation and freedom throughout these stormy years and what can be felt out of it in the sphere of youth work. For a better understanding, beside our data, we have used the findings of two surveys: Youth 2008 (N=8000) commissioned by the government and Pew Research Center's study titled Two Decades After the Wall's Fall (2009).

In 2008, before the crisis hit the region, 81% of Hungarian youngsters thought that the economy of the country had downgraded between 1998 and 2008 as well as the living standard (77%) and the financial situation of their own families (60%). Only half of them conceived that they and their families have no financial problems — 'we live an easy life' (6%), 'we make ends meet if we care' (44%) —, while the other half thought that they could not make ends meet and their consumer status is restricted. Their future expectations were not any better, about one fourth of them (22–23%) were optimistic about the improvement of the living standard and the

economy, while 26% of them hoped for a better financial situation of their families. László Laki (2011) stressed that these opinions were based on decade-long processes, so they could even be seen as the characteristics of the neocapitalist system built by the regime-changing political forces (Laki 2011: 128). More than one third of youngsters with a labour-market experience (37%) reported about a previous unemployed status. Residents of the capital were not so prone to it (26%) as town and rural ones (40–43%). 66% of them thought that their job opportunities were 'bad' or 'very bad', while only 8% said their opportunities were 'good' or 'very good'. So it is not surprising that their biggest generational problem was thought to be 'unemployment and hard ways to employment' (38%) followed by 'stringency and impoverishment' (22%). That is why such problems appeared as 'uncertainty' (18%), 'lack of perspective' (18%) and pointlessness (11%). Youngsters' attitude to politics and public matters was definitely influenced by the crisis. 69% of them did 'not at all' or did 'not really' trust in the ruling government in 2008, but they almost equally mistrusted (60%) the Parliament (LAKI – SZABÓ 2012). Compared to the data of the 2004 survey we can see a significant democracy deficit. The European Youth Research Institute's (EIKKA) survey, carried out in the autumn of 2009, among 17-18-year-old secondary-school students (N=500) came to the same conclusions. The students were asked how much credit they could give to the opinions of the representatives of 30 different professions. 'Country' and 'local politicians' came last: 60% of them answered they would 'absolutely disregard their opinion'.

The same democracy deficit can be observed in the case of democracy. Half of the interviewees of Youth 2008 (48%) agreed with the statement that 'democracy is the best of all institutions'. 36% of them thought that 'for people like me distinct political systems do not make any difference'. 16% of them concluded that 'dictatorship is better among certain circumstances than democracy' (SZABÓ–KERN 2011. 55–56.).

WHICH STATEMENT IS CLOSEST TO YOUR VIEWS OUT OF THE THREE?	BUDAPEST (%)	CITY (%)	TOWN (%)	VILLAGE (%)	TOTAL (%)
'democracy is the best of all institutions'	52	49	50	43	48
'dictatorship is better among certain circumstances than democracy'	27	18	12	13	16
'for people like me distinct political systems do not make any difference'	21	34	38	44	36
Total	100	100	100	100	100

TABLE 3 *Youngsters' opinion about the relationship of democracy and dictatorship based on the consideration of three statements* ❖ Source: *Ifjúság 2008*

This deficit was confirmed in the Global Attitudes Survey of Pew Research Center in 2009. Hungarian interviewees would rather rely on a „Strong Leader”. Looking into the demographic details, we can see that the 18-29-year-old age group (47%), youngsters with a degree (54%) and city residents (47%) are more committed to the 'Democratic form of government'. In proportion to the same groups of the Czech Republic, Poland and Slovakia Hungary is far behind them. Hungary shows similarities with the data of Lithuania.

Judging democracy, being confident about the future and unemployment have always been strongly related to each other in youth surveys of the previous decades. These data become extremely important during economic depression.

People under the age of 25 suffer the most from the consequences of crisis. 28,4% of youngsters have been jobless in 2012 which is 2% higher than in 2010. Long-term unemployment

	Strong Leader (%)	Democratic Form of Government (%)	Differences on Democratic Form of Government vs Strong Leader (18–29 ages, %)	Some college+ (%)	Urban (%)
Bulgaria	68	26	37	37	29
Lituania	49	42	50	50	45
Hungary	49	42	47	54	47
Poland	35	56	64	70	60
Czech Republic	15	81	86	89	83
Slovakia	12	81	82	92	83

TABLE 4 Should we rely on a democratic form of government or a leader with a strong hand? ❖ Source: www.pewglobal.org

strikes youth really hard. The most concerned group is the 25–29 year-olds. In 2010 42% of the 15–24-year-old unemployed group suffered from long-term unemployment, while this ratio was 52,4% among the 25–29-year-old group. According to the data of the Hungarian Central Statistical Office the higher the age of a group is the higher the percentage is of people stricken by long-term unemployment.

	AGE GROUPS			
	15–19 (%)	20–24 (%)	25–29 (%)	Total (%)
2006	32,2	38,7	45,4	41,1
2007	27,3	41,8	46,8	42,8
2008	20,2	38,2	47,8	41,1
2009	26,8	33,8	43,3	37,6
2010	34,2	43,1	52,4	47,1

TABLE 5 The rate of long-term unemployment* within the total number of unemployed people of a given age group
* Has been unable to find a job for at least 12 months ❖ Source: http://www.ksh.hu/docs/hun/xftp/idoszaki/pdf/ijfusag_munkaero_piac.pdf

The government tried to react to the problem: employers partake tax incentives, if they employ entrants below the age of 25 (or 30 if the entrant has a degree), and there is a 3 billion HUF budget to support the expenditure on wages of employers who employ entrants long-time job seekers below the age of 25. We currently have no data about the impacts of these preferences.

The seriousness of this problem can also be underlined by the fact that there are four Hungarian regions within the twenty poorest regions of the EU 20 (Northern Hungary, Northern and Southern Great-Plain, Southern Transdanubia) where more youngsters mean more „vulnerable youth” status (FURLONG – STALDER – AZZOPARDI 2000).

Frustration is accumulating among Hungarian youth as a result of economic recession. Frustration can easily lead to hopelessness, anger and finally to non-conventional patterns of political behaviour, to the acceptance of alternative or radical political actors. However it is quite complicated to measure these radical party or movement preferences. One third of Hungarian youngsters stated in 2011 that they would vote to the far-right Jobbik party, while every tenth youngster would vote to the ecopolitical party, Lehet Más a Politika (www.tarki.hu). The supporters of civil movements of Fourth Republic (4K!) and Milla (One Million People for the Freedom of Press Movement) as the counterparts of power, and of the protagonists of the government, Civic Forum (CÖF), which organised Peace Marches, can only be estimated from the crowd of their street events. During the biggest national holidays (15 March, 23 October) of the previous years at least 100 000 people attended the street events of Milla.

The vast majority of this politically active generation is below the age of 40, or, rather, at

the beginning of their 30s. Their most committed supporters are around the same age, but they can even be ten years younger. Official Hungarian youth researchers shared the view until 2008, that Hungarian youngsters showed a low intensity of political activity, though it was doubted by other experts (including the authors of this study). Jobbik and LMP have become more and more embedded into society since 2010. This new version of attitude towards public matters shows that Hungarian society and youth has reached a turning point of political socialization.

As the writing of this study is coming to an end the students of Hungary are demonstrating. (In Hungary, as in other European countries, students can be easily mobilised as a government-sceptical group. The spark of the 1956 Revolution also came from the universities, not to mention the change of regime.) University students demonstrated in university buildings, blocked bridges in the capital and even occupied some regional government offices as a result of the announcement of the drastic cut (from 40 000 to 10 000 which is 15% of the whole age group trying to get into tertiary education) of state-financed student places and decreasing the subsidy of universities by 25%. Their watchwords are: 'Politics has been wrong for 20 years' and 'We are the university, we are the future'. The nationwide student organisation with 300000 member (HÖÖK) stated that 'the government goes against its own youth'. These drastic steps are due to the Maastricht criteria, that the government wishes to keep the yearly financial deficit under 3%.

Right-wing radical groups (led by the party Jobbik) further strengthen EU-scepticism and democracy deficit while they consider the government as a slave of the EU and international capital. That is why socially committed youngsters consider this government to be insensitive, while pragmatists look at them as insincere improvisers. The now ruling parties won a campaign against the 2008 government based on the refusal of any student fees.

The most rejected measure is 'binding', the student treaty. The government wanted to slow down the process of brain-drain (mostly in the case of young doctors), that is why it was introduced first for medical students and then for everybody. It means that a wholly or partly state-financed student accepts the obligation of staying in Hungary for the double of the time spent with studying in the tertiary education. This move is probably unique in Europe and concerns the right of free movement. The government insists (50% of the students want to leave the country), the students reject it. During the 2010 elections people thought constraints would come to an end by the new Orbán government, but they have become more and more serious. As a result three different groups can be detected: the resigned, the resisters and the escapers. The politics of constraints strengthens the group of escapers, but recent events have shown the growing group of resisters. The claims of student organisations are not only about higher education. They mention politics as the world of adults which fools and exploits youths, and they call for real democracy. The young party of LMP stands close to these thoughts. They also think that important decisions of the last 20 years were made in backrooms not in democratic ways. Most Hungarian youngsters share the view that they cannot shape the future of the country (SÁGVÁRI 2008).

These voices can also be heard outside the Parliament. One of them is 4K! (Fourth Republic) which hints with its name that the previous republics all failed to deliver their aims, so we have to build a new one. 4K! is smart enough to use the media and the method of provocation to address youth with its left-wing messages. Their appearance was a huge surprise, because their political environment does not really understand how they could gain measurable popularity with these tools and methods used outside the current political ruling bodies. Their popularity is probably due to the fact that youngsters suffer the most from the current crisis. In 2008 19%

of youth thought that the biggest problem was uncertainty, while this number grew to 31% by 2012 (SÁGVÁRI 2012.). The fall of the Hungarian left wing gave a good reason to the emerge of a new youth counter-cultural movement which has turned to a party a few weeks before.

Revoltng youth has become more and more rational within the period of 2006-2012. Besides representing interests, demonstrating and working out alternatives a new, more rational attitude has emerged: leaving the country. More and more youngsters tolerate violent acts, long for a strong leader or turn away from capitalism.

The context of Hungarian youth is under constant transformation while rejecting the politics of the last three governments. In 2010 the new government announced the new system of national cooperation with its inevitable gains and losses. Now it cannot be judged, whether youth is on the winning or losing side of the game, since the system goes under so huge reconstruction regarding education, health care, the economy, the labour sphere, social policy, culture, municipalities, administration and the general elctions. We can get a clearer picture by the end of 2014.

Summary

In our study we have surveyed the issues of youth institutions, youth policy and Hungarian youngsters' attitude to democracy between 2006 and 2012. Finally we would like to add some remarks. The youth context of Hungary started to transform before the recurrence of global economic crisis, and it is still an ongoing process framed by the strong rejection of the politics of the last three governments regardless of their ideological background.

Youth of the discussed period has been characterized by revoltng which is more and more rational. Beside lobbying, demonstrating and devising new political alternatives an even more rational behaviour has occured, leaving the country. This period has also been characterized by the growing acceptance of violent behaviour and the idea of a strong leader, while more and more people turn away from capitalism.

From 2006 until now Hungary has seen two left-wing-liberal and a right-wing-conservative government. All of them have made attempts to transcend the idea of youth maintained in the postcommunist era of the nineties: 'Let's use youth for decoration' and 'We select nice and wise opinions fitting to our liking'. Although it sometimes happened that 'adult society asked youth', but decisions and and execution were not transferred to them.

The transformation of the system of youth institutes is extremely difficult to follow, while most of them simply disappeared, the presence of the sector can hardly be felt as well as the effect of horizontal policies on youth due to (or said to be due to) economic crisis.

The drastic reduction of resources, as a result of different effects amplifying each other, appeared both on national and local levels, only service organisations' youth projects colud further rely on stiff subsidies from the EU. Under the given financial circumstances a change is rather unlikely in this process. Taking steps forward is yet to come for the actors of the Hungarian youth scenario considering the involvement of youth in decision-making processes, the realisation of their responsibility, critical sensibility and sensitivity in social and public matters. If it happens, they could become active, innovative and responsible members of society and committed to community values and democratic institutions. It is still unanswered whether the prolongation of the crisis will fuel the transformation of youngsters' set of values and a possible further radical turn in their views. *

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