CORVINUS UNIVERSITY OF BUDAPEST
INSTITUTE FOR POLITICAL SCIENCE

SUMMARY

Daniel Oross
Youth participation beyond party politics

Ph.D. dissertation

Supervisors:

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Contents

1. Theoretical background

1.1. Changing forms of political participation

Young people are often presented as the apolitical harbingers of an incipient 'crisis of democracy'. Sometimes, on the other hand, they are heralded as innovators of politics, as creators of new forms of participation. While in the past decades there has been a clear decrease in traditional forms of political participation (voting, participation in political organizations, connection to political institutions) in Western Europe, other indicators show an increase in issue-driven civic participation (DALTON 2008; INGLEHART 1997; NORRIS 2002, 2007; KLINGEMANN–FUCHS 1995; PATTIE ET AL. 2004; KRIESI 2008; DALTON ET AL. 2004). In other words: voting, campaigning, and participation in political parties may have become unpopular, but participation in protests and citizen lobby groups have clearly become more popular. While some researchers have interpreted these trends as reflecting growing skepticism and apathy (HENN–WEINSTEIN–WRING 2002) others have called attentions to the danger inherent in formulating oversimplified claims such as "the youth have become disillusioned with politics" (ZUKIN–KEETER–ANDOLINA–JENKINS–DELLI CARPINI 2006, 118–189). It may well be the case that the upcoming generations are simply interested in inventing novel forms of political participation (PHELPS 2004). If one looks beyond conventional forms, voting and party politics, and takes account of non-conventional forms of public and political realm as a broader field of concerns and activities, from community activism to identity politics, then one should draw the conclusion that young people's public engagement and participation are evident.

The emergence of novel forms of participation presents a theoretical challenge, prompting researchers to come up with new concepts and distinctions. One such innovation has been the separation of the "political" and "civic" forms of participation. (DAHLGREN 2000; DALTON 2004; DE VREESE 2006; DUNLEAVY 1996; LIVINGSTONE–BOBER–HELSPER, 2005; O'TOOLE–LISTER–MARSH–JONES–MCDONAGH 2003; PHELPS 2005; VERBA ET AL., 1995). Other salient theoretical attempts include: Barnes and Kaase's (1979) distinction between "traditional" and "non-traditional" forms of participation, Inglehart and Catterberg's (2002) focus on "elite-driven" and "anti-elitist" mobilization, Norris' (2002) "citizen-oriented" and "case-oriented" participation, and Dalton's "responsibility-based" and "commitment-based" participation.

These different attempts at conceptualization have engendered an emerging methodological consensus according to which research focusing on explaining political

participation should seek to identify different forms of participation and group them into clusters. I draw on this insight, as well as on Verba, Scholzman, and Brady's advice (1995) to approach the explanation of participation through a focus on resources as key conditions ofparticipation. In my dissertation I use the following three participation categories:

1. "Traditional" forms of political participation: Using the approach suggested by Andrea Szabó and Tamás Kern (2011, 18–19) I subsumed participation at elections and participation in political organizations (political parties, unions), as well forms of participation related to these organizations (such as campaigning, participation at meetings, wearing the symbols of these organizations, etc.) under this label. These forms, which have been around since the establishment of mass parties usually require different levels of individual involvement and achieve different results from the perspective of the collective and the individual.

2. "Collective" or "direct" forms of political participation: These comprise forms of participation that require personal involvement but do not require long-term commitment on behalf of the actor. I further distinguish between face-to-face activities that require significant resources and intensive involvement from activities that do not require these. Examples of the former subtype include direct forms of protest such as sit-ins, blockades, expressive and symbolic acts (such as hunger strikes). Direct forms of political participation that require few resources, come with low risk and require low levels of commitment include the signing of statements, petitions and initiatives.

3. "New" or "virtual" forms of political participation: With the help of the internet it has become possible to take part in both traditional and collective forms of political participation, for example, through blogging, posting, and other forms of social media use. This new form of participation typically requires low levels of commitment and few resources.

Studies written about young Hungarian's political participation are regularly interpreted along party politics, along the dimensions of "macro-politics " and especially on "traditional" forms political participation[1]. Going beyound party politics is a missing link in the existing literature and little attention was paid to the question how changing forms of political

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[1] Hungary is an interesting case since the economic and democratic transition of the country has abolished former structures of the youth sector. The main question about youth participation is how to establish adequate structures for youth involvement. (KOVACEVA 2000: 74).

participation affect young Hungarians' political interest and subsequently the level of their participation.The dissertation can bring important new results in this respect.

Since 1990 four national youth researches (Youth2000, Youth2004, Youth2008, Hungarian Youth 2012) have been conducted in Hungary. One of the objectives of the youth data collection, conducted every four years in a large sample covering the 15-29 age-group, is to record changes   in the social factors that influence education, employment, career, independence, political interest and welfare of young age groups. All previous Hungarian and international comparative research findings substantiate the thesis that the political interest of young Hungarians is very low and decreasing. Figure 1 describes the decreasing trend of young Hungarians political interest following data of European Social Survey (2002, 2004, 2006, 2008, 2010, 2012).

Figure 1. Young Hungarians (15-29 year olds) interest in Hungarian politics (4-point scale, mean values)
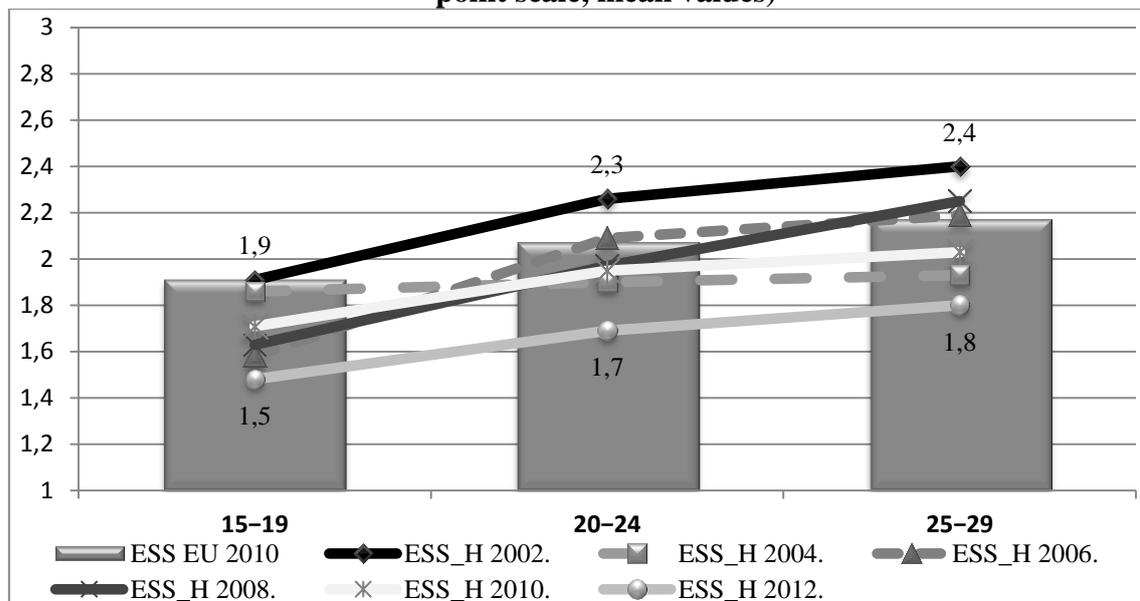

Source: European Social Survey, Hungarian datasets, 2002-2012

Sociological studies written about political participation of young Hungarians unanimously suggest that the level of youths' political interest strongly shapes their assessment of the political system, their acceptance of political actors, and also the modes in which they become integrated into society (SZABÓ I.–ÖRKÉNY 1998; GAZSÓ–SZABÓ A. 2002; GAZSÓ–LAKI 2005; SZABÓ A.–KERN 2011, LAKI–SZABÓ A. 2012A; LAKI–SZABÓ A. 2012b.; SZABÓ A.–OROSS 2012). Many previous studies have also pointed out that in international comparisons, Hungarian young people appear particularly uninterested in politics (SZABÓ A.–KERN 2011; SZABÓ A.–OROSS 2012).

1.2. Political participation and the role of political institutions

In order to clarify the approach of my dissertation I cite the article *Political participation and three theories of democracy, a research inventory and agenda* (TEORELL, 2006). Teorell explains the links among normative theories of political participation[2] and the latest results of the empirical stuides and sets new research agendas.

The approaches of the theoretical models are illustrated as follows (see Figure 2): the main box in the middle shows the three different concepts on participation. The arrows indicate the causal relationships that are necessary to assess in order to be able to measure the level of political participation in a given community. These arrows run out of political participation (causes), or run into them (consequences). Previous surveys carried out in connection with political participation dealt with these different areas differently: most researchers approached political participation from the aspect of influencing factors. From the perspective of consequences, much more research has addressed the issue of equal protection of the interests than from the perpective of self-education or subjective legitimacy. Overall, the model responsive approach has inspired much more research than the participatory or the deliberative model. A complete examination of the relationships shown in Figure 2 is a major challenge for the political science, such a comprehensive examination goes beyond the scope of a single research project. I do experimental research and case studies to compare empirical attitudes on political participation of young Hungarians. The research hypotheses are based on the assumption of the participatory model: if the possibilities for direct participation are widely in place, individual skills for political participation develop.

Figure 2. Causes, conceptions and consequences of political participation
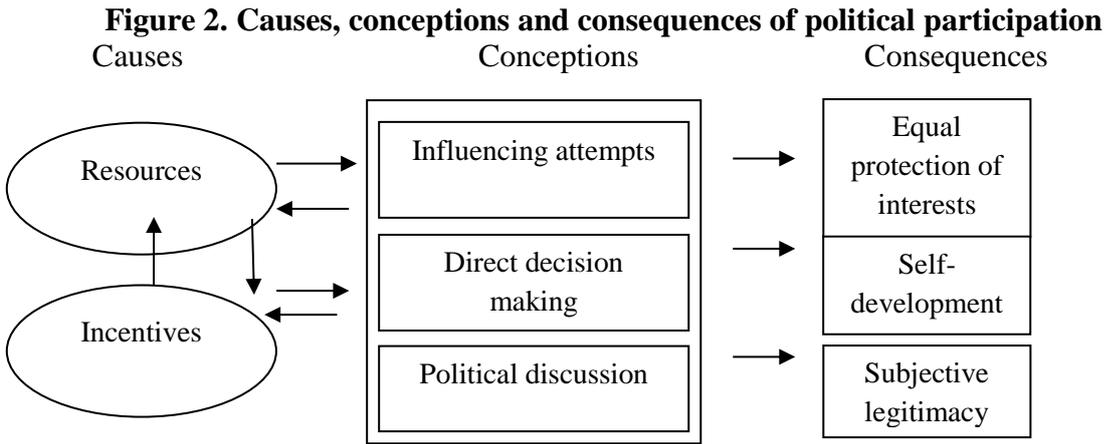
Source: TEORELL (2006:802)

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[2]*The responsive* model of democracy defines participation as an attempt to influence those who have a say in government. According to participatory democrats, by contrast, participation is to have a say in government oneself. The deliberative model, finally, defines participation as a way of finding out what to say. (TEORELL, 2006:791). In my dissertation participation is defined following the definition of the participatory model.

While there has been significant research interest in young people's political apathy, it is also important to note that political structures, processes and debates marginalize young people and are primarily structured around adult interests and needs (EDWARDS, 2007). Therefore participation of young people in democratic institutions is not merely a question of young people's interest in politics, but also the result of institutional opportunities and mobilization channels that are available for them. Youth policy approach can give important insights from this aspect since youth policy is a summary of services, measures offered for both young individuals and to their communities, organizations and institutions.

The development of the youth policy was boosted by the UN's initiative, that the year 1985 was declared as the International Year of Youth. (LAURITZEN GUIDIKOVA-2002). The UN General Assembly observed 1985 as International Youth Year, bringing the issue of youth participation to the fore. Following several researches conducted by the UNICEF International Child Development Centre, Roger Hart (1992) elaborated 'The Ladder of Participation diagram' as a beginning typology for thinking about children's and young peoples' participation in society. The theoretical model sets a number of important requirements for a project to be truly labelled as participatory. Hart deals with eight different stages of children's participation.The first three stages are *manipulation, decoration* and *tokenism*, false means of participation that can compromise the entire process. Real forms of participation include the *Assigned and informed* stage in which specific roles are given to children, and the *Consultation and informed stage* in which children give advice on programmes run by adults and they understand how their opinion will affect the outcome. The most advanced stages are *Adult initiated* participation, a shared decision making process with children, and *Child-initiated and directed* projects in which adults appear only in a supportive, advisory role. This last stage provides children with the opportunity for joint decision making, co-management and shared responsibility with children and adults accessing each other's information and learning from each other`s life experience. The model is a valuable tool in measuring if a given project or institutional setting serves the interest of young people therefore I will use the model to evaluate the tested local participatory structures.

The issue of youth participation first appeared on European level in 1992 when the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe adopted the European Charter on the Participation of Young People in Local and Regional Life. This document was revised and adopted again by the Congress in in 2003. According to the definition of the Charter „*participation and active citizenship is about having the right, the means, the space and the opportunity and where necessary the support to participate in and influence decisions*

and engage in actions and activities so as to contribute to building a better society." The document sets the standards of support structures for young people's active participation. These structures should provide the framework for young people to freely express their concerns and make proposals to the authorities. Although the measures of this document are legally not binding, these requirements settled by the Charter may serve as a basis to evaluate the implementation of participatory measures in different European countries. I have used this framework to evaluate the local participatory structures under investigation.

Concerning youth's political representation there is a clear territorial division among the 'old' and 'new' member states of the European Union. In 'old' member states arenas for youth involvement in political life are numerous. Low participation level of young people in these countries brings evidence that institutionalisation has a strong tendency to limit participation, and it seems to be this weakening social anchoring that, over time, affected the legitimacy of democratic institutions (FORBRIG, 2005:13). Therefore the main concern in these countries is to expand the institutional realm and to ameliorate connection between political institutions and their social environment. In 'new' member states the economic and democratic transition has abolished former structures of the youth sector. In these regions the main question is not how to expand the former institutional realm but how to establish adequate structures for youth involvement. (KOVACEVA 2000: 74).

For Hungarian youth participation in institutional politics is not popular and different forms of direct participation (demonstrations, flashmobs, petitions) and issue politics are the most preferred *activities* (BAUER-SZABÓ 2009:118). The unwillingness of young people to participate in institutional politics creates a specific barrier to the development of youth organisations.. Youth organisations meet with several difficulties: they have to face undeveloped legislation and weak legal stability, lack of comprehensive state policy toward the NGO's, weak traditions and insufficient experience, technology and information base (OROSS 2013). Youth policy is characterized by fragmentation. Policy tools, youth services and institutions do not support the socialization and involvement of young people into society at local, regional, national and European level (WOOTSCH 2009).

Youth 2008 Research argues that the great majority of the age group in the survey (about three quarters) think that the politicians are not interested in their opinion, and national politicians are even less interested in their opinions than local ones. This might explain why they think that they do not have any say in public affairs, particualry at the national level (BAUER-SZABÓ 2009:108). This finding implies that there are obstacles concerning the

political participation of the Hungarian youth, but no comparative research has been done on the issue. Further research is needed to understand obstacles as well as institutional opportunities in this respect..

My research is based on the idea that young people's participation in democratic decision-making is largely determined by political institutions. In this respect Hungary is an interesting case because more than two decades after democratic transition still there is not any institutional structure of the civic-governmental dialogue in youth affairs at national level, and the coordination of local and regional institutions is incidental. The Hungarian youth sector has taken a zig-zag path since 1989. It is fragmented and fragile, incoherent and the prospects of policy measures are uncertain (WOOTSCH, 2010). Hungarian youth policy does not reflect a single model therefore its elements are difficult to evaluate on comparative grounds.

My research explores political participation in local participatory insitutions that aim to encourage political participation of Hungarian young people aged between 15-29 years. The main question is whether the practice of local youth advocacy organisations can increase political participation of young people. The most developed youth advocacy organisations and the most dense network among the organisations can be found in the subregion of Mórahalom (*Mórahalmi Kistérség)* and there exists an unique, subregional cooperation among them. Although the practice of youth policy cooperation among youth advocacy organisations in the Mórahalom subregion is an isolated formation in the Hungarian youth policy context, the analysis of this cooperation brings empirical evidence that youth advocacy organisations can increase political participation of young people.

2. Research questions and hypotheses

2.1 First hypothesis

Following the findings of Stolle-Hooghe (2005:44) and Skocpol (1999, 2003) my research takes as starting point that if young people participate less intensively (and there is ample empirical evidence to substantiate this claim), this is not just a matter of less interest, but might also be a result of the fact that traditional mobilisation channels are no longer available to them. Political participation of young people is not only dependent on young people`s interest in politics, but also on the available mobilisation channels.

The first hypothesis of my dissertation is *that there is a significant correlation between the availability of local channels for youth mobilization and political participation of young people living there. I assume that the existence of active youth advocacy organizations and institutionalized relationship between young people and administration has a direct effect on political interest and political participation of young people living in the settlement.* Compared to the national average measured by nationally representative samples of youth research I expect that levels of participation of people living in these settlements are higher.

Q1: What institutional structures are available to support the participation of young people living in the subregion of Mórahalom?

Q2. Do the main actors responsible for youth participation in the sub-region experience change in the way how new age groups of young people participate? Do they apply new communication tools to keep contact with young people?

Q3.: What are the principles of the participatory model of the subregion of Mórahalom? How do these fit to the principles proposed by the *Revised European Charter on the Participation of Young People in Local and Regional Life?* Compared to similar participatory modells and other youth organisations of the member states of the European Union, what are the main similarities and the main differences of this model?

Q4. Do locally available youth services, including youth advocacy organizations have empirically demonstrable impact on young people's willingness to participate?

Q5. What characterizes the political interest of the young people in the survey? Do earlier results of national researches - that interest in politics is permanently on low level among young Hungarians - also hold for this group of young people?

Q6.What are the proportions in different forms of political participation among young people in the survey?

2.2. Second hypothesis

According to the participatory theory participation consolidates certain personal and social qualities (DAHL, 1989: 92). When assessing the validity of this statement first I clarify what young Hungarians mean by politics and by political participation and whether there is a change in use of the term. I claim that *cornerning the interpretation of young Hungarians, the term "politics" is discredited, and this fact greatly affects young people's rejection of the use of the term and all the activities linked to it. Young Hungarians interpreted differently the*

everyday appearance of the concept of political participation and those forms of action which are linked to it: they do not interpret it as "politics" but you the term "public life", which in turn has an impact on the attitudes of political participation as well. If it is true that young people participate in many activities linked to political participation, but due to their distancing of politics and of "party politics" all this is not regarded as a political action then it can be shown that the two concepts are separated from each other, both at the level of interpretation and action.

Q7. Is it justifiable that the meaning of "politics" has changed among young people in Hungary? Is it justifiable that "interest in public life" and "political interest" are significantly different from the aspect of the perception of the tested age groups?

After clarifying the above question my dissertation focuses on the effect of political participation. Following the approach of Carole Pateman (PATEMAN, 1970) I measure this effect concerning political efficacy of the tested young Hungarians. The second hypothesis of the thesis is based on the assuption of the participatory theory: *if the possibilities for direct participation are widespread, individual skills for democratic participation develop.* I claim that participation in decision-making develops some democratic skills, therefore direct participation has empirically measurable impact on the political participation of individual skills.

Q.8. Based on their own estimation, how much say do young people living in the area have in decisions that affect them? What do they think about what it takes for someone to be a good citizen? What rights and obligations do they held as important for shaping their communities?

Q.9. Is it justifiable by empirical data that the level of political participation in the subregion of Mórahalom is higher than the national average? If so, what are those forms of participation where there is a correlation between participation of young people and the existing mobilization channels that are available for them?

3. About the research process

Results of the series of interviews carried out as part of the research showed that a nationally representative sample of youth based on the selection of Hungarian institutions ensuring the participation of young people is not possible in the Hungarian political environment. However each factor determining youth participation deserved special attention

during the analysis, so it necessited the selection of complex, multi-layered set of cases. The regional concentration operated by the Child and Youth Participatory Model within the Homokhát subregion model prooved to be such a case due to its local traditions, continuous operation and the number operating entities (within the subregion of nine municipalities five has had such an organization). The homogeneous social composition of young people living in the area also suited to meet the research assumptions.

As the first step of the empirical research I've conducted interviews with mayors, youth workers, elected members of municipal youth councils and other representatives of local youth NGOs during the period February to May 2013. The aim of the interview process was to reveal the principles of the Participatory Model of the subregion of Mórahalom and to reveal the practice of the implementation of the principles. Questions focused on the question how the local youth policy action plans are deleveloped and implemented at municipal and subregional level. I intended to make assumptions on the opportunities of young people's participation within the process.

Following the interviews, I've developed the questionnaire of the research. The main topics of the questionnaire followed the topics of the questionnaire of the research done by the Active Youth Hungary Research Group[3]. Some extra questions were elaborated focusing on the special needs of 15-29 year old Hungarians living within the Mórahalom subregion. The questionnaire consisted of thematic blocks with questions concerning interest in public life and interest in politics; membership in organisations and informal attachment to different organisations; political participation and political activity; consumption of political news (online news portals); political values and ideologies and relationship to democracy.

I've elaborated a quota sample on 130 persons , following the annual regional statistics published online by the Central Statistical Office.[4] I've done quota sampling (see Table 1).

The survey had been realised by using a so called hybrid technique:[5] 46 persons (25.5 %) filled in the online questionnaire on the website www.politikagora.hu/kerdoiv, and in 124 persons (74.5 %) were surveyed by using face to face interviews.

Within three months, the online questionnaire was viewed by more than 1,000 young Hungarians living in the subregion. In order to adjust the collected data to the sample quota a personal, face to face query has been conducted in each settlement of the subregion. During

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[3] http://aktivfiatalok.hu/wp-content/uploads/2013/06/Racionaliasn-lazado-hallgatok-_-BCE-Belvedere.pdf
[4] http://www.ksh.hu/nepszamlalas/tablak_teruleti_06
[5] In total, 310 respondents have filled in the questionnaire.

this phase of data collection respondents were chosen with the assistance of subregional and local youth workers.[6]

Table 1.: Quota used for sampling in the Mórahalom subregion

Subregions	man				woman			
J05 Mórahalmi	**15–19**	**20–24**	**25–29**	**Total**	**15–19**	**20–24**	**25–29**	**Total**
Towns								
J05 K05 Mórahalom	5	5	4	14	4	4	5	**13**
Villages								
J05 K05 Ásotthalom	9	4	3	16	4	3	3	**10**
J05 K05 Bordány	3	3	3	9	2	3	3	**8**
J05 K05 Forráskút	2	2	2	6	2	2	2	**6**
J05 K05 Öttömös	1	0	1	2	0	1	0	**1**
J05 K05 Pusztamérges	1	1	1	3	1	1	1	**3**
J05 K05 Ruzsa	2	2	2	6	2	1	2	**5**
J05 K05 Üllés	3	3	3	9	2	2	2	**6**
J05 K05 Zákányszék	2	2	2	6	2	2	3	**7**
Subregion total	**28**	**22**	**21**	**71**	**19**	**19**	**21**	**59**

130

The database contains 175 young people between the ages of 15-29 years (46 online and 124 questionnaires). It was compared to the the annual regional statistics published online by the Central Statistical Office and it was weighted based on two aspects . The weighted sample is representative for the Mórahalom subregion in three dimensions :

• number of inhabitants

• the proportion of men and women within the settlements

• the distibution of gender and age groups (15-19, 20-24, 25-29) within the settlements

For the comparison of my results to national data I did secondary data analysis on the datasets of Youth2000, Youth2004, Youth2008, and Hungarian Youth 2012 research.

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[6] As for the generalizability of the data it is important to note that the survey is not based on a random sample, but on a so-called hybrid sample, where a snowball based online interviewing was completed with a personal quota sampling. The fact that the selection was not based on random sampling, casuses problems for any statistical tests. On the other hand, the composition of the sample is strongly biased towards those young people who are happy to take part in opinion polls (this type of bias is due to the voluntary participation of the respondents). That is why I did not run the statistical tests and therefore I don't show such results within my analysis.

4. The interpretation of the results

Q1.: As for the available structures supporting the participation of young people living in the subregion of Mórahalom, results show extremely heterogeneous conditions. The fragmentation of Hungarian youth policy context also has consequences for the everyday practice of these structures. Although advocacy structures exist in each settlement, when evaluating their practice following the model of Roger Hart, there can be found several examples of decoration (Öttömös, Forráskút , Üllés, Pusztamérges) tokenism (Ruzsa) a settlement where young people are assigned but informed (Mórahalom) and a youth-initiated and directed practice (Bordány) also. Considering this heterogeneity it would be an exaggeration to say that the participatory model creates a uniform practice to ensure equal local youth representation within each settlement of the subregion (see table 2.).

Table 2. Youth structures of the Mórahalom subregion in frame of the model of Roger Hart

Features	Results
Youth-initiated, shared decisions with adults. This happens when projects or programmes are initiated by young people and decision making is shared between young people and adults.	None of the settlements within the subregion
Youth-initiated and directed. This step is when young people initiate and direct a project or programme.	Bordány
Adult-initiated, shared decisions with young people.	None of the settlements within the subregion
Consulted and informed. Happens when young people give advice on projects or programmes designed and run by adults.	Zákányszék, Ásotthalom
Assigned but informed. This is where young people are assigned a specific role and informed about how and why are involved.	Mórahalom
Tokenism. When young people appear to be given a voice, but in fact have little or no choice about what they do or how they participate.	Ruzsa
Decoration. Happens when young people are used to help a cause in a relatively indirect way, although adults do not pretend that the cause cause is	Öttömös, Forráskút, Üllés, Pusztamérges
Manipulation. Happens where adults use young people to support causes and pretend that the causes are inspired by young people.	None of the settlements within the subregion

Source: own estimation

The principle of youth representatives elected by young people with an NGO background have not been put into practice in the majority of the settlements. Local youth organistaions have their elected representatives and legal background in two settlements (Bordány, Ásotthalom). Most youth organisations of the region do not have legal background, therefore they are dependent on their background institutions (e.g. the local government or local

associations of adults). Where these "background institutions," actively cooperate with young people (e.g. Zákányszék), the lack of legal personality does not hamper the independent operation of these organisations and do not obstruct their own financial background.

Q.2.: As for new tools used in contacting with the young people every interviewee has mentioned new tools offered by the Internet. It has also turned out that the social media has a dominant role when keeping contact with young people. Social media replaces former tools for informing young people in all settlements.

Q3.: As for the implementation of youth policy action plans within the Mórahalom subregion I got ambigous results and it not clear whether following the EU accession of Hungary the European youth policy cooperation will lead to sustainable processes in the application and enforcement. On the one hand it is promising that out of the 9 villages of the subregion 8 has adopted a youth policy concept. This indicates that special youth issues had been taken into account on the agenda of the municipalities of the sub-region. However in most cases those concepts are not related to the implementation since the objectives are not put into local youth policy action plans. Therefore it is not clear who is responsible for the implementation for issues concerning youth, and there is no available information about the rights and opportunities of youth representatives. In terms of the policy process it is extremely worrying from the aspect of sustainability that municipalities have not reviewed their former concepts (adopted for 4 years) since 2008.

Q.4.: Concerning the question if locally available youth services and youth advocacy organizations have measurable impact on young people's willingness to participate the research has found that 40 percent of young people tested has had contact with the local youth council, while national data mirrors only 20 percent. This supports the claim that youth organizations of the subregion reach better young people than organisations in other parts of Hungary.

As for the question if it can be justified by empirical data that the political activity of young people within my sample is higher than the national average. Results do not mirror particularly high proportion of very active young people (although it is above the national average), but the proportion of young people rejecting participation is significantly lower than the national average.

Data of the Youth 2008 and Youth2012 research has shown decline of political interest among young people. Within the sub-region this trend can not be identified: the average interest in politics almost 0.4 higher than the national average in 2008, and much higher than the 2012 national figures. This supports the hypothesis that youth advocacy organizations operating within the sub-region have a positive effect on the political interest of young people. If we examine the question in the context of the permanent residence of young people tested, results show that young people claiming to be very interested in politics live exclusively in settlements where local youth governments exist (Ásotthalom, Bordány, Zákányszék). Assumption of existing youth governments having a positive impact on the political interest of young people is supported by the fact that the proportion of young people claiming to be not at all interested in politics is low in these settlements. Results show a positive correlation between the level of political interest and the operation of local youth advocacy organizations.

Q.5.: Although national datas from 2012 show a significant decrease of political interest among young people, regarding the political interest of the studied population of young people there is no sign of the national trend. The average interest in politics within the studies population is much higher, which supports the hypothesis that functioning of youth organizations has a positive impact on the political interest of young people. The breakdown of the results on the permanent residence of the respondents shows that those young people who are very interested can be found in municipalities where local youth council exists (Ásotthalom, Bordány, Zákányszék). The assumption that youth councils have positive impact on the interest of young people in politics is also strenghtened by the correlation that withing these 3 municipalities, the proportion of young people with very low interest is the lowest.

Q.6.: Concerning political participation my results indicate that:
- As for electoral participation although the percentige of young people declairing a clear will to participate is only 27 percent, 2 percent higher than the national figures (25%), the percentage of those who abstain from voting is only 7 percent, 23 percent lower than the national average.
- To the question on different forms of collective political participation respondents had the opportunity to choose from 13 categories and aswer if they have ever participated in any of them. While results of Hungarian Youth 2012 national youth research mirrored that only 2 percent of young Hungarians participate in these forms of political action, my results are significantly higher. Collecting signatures poved to be

the most popular action: every third respondent had already done so , but boycott (28%) and contacting politicians (27 %) were also mentioned by high level of respondents. About a fifth of the respondents (22%) have participated in campaign activities - this might be the effect of youth municipal elections. A relatively high rate of young people have already donated money to an NGO or political party (16%) and a similar proportion of them have acted as an elected officer of an organization. 11 percent of respondents have worn political emblems or buttons and the same proportion took part in spontaneous demonstrations. Although only 2 percent of respondents of youngsters responded affirmatively to the question of being a member of a political organization, loose attachment to the activities of political parties is supported by the fact that 10 percent of the respondents were active in a political party or participated in their events. However, the fact that eight percent of respondents had been a candidate at elections, might be the related to municipal youth election and presumably not primarily to partisan political activity.

First hypothesis

The above indicated results support the first hypothesis of my dissertation that there is a significant correlation between the availability of local channels for youth mobilization and political participation of young people. Based on the results of the first hypothesis, therefore, we can conclude that the principles of youth participation model are heterogenously applied within the settlements of the subregion. However the model has a positive impact on the political participation of the young people living in the subregion. It is however important to note that the the participatory model does not create a coherent model for all settlements within the subregion, and these differences in apllication are also reflected in the political participation of young people.

Q.7.: My research has found difference between the two concepts of "politics" and "public life". The meaning of the word "politics" has changed among the Hungarian youth. The results show that the word politics relates primarily to political parties since 93% of the respondents think that parties can only be associated with the tem politics, and less than 5 per cent thought that the activities of the parties is related to both public life and politics. Similarly, politics is also associated with the word "power" in a high proportion (71%), as well as with the word "interest" (60%), with public funds (61%). The words are closely tied to "politics" according to the young people tested. Those words wich are characteristic to both

politics and public according to the respondents are "citizens" (61%), "competition" (49%), decision (49%) and "common issues" (46%). The concept of public life is linked to words which are close to the everyday experiences of young people but outside the dimensions of the national politics: to the word "community" (67%), and as well as to "local issues" (58%). Based on these results there is a difference in the perception of the meaning of the word "politics" and "public life" among young people under investigation.

The is also a difference in the level of interest in "politics" and interest in "public life". Although the correlation between the two variables proved to be high in this study (r = 0.4), still on a 5-point scale interest in "public life" (2.88) was 0.2 unit higher value than interest in "politics" (2.66) . This suggests that, although the two terms are not clearly separated, there is a diffence in the perception of these concepts among young people.

Q8.: As for results concerning the question how much say do young people living in the area have in decisions that affect them, I found that respondents had great autonomy in their families and their private lives, but but in the context of collective decision-making data has shown a more ambivalent picture. To tell their problems to others 65 percent of the respondent had opportunity. The proportion of those young people who believe that they have no opportunity to influence the press was extremely high (77%), which is in line with qualitative results indicationg that there is a very low support for the participation of young people in media projects. Responses suggest that young people have limited autonomy concerning decision-making in their communities.

As for having a say in public affairs at national level more than eight-tenths of the interviewees said that they have no say which is close to the national average. However, my results show quite a different picture for the attitudes concerning having a say in local public affairs. Nearly sixty percent of the respondents think that they have the possibility to interfere.

Results of the national Youth2008 survey have shown no significant difference in these two aspects, young people claimed to have no say neither at local nor at national level. However my results have shown the correlation between high levels of influence at local level and local organizational activity. From this we can conclude that local youth programs have a positive impact on having a say in local public affairs, but they have almost no impact on having a say in national affaires.

The breakdown of the results on the permanent residence of the respondents underlines the relationship between existing structures for local youth participation the opinions on having a say at local level: those respondents who consider that they have a great opportunity to have a

say in local public affairs live only in settlements where there are youth structures (Ásotthalom, Bordány, Zákányszék) ot at least there where young people are consulted and informed. (Mórahalom).

After the regime change in 1989-90 there was a clear shift in the field of values. In connection with the acceptance of democratic norms and values, I did research based on the standardised questions of the national youth research. The results show higher values compared to the national average in most categories, and the order of preferences is different from that of the national data.

The willingness to follow democratic norms is very high. This is in line with the national data, and this value is seen as the most important factor, more important than any other considerations. However, among the young people tested the importance of shaping their own opinions in peublic affairs exceeds by far the national average, and this value came at second place within their order of preferences,which contradicts the conformist attitudes of young people potrayed by results of former result of national youth studies. This image of their conformism is also shaded by values concerning the impartance of paying their tax contributions. This value is lower than both the result of the 2008 and the 2012 national youth surveys. However it is similarly at third rank within their order of preferences.

As for the acceptance of the participation at national elections as a mandatory norm, I found an ambivalent image among young people under investigation. My results prooved to be higher than the national average in 2012, but compared to the national results of 2008 my results show lower acceptance of this norm, while concerning the order of preference this norm occupies the same space as in national results.

The subregion consist of mostly small villages, and these local communities seem to have effect on the awareness of young people on local issues. Activity in local affairs has more importance for them as for the national average. As for the value solidarity to support of the poor people has more importance for young people tested than for the national average. However it might be the result of the activity of local youth organisations that willingness to participate in voluntary work has much higher results than the national average, and it occupies the the sixth rank in their order of preferences.

At the far end of the preferences we find the acive participation in politics. As mentioned earlier, this might be related to the fact that politics is associated to the activities of the parties. In addition to the negative perception of the parties, this might also be influenced by the fact that in most settlements there are simply no party organizations that leads to the lack of any opportunities to participate in party politics.

Trust in political institutions is also a very important aspect of democratic citizenship. Low or declining confidence level indicates problems of legitimacy of the whole political system.

Among all institutions examined in the level of trust in political parties has been the lowest – 25. This finding is in line with national results recorded earlier.

As for institutions of democratic decision-making, trust in the Government and trust in the National Assembly has been asked in my questionnaire, and the mean values were transformed on a -/+100-ig scale. Although I found more positive perception (-22 and -21) towards these institutions than the result of Hungarian Youth 2012 (-40, -33) research did, trust within these institutions still prooved to be low. Interestingly, political actors standing closer to the everyday life of young people and especially local youth parliaments prooved to have positive image among young people tested.

Compared with the national data I found extremely high confidence in the mayor. The level of confidence in the local government and local youth self-government prooved to be the same. Of all the institutions examined young people tested had the most confidence in the youth mayor.

My research also contained questions about democracy. Responses received to questions about the assessment of a democratic political system testify serious democratic deficit.

Those who are completely satisfied with the performance of Hungarian democracy represent only 1 percent of the sample, the more or less satisfied represent only 19 percent. Half of the respondents (51 percent) are not really satisfied with it, while the proportion of young people not at all happy with the performance of democracy is 29 percent. Based on responses to this question, the vast majority of young people are dissatisfied with the democratic institutions currently operating in Hungary.This result is consistent with the data of Hungarian Youth 2012, with the declining trend of young Hungarians commitment to democracy.

Q.9. In order to answer the question if it is justifiable by empirical data that the level of political participation in the subregion of Mórahalom is higher than the national average, I created a table to compare some decisive factors of political participation (Table 3). When selecting these factors I tried to include all relevant aspects (young people's values, aspects of deliberative, direct and representative democracy, confidence in the decision-makers, interest in politics, electoral participation) but I included only those variables where there are former research results of national youth studies.

Table 3. Summary of the main results

category	Mórahalom subregion	County level	National level
(value) activity in politics	32 %	23 %	34 %
(value) activity in public affairs	57 %	40 %	48 %
(deliberation) blogging about public affairs	45 %	18 %	27 %
(deliberation) has opportunity to have a say in local affairs	9 %	1 %	0 %
(deliberation) has opportunity to have a say in national affairs	3%	<u>1 %</u>	<u>0 %</u>
(trust) trusts the mayor	17 %	- 4 %	- 5 %
The average of interest in politics (1-5 scale)	2,65	2,05	1,8
(direct participation) participates regularly within the activitiy of a loacal youth organisation	30%	<u>7%</u>	<u>7%</u>
(direct participation) participated in a protest	10%	3%	3%
(traditional participation) participation at national elections	25%	16%	23%

Source: where not indicated, data come from Hungarian Youth 2012 Research. The source of <u>underlined data</u> is Youth2008 Research.

Although there are limitations corncerning opportunities to participate in the subregion (see Table 2) still, in terms of political participation, we can conclude that results of the young people tested in the subregion are better than results reflected by county and national data.

Second hypothesis:

Based on the above explained answers, my research got ambivalent results for the second hypothesis of the thesis. According to the assuption of the participatory theory if the possibilities for direct participation are widespread, individual skills for democratic participation develop. I claimed that participation in decision-making develops some democratic skills, therefore direct participation has empirically measurable impact on the political participation of individual skills.

It turned out that young people tested have a limited autonomy in decision-making in their communities.

My research results did not confirm any relationship to the assessment for having a say in public affairs at national level, but it prooved the relationship between local participation structures for young people and having a say in say in local public affairs. Those respondents who consider that they have a great opportunity to have a say in local public affairs live only

in settlements where there are youth structures (Ásotthalom, Bordány, Zákányszék) or at least there where young people are consulted and informed. (Mórahalom).

Results in the area of the values prooved to be better compared to the national average, and also the order of preference of the test values differed (in a positive direction) from those of the national data.

Trust in political institutions was high for political actors standing closer to the everyday life of young people and especially local youth parliaments prooved to have positive image among young people tested. But among institutions responsible for national affairs trust has been not much higher than the national average (e.g. trust in parties – 25. trust in the Government -22, trust in the National Assembly -21), so trust within these institutions still prooved to be low.

Concerning the perception of the performance of the Hungarian democratic political system results testify serious democratic deficit, thereby pointing to the paradoxical situation that more participation could lead to even less commitment to democracy (MOUFFE, 2000).

Conclusory statements

Results of my dissertation do not mirror that the practice of Hungarian youth policy does coordinate the activity of the actors responsible for democratic political socialization. This might raise concerns if it ensures the involvement of young Hungarians into the democratic decision making processes.

While due to the European integration processes there are some synergistic domestic good practices, the Hungarian youth policy continue to be a fragmentated context for support structures for young people's active participation.The youth participation model examined within my dissertation is an exception rather than the a nationwidely spread model. Examining the impact of the objectives of the subregional model it can be seen that the they differ from settlement to settlement therefore they do not mirror the image of an integrated subregional youth policy concept either.

1. At individual level, results of my research have highlighted a potential stress point concerning the sense of freedom in making decisions at individual-level and sense of limitations in making decisions in their communities.

2. While results for youth political participation are better in several villages of the subregion, thus increasing integration within the local society, from a macro-social point of view my results show the worrisome picture that it has little impact on the assessment of politics at national level. In other words, in addition to the above

mentioned gap between the level of autonomy in individual and public decision-making there is another gap between the level of integration at local, community level and those at national level.

3. Results of my research do not justify the conformist attitudes of young people potrayed by results of former result of national youth studies. This together with the assesment of the efficacy of the democratic political system can lead us to assume the presence of a third source of tension. The shortcomings of democratic political socialization also have consequences for the political participation of young people.There might be growing resistance to the existing system, and as part of a kind of counter-culture against the government it can lead to increasing number of forms of action to reject the democratic system as well.

New variables, qualitative methods and a new survey research would be required to see the effects of three above detected sources of tension and obstacles created by the institutions on political participation of young Hungarians to see the matter more clearly.

Recommendations

The result of my research demonstrated that it is appropriate to assess issues related to the participation of young people on a wider scale than before. Trends described by international literature concerning the change of political participation can be measured among young Hungarians also.

Thus, on the basis of my research findings we are witnesses of social change related to the political participation of the Hungarian youth. It is therefore necessary to make a revision of former national scientific points of view on the topic, in particular to the transformation of the concept of political participation among the Hungarian youth, and to changing opportunities and tools for political participation.

Based on the approach of Roger Hart and the common EU objectives revealed to forstering youth participation my dissertation revealed the conditions for political participation of young people in a particular subregion of Hungary. This, I think, gives very important evidence and arguments to involve new aspects next to expalantions centered around attitudes of young people, such as issues of interest, knowledge and skills concerning political participation, and to go beyond the topic by pointing out the social and institutional context in which youth participation takes place.

Relationships emerging from the results of the dissertation give insights to factors that influence youth participation and might serve as important arguments for policy programs aimed at increasing participation of the Hungarian youth as a separate social group through the reform of the institutions.

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