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Active Youth? Trends of Political Participation in East Central Europe

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Political participation is a complex political phenomenon and it is influenced by many factors ranging from the national legal context to individual skills and socio-economic backgrounds. Among all those variables, age has been found to be an essential variable regarding political behaviour. Numerous studies refer to the so-called life-cycle to illustrate the relationship between age and political participation (cf. Nie et al., 1974: 324; Quaranta and Dotti Sani, 2018; Dalton, 2008). The seminal study by Milbrath shows that 'political participation rises gradually with age, reaches its peak in the forties and fifties and gradually declines above sixty' (Milbrath, 1965: 134). Oftentimes, younger cohorts are thought to participate less than older cohorts (e.g. Gallego, 2007; Kriesi, 2008; Loncle et al., 2012; Melo and Stockemer, 2014), as they are less integrated into society, have fewer socio-economic resources and less experience with political participation (Brady et al., 1995).

More generally, major societal changes caused by the development of the internet or globalization have become crucial factors that shape political participation over the last two decades. Globalization offers clear economic opportunities and benefits but comes with substantial social costs that often appear to affect young people disproportionately given their tenuous transitional status within an uncertain and rapidly evolving global context. This development fosters concerns about young people's disengagement from institutional politics and about decline in young people's political engagement. At the same time, there is a scientific discussion about how young people may be switching to other forms of non-traditional and political engagement or civic engagement (Pattie et al., 2004; Quintelier, 2007) and some authors herald young people as creators of sophisticated new forms of participation, especially online (Vromen, 2008; Vromen et al., 2015; 2016). New social movements, especially the Fridays for Future protests, indicate that a new cohort of young people willing to protest might emerge (Streeby, 2018).

The region of East Central Europe is particularly interesting regarding youth participation. Since the end of state socialism in the region in 1989, the scientific debates on regional specifics have focused on the legacy of state socialism. Early debates in the 1990s optimistically expected the newer, supposedly more democratic cohorts – socialized in the late 1980s or later – to become the new basis of democracy, as older cohorts socialized long before 1989 were deemed

'civilizationally incompetent' (Sztompka, 1993: 85); and therefore expected to be less capable to adapt to the new democratic standards.

More than 30 years after the end of state socialism, the picture of youth participation in the region is not as rosy as expected earlier. Studies show that the youth, cohorts socialized after 1989, are not necessarily more democratic than older generations (Oross et al., 2020). This has to do with the fact that several countries in the region stagnated or even regressed in their level of democracy in the past years (Maertz et al., 2020; Lührmann and Lindberg, 2019). This trend applies particularly to Hungary and Poland, two former 'poster boys' of the transition to democracy that increasingly face international criticism regarding growing authoritarian tendencies. However, generally growing authoritarian tendencies and non-democratic practices in the region cannot fully explain why the optimistic perspective at the beginning of the transition has not become fully true.

This assessment is the starting point of the special issue. The goal of this special issue is to contribute to the state of the art of youth participation in East Central Europe and to highlight different regional trends. It aims to commit to the better understanding of social challenges of youth political participation, with a special focus on university students. This thematic issue presents important contributions that explore these phenomena in different countries using various research methods, including qualitative and quantitative techniques.

Several papers of the special issue focus on the analysis of political participation of students. Analysing university students' attitudes is relevant because among social institutions universities are one of the most important socialization agents for democratic education. Many scholars argue that universities have a civic mission to serve as public good and to develop democratic attitudes and skills among students (Kovács et al., 2018). University students are embedded both in the traditional values of their families and in the new ideas of youth organizations, therefore they are very sensitive to societal changes. Two articles of this special issue use data collected by Active Youth in Hungary Research Group[1] via online and face-to-face interviews. Since its inception in 2011, this survey has used the same method to survey a single social cohort, namely students in full-time education, a group who may be considered role models for their generation in Hungary. Additionally, the special issue features papers on Poland, Czechia and Romania.

Regarding the thematic focus of the papers, two contributions of the special issue deal with the influence of demographic characteristics or socio-economic backgrounds on young people in Central and Eastern Europe. The article 'Digitalization and gender differences in political participation among Hungarian university students' analyses the impact of gender on online and offline participation. The paper is based on two rounds of the Active Youth data set (2015 and 2019) and uses latent class analysis to cluster young people regarding their participation activities. The results support previous studies by demonstrating that Hungarian university students are a very active stratum of society displaying

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[1] https://www.researchgate.net/project/Active-Youth-in-Hungary-AYM-Research-Group

above-average online participation. Compared to other countries, however, the share of politically disengaged students is bigger in Hungary indicating that the increasing availability of online participation did not increase participation of all students. Furthermore, the paper found little differences in youth participation regarding demographic characteristics, including gender. The paper 'Moving through and moving away: (Higher) education strategies of Hungarian students' studies the high selectivity of the Hungarian educational system. Young people with a more advantaged family background have higher chances to persist in higher education and are more likely to start postgraduate studies. Moreover, students with higher socioeconomic status are more likely to study abroad and leave the country. The text also relies on the Active Youth data set and demonstrates that the multifaceted inequality in higher education determines the future prospects of Hungarian students and has severe consequences for youths' political culture in Hungary.

Moreover, there are three articles in the special issue that focus on mobilization of young people from different perspectives. The article 'Demobilization processes' investigates how perceived risks predict willingness of university students to participate in protests in an illiberal state that aims to control both parliamentary and street politics. Using binary regression models the paper tests whether socio-economic and political factors shape risk perception and finds that socio-economic status, political attitudes and party preferences significantly predict physical risk perception. Lower social status and dissatisfaction with democracy positively predict the likelihood of physical risks of protest. Moreover, supporters of the party in government seem to perceive police attacks as less likely. Overall, the paper did not find evidence for the statement that perceiving higher risks radicalizes university students and makes them more likely to participate in protests. The article 'Revitalization of social and civic participation in Eastern Europe?' enables readers to better understand the question why young Romanians distrust unions and why they are unable to mobilize young Romanians despite the high level of social mobilization in the country since 2012. The authors explain the lack of interaction between protests and unions with incompatible mobilization frames: taking the example of the reform of the justice system, unions opposed the reform and their main focus was on the pension system and the tax reform while popular protests, on the other hand, were mobilizing almost exclusively around the reform of the justice system. The article 'The mobilization potential of political parties among full-time university students' brings new evidence to understand to what extent political parties are able to mobilize the future intelligentsia of Hungary. Based on national and international datasets (ESS) the article examines the mobilization potential of party organizations from a comparative perspective. While the authors find that only a small group was mobilized by party organizations, they explain that Hungarian parties differ both in their willingness to recruit young students and in their mobilization potential among them. The government party attracts students with career ambitions while extra-parliamentary opposition parties, such as the green-liberal Momentum and the satire party MKKP, attract mainly young students guided by bitterness and willingness to change.

The last three papers in this special issue focus on parties and political movements that are active on the political fringes. 'Why nationalism? Biographies, motives and identities of participants in the Polish nationalist movement' studies the motivations of young Poles for joining the radical (right-wing) nationalist movement All-Polish Youth and National Radical Camp. Using biographical-narrative interviews the article shows how the multifarious interests, values and scenarios of political socialization lead people to nationalist organizations. For some participants activism is an 'ideological way of life', however for others activism is an instrument in their hands shaping political and social environment. The paper 'The nationalist turn in youth culture' also provides deep qualitative analysis of young Hungarian radical right supporters' cultural embeddedness. The study demonstrates that nationalist young people turn away from the 'global youth culture' that they describe as extremely materialist and individualist. Focus group interviews illustrate how mainstream youth culture is deemed as deviant. Moreover, these discourses indicate a traditionalist turn within the radical right culture, which is characterized by the celebration of national traditions, awe of a glorious historical past and 'national pride'. As 'The Czech Pirate Party: A new alternative, not only for the young' shows, the Pirate Party were able to present themselves as a convincing liberal alternative to far-right or populist parties. Their manifesto emphasizes classical liberal political values, like fundamental political rights or transparency of public life. Using survey data, the authors describe the demographic and socio-economic characteristics of Pirate Party voters. According to the results half of the party`s electorate was from the younger generation, especially first-time voters and previous non-voters. The Pirates were able to bring apathetic, disenchanted citizens to the ballot boxes.

The results of the contributions to the special issue display a great level of diversity in East Central Europe, both thematically and geographically. The papers demonstrate that the region is affected by general global trends regarding political participation. Political activities of young people are strongly determined by their socio-economic background, and their norms and values. Additionally, their online participation rates are above average compared to other age groups and new, sometimes extreme parties are capable of mobilizing young people particularly. Established institutions, however, such as unions in Romania, hardly offer frames that can mobilize young people.

At the same time, the special issue shows phenomena that are particular to the region. Parts of the youth there display growing scepticism towards any liberal lifestyle that is strongly linked to a Western dominated liberal mainstream. The perception of liberal democracy as too individualist, too materialist and simply too liberal reflects a regional trend of anti-liberal tendencies and a turning away from liberal democratic norms and values. Some parts of the youth in the region appear to be open to anti-liberal messages from national governments and some even join nationalist movements or groups. Additionally, the growing authoritarian trend in the region impacts on political participation, as young people protesting against the government in Hungary are at a higher risk of experiencing violence by state authorities.

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Digitalization and Gender Differences in Political Participation among Hungarian University Students

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Abstract

Similarly to with the debate in western societies, concern about the disengagement of young people in political life is present in Hungarian politics. Traditional party-based politics is less and less appealing to younger cohorts of Hungarian society. However, empirical evidence supports the claim that university students are the most politically active strata of society, and online political participation has been identified as a potential avenue for connecting young people to politics. The present paper aims to reveal whether the characteristics of those students who are active online differ significantly from the background characteristics of students who take part in offline activities.

In order to describe university students' activity in online forms of participation and assess the chronological trends thereof, the paper uses data that covers the period between 2015 and 2019 – i.e. research rounds three and four of the dataset collected by Active Youth in Hungary Research. We use latent class analysis (LCA) to assess whether individuals who participate most actively in traditional offline activities are also those who are most active in terms of online participation.

The results of the research reveal that distinct groups of university students are drawn to specialize in online versus offline repertoires of political participation, indicating that online political activities are not exclusively the purview of those who are most active in traditional offline activities.

Keywords: Hungarian university students, political participation, gender equality.

1. Introduction

Debates about young people's political participation tend to include the argument that the willingness of the latter to participate in politics is decreasing. There is huge scientific debate about whether young people may be switching to non-traditional forms of political engagement (e.g. direct action) (Norris, 2012) and/or civic engagement (e.g. volunteering) (Pattie et al., 2003; Quintelier, 2007). Some authors herald young people as political innovators and creators of sophisticated new forms of participation, especially online (Coleman, 2006; Vromen, 2008; Vromen et al., 2015; 2016). Research evidence also indicates that young people are taking advantage of technological opportunities to engage with politics in a new way through online means (Oser et al., 2013), but also that this has the potential to reinforce inequalities. In the case of deliberation, most online deliberators are also engaged face-to-face, thus the online environment supplements the traditional deliberative sphere, rather than replaces it (Baek et al., 2012). However, the debate is dominated by studies conducted in Western countries, and most data comes from the United States. Since the socioeconomic stratification of online participation identified in the United States may be less applicable in another context, we undertook research among Hungarian students who live in a country with a multi-party system.

The main goals of the article are twofold. First, we aim to create empirical evidence that increases understanding about changing forms of political participation by measuring the proportion of Hungarian university students that participate in political activities in different ways. Second, we intend to join the scientific debate about the consequences of the political use of the internet by testing the theses of mobilization and reinforcement. According to the former, new information and communication technologies are involving disengaged groups of the population in politics. The latter assumes that the internet does not change existing patterns of political participation, and may actually widen the gaps in participation between advantaged and disadvantaged populations. Do the background characteristics of online activists differ significantly from the background characteristics of offline activists? Is there a gender divide in relation to any of the participation types?

After describing the trends in political activity among Hungarian university students, we use latent class analysis (LCA) to answer the question whether online participation can be empirically identified as a distinctive type of political participation among Hungarian students. In a second step, we run two multinomial regression models to reveal if the social characteristics of online activists differ significantly from the characteristics of offline activists.

2. Changing forms of political participation and trends in Hungarian university students' political activities

The study of changing forms of political participation is one of the key areas of international political science today. As citizens have a wide repertoire of political participation at their disposal, when measuring the willingness of citizens to participate, the theoretical significance of choosing adequate forms of participation is enormous. Given that it is young people in particular who are experimenting with innovation, it is particularly important to consider this aspect when researching the activity of young people. While some traditional forms of participation are regularly included in questionnaires, some new forms are omitted. As a result, the risk is increasing of drawing the wrong conclusion that citizen activity is declining from the fact that some forms of participation have become unpopular. In a book summarizing changes in political participation, Yannis Theocharis and Jan W. van Deth (2017) sought to develop a common denominator for bridging different concepts and approaches. After reviewing earlier theoretical work and the results of several empirical pieces of research, the authors developed a conceptual classification to unify the different forms of measurement (Table 1).

Theocharis and van Deth (2017) classify the first type of political participation as voluntary and non-professional forms of political participation that are within the realm of politics and governance. This category includes making contact with politicians, participating in a political assembly, or working for a political party/candidate, in addition to casting votes. The second category includes activities outside the area of politics and governance, including the signing of petitions, demonstrating, activities undertaken in political action groups, and other forms of creative, expressive protest. The third type of political participation, in the authors' approach, includes volunteer-based forms of action that are tailored to the needs of a particular community, including making charitable donations, volunteering at charity events, and participating in a local community project. The fourth group includes networked forms of political action enabled by digitization, including sharing information and ideas about political issues on social media, commenting on social media, and encouraging citizens to be active about social issues on social media. The fifth category includes forms of participation that enable consumers to express their political opinions, such as buying or boycotting specific products for political or ethical reasons.

**Table 1: Overview of changing forms of political participation**

Conceptual Category	Major specimen of each of these variants	Items used for empirical analyses	Our categorization
Political participation I.	Voting	casting a vote	Electoral participation
	Institutionalized participation	contacting a politician attending a political meeting working for a party or candidate	Traditional/ institutionalized participation
Political participation II.	Protest	signing a petition demonstrating working for a political action group other creative or expressive form	Direct participation
Political participation III.	Volunteering	donating money to a social, humanitarian or charitable organization volunteering in a social, humanitarian or charitable organization volunteering for a community project	Volunteering participation
Political participation IV.	Digitally networked participation	posting or sharing links to political stories on social media commenting on social or political issues on social media encouraging other people to take action	Online participation
Political participation V.	Consumerist participation	boycotting certain products for political or ethical reasons deliberatively buying products for political or ethical reasons	Direct participation

Source: Theocharis and van Deth (2017: 106-107) and authors' own classification.

First, we describe the pattern of political participation of Hungarian university students, which was of particular interest in spring 2019 (see Figure 1). The second most strongly supported form of participation in 2019, as in 2015, was the intention to participate in upcoming parliamentary elections (60 per cent compared to 46 per cent four years earlier). The appreciation of electoral

participation was also confirmed by the fact that support for the activity 'encouraging someone to vote during the campaign' almost doubled compared to four years earlier. Accordingly, students in 2019 may be characterized by their high electoral turnout (i.e. willingness to participate in political activity).

Figure 1: Political participation of young people in different activities, 2015 and 2019 (%)
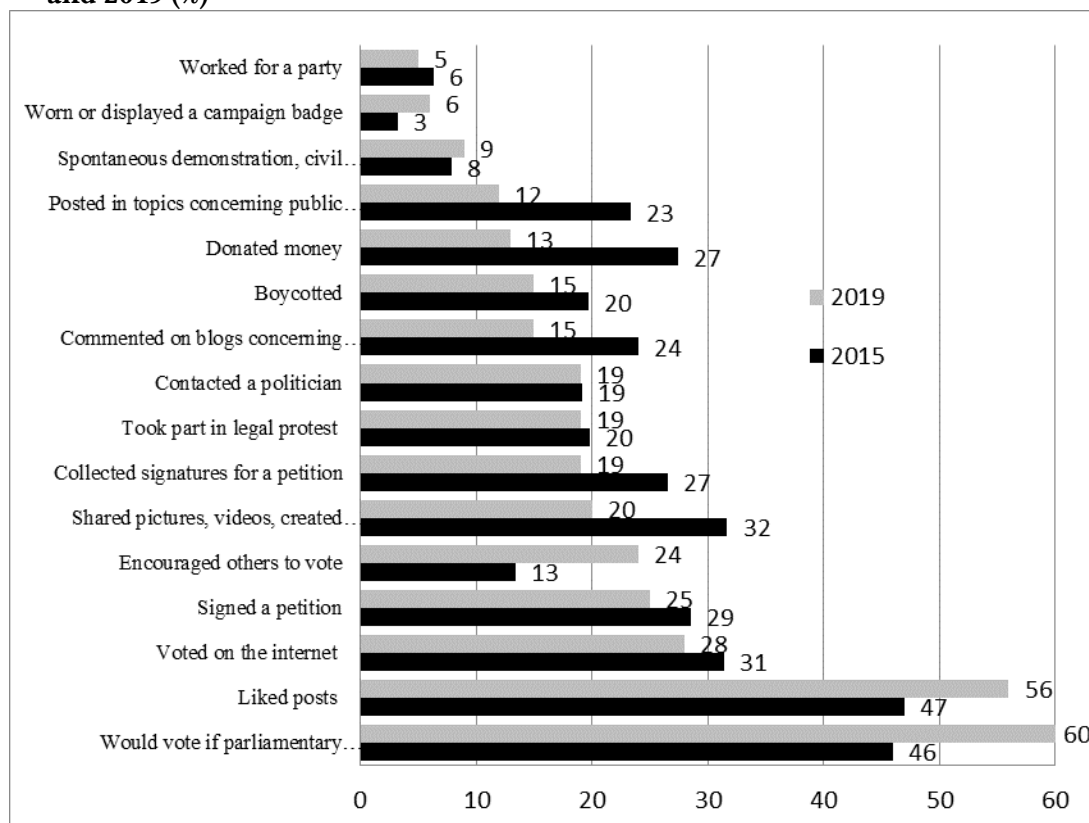
Source: Active Youth in Hungary Research, 2015, 2019.

Compared to 2015, the frequency of other forms of participation decreased – out of the 16 forms of participation we examined, an increase was only found in four forms (+2 per cent), while four stagnated (±2 per cent) and eight decreased (−2 per cent). There was a significant decrease (over 10 percentage points) in 'sharing social events, social issues, images, videos, posts' on community websites, donating money to a non-governmental organization or party, and in 'posting related to public affairs about social issues.' In general, the frequency of online forms of participation seems to have decreased in opposition to that of traditional participation. However, two forms of participation increased in popularity over the four years; namely, 'Liked posts in social media concerning public affairs or social problems' (from 47 per cent in 2015 to 56 per cent in 2019) and 'wearing campaign

badges.' In the latter case, we can see the effect of campaigning for the 2018 parliamentary elections.

In 2019, as in 2015, the least favored forms of participation (under 10 per cent) were joining in spontaneous demonstrations, wearing campaign badges, and doing campaign work. The latter response was selected in both years by 2–3 per cent of students only.

It should also be noted that two classic civic activities (donating money to a non-governmental organization or party, and collecting signatures) were defined as a separate principal component.

Second, we compare the results of the Active Youth Research with two representative Hungarian samples (Oross and Szabó, 2019: 39): Hungarian Youth Research 2016 (HYR 2016),[1] and the Hungarian Election Panel Study 2018 (HELPS 2018/3).[2] In each of the three databases, there were 14 types of participation that can be compared. From these we constructed a simple overall participation rate ('0' = no participation, '14' = active in all 14 forms of participation). The results show that 62 per cent of 18–29-year-olds and 68 per cent of those 29 years old or older were passive, meaning that they did not politically participate in any way. However, the proportion of passive *students* was only 21 per cent. The activity index is the lowest among adult citizens (above 29 years of age), followed by young people (primarily due to the frequency of online participation), while university students are by far the most active in our comparison (Oross and Szabó, 2019: 60).

As Table 1 indicates, we compare the repertoire we used to the classification established by Theocharis and van Deth (2017). We distinguish between traditional and direct offline and online participation. We defined electoral activity as participation in parliamentary and municipal elections, which could apply to the past in a retrospective way ('did you participate in the previous national elections?') and in the future, in a predictive way ('would you participate in national elections this Sunday?'). Offline participation (not directly related to an election) was divided into traditional/institutionalized and direct forms (Szabó and Oross, 2014).

We classified those activities as traditional/institutionalized forms of participation that are related to the political system, and to political actors/organizations. Types of the former included respondents contacting a parliamentarian, local councilor mayor, or another local politician. They also included activity related to political parties, attending political events, campaigning, encouraging voting, and being an elected official in a public, social, or political organization. Finally, we also classified into this category cases in which a respondent donated money to a non-governmental organization or political party, or participated in a student council election.

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[1] In Hungarian Youth Research 2016: the representative sample size was 1418 young people (18–29 years old) – not including university students.
[2] HELPS 2018/3: *Participation, Representation, Partisanship. Hungarian Election Study 2018. NKFI – 119603.* Principal investigator: Szabó, Andrea. The sample size of the third wave was 1300 individuals 29+ years old – excluding university students.

We consider direct participation to be an activity that requires the personal involvement of students and requires a commitment of varying intensity and durability. In terms of the resources required for participation, we distinguish between resource-intensive, face-to-face activities requiring intensive involvement, and those requiring few resources and a low level of involvement. For example, a qualified case of direct participation that requires a lot of resources and face-to-face action is mobilization for political demonstrations. This category includes participation in legal (pre-announced) demonstrations, spontaneous demonstrations, street marching, and carrying badges and emblems with a political message. Other direct forms of participation are collecting signatures, signing paper-based political declarations, referendum initiatives, or petitions.

We are the first in Hungary to study the online participation of university students. In our research we consider online participation to be a form of political activity that only arose after the internet broadened the means of participation, enabling people to take part in both traditional/institutionalized and direct forms of participation. In our questionnaire, we have thus continually expanded the range of online participation items.

This result is a model similar to that of Theocharis and Van Deth's that classifies volunteering and donation into a third category. As domestic data and international literature confirm that civic/volunteering activity is a special, independent form of participation, we investigate not only four, but five categories of activities. However, we do not consider boycotts to be a key element of the 'consumerist' type of participation for Hungarian students. For the time being, we do not see the type of commitment that could lead to students explicitly limiting their consumption-related behavior, especially due to the decline in the frequency of boycotting since 2015 (Gerő and Szabó, 2019). However, we do not claim that there might not be radical change in this field in Hungarian student society in the future.

Similarly to the categorization of Theocharis and Van Deth's, we make a distinction between online and offline participation (see Table 2). In Round 2015 and 2019 of the Active Youth in Hungary Research, alongside online participation we examined five forms of offline direct participation and four forms of traditional/institutionalized participation: electoral participation; direct participation; civic/volunteer participation; and, traditional/institutionalized participation. It is clear from the data (see the end of Table 2) that every second university student has participated in electoral activity, and it is also clear that online forms of participation occur more often than offline activity. However, civic participation is weak (activity index: 0.2). As for non-electoral offline participation, direct forms of participation are more common (the activity index value is high, at 0.94). Similarly to other international findings, traditional party-centered participation is of little interest to Hungarian university students. As for the different categories of political participation, Hungarian students can best be characterized by their engagement in electoral-, online-, and direct forms of participation.

Table 2: Examined forms of political participation (2015 and 2019)

Type	Offline participation				Online participation (5)
	Electoral participation (1)	*Direct participation (5)*	*Civic/volunteer participation (1)*	*Traditional/ institutionalized participation (4)*	
1	Would surely vote if parliamentary elections were to be held this Sunday	Collecting signatures for a petition	Donating money to a political or civil organization or group	Contacting politicians at a national level or representatives in the local government	Liking posts in social media concerning public affairs or social problems
2		Signing of a protest letter or a petition		Taking action in a political party, and/or assisting in its programs*	Voting on the internet in relation to issues concerning public affairs or social problems
3		Legal, public protest (demonstration)		Encouraging someone to vote during the campaign	Sharing pictures, videos, creating events on social media concerning public affairs or social problems
4		Spontaneous, illegal demonstration, civil unrest*		Wearing or displaying a campaign badge/sticker*	Making comments on blogs concerning public affairs, social problems
5		Any type of boycott			Posting on topics concerning public affairs, social problems
mean value of participation	0,53	0,94	0,20	0,46	1,44
no activity	47%	46%	80%	68%	37%

* Due to the low number of elements, this factor is not taken into account in the LCA analysis. Source: Active Youth in Hungary, 2015–2019.

3. Data and methods

Since its inception in 2011, four rounds of Active Youth in Hungary Research have been conducted using the survey method of data gathering from a single social cohort – namely, students in full-time education – to obtain a deeper understanding of their political values, orientations, and activities. By pooling data from the 2015 and 2019 dataset of Active Youth in Hungary Research, we produced a sample of 1,600 students. Variables were analyzed using R software. We ran an LCA model (Oser et al., 2013; Hustinx et al., 2012) that is suitable for clustering types of participation based on a large number of variables (Albert et al., 2017). The LCA identified well-defined, distinct groups of respondents based on participation variables. Thus, the model helped us to distinguish the participation structure of respondents with a high degree of similarity.

Variables with a frequency of 10 percentage points or more were included into the LCA model. Out of 16 forms of political participation (listed in Table 2), 14 were included in the LCA analysis. Two low-frequency forms of participation were omitted.[3]

In the second step we included classic socio-demographic variables, as well as political, ideology-type variables, to analyze the clusters (see Table 3).

Table 3: Control and explanatory variables in the Multinomial Logistic Regression Analysis

variable name	categories	reference category
Gender	0=female; 1=male	1=male
Socioeconomic status (SES)	father's highest level of education and subjective income (1–4) first quarter=low status; fourth quarter=high status	4=highest status
permanent residence	1=village; 2=town; 3= city; 4=capital city	4=capital city
level of education	1=BA, BSc; 2=undivided; 3=MA, MSc; 4=PhD, DLA	4=PhD
area of studies	1=technical and agrarian studies; 2=arts and pedagogy 3=social sciences; 4=medical studies; 5=natural sciences	5=natural sciences
political interest	1=interested; 2=not interested; 3=average level of interest	3=average level of interest
satisfaction with democracy	1=not satisfied; 2=satisfied	2=satisfied
ideology	1=left; 2=right; 3=centrist	3=centrist

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[3] 'Taking action in a political party, and/or assisting in its programs' and 'Worn or displayed a campaign badge/sticker.'

We ran two multinomial regression models. In both, we used the four-cluster variable resulting from the LCA model as the dependent variable, with Online Activist as the reference category. According to Oser et al. (2013), the independent variables in the first run should be socioeconomic status (SES), gender, and age. However, in terms of students, we can speak of individuals of the same or nearly identical age. In fact, 88 percent of the sample students were born between 1990 and 1998. Therefore, we changed the independent variable structure of the original model. The socioeconomic status (SES) variable was transformed into a variable derived from the father's level of education and the subjective income variable. In Hungary, an important indicator of social inequality is the type of permanent residence, so this variable was also included into our model. We also included two special student-status-related variables: level of education (BA, MA, PhD), and area of studies (e.g. social sciences, sciences, etc.). In the second run, we included political interest, satisfaction with the way democracy works, and an ideological variable (self-positioning on the classic left-right scale). By including these variables, we aimed to examine whether there is a significant difference in political thinking between members of different clusters.

4. Results

### 4.1 Latent Class Analysis findings

The first step in analyzing an LCA model is determining the optimal number of clusters. Based on the various statistical indicators included in Table 4 and Figure 2 – BIC statistics, statistics, and CAIC statistics – it can be seen that the values decrease until Model 4, or in the case of ABIC statistics, the values stagnate. We identified a breakpoint here because BIC and CAIC values started to increase from the five-cluster solution onwards. Table 3 shows the weight of each variable within the four-cluster model.

Table 3: Latent Class Analysis (LCA) model statistics for participation behavior

Model	log_likelihood	BIC	ABIC	CAIC	likelihood_ratio
3 cluster	-10537.05	21398.72	21258.94	21442.72	3406.753
4 cluster	-10407.60	21250.48	21063.05	21309.48	3147.848
5 cluster	-10374.82	21295.60	21060.51	21369.60	3082.299
6 cluster	-10342.81	21342.24	21059.51	21431.24	3018.280
7 cluster	-10317.44	21402.17	21071.79	21506.17	2967.543
8 cluster	-10295.26	21468.47	21090.43	21587.47	2923.176

Source: Active Youth in Hungary, 2015–2019.
Considering Table 4 and Figure 2, we decided to choose four clusters.

Figure 2: Latent Class Analysis (LCA) model FIT plot
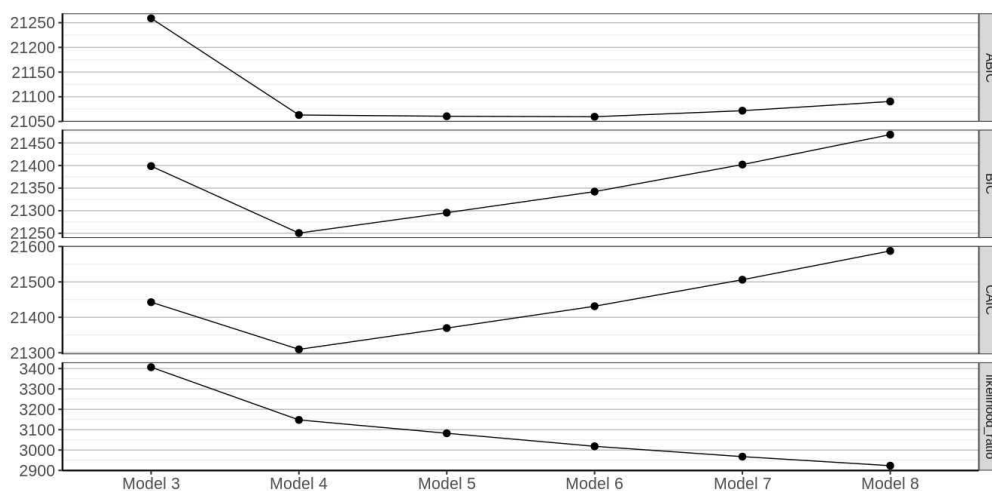
Source: Active Youth in Hungary, 2015–2019.

According to the LCA analysis, the group containing the most Hungarian students (52 per cent) is the 'Disengaged' group. The strongest variable in the cluster is participation in parliamentary elections this Sunday (0.409). However, none of the other forms of participation reaches more than 0.5 points. Members of this group do not participate in politics much – at most in parliamentary elections.

Members of the second-largest cluster (20 per cent) are called 'Contactors.'[4] In this cluster, we identify those forms of participation (with a weight of above 0.5) that require a low level of personal involvement and minimal cost in terms of time, money and commitment. These factors include 'intend to participate in the elections' (0.762), signing a protest letter (0.592), and voting on the internet about public affairs or social problems (0.527). Thus, 20 per cent of respondents are clustered due to a mix of low involvement and low-commitment-driven forms of online and direct participation.

The third cluster is named 'Online Activists,' and consists of 19 per cent of all respondents. The two most important types of participation in the cluster happen in an online space: liking posts on social media (0.772) and sharing pictures and videos and creating events on social media concerning public affairs and social problems (0.712). It is difficult to interpret the level of personal involvement in the case of 'liking' posts, but this is more evident in the case of sharing in the online world, which is an integral and even decisive part of student life (Székely and Aczél, 2018). When an individual shares a public image or a post, most of their online acquaintances will become aware of their public interest, and, if relevant, their political affiliation. That is, such an act may even have consequences. It is

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[4] Based on evidence presented in an article by Oser et al. (2013), this cluster is also distinct in the US population.

interesting that among the four categories of participation (electoral participation, direct participation, traditional participation, and online participation), only online participation emerges as a standalone cluster based on the LCA analysis.

Finally, the smallest cluster, involving 9 percent of the total student population, is made up of 'Omnivores.' Almost all forms of participation in this cluster have a weight of above 0.5. The students classified herein are distinguishable for their political participation and are likely to have strong ideological commitment, expressed through various channels of participation (online and offline). They are likely to take part in activities that require high levels of personal engagement, such as going to a demonstration, participating in online activities, and distributing likes. Out of the 14 forms of participation we examined, only 4 have a low probability (below 0.5) for members of this group: the latter individuals are not likely to take part in illegal or spontaneous demonstrations; in civil unrest; to donate money to a political organization or group; or to contact politicians. For the latter form of participation, however, the value reaches 0.492 points, which is just at the limit of significance.

Table 4: Latent Class Analysis (LCA) model fit statistics for participation behavior (four clusters)

| Forms of political participation	Form of political participation	Cluster 1 Disengaged	Cluster 2 Online Activists	Cluster 3 Contactors	Cluster 4 Omnivores
direct participation	Collecting signatures	0.126	0.229	0.393	0.395
	Signing a protest letter	0.085	0.197	**0.592**	**0.686**
	Legal, public protesting	0.044	0.156	0.391	**0.638**
	Illegal protesting	0.017	0.047	0.161	0.335
	Boycotting	0.071	0.198	0.247	**0.503**
traditional participation	Contacting politicians	0.066	0.174	0.277	0.492
	Encouraging someone to vote	0.044	0.123	0.426	**0.539**
volunteer participation	Donating money	0.138	0.246	0.239	0.388
online participation	Liking posts	0.254	**0.772**	**0.662**	**1.000**
	Voting on the internet	0.087	0.379	**0.527**	**0.711**
	Sharing pictures and videos	0.003	**0.712**	0.089	**1.000**
	Making comments	0.036	0.390	0.151	**0.731**
	Posted	0.000	0.481	0.010	**0.867**
electoral participation	Sure to vote	0.409	0.461	**0.762**	**0.827**
Number		831	306	322	141
%		52	19	20	9

Source: Active Youth in Hungary, 2015–2019.

Direct participation and electoral participation are important (+0.5 points) among Contactors and Omnivores, but traditional/institutionalized participation appears only within the Omnivores cluster. Thus, traditional/institutionalized forms of participation appear to be considered of minimal importance and become the terrain of politically highly involved Hungarian university students. Electoral participation reaches a value of 0.4 even among Disengaged students, therefore has a non-negligible role, whereas the activity of volunteer participation is not at all important for any LCA cluster.

Online participation is an important form of participation for all clusters except the Disengaged cluster. An important result of this is that participation in different types of offline activities – direct traditional activity and volunteering – does not form a separate cluster.

The LCA model thus shows four distinct types of student participation that can be understood as an ordinal scale. It ranges from passive, aloof behavior to full involvement and activism, with two intermediate forms. As a result of the LCA, it can be stated that online participation is an independent type of activism engaged in by Hungarian students. Therefore, our research evidence confirms our first hypothesis.

Before doing a regression analysis, we used descriptive statistical tools to describe the characteristics of different clusters (see Figure 3).

Figure 3: Distribution of clusters based on gender and participation index
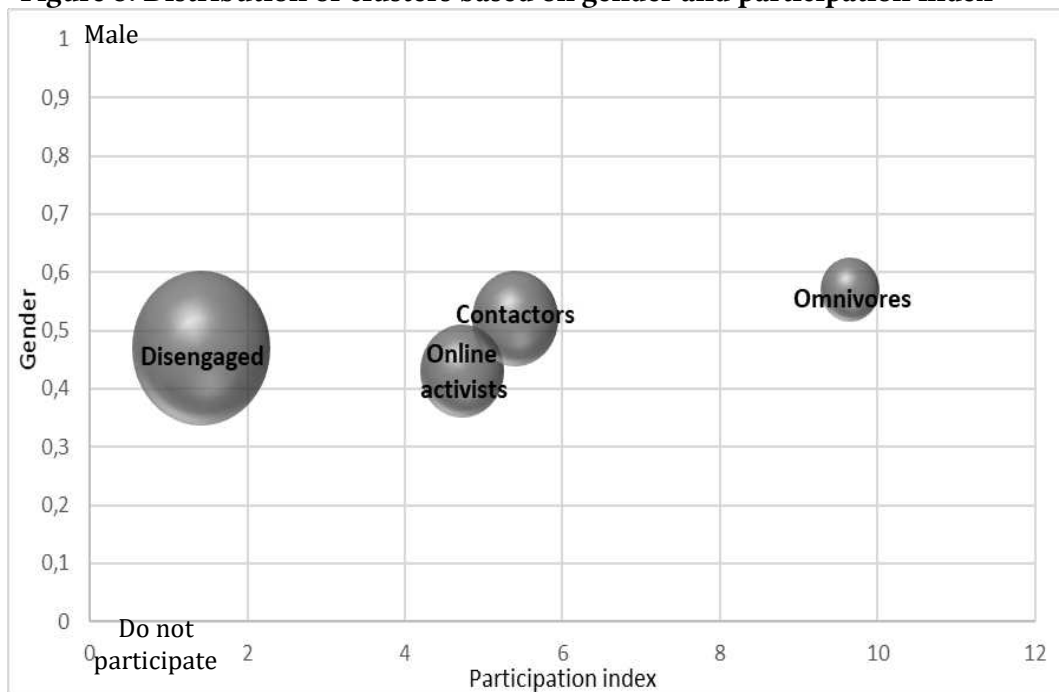
Source: Active Youth in Hungary, 2015–2019.

Figure 3 draws attention to several interesting factors in relation to our research questions. As the figure shows, a gender gap is detectable among the participation clusters. From the perspective of gender, 53 per cent of female students belong to the Disengaged group, 21 percent are Online Activists, 19 per cent are Contactors, and 7 per cent are Omnivores. That is, the higher the level of involvement, the lower the proportion of female students.

In contrast, men are less well represented within the Disengaged and Online activist clusters, but appear in greater proportions among the Contactors (22 per cent) and Omnivores (10 per cent). In parallel, the differences appear to be more significant based on the distribution of clusters: 57 per cent of the Online activists and 53 per cent of Disengaged are female students, compared to 43 per cent for Omnivores and 47 per cent for Contactors. These results are statistically significant, indicating variation in participation according to gender (Pearson Chi-Square = 9.792; Sig = 0.020, Cramers'V = 0.078).

However, there is no statistically significant difference among different clusters of students based on place of residence and socioeconomic status. Among the special, student-specific variables, the level of education and the area of studies segment the population. The data suggest that the fewer years students spend in education, the more they are overrepresented within the Disengaged and Online Activists cluster.

On the basis of the area of studies, students of humanities, the social sciences, and economics are the most active groups. This finding is most notable regarding the Disengaged cluster, in which the proportion of students of engineering and IT services training is 59 per cent, but only 45 per cent of students of humanities and 51 per cent of those involved in the social sciences. The latter two groups of students are overrepresented within the Omnivores cluster (11 per cent and 10 per cent, respectively). In addition, students of humanities are significantly over-represented (26 per cent) in the Online activist group compared to their weight in the sample (21 per cent). Students of science are also overrepresented among the Online Activists.

To sum up, out of the four clusters created by LCA analysis, within the cluster of Disengaged younger students, women, BA students, and students studying engineering and IT are overrepresented. Online Activists are also mostly women, and students of liberal arts, while students of science are overrepresented among them. The proportion of men within the cluster of Contactors is high, and students of medicine and health care are overrepresented within the group. Finally, men, graduates, and students of humanities and social sciences are significantly overrepresented among the most active group, the Omnivores.

The results of the descriptive statistics suggest that different forms of participation (direct participation, traditional participation, volunteer participation, online participation, and electoral participation) and inactivity result in clearly defined participation clusters. The higher the level of personal involvement (i.e. the higher the 'price' of participation), the smaller the number of participants. The size of each cluster changes accordingly: the largest is the passive, Disengaged cluster; the smallest is the cluster of Omnivores.

Traditional forms of participation – i.e. those that are strongly tied to main political actors such as political parties – are exclusive in nature and the terrain of the students most committed to political participation. Another important lesson from the results is that the most favorable terrain for female student involvement is the online space, where the cost of involvement is lower. These results indicate that political participation, as Inglehart and Norris (2003) and Hustinx et al. (2012) point out, is higher among men, including among college students.

4.2 Stratification of participation types

In the second part of the analysis, we use multinomial logistic regression modeling to examine what sociological components distinguish those students who are active only in online participation from those in other clusters, and test whether there is a gender divide between them.

In the regression model, we compare members of other clusters with Online Activists (N = 306). The independent variables are gender, socioeconomic status, place of residence, level of education, and study area.

As indicated in Table 5, the most important result of the regression model[5] is the fact that the influence of the status variables we included on the individual clusters is small. There is only one socioeconomic variable in the whole model that shows significant correlation, and that is gender. According to Table 5, female students are less likely to be Contactors and Activists than Online Activists. However, for the cluster of Disengaged students there is no such statistical relationship. So, it is much more likely that Contactors and Activists will be male students than Online Activists.

Type of settlement, socioeconomic status, level of education, and area of studies do not affect the clustering outcomes.

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[5] The multinomial logistic regression shows very low Pseudo R-Square values, whether Nagelkerke or Cox or Snell R-Square.

Table 5: Stratification of participation types: Multinomial logistic regression analysis[6]

* p<0,05 ** p≤0,01 ***p≤0,001	Disengaged			Contactors			Omnivores		
	B	Wald	Exp(B)	B	Wald	Exp(B)	B	Wald	Exp(B)
Female	-.034	.052	.967	-.405*	5.403	.667	-.706***	10.226	.494
Type of settlement[1]									
village	-.353	2.894	.703	-.297	1.451	.743	.043	.018	1.044
town	-.194	1.014	.824	-.252	1.214	.777	-.163	.289	.850
city	-.258	1.750	.773	-.179	.614	.836	.158	.291	1.171
SES[2]									
First quarter	-.162	.672	.850	-.067	.078	.935	.477	2.565	1.612
Second quarter	-.071	.138	.931	.095	.175	1.100	.046	.023	1.047
Third quarter	.058	.072	1.060	.205	.637	1.227	.189	.310	1.208
education[3]									
undivided	-.358	.536	.699	-.636	1.459	.529	-.808	1.745	.446
BA, BSc	.088	.037	1.091	-.619	1.590	.539	-1.003	3.134	.367
MA, MSc	.024	.002	1.024	-.242	.201	.785	-.507	.657	.602
area of studies[4]									
engineering	.368	1.986	1.445	.273	.711	1.315	.054	.016	1.056
liberal arts	-.211	.607	.809	.227	.468	1.255	.518	1.488	1.679
social sciences	.224	.726	1.252	.412	1.610	1.509	.714	2.967	2.043
medical studies	.390	1.439	1.476	.692	3.170	1.997	.599	1.406	1.820
Intercept	1.081*	4.608		.620	1.255		-.184	.079	
Nagelkerke R²	0,052								
Cox and Snell R²	0,047								

Reference category: Online Activists.

1 Reference category: capital city (Budapest)

2 Reference category: Highest (fourth) quarter

3 Reference category: PhD

4 Reference category: science

An important finding is that there is a gender gap in the participation structure of Hungarian students: female students are less active, or are active online at most. The online space seems to offer greater opportunities to female students in Hungary, a result that is consistent with earlier findings (Inglehart and Norris, 2003), and especially with the finding that 'male students are significantly more likely to participate in an omnivorous way [...] and women feel more attracted to a more informal and monitorial repertoire of participation' (Hustinx et al., 2012: 111.)

In our second model we included political and ideological variables. These are political interest, satisfaction with democracy, and the classic left-right scale. The reference value for both the political interest and the left-to-job scale was the average value or the center position. For the dependent variable, the reference cluster was the group of Online Activists.

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[6] The model is based on Oser et al. (2013: 97).

Based on Table 6 (below), the fit of the model is significantly better than that of the previous model.[7] Thus, political, ideological-type variables explain belonging to individual clusters to a much greater extent than socioeconomic variables. The effect of gender in this new model disappears. For those new variables that have a strong effect, see Table 6.

Compared to the Online Activists cluster, the likelihood of being classified into the Disengaged cluster is high (Exp (B) = 2.021) if the student is not interested in politics. But, if interested, the chance of not entering that cluster is high (Exp (B) =0.585). Students with a left-wing attitude are also less likely[8] to be included in the cluster of Disengaged students. Based on these results, compared to Online Activists, the Disengaged cluster primarily contains students with little interest in political issues who position themselves at the center of the ideological scale.

There is only one significant effect regarding the cluster of Contactors. Compared to Online Activists, the more dissatisfied a student is with the functioning of democracy in Hungary, the more likely they are to be included in this cluster (Exp (B) = 1.579).

Finally, the chances of being included in the Omnivores cluster is greater among those who are interested in politics (Exp (B) = 3.998) and dissatisfied with the way democracy works in Hungary (Exp (B) = 1.582)[9]. Not surprisingly, compared to Online Activists, Omnivores are much more involved in politics.

Table 6: Stratification of participation types: Multinomial logistic regression analysis

* p<0,05 ** p≤0,01 ***p≤0,001	Disengaged			Contactors			Omnivores		
	B	Wald	Exp(B)	B	Wald	Exp(B)	B	Wald	Exp(B)
Female	-.245	2.935	.783	-.292	3.105	.747	-.385	3.171	.681
Political interest[1]									
disinterest	.703***	16.963	2.021	-.288	1.739	.750	-.705	3.141	.494
interest	-.537***	8.768	.585	.331	2.871	1.393	1.386***	25.076	3.998
Dissatisfied with democracy	-.040	.078	.961	.457**	7.373	1.579	.459*	4.219	1.582
Left–right scale[2]									
left	-.981***	25.207	.375	-.255	1.214	.775	.290	.869	1.337
right	-.067	.062	.935	.208	.448	1.231	-.548	1.307	.578
Intercept	1.633***	45.734		.048	.028	.747	-1.676***	16.419	.681
Nagelkerke R²	0.226								
Cox and Snell R²	0.205								

Reference category: Online Activists.

1 Reference category: Moderately interested.

2 Reference category: Centrist position.

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[7] This is indicated by a multiple of Nagelkerke R2 and Cox and Snell R2 (0.226 instead of 0.052).

[8] Wald index or Exp (B) value (.375).

[9] While the effect is not significant, it is noteworthy that the Activists cluster is more likely to contain left-wing students.

We also know from Table 5 that male students are more likely to be included in this cluster. Thus, there is little difference between the clusters in terms of social background and composition, but from a political, ideological point of view, we can speak of the clusters having different characters.

Overall, according to the second multinomial regression model, Online Activists are more interested in politics than Disengaged ones, but much less interested then Contactors and Activists. The satisfaction of the former with democracy is as high as for Disengaged students, and they are much more satisfied than Contactors and Activists. Finally, according to the left-right scale, Disengaged individuals are more left-wing, with no significant difference in this respect to the other two clusters.

Overall, confirming previous findings in the literature, a key factor in political participation is found to be interest in politics. Low political interest results in passivity, while a high level of interest promotes involvement.

5. Conclusions

Our main goal was to assess the trends in Hungarian university students' political participation over time, taking into account the latest results about changing forms of political participation (Theocharis and van Deth 2017). Whereas the level of political participation of Hungarian society is generally low (Róbert and Szabó, 2017), a distinguishable youth group – university students – are the exception, and perhaps even represent an encouraging sign (Oross and Szabó, 2018). In our study, we examined the political participation of Hungarian students and set up political participation groups using LCA analysis. Beyond creating empirical evidence about changing forms of political participation among university students, we also tested the consequences of the political use of the internet.

In terms of analyzing political participation trends among Hungarian university students, we found that every second university student participated in electoral activity, while in relation to non-electoral offline participation, direct forms of action were the most common (with an activity index value as high as 0.94 points). Traditional, party-related forms of participation and civic participation are of little interest to students. These results confirm the fact that university students are a very politically active strata of Hungarian society. It also became clear that online forms of participation are much more likely than offline activity. Therefore, it is worth examining online participation in more detail.

Our LCA model helps us distinguish four clusters: Disengaged, Contractors, Omnivores, and Online Activists may be classified as separate groups of students. Compared to earlier results (Hustinx et al., 2012), the cluster of Disengaged students is much bigger among Hungarian students, and there is no sign of classic volunteers, humanitarian citizens, or monitorial citizens. Unlike results based on data from the US population (Oser et al., 2013) offline activists do not represent a separate cluster among Hungarian students, since the fourth group (that we called 'Omnivores') consists of students involved in direct-, online-, and electoral forms of participation, thereby combining those forms in a complex way.

The results of LCA analysis support the thesis of reinforcement. Similarly to our previous findings and results of international studies about this topic, we found that the online space did not represent new opportunities for democratization for the entire student community. As for SES, similarly to earlier research (Oser et al., 2013), our results also confirm that online participation does not narrow the participation gap. However, from a political, ideological point of view, we can speak of the existence of clusters of a different character: those students who are more dissatisfied with the functioning of democracy in Hungary are more likely to become Contractors, whereas the chance of being included in the Omnivores cluster is higher among those who are interested in politics and dissatisfied with the way democracy works in Hungary.

In our study, we examined the issue of gender inequality in political participation. There is a consensus in the literature that political participation is fundamentally male-centered. However, it is not evident whether the online space may balance the inequalities that still exist between the political participation of men and women. From an examination of the participation patterns of Hungarian students, we did not obtain completely unambiguous results. We found little difference between the clusters in terms of social background. It seems that students who are already politically active appear in the online space, but some groups, especially women, become activated.

The reason for the lack of explanatory power of the social status of individual students is probably that Hungarian student society is comprised of a fundamentally homogeneous group of middle-class individuals (the latter term being widely interpreted). Students of a lower-status cannot enter higher education, while the children of the social elite often do not enter Hungarian higher education as they study abroad.

One limitation of our study is that we analyzed a homogenous group in Hungarian society; namely, university students. Future research might help us to understand how university students differ from Hungarian youth more generally, or from the wider population. As little comparative data has been systematically collected about the Central European youth population, further research is needed to enable the study of the topic from a Central European comparative perspective. Another avenue of research could be the impact of the hybridization of the Hungarian political system (Enyedi, 2016; Bozóki and Hegedűs, 2017; Bogaards, 2018) on young citizens' participation patterns. Based on Morlino (2009), it can be assumed that in hybrid regimes the independent, autonomous participation of citizens is low, although electoral participation can grow when this is encouraged by political actors because it can give such systems a huge surplus of legitimacy (Petrov, Lipman and Hale, 2013). Our results indicate that even Disengaged Hungarian university students strongly participate in electoral activity, which might be one indicator of such an impact, but further research is needed to understand the matter more clearly.

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RITA HORDÓSY AND ELEONÓRA SZANYI-F. *

Moving Through and Moving Away: (Higher) Education Strategies of Hungarian Students

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Abstract

The existence of persistent and entrenched inequalities within the Hungarian education system is revealed in international comparison, thereby highlighting the strong link between students' socio-economic background and educational outcomes. University entry and progression are patterned on student background, with a lack of systematic and robust support for disadvantaged students. Drawing on two rounds of the Active Youth survey of full-time university students (in 2015 and in 2019), this paper explores the diverse educational and career strategies of young people. After giving an overview of tertiary participation in relation to socio-economic background, it explores the financial experiences of university students, pointing to the related difficulties and mitigation strategies. The paper also looks at future migration plans, including their aim, planned duration, and key push and pull factors. The results point to social closure, along with large differences in student experiences throughout university, with international student mobility remaining the privilege of more advantaged students. The lack of equitable student pathways into, through, and beyond Hungarian higher education correspond to several policy areas. One conclusion is that the financial support system needs to be made more effective through better targeting and the provision of sufficient funding for students in need.[1]

Keywords: *Hungary; Inequalities in higher education; International student mobility; Career strategies.*

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1. Introduction

The current generation of university students in Central Eastern Europe (CEE), including in Hungary, were born a decade after the transition from a planned economy to a market system. They were around nine to ten years old when the global economic crash of 2008 happened, potentially impacting them and their families to a serious extent (Medgyesi, 2019). Further, they grew up in a borderless Europe, given that Hungary joined the European Union (EU) in 2004 and the Schengen Area[2] in 2007. Owing to transnational cooperation, thousands of university students have become internationally mobile for a part or all of their degrees, primarily via the Erasmus program (EU, 2017; Neumann, 2019). For this generation of students, global connectedness is taken for granted, given that they are likely to have joined national (such as the now defunct iWIW) or international social media networks and have been able to enjoy a wide variety of online films, music, and news (Daily News Hungary, 2014).

Little has changed, however, in relation to the opportunities of this generation of young people growing up in Hungary. As successive rounds of international student assessments have shown, family background has a profound impact on educational outcomes (OECD, 2016; OECD, 2019), resulting in a persistent and large gap between students with the highest and the lowest economic, social, and cultural status. Similarly, university entry, progression, and outcomes are patterned on student background, with a lack of systematic and robust support for disadvantaged students (Fehérvári et al., 2016). Róbert (2019) suggests that patterns of inter-generational mobility show the strong impact of parental education on outcomes, and points at consistently low levels of mobility. Arguments for social mobility – in which more equitable access to higher and / or lifelong education plays a crucial role – range from the need for human flourishing to the realization of common social good. A 'broken social elevator' has serious social and political consequences, undermining social cohesion and reducing life satisfaction (OECD, 2018b). Further, arguments for social mobility are also rooted in economic factors, such as claimed in a recent World Economic Forum (2020: 11) report, suggesting that '[...] low levels of equality of opportunity may act as a magnifier of the negative impact of income inequalities on the rate of economic growth. Low social mobility entrenches those inequalities and acts as a drag on economic growth'.

This paper extends the literature on the diverse educational and career strategies of young Hungarian people from different socio-economic backgrounds, pointing to inequalities in university experience and international mobility. Drawing on two rounds of the Active Youth secondary dataset that surveyed full-time university students, it looks at the educational pathways through Hungarian universities in 2015 and in 2019. First, it sets out to give an overview of tertiary participation with regard to university level and type of study area along familial

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[2] Those crossing the internal borders of this area within the European Union are not required to go through border checks.

background. Second, it explores the financial experiences of being a university student, pointing to the difficulties some face in budgeting for accommodation costs and general living expenses. This often results in the need to take on a substantial amount of part-time work, hindering studying. Finally, given the increase in the proportion of the country's population living in other EU Member States, the paper looks at the potential future migration strategies of students, including their aim, planned duration, and key push and pull factors.

Taken together, the results presented here point to social closure rather than decreasing inequalities, along with large differences in student experiences at university, and international student mobility remaining the privilege of more advantaged students. The educational inequalities explored in this paper indicate the need for urgent change in university financing and student support schemes to create a fairer and more equitable university system. Beyond the economic argument for a highly educated workforce that contributes more in tax, as well as broader societal benefits through better health and higher levels of democratic participation, the moral argument of fairness is a key component of the struggle for equity in university access, participation, and progression.

2. Literature review

The need for broader skillsets and capabilities that help individuals to adapt and relate to a computerized world (Bakhshi et al., 2017; OECD, 2018a), compounded with the issue of credential inflation (Collins, 1979), mean that school-related preferences are increasingly for a more generic education that facilitates potential university progression (Marginson, 2016). Obtaining a university diploma yields substantive personal advantages, such as a reduced risk of unemployment, the possibility of a substantive wage premium, and general improvements in mental and physical health (Lochner, 2011), whilst wider society is a net beneficiary too (Marginson, 2006; 2016). The Hungarian higher education system is similar to that of the Germanic countries, and currently operates through three different types of institutions. First, universities have degree-awarding powers at Bachelor, Masters and PhD levels; second, universities of applied sciences were transformed from former colleges following the Higher Education Act of 2011 and can now award BA and MA degrees; and third, colleges focus on delivering BA programs and short-cycle higher education qualifications (Eurydice, 2019; Kováts, 2016). Similarly to other CEE countries, in Hungary the rate of enrolment in tertiary education has grown substantially over the past decades to create a high-participation system (Marginson, 2016; Temesi, 2016). The expansion of higher education was initially seen at those institutions with a strong vocational focus, followed by institutions with a more academic focus (Bukodi and Róbert, 2008). Whereas in 2000 the proportion of 30–34 year olds who had completed tertiary education (ISCED level 5–8) was 14.8 per cent, this had grown to 26.1 per cent in 2010, and to 33.7 per cent by 2018, albeit having stagnated for the five years previous to this (Eurostat, 2019b), due to the low entry rates of those with matriculation exams, therefore eligible to attend (Nyüsti, 2018). This review looks

at the social dimensions of higher education, as well as financial and budgeting issues related to university experience, concluding with a discussion of post-graduate progression and international mobility of Hungarian students.

2.1 The social dimensions of higher education

The Bologna declaration of 1999 was designed to create comparable degrees in both the BA and MA degree cycles across the 48 countries that signed up to the related policy and practice changes coming under the aegis of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) umbrella. The process of the non-binding harmonization of the EHEA is seen by Corbett and Henkel (2013) as a political project, focused on instrumental aspects such as increasing competitiveness and employability, whilst also asserting the principles of academic freedom and autonomy, respecting diversity, and fostering trans-national cooperation. The social dimensions of higher education are linked to both the economic and the societal outcomes of education: 'widening access to quality higher education is viewed as a precondition for societal progress and economic development' (EHEA, 2019). These dimensions of higher education (HE) were elements of early meetings during the formation of the EHEA (Fehérvári et al., 2016) However, Usher (2015) argues that, beyond 'rhetorical nods', the EHEA has not been substantially developed due to potential policy changes related to equity that are the purview of nation states. Nonetheless, work on equity indicators and regular reporting has been ongoing (see, for example, European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice, 2015; 2018), despite differences in conceptualizing access-related factors and the resultant problem of comparability (Usher, 2015).

The key socio-economic characteristics observed as regards the social dimension of higher education are the impact of parental education on participation; the progression of students from an immigrant background; and gender equity. These aspects are generally compared using trans-national comparative surveys, such as the EuroStudent study (Orr and Mishra, 2015). A wider set of background characteristics includes parental occupation; disability; age; socio-economic background; and ethnic, cultural, and linguistic minority status (European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice, 2015; 2018; Usher, 2015). Beyond comparing national higher education regimes on the basis of these characteristics, research has also explored some of the key reasons for the difference in admission rates and the variety of the policy environment. For instance, Orr et al (2019) looked at the diversity of admissions systems across Europe, showing how school systems with streaming are problematic from an equity perspective, and proposed that decision points that could lead to the abandonment of HE should be encountered as late as possible.

Recent work by Fehérvári and colleagues (2016) on the social dimensions of Hungarian HE first reviews the secondary data sources regarding inequalities, and second identifies the turning points in educational pathways. The authors analyze the issue from the viewpoint of the most vulnerable groups, such as the socio-economically disadvantaged, Roma, and disabled students, but they also reflect on

the circumstances of students who have young children, as well as those from the Hungarian minority communities in neighboring countries. The study evaluates four key areas of student life, including the length and the prolongation of university studies; postgraduate access – as the proportion of students entering MA programs –; international student mobility; and labor market outcomes (Fehérvári, et al. 2016). The work provides an in-depth analysis of the support afforded to students. For example, to increase access, students from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds, those with disabilities, and students with young children can receive extra points on their applications. Fehérvári and colleagues (2016) identify the latter provision in aiding retention as learning support for students with disabilities. Other sources of support include means-tested bursaries and non-means-tested scholarships for socio-economically disadvantaged students.

As suggested by Nyüsti (2012; 2018) as well as Fehérvári and colleagues (2016), socio-economically disadvantaged students are less likely to attend university, more likely to drop out if attending, and are more likely to prolong the normal period of study. Students from different socio-economic backgrounds attend different types of institutions and courses with different modes of study: disadvantaged students are over-represented in lower-prestige-, lower mobility courses that lead to clear professional outcomes predominantly at universities of applied sciences and colleges (Nyüsti, 2018; Fehérvári et al., 2016). According to EuroStudent data (2017), Hungarian students (27 per cent) are substantially more likely to be enrolled on part-time programs than students of other CEE countries (15 per cent). Further evidence that those enrolled in part-time Hungarian HE tend to be more disadvantaged is the fact that only 38 per cent had parents with a university degree, whilst this was true of 61 per cent of full-time students (EuroStudent, 2018).

### 2.2 Financing university: public and private funds

Appropriate financial support in the form of maintenance funding and financial aid for tuition are key elements of student success (Dougherty and Callender, 2017; European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice, 2017). Systems without substantive financial support provision increase the risk of students having to rely on familial contributions, or to undertake part-time work throughout their studies (Antonucci, 2016; 2018; Hordósy; Clark, 2018), meaning that students from poorer backgrounds are left with the choice of indebting their future, or paying with their time throughout the duration of their studies.

Due to public sector cuts in Hungary in the post-transition era, higher education institutions started charging fees in 1996, and this issue subsequently became a politically charged topic. The initial tuition fee system was abolished by the incoming government in 1998, while an income-contingent student loan system was set up in 2001 to cover maintenance costs, as well as the tuition fees applicable to some programs (Barr and Crawford, 2000; Veres, 2016). Crucially, part-time, distance programs enrolling students in higher education tended to

retain tuition fees without means-testing, justifying this approach with the need to maintain 'quality' due to the nature of applications from prospective students with weaker lower secondary school achievement (Bukodi and Róbert, 2008). This is precisely the sector of higher education that attracts mature students and those from disadvantaged backgrounds, and as such, this 'dual track' phenomenon has hindered attempts to widen access (de Gayardon, 2019). More recently, the Higher Education Act of 2011 retained this regressive feature, and defines full state scholarships and partially state-funded university places on a yearly basis, allowing institutions to recruit students who pay full tuition fees in numbers above and beyond those of funded places (Eurydice, 2019). Tuition fees in Hungary are not means-tested, but tend to be paid by those whose achievements in lower secondary school are weaker and who are either attending university full-time, or via distance-learning and part-time provisions. Places that are associated with state scholarship involving free or partial tuition tend to go to students who achieve more academically at an early stage of schooling.

The national higher education statistics for the past decade show that the structure of participation is being transformed. The absolute number of students is decreasing, along with the proportion of students who are enrolled in state-financed, full-time programs, as well as the proportion of students whose studies are partly subsidized by the state, as shown in Figure 1 (Oktatási Hivatal, 2017). Between 2008 and 2018 the decline in places on state-financed, full-time programs was 15 per cent. Beyond demographic changes, such as the decrease in the number of students passing matriculation exams, Polónyi (2018) also points to the substantial reduction in state-funded places, along with the increase in the minimum exam-requirement thresholds for popular humanities and social sciences courses.

Figure 1: Proportion of full-time students participating in state-financed programs and the proportion of students receiving state subsides
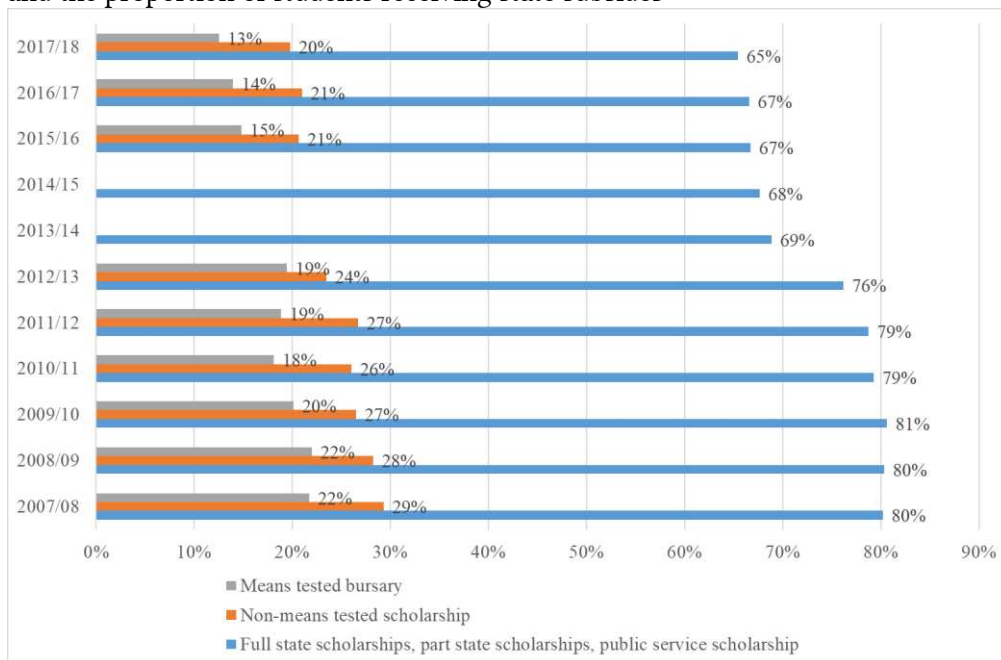
Source: Hungarian Educational Authority (Oktatási Hivatal, 2017)

Exacerbating the issues around affordability is the fact that financial support in Hungarian HE is not well targeted; the two forms of support are academic scholarships, which are dependent on term-based student outcomes (and rankings within courses), and the means-tested bursaries that students need to apply for each term (Fehérvári et al., 2016). Means-tested forms of financial support are administered by institutions themselves, hence there is a lack of transparency and consistency across the board. Bursaries can vary substantially based on the year of entry, tuition status, nature of residence, and even in relation to the university or faculty the student attends, and are only available to full-time entrants to HE (Nyüsti, 2018; Fehérvári et al., 2016).

As a result, the private funds required for studying in the Hungarian higher education system are the third highest in the European Union (European Commission, 2018). University attendance, including tuition fees and especially maintenance payments, represents a significant drain on family budgets, with more than 90 per cent of students receiving financial support from their parents in 2016 (Nyüsti, 2018). The proportion of students in receipt of familial support is broadly similar, varying between 85 and 94 per cent across the CEE countries according to EuroStudent data (2017), but substantially less for the Nordic countries (varying between 60 and 77 per cent). Those students who are least able to rely on their families typically take out substantial maintenance loans (52,000–

55,000 HUF on average per month, ~€168–177[3]), while one-third of them also work part-time (81,000–94,000 HUF average earnings per month, ~€262–304) throughout the duration of their studies (EuroStudent, 2017).

Hámori and colleagues (2018) looked at the main motivation to work amongst university students. The authors found that the propensity for part-time work does not differ in relation to student background in terms of intensity or the amount of money that is earned; however, there are key differences in the degree to which students can tailor their engagement outside of university to their area of studies and potential future careers. Students who take on part-time work due to financial need are significantly less likely to work in areas connected to their studies than those who opt to work despite already having sufficient funds. Importantly, Hámori et al. (2018) also found that students who take on part-time work due to financial need are less likely to aspire to further studies. Conversely, those who do not work part-time, or those who take on part-time roles in their area of studies, are significantly more likely to plan to continue with postgraduate studies. This suggests that financial hardship and the urgency associated with obtaining a part-time job has a long-term impact on graduate progression that does not seem to be mitigated by the provision of financial support.

2.3 Progression and outcomes

Beyond the crucial issue of who gets to go to university, the issues of retention, completion, and study success, as well as post-graduation progression, are of high importance (Vossensteyn et al., 2015; Antonucci, 2016; Fehérvári et al., 2016; European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice, 2014). After comparing the situation in different European countries, Quinn (2013) suggested that the students most likely to drop out are those from lower socio-economic backgrounds, men, ethnic minorities, students with disabilities, and those enrolled in part-time programs, with the worst retention rates measured in Italy, Hungary, and Poland. Reasons for non-continuation are of course interrelated (Yorke, 2000; Tinto, 2002; Kurantowicz and Nizinska, 2013; Crawford et al., 2017), and are identified by Quinn (2013) as a combination of the following:

1) **Socio-cultural factors:** when there exists the expectation and self-fulfilling prophecy on the part of families, local communities, and university staff that non-traditional students will not complete their studies.
2) **Structural factors:** when the unequal positioning of students in society due to poverty, class, race, or gender increase pressure, making it difficult for them to persist.
3) **Policy factors:** when strategic decisions about HE negatively impact the ability of students to complete their studies.

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[3] The Central Bank of Hungary (Magyar Nemzeti Bank) exchange rate on 2 January, 2017 (to correspond with the reporting year of EuroStudent): €1 = HUF 309,40

4) **Institutional Factors:** when institutional cultures and practices do not support students to succeed.

5) **Personal Factors:** when illness, mental health issues, traumatic experiences, or the influence of family, peers, or cultural-, work- or religious commitments lead students to withdraw.

6) **Learning Factors:** when student approaches to learning and/or poor quality higher education prevent students from completing their studies (Quinn, 2013: 71).

Level of education became strongly associated with employment prospects in Hungary in the period following the transition years of the 1990s, both with regard to the employment rate and the wage premium. Those with a tertiary education saw their earnings rise from 57 per cent more than the average pay of primary educated citizens in 1989 to 92 per cent more by 2002, and the former have remained similarly high since then (Fábian et al., 2014). According to the latest report from the OECD (2019), compared to the income earned by those who have only a secondary education (defined as 100 per cent) the relative income advantage of having a bachelor's degree is more than 150 per cent, whereas in the case of a master's degree the advantage is as much as 200 per cent. However, the labor market entry of different groups remains unequal (Eurostat, 2019c). Using graduate career tracking data, Fehérvári and colleagues (2016) showed that graduates with parents who have only finished primary school are likely to take longer finding employment after graduation, and are liable to earn substantially less once employed compared to those whose parents have finished at least secondary education. Similarly, using European Social Survey data, Róbert (2019) found that the impact of parental education on the likelihood of completing tertiary education is strong in Southern European countries, as well as in those countries with a German-type school system, such as Hungary. Further, Róbert (2019: 135) concludes that 'In Hungary, there was no substantial change[4] in terms of either the correlation between the education of the parent and the child or the educational premium; but upward mobility declined strongly and the effect of parental education on the completion of tertiary education increased after the economic crisis to a greater extent than in any of the other societies investigated'.

As Veroszta (2016b) shows using graduate tracking data, economics and business degrees provide stable, well paid jobs, whereas those in the arts and humanities as well as sciences are associated with less stable contracts and smaller initial pay packages. As the 'Hungarian university system is not as stratified as the American or British' (Tóth and Szelényi, 2019: 114), differentiation based on socio-economic background is more likely to take place via course choice, retention, and international mobility (Quinn, 2013; Veroszta, 2016b; Nyüsti, 2018).

A focus on international student mobility has characterized the past few decades of the European integration process. However, participation in terms of diploma mobility (mobility for the whole duration of a degree program), and shorter, credit-based mobility programs such as Erasmus are not afforded to all

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[4] Looking at the impact of the economic crisis, Róbert compared data for 2002–2008 and 2010–2014.

(Neumann, 2019; Nyüsti, 2018). Differences in the take-up of credit mobility based on socio-economic background are due to costs that can be prohibitive despite the availability of scholarships; these include a lack of sufficient language skills and of institutional infrastructure for supporting mobility (Nyüsti, 2018). EuroStudent data VI (2017) suggest that two-thirds of Hungarian university students do not plan to take part in credit mobility initiatives, predominantly due to the additional financial burden their semester or year abroad would mean. They also show that around 13 per cent of students took part in study-related credit mobility opportunities. This proportion is similarly low in most other CEE countries, although the Baltic States and Slovenia reported above-average credit mobility (EuroStudent, 2017). Students who study at university focusing on academic subjects are four times as likely as those at universities of applied sciences to study abroad (Veroszta, 2016b). Nyüsti (2018) goes on to suggest that international student mobility has become a new frontier of social inequality, given that both differences in aspirations and take-up of initiatives are based on socio-economic background. The difference in take-up has a knock-on effect on individuals' next career steps – as shown by Veroszta (2016b) using graduate tracking data from 2015, those who have studied abroad enjoy a substantial wage premium in relation to those who have not. As a study by Horváth and Jakab (2018) highlights, those students who are the least mobile internationally due to their lack of language knowledge are also those with the least advantageous social and financial background. Similarly, it is only a small proportion of the most advantaged students who can opt to study for their first degree outside of Hungary (Neumann, 2019; Golovics, 2018). Drawing on focus group interviews with Hungarian students who have studied at higher ranked institutions in the UK, Neumann (2019) points to the importance of familial funds for pre-application preparation programs, as well as maintenance and tuition fee support and the need for wider information networks, concluding that the threshold for diploma mobility is very high.

Researching mobility apart from for the purpose of studying is considerably harder due to the diverse potential definitions and lack of robust and comparable datasets. A recent micro-census estimated that 306,000 Hungarians live abroad (KSH, 2016), a figure that does not include those who have no family members remaining in the country. The highest estimates suggest that as many as 637,000 Hungarian citizens could be living and working abroad, constituting 6–7 per cent of the population (Gödri, 2018). After years of a low level of migration, especially of the low-qualified and very young, Hungary has 'caught up' in this respect with other countries that joined the European Union since 2004. In 2017, outward migration[5] from Hungary to another EU Member State was measured at 5.2 per cent relative to the total population based on Labour Force Survey data (Hárs, 2019; Eurostat, 2019a). Suggesting the phenomenon of brain drain, Hárs (2019: 142) observed that 'Hungary is the only country [amongst those joining the EU since 2004] where the graduate migration rate is highest – higher than the average rate

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[5] 'Outward migration is measured as the proportion of the population of an EU-10 country living in another EU Member State relative to the total population (those living abroad plus those who have stayed in the home country)' (Hárs, 2019: 139).

and above the rate seen in any of the less-qualified groups'. Most studies, such as one by Kováts and Papp (2016) based on a non-representative survey, and one by Blaskó and Gödri (2014) who used national statistics, suggest that internationally mobile Hungarians tend to be younger, and more likely to have either a diploma or a vocational qualification. The main motive for mobility is a combination of the search for a better life away from what is perceived as the bad economic and political situation in Hungary, and the desire for opportunities for professional growth, with substantial variation observed in the destination of migrants.

3. Research questions and methods

Active Youth 2019 is the fourth wave of a representative student survey that was conducted by the Hungarian Active Youth Research Group. It measures the political and voluntary activities of young adults enrolled in higher education at regular intervals, allowing for the analysis of educational trajectories into universities, and respondents' attitudes about their next steps (Szabó, 2019). This paper utilizes the two recent iterations (2015 and 2019) of this survey as secondary evidence to raise questions about the higher education strategies of current Hungarian university students. Based on the Active Youth data, it explores the following research questions:

1) What patterns can we observe in terms of who participates and progresses within Hungarian higher education?
2) What are students' financial experiences of attending university with regard to:
a. financial difficulties;
b. accommodation costs; and,
c. part-time work commitments?
3) What strategies of international mobility can be observed across different student groups with regard to:
a. the intention to migrate, and the main purpose of international mobility; and,
b. push and pull factors of international mobility?

The quota-based sample of the Active Youth survey included 800 full-time university students who were attending a Hungarian university or college at the time of the research. The respondents were selected according to the restricted random walk method. Questioning involved a unique technique, whereby students were addressed by their peers during face-to-face interviews. The 100 interviewers were students themselves from the faculties of political science, sociology, and the social sciences. This technique was designed to diminish the classical differences (age, social status, attitudes, etc.) between interviewee and interviewer, and to increase the validity and authenticity of answers. The sample included 35 institutions and was representative of the higher education population in terms of the composition of institutional faculty; gender of students; level of studies (university-college, BA, MA, integrated MA program, and PhD). The margin of error for the 800-person sample is ± 3.5 percentage points (with a 95 per cent

confidence interval; however, the margin of error may be even higher (Szabó, 2019).

Issues with using secondary data are associated with the aim of data collection and its coverage, the definitions that are used in the dataset, data quality, sampling frame, and response rates (Smith, 2002). In the case of the Active Youth datasets, two key issues emerge; first, the dataset only covered full-time students who were actively enrolled, thus not allowing for the analysis of the experiences of students on part-time distance education programs or those who had dropped out. Second, it only allowed for a partial analysis of the social dimensions of HE, given that it did not include characteristics such as ethnicity or disability. Nonetheless, the data permit an exploration of the broader university experiences and future plans of current Hungarian students.

Beyond the Active Youth 2019 and 2015 surveys, our discussion also draws on data from the EuroStudent VI. Survey (EuroStudent, 2017). This international project focuses on the social and economic dimensions of European higher education. The cited Hungarian data collection process was conducted in 2016, and the representative sample included 25 universities and colleges, with 7202 students answering the online questionnaire (EuroStudent, 2017; 2018; Hámori et al., 2018). Utilizing this database via the EuroStudent (2017) website (http://database. eurostudent.eu) allows for comparisons to be made with other CEE countries, using results from Albania, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Poland, Romania, Serbia, Slovak Republic, Slovenia, Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania.

The results section discusses, first, the main characteristics of, and differences within the sample regarding the social dimensions of participation and progression. Second, it provides an overview of the financial issues related to studying at university, focusing on subjective economic status and part-time work. Third, it looks at the migration potential in the sample, analyzing the reasons for planned migration, its purpose, as well as push and pull factors across different student groups.

4. Results

### 4.1 Participation and progression – moving through higher education

The majority of the members of the quota-based sample of Active Youth were studying for their BA/BSc degrees (71 per cent), with 15.5 per cent enrolled on integrated MA programs, 10.3 per cent studying for an MA/MSc, and 3.3 per cent enrolled on a PhD program. Male respondents were more likely to be studying applied areas, such as engineering, computer sciences, medicine, sports, and jurisprudential disciplines (53.6 per cent men compared to 39.2 per cent women in applied sciences), whereas women were much more likely to be studying the

humanities[6] (17.6 per cent women compared to 9.4 per cent men in humanities). Regarding the age distribution of the sample, 40.3 per cent of the respondents were 21 or below; 44.3 per cent between 22 and 24 years old; and 15.4 per cent were 25 years old or more. Drawing on the EuroStudent data (2017), which covers a wider subset of students, it is notable that a smaller proportion of Hungarian BA students are included in the youngest age group than in other CEE countries, while Hungarian BA students aged 25 years and above are found in the highest proportions (30.2 per cent).

The Active Youth survey offers information about parents' highest level of education. Results from 2019 show that 44.8 per cent of respondents are reproducing the educational status of their fathers (i.e. 44.8 per cent of all students' fathers have a university degree). The rest of the students were pursuing a higher level of education than their fathers had achieved. The children of fathers who had completed only a maximum of eight grades of primary school are considerably underrepresented in the Hungarian higher education system, their proportion in this sample being only two per cent. Based on the EuroStudent data (2017), compared to other CEE countries, Hungarian students were somewhat more likely to have a university-educated father (40 per cent).

Drawing on the Active Youth data, we also found a marked difference in terms of students' progression to higher degrees in relation to parental education, similarly to the work of Nyüsti (2018) and Fehérvári et al (2016). Our data clearly shows that the 'leaky pipeline' phenomenon applies to those students who were the first in their family to attend university: they constituted 44 per cent of Bachelor's students, 36 per cent of integrated MA students, 30 per cent of MA / MSc students, and only a fifth of all PhD students. Figure 2 shows the educational advantage of students whose parents have completed higher education; given they are more likely to be studying at levels beyond a BA/BSc, this mirrors the educational aspirations of young people as measured at the age of 12-13 (Lak et al., 2018).

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[6] The disciplinary areas have been categorised as follows. *Applied sciences*: agronomics, computer science, jurisprudential, public administration, engineering and technology, military, national security and law enforcement, medicine, teacher training and sports science. *Humanities*: humanities, theology, and art. *Social sciences*: economics, and social sciences. *Sciences*: health sciences (non-medical); natural sciences.

Figure 2: Type of university degree and parents' education
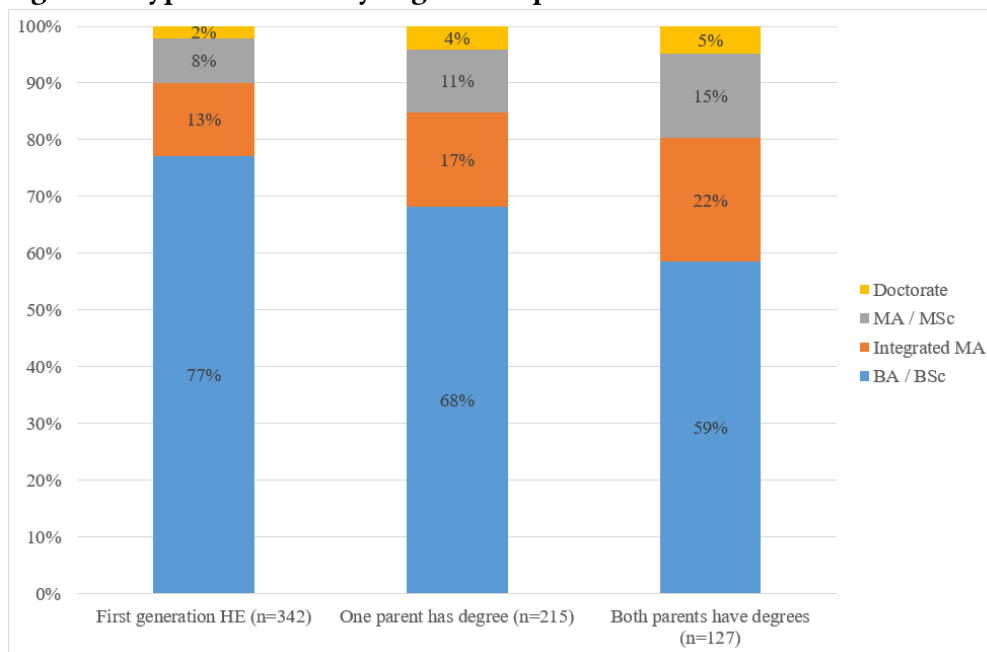
Source: Active Youth 2019 database

4.2 Money issues: financing university

The Active Youth survey asked respondents to subjectively self-assess their economic status. Those who struggle financially tend to be older students who are less likely to receive substantial financial support from their families. First-generation students are more likely to say that they are struggling to make ends meet than those with parents who have been to university, with 14.8 per cent of all first-generation students suggesting that they struggle to get by, or just about manage financially. Respondents whose father has only a primary school qualification are four-and-a-half times more likely to say they are struggling to make ends meet than those students with a university-educated father.

Regarding the subjective economic status of students, the EuroStudent (2017) outcomes suggest that Hungarian students are less likely to say they have serious financial difficulties (22 per cent) than other CEE respondents. Comparison of the recent Active Youth data with that of 2015 indicates that there was no substantial change between the two time points of data collection with regard to the student make up in higher education. In 2015, 20 per cent of students reported that they were struggling to get by financially. The same response was chosen only by 12 per cent of respondents during the second period of data collection, in 2019. This raises the question whether the general living standard of Hungarian society changed in these five years, or whether a stagnating, increasingly closed higher education system has favored students who are in a better economic situation. A further feature of the structure of the sample strongly supports the

latter hypothesis – that we are indeed likely to be observing rising inequalities. Between 2015 and 2019, the proportion of students from villages, which are considered to be a disadvantaged settlement type, declined by seven per cent, while a new category appeared: two per cent of the sample chose 'abroad' as their permanent residence (see also Kiss, 2008).

Accommodation – whether permanent or term-time – matters in relation to how students perceive their financial situation. Students whose permanent address is located in a smaller rural settlement or smaller town were somewhat more likely to suggest that they struggle financially. The key issue, however, was their term-time living circumstances. Students who were renting privately or living in student accommodation were more likely to struggle financially; conversely, those who were living in their own flats/houses tended to say they were managing without any financial concerns. Given spiraling rental costs, especially between 2013 and 2020 in Budapest, but also in major university towns across Hungary, it is no surprise that a fifth of those who were renting had serious difficulties paying for their privately rented flats (MTI, 2018; Ingatlan Net, 2020). Looking at accommodation costs comparatively using EuroStudent data (2017) shows that 83.3 per cent of students who were not living with their parents were burdened by this expenditure, given that they were spending more than two-fifths of their income on it. Across other CEE countries, the proportion ranged from 65.5 per cent for Poland to 91.3 per cent for Latvia; generally higher than in Western Europe.

Some students are not able to draw on family funds or reserves to mitigate financial pressure, and have to rely on part-time work either regularly or occasionally throughout their studies. Data from the Active Youth survey shows that students who were studying humanities and science subjects were more likely to say they were struggling to make ends meet than those completing social sciences degrees or applied subjects. However, social science students were most likely to be working occasionally or regularly, suggesting that their paid jobs were contributing to their budgets. There is a clear cohort effect in relation to financial struggles and the resultant need to take on paid work: parents are less capable of contributing to student budgets during the later years of university studies. Whereas only a third of the youngest respondents (19–20 year olds) said they worked occasionally or regularly, the proportion was more than half for those due to graduate from a BA (aged 21–22 years old), and two-thirds for those aged 23 and above. Indeed, those taking longer degrees, and those working towards their doctorates were most likely to say they were struggling to make ends meet, hence were working both irregularly and regularly.

Although it is possible that the jobs students were engaged in would be useful in relation to their career progression, it is rather striking that only a third of MA, and 1 in 6 PhD students were not engaged in paid work. PhD students were a lot more likely to be working regularly than students at other levels of higher education. As for BA/BSc students and those on integrated MA programs, a fifth of them were working regularly, whereas another third worked occasionally. Drawing on the EuroStudent data (2017), compared to students of other countries Hungarian BA/BSc students were more likely to have taken on term-time paid

work than their CEE counterparts, both regularly (37.7 per cent) and occasionally (14.8 per cent). More than two-thirds of MA students had taken on regular and occasional work in most CEE countries, with the exception of Albania, Croatia, and Serbia. As for Hungary, 55.5 per cent were working regularly, and 13.9 per cent working occasionally throughout their MA courses. In relation to the student budgets of CEE students, both BA (9.2 per cent) and MA (7.8 per cent) students obtained a somewhat greater proportion of their total monthly income from national public student support schemes. However, this clearly left a large gap, given that both Hungarian BA (40.3 per cent) and MA (55.2 per cent) students generated a substantial proportion of their monthly budget through self-earned income, more than students in other CEE countries (EuroStudent, 2017).

EuroStudent data (2017) also allows for the analysis of the link between the students' field of study and their employment. Of those who had taken regular or occasional paid jobs throughout their studies, 47 per cent of Hungarian BA and 64.4 per cent of MA students reported that their employment was closely or very closely related to their field of study; these figures are some of the highest compared to those of other CEE countries. However, the figures are also higher for those who had financial difficulties, as well as those who were working more than 20 hours per week – meaning that while the jobs of the former might support labor market integration, the students' focus was clearly not on university studies for financial reasons.

4.3 International (student) mobility – moving away

The Active Youth survey allows for the analysis of planned international mobility (Szabó, 2015; 2019). Given that research participants were university students in Hungarian institutions, this section looks at migration *potential*, i.e. planned relocation with the purpose of short or long-term work, settling, or studying abroad (Sik and Szeitl, 2016). The 2015 round of data collection put more emphasis on labor market expectations, including experiences and aspirations regarding working or studying abroad. Compared with the data from 2019, the proportion of students planning to study or work abroad for the long and short term had not changed significantly; however, the intention to permanently live abroad had decreased by five per cent.

Overall, one-fifth of the Active Youth sample (20.6 per cent) reported that they were not planning to move abroad at all.[7] Drawing on a composite measure, Figure 3 shows that first-generation HE students were the least likely to be planning to work or settle abroad, with 30 per cent saying they were not planning to do so, compared to 17 per cent of those who had one parent with a degree. In fact, it is this latter group who appeared to be the most keen to settle abroad, with 45 per cent planning to do so, along with another 17 per cent thinking about committing to working abroad for a few years.

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[7] The proportion of data missing for the migration-related questions amounted to 13.9 per cent.

Figure 3: Plans to work abroad and level of parents' education
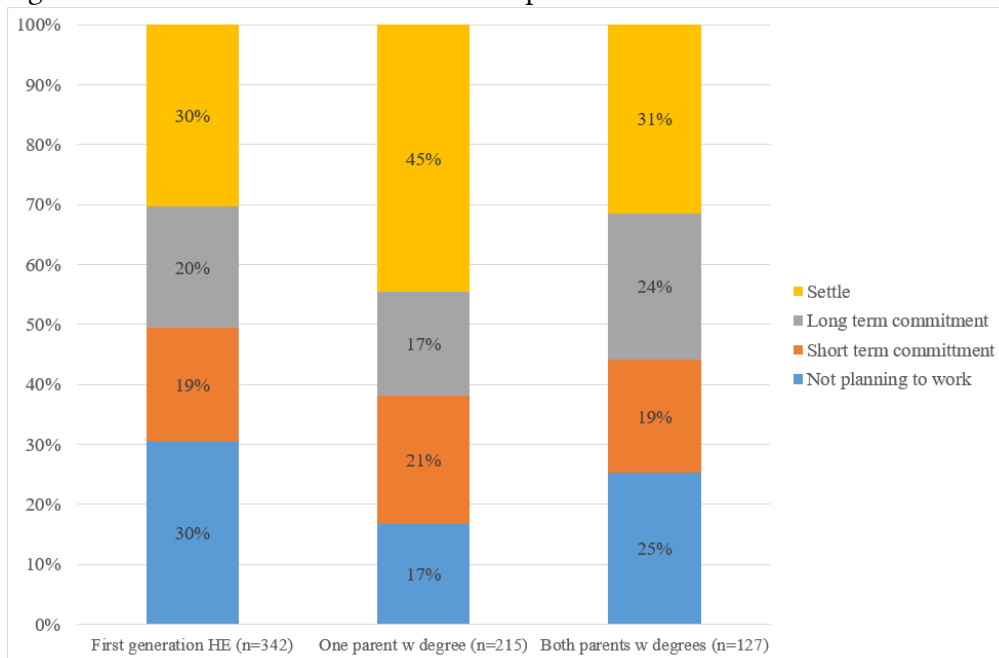
Source: Active Youth 2019 database

Regarding diploma mobility plans specifically, 19.9 per cent of respondents said they would consider studying abroad, and most of them would opt to work for the short or long term, or settle outside of Hungary, whereas 55.3 per cent were thinking of migrating only for short or long-term work, or settling, but not leaving for the purposes of diploma mobility. Students whose parents were more highly educated were more likely to want to leave Hungary for a shorter period of time in general, and to study for a degree abroad in particular. Conversely, students who were the first in their family to attend university were significantly less likely to plan to study abroad. Whereas only 15 per cent of students whose parents had not been to university were planning to study abroad, 18 per cent of those with one parent who was university educated and 29 per cent with both were planning to do so, as Figure 3 shows. Regarding settlement type, students from Budapest were more than twice as likely to say they would like to study abroad as those who lived in smaller villages (see also Szabó, 2019).

Figure 4: Plans to study abroad and level of parents' education
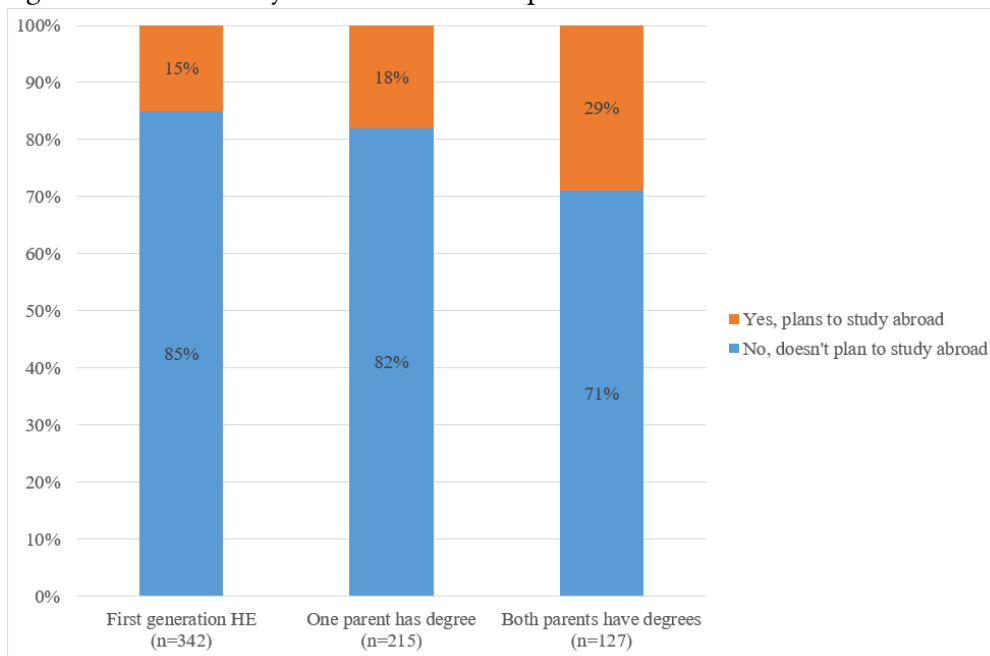
Source: Active Youth 2019 database

Students who claimed to be struggling financially were less likely to be planning to study abroad (tuition fees and maintenance costs are likely to be prohibitive) than those who suggested they were living without financial difficulties. Interestingly, however, those with financial problems were more likely to say they were planning to move abroad in either the medium or long term for work than those who were living without financial concerns, as shown in Figure 5.

Figure 5: Plans to live abroad and subjective economic status
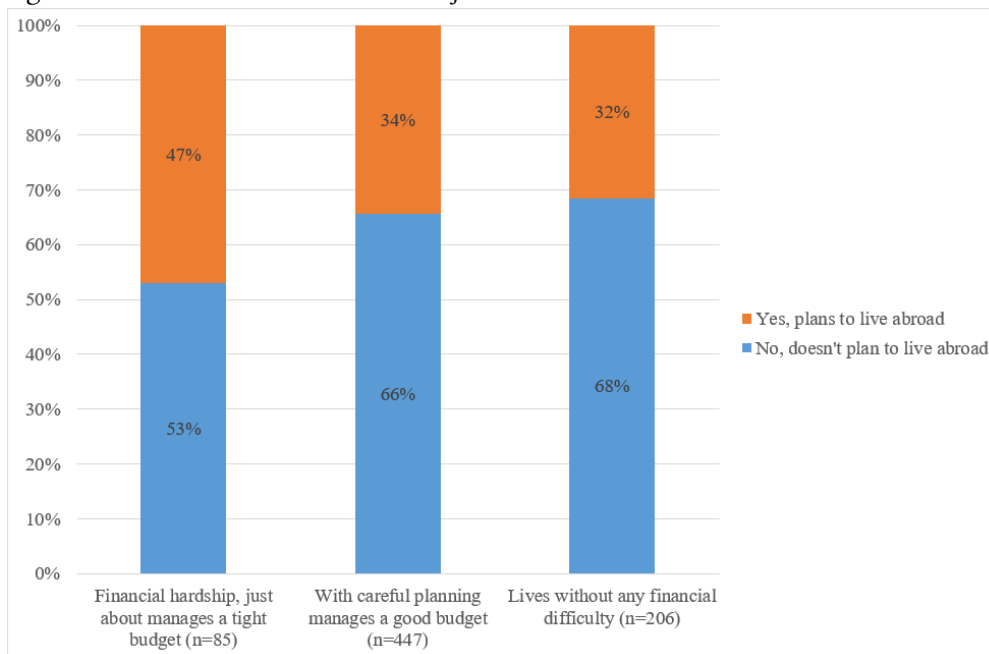
Source: Active Youth 2019 database

Overall, although students were less likely to want to migrate in 2019 than they were in 2015, the trend in the least advantaged students' intentions had reversed by 2019. Whereas in 2015 members of this group were less likely to want to move abroad, by 2019 they were more likely to want to leave the country for good. In 2015, 55 per cent of all respondents wanted to work abroad for a few years and there was no significant difference according to subjective financial status. In 2019, 47 per cent preferred this option amongst those with no financial problems, and 61 per cent of those who were facing financial difficulties. Similar patterns emerged when looking at whether students were planning to settle abroad: those who were struggling financially were more likely to be planning to move away for good (47 per cent) than those who were living without financial issues (32 per cent). The data shows that the conclusion of the Active Youth research from 2015 is even more true in 2019: 'the motivation for migration is above all financial: it is easier to make a living abroad, the standard of living is higher abroad, and much more money can be set aside' (Szabó, 2019: 34).

Further detailing the motivation to move abroad, career opportunities (17.9 per cent) and better remuneration (22.6 per cent) were the primary factors, along with a desire to gain experience (14.8 per cent) and learn languages (12.5 per cent). Based on a factor analysis, the three push and pull factors of international migration can be summarized as: 1) 'opportunities' – meaning career and remuneration opportunities, gaining experience, and meeting new challenges, as well as studying and language learning; 2) 'contextual push factors' – such as the

state of Hungarian politics and the lack of work-related opportunities; and 3) 'personal push factors' – such as family-related reasons and a poor financial situation. Regarding the steps students were taking to prepare to move abroad, respondents were most likely to report learning a foreign language (27.1 per cent), and gathering information about job opportunities (9.6 per cent), universities (7.1 per cent) and scholarships (6.0 per cent). Only a handful of students were actively taking steps already, such as applying to universities or jobs. Students who were not planning to live, work, or study abroad mainly explained this as due to their commitment to their homeland (22.4 per cent), or families and friends (35.4 per cent), and the fact that they could get by fine in Hungary (16.5 per cent).

Language competences were of course one of the strongest indicators of plans to study and work abroad, just as they were in 2015 (Szabó, 2019). In the recent Active Youth dataset, the level of English knowledge (the most popular foreign language taught in schools) was also correlated to the level of parental education. Students whose fathers were university educated were more likely to speak English at an intermediate (43.7 per cent) or higher (43.7 per cent) than those whose fathers had not completed higher education (52.6 or 25.6 per cent, respectively).

5. Discussion

The pervasive and entrenched socio-economic differences in Hungary can be charted in the form of unequal school pathways, with those from disadvantaged backgrounds being hindered in their choices at most stages (Bukodi and Róbert, 2008). Key factors for students regarding university access are whether they are enrolled in full-time, government-subsidized, or part-time fee-paying programs, and the nature of the university degree – either academic or vocational. When enrolled in tertiary studies, students from disadvantaged backgrounds are: a) more likely to attend colleges or universities of applied sciences and take more vocationally focused and less prestigious courses that tend to yield lower financial returns upon graduation; b) less likely to progress to further studies and more likely to drop out of higher education altogether; and c) are less likely to participate in international credit- or diploma mobility (Fehérvári et al., 2016; Golovics, 2018; Veroszta, 2016a; Róbert, 2019).

Throughout this paper we have discussed some of the key issues relating to how broader inequalities shape the higher education pathways of young people in Hungary, reiterating the importance of parental background with regard to university experience – a key issue that Róbert (2019) observed to play an increased role in student trajectories since the financial crisis. The Active Youth data shows that students from disadvantaged backgrounds are more likely to report that they struggle financially, partly because the financial support system cannot compensate for gaps in student budgets (Fehérvári et al., 2016; European Commission, 2018). To make up for such gaps, those from disadvantaged backgrounds are more likely to take on part-time work in general, as claimed in this paper, and to be engaged in paid work for more than 20 hours per week in

particular (EuroStudent, 2018). Further, members of this student group are less likely to persist in HE, are more likely to prolong their degrees, and are subsequently less likely to progress to postgraduate programs (Hámori et al., 2018; Fehérvári et al., 2016). The research this paper is based on has also provided strong support for the existence of a 'leaky pipeline' – inasmuch as those students who are the first in the family to attend university are decreasingly represented from the BA to PhD level, similar to the findings of Nyüsti (2018) and Fehérvári et al (2016).

Socio-economic inequalities related to second-language acquisition and budgetary constraints also affect students' plans for international mobility. Whereas students in the Active Youth survey from more advantaged backgrounds were more likely to say they were planning to pursue their studies abroad, students from less privileged backgrounds could not commit to such endeavors (Veroszta, 2016b; Nyüsti, 2018). However, this latter group was more likely to plan to work in a different country for a longer period, suggesting that one answer to social closure is indeed exit from the society they grew up in. Similar trends can be observed when looking at the type of settlements students are from: students from Budapest were more than twice as likely to say they would like to study at university abroad than those who were living in smaller villages (see also Szabó, 2019). This finding underpins Neumann's (2019) assertion that diploma mobility is reserved for metropolitan intellectual and upper-middle-class families.

Analysis of the main push and pull factors for international migration suggests that the latter is seen by the most advantaged students as more of a short-term, career-enhancing exercise, done to gain experience and learn languages. Using their economic advantages to obtain varied experience abroad, these students are likely to subsequently use their social networks to find jobs in Hungary. Students with less economic capital are more likely to plan on leaving the country to earn a living. They are, of course, less likely to be able to draw on their social networks to find a job in Hungary, hence they tend to make plans to spend a longer time abroad.

Reflecting on the call to create more equitable societies to increase social cohesion and economic prosperity, the need to build a more socially inclusive higher education system is crucial (EHEA, 2019; World Economic Forum; OECD, 2018b; Eurofund, 2017). The lack of equitable student pathways into, through, and beyond Hungarian higher education is related to a whole host of policy areas. The financial support system needs to be made more predictable, as well as more effective and better targeted, providing sufficient funding to full-time *and* part-time students in need. Similarly, supporting students from disadvantaged backgrounds to obtain work experience in their chosen study area, and / or study abroad would be essential for at least starting to level the playing field. However, addressing wider issues such as early streaming within the school system, the decrease in both funded and non-funded university places, as well as the existence of a regressive dual-track tuition fee system – as would be required to create a more equitable higher education system – requires serious political and financial commitment.

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PÁL SUSÁNSZKY*

Demobilization Processes: Perceived Risks of Protest Participation among Hungarian Students

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Abstract

There is abundant literature on individual-level characteristics that encourage citizens to participate in political demonstrations. However, empirical studies on demobilization and factors that prevent people from joining protests remain scarce. In this paper, I zero in on the perceived risks of political participation. Two questions are examined: first, how protest willingness is shaped by perceived risks, and second, what political and socio-economic factors explain risk perception. I answer these questions using the representative sample of 800 Hungarian university students from the Active Youth Survey (2019). Hungary has a special position in Europe because it is defined neither as a liberal democracy nor as sheer autocracy, but an 'illiberal regime'. In non-democratic illiberal societies the state does not apply overt repressive techniques against dissident groups, although protest participation is still not a riskless form of political action, as regarded in developed democracies.

I apply logistic regression models to predict both protest willingness and perceived risks of protest. Results confirm the importance of risks in extra-parliamentary protest politics, since almost half of the university students see their participation in demonstrations as somewhat risky. Regression models show that perceived risks are to some extent politicized, but risks have their own significant role in explaining protest (un)willingness.

Keywords: *demobilization, perceived risks, willingness to protest, collective action, illiberal regime, Hungary.*

1. Introduction

Recent review articles (Earl, 2011; Honari, 2018) about state repression, and the threats and risks of political participation emphasize that there is hardly any study on the link between political participation and its risks. Individual-level analyses are rare, although in the last few years the topic has attracted some scholarly attention (Young, 2019; Curtice and Arnon, 2019; Ayanian and Tausch, 2016; Ayanian et al., 2020).

Theories of collective action are based on the idea that there are factors that make political participation easier, and others that impede them, or at least make political action more difficult. The first group of factors mobilize, while the others demobilize citizens.

Research results however show a mixed picture on the risk–protest nexus. Qualitative studies demonstrate that social movement activists assess various forms of risks (e.g. Boykoff, 2007; Della Porta, Fillieule and Reiter, 1998; Earl, 2011) that may hinder their protest participation. On the other hand, there is survey-based evidence of a positive correlation between perceived risks and participation (e.g. Opp, 1994; Ayanian and Tausch, 2016). Scholars have shown that the riskier it is considered to be active in demonstrations, the more willing respondents are to participate. Opp and Roehl (1990) offer us a concise explanation of the puzzle: perceived risks not only deter people but also invoke dissatisfaction, anger, or other political attitudes that increase protest willingness.

In this paper, I study how perceived risks predict willingness to participate in protest participation, and I also analyse how socio-economic and political factors shape risk perception. To answer these research questions, I use the representative sample of Hungarian university students (the fourth round of the Active Youth Survey (2019), N=800) and apply logistic regression models to predict both protest willingness and three different types of perceived risks, namely friends' disapproval, counter protesters' and police attacks.

Some of the existing research on the link between perceived risks and protest participation was conducted in non-democratic countries like Egypt (Ayanian and Tausch, 2016), Zimbabwe (Young, 2019), or the communist East Germany (Opp and Roehl, 1990), where engagement in protests was regarded as risky, and where physical retaliation or state repression were part of everyday politics. Other studies focus on the repressive techniques applied by democratic states against dissident groups (e.g. Almeida, 2018; Earl, 2011), and focus mostly on activists on the political fringes (e.g. Boykoff, 2007; Linden and Klandermans, 2006).

Hungary has a special position in Europe because of its obvious backlash in democracy (Buzogány, 2017; Bogaards, 2018) and the increasing state repression against civil society organizations and academia (Enyedi, 2018; Gerő et al., 2020; Kuti, 2016). As an illiberal state, it aims to control both parliamentary and street politics (e.g. Robertson, 2010; Cheng, 2016). However, Hungary is not an autocracy, where state represses government-critical demonstrations. Incarcerating and

shooting demonstrators is not happening in Hungary, but protest participation is still not risk-free.

In this article, I do not analyse the state's demobilizing techniques, but will show the attitudes university students have towards extra-parliamentary politics. I will also look into how risky protesting is in the eyes of the new generations of the intelligentsia, who have socialized in non-democratic Hungary.

Unsurprisingly, Hungarian university students are more active and more willing to participate in demonstrations, as compared to the whole population. One-fifth of students see the risk of peers' negative reactions, and half of them see police attacks as a kind of risk that would likely follow their participation. Regression models reveal that perceived risks predict protest willingness in a complex way. Physical and non-physical risks could predict protest willingness both negatively and positively, which indicates that, as Opp and Roehl (1990) suggest, there are different mechanisms linking risks to willingness. An alternative explanation may be that risks are only proxies of political identities, party preferences and political orientations, thus risk perception is politicized and fully shaped by these political factors. Results of the analyses, however, clearly refute this reasoning.

The study is structured in the following manner. First, I delineate how micro-theories focusing on the individual level explain why people participate in protest activities. Second, I discuss theories and empirical studies about the costs and risks of protest participation. In the third section, I describe Hungary's illiberal political context. Fourth, I introduce my hypotheses derived from the literature. Finally, after presenting the results, I discuss the findings and show that risks could demobilize but also encourage university students to take part in demonstrations against the government.

2. Micro theories of protest participation

Research on political participation has a long tradition in the social sciences. How can we explain that some citizens have their voices heard, while others do not? Why do people vote, take part in protests, sign petitions or, in more general terms, join collective actions?

Explaining political participation lies at the crossroads of many disciplines. Sociology, economics, social psychology, as well as social movement studies have made efforts to elucidate the above questions. However, all of these branches of social sciences have developed their own theoretical models. Although these disciplines differ in their approaches, and their models focus upon different aspects of this problematic, they all conclude that while some social and psychological factors mobilize citizens, others demobilize them.

Mobilizing factors, on the one hand, are incentives and benefits (e.g. Mueller and Opp, 1986), grievances (e.g. Pinard, 2011), resources (e.g. Verba, Schlozman and Brady, 1995), protest efficacy (e.g. Saab et al., 2015, Opp and Kittel, 2010) and political values (Dalton, van Sickle and Dalton, 2010) that push citizens towards participation. On the other hand, demobilizing factors are forces that hold people

back from political activism. These are the individually estimated costs and risks of demonstrations. The general – and simplified – model of an individual decision about political action is: A=B−C. In other words, the probability of participation (A) hinges on the mobilizing (benefits of the action) and the demobilizing (costs of the action) factors[1].

While mobilizing factors have always been in the limelight of political sociology and political psychology, demobilizing factors are still under-researched (Earl, 2011; Honari, 2018). I see three main reasons why scholars have been reluctant to research citizens' risk perceptions over the last three decades:

Firstly, our theories aim to explain participation rather than non-participation or passivity. Micro-mobilization theories differentiate between protest participants and non-participants, and try to dissect 'personal characteristics [that] determine which individuals are most likely to protest within a nation' (Dalton, van Sickle and Weldon, 2010: 56). If we can explain why citizens participate in demonstrations, we can also explain why others do not. Those who are dissatisfied with the government are more inclined to protest, which indicates that the less dissatisfied are less willing to protest. Thus, our explanation shows a symmetry between participation and non-participation. As Ward (2016) states, '[i]dentifying attributes participants possess and non-participants lack is the sine qua non of this sociological literature' (Ward, 2016: 854). However, others regard demobilizing factors as a separate and substantive element. According to Goldstone and Tilly (2001), threat is an independent factor that influence both dissident mobilizations and also state reactions. In their analysis threat is defined as a demobilizing factor instead of less opportunity to protest, or lack of motivating attitudes.

Secondly, there is also a technical reason behind the moderate intensity of empirical research, namely, the lack of a standardized and tested questionnaire battery for perceived risks of protests. While, for example, internal and external political efficacy was introduced in the early 1950s (Campbell, Gurin and Miller, 1954), and other relevant incentives for political participation (e.g. dissatisfaction with the government and left–right political attitudes) are quantified by standardized and refined survey questions, negative incentives, costs, and risks have less developed measurement techniques.

Finally, in mature democracies state repression, threat, and political demobilization seem to be less prevalent than in non-democracies. Thus, sociologists in the western part of Europe have not perceived political risks as a relevant social phenomenon. If something is not present in a society, and

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[1] See the much more sophisticated models of voting by Riker and Ordershook (1968), and Blais (2000), or of protest participation by Muller and Opp (1986), Klandermans (1984), and Goldstone and Tilly (2001). Some of these studies are based on the collective action theories and the seminal book by Mancur Olson (2009 [1965]).

   These models are extended with subjective evaluations of probabilities: for instance, the probability that one's participation in the demonstration will be decisive for the success of the collective action; or the evaluation of others' participation.

examining it is not necessary either, then researching it is not very likely to happen.
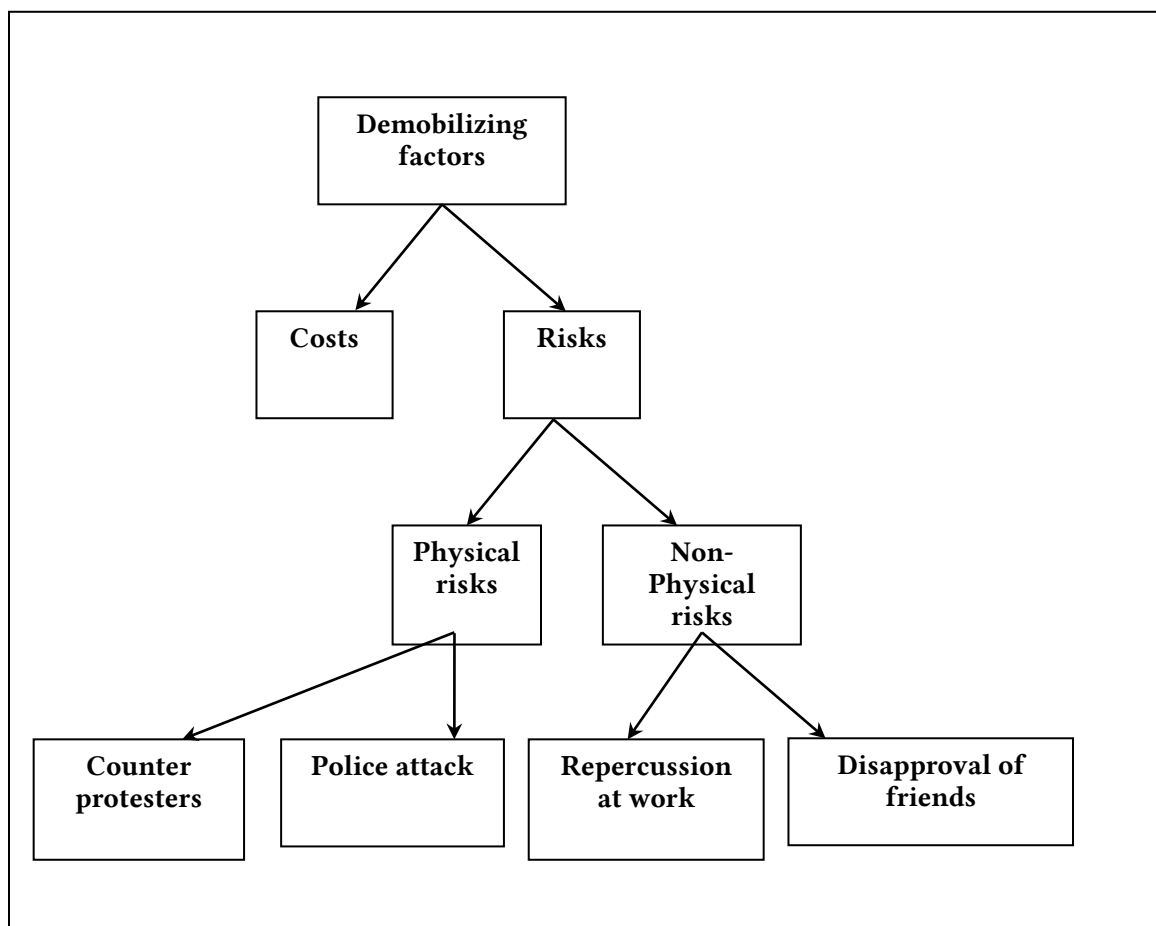
2.1 Perceived risks and costs of protest participation

As noted above, research on protest demobilization is scarce, but is not completely missing from the literature. McAdam (1986) emphasizes that at the level of individuals, it is important to distinguish between the costs and risks of participation. The cost of an action is defined by the time, money, and energy devoted to participation. Risk, on the other hand, 'refers to the activists' subjective anticipation or expectation of a cost that they may incur as a result of their movement participation' (Wiltfang and McAdam, 1991: 989). The literature on protests identifies two main types of risks citizens may face (e.g. Davenport, 2005): (1) physical retribution by police, other state actors, and counter-demonstrators, and (2) non-physical risks. Physical risks include being arrested, beaten, injured, tortured, or killed (Wiltfang and McAdam, 1991; Opp, 1994), abducted, having one's property destroyed (Young, 2019), and being sexually harassed or abused (Ayanian and Tausch 2016; Young 2019). On the other hand, protesting may be associated with negative non-physical consequences, such as losing one's job (Shriver, 2000), 'problems for close family members' (Opp, 1994), or losing one's social contacts (e.g. severing ties with friends or relatives) (Tóth and Kertész, 2016).

According to collective action theory (e.g. Olson, 2009; Opp, 2009), costs and risks prevent participation in demonstrations through decreasing people's willingness to protest, and therefore costs and risks are deemed as demobilizing factors. Since previous, mostly qualitative, research has revealed various types of risks, my quantitative survey needs to cover some of these different dimensions. In the questionnaire we asked our respondents about four kinds of risks: (1) disapproval of friends and relatives, (2) trouble at work or at university, which count as non-physical risks, and (3) attacks by counter-protesters; (4) police attacks, which are physical risks. I chose these four types of risk, because they are diverse in their consequences, and also because as I will show in the next sections, since 2010 the Hungarian media has been intensively reporting on these risks.

In order to make the classification of demobilizing factors clearer, Figure 1 summarizes the categorization. Demobilizing factors can be broken down to costs and risks, and within risks we can distinguish between physical and non-physical risks. In our survey, two items represent physical, and two others non-physical types of risks.

Figure 1: Demobilizing factors

2.2 Previous research on perceived risks and protest participation

There is some empirical evidence that protest participation has negative personal consequences even in well-developed democratic contexts. Qualitative research based on interviews with activists and on historical analyses demonstrates that social movement activists even in Western democracies often face a wide range of physical (e.g. Boykoff 2007; Della Porta, Fillieule and Reiter, 1998) and non-physical risks (e.g. Boykoff, 2007; Marx-Ferree, 2004; Shriver, 2000) that may hinder their protest participation. These studies, however, mostly focus on extremist groups (e.g. Linden and Klandermans, 2006) and violent dissident groups (e.g. Boykoff, 2007; Della Porta, Fillieule and Reiter, 1998), rather than on non-violent demonstrations of ordinary people. Researchers also have found a negative association between risks and activism in countries where state repression and the possibility of severe injuries in protest events is overt and obvious for every

citizen. For example, in China (Deng and O'Brian, 2013), in South Korea in the early 1970s (Chang, 2015) or in Zimbabwe (Young, 2019) to mention just a few.

Surprisingly, there is survey-based evidence for a positive correlation between perceived risks and participation (e.g. Opp, 1994; Ayanian and Tausch, 2016). Analysing survey data from West and East Germany in the 1980s, Opp and his colleagues (Opp and Roehl, 1990; Opp and Gern, 1993; Opp, 1994) found that the riskier it is considered to be active in protest, the more willing respondents are to participate in demonstrations. Ayanian and Tausch found the same positive correlations in the case of protesters in Egypt (Ayanian and Tausch, 2016) and also in Russia, Hong-Kong or Turkey (Ayanian et al., 2020).

How can we explain these seemingly contradictory results? Opp and Roehl (1990) suggest that political repression shapes political activism through two parallel mechanisms. The first is the deterrence mechanism, a direct negative effect of repression on participation. On the other hand, there is the radicalization mechanism, an indirect path through which repression triggers activism. Not only does the indirect effect of repression increase the perceived levels of risk, but it also produces attitudes (e.g. moral incentives, anger, and group efficacy) that make supporters more likely to participate.

In this study, I examine the risks of protest as perceived by Hungarian university students, because Hungary as an illiberal member state of the European Union is neither a democracy like Western European countries, nor an autocracy like Zimbabwe. Incarcerating and shooting demonstrators is not happening in Hungary, yet as we found, in 2014 citizens (and not the zealous extremists) saw demonstrations as somewhat risky (Majtényi, Kopper and Susánszky, 2019).

Theories on protest participation aim at explaining political protest mobilizations in the most general form, and providing understanding of political processes across different political contexts. Mobilization in high-risk political contexts is much more difficult than in well-developed democracies, where low-risk activism is the most dominant form of political protests. However, participation can be dangerous and risky in democratic countries as well.[2] Thus it seems necessary to put further effort into dissecting the risk–protest nexus, and extend our knowledge on demobilizing processes in non-authoritarian regimes.

As the next section explains, there is a vivid public discourse in the media on state repression and risks of political participation.

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[2] Demonstrations after George Floyd's death show that violence might occur in low-risk countries. (https://www.nytimes.com/article/george-floyd-protests-timeline.htm, Accessed: 10-07-2020).

3. Risks of protest participation in illiberal Hungary

Prime Minister Viktor Orbán first used the term 'illiberal state' for Hungary in a 2014 public speech.[3] Some government leaning journalists and analysts interpreted the term as 'post-liberalism,' or 'national democracy.'[4] However, most social scientists have been reading Orbán's speech and his politics as a democratic backlash. Analyses cover the centralization of the media (Polyák, 2019), changes in the electoral law (Papp and Zorgit, 2018), rewriting the constitution (Batory, 2016; Várnagy and Ilonszki, 2017), and the weakening role of opposition parties in parliament (Várnagy and Ilonszki, 2018). All the studies show that the governing *Fidesz* party has been extremely successful in power centralization, which makes it easy for them to control institutionalized politics.

As part of the Orbán regime's centralizing politics, the civil sphere has been restrained, since civil society organizations, and especially those who work for human rights protection, perceive shrinking political opportunities (Gerő et al., 2020). Moreover, a significant part of Hungarian civil society actors, particularly those who have criticized the government, are intimidated and stigmatized (Freedom House Country Report, 2018; Maerz et al., 2020). Beyond demobilization at the level of organizations, it is worth analysing how ordinary citizens assess risks of protest participation.

In the present political situation, when opportunities for party politics are narrowing, political protests are gaining a special role. This is not so because political decisions could be more effectively influenced through demonstrations, but because political protests have the function to sway public opinion, social value systems, and to build the opposition's group identity (Amenta and Young, 1999). However, we know much less about the way illiberal states manage to control such non-institutionalized forms of participation as protesting and organizing demonstrations. As Robertson correctly argues, non-democratic regimes do not want to eliminate competition; on the contrary, it is rather 'something that they consciously allow and try to control' (2011: 13). Non-democratic governments show off public demonstrations as a testimony of freedom of speech and expression, and a limited scale of protests informs the regime about grievances within the society, but they want to be able to react before discontent escalates (Lorentzen, 2013).

To illustrate how public perceptions of risks have evolved in the last few years, I have collected news content from Hungarian mainstream news portals.[5] The main goal of the following non-systematic analysis of Hungarian media

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[3] https://magyarnemzet.hu/archivum/belfold-archivum/Orbán-viktor-teljes-beszede-2-4054256/; https://www.kormany.hu/en/the-prime-minister/the-prime-minister-s-speeches/prime-minister-viktor-orban-s-speech-at-the-25th-balvanyos-summer-free-university-and-student-camp (Accessed 22-06-2020).

[4] https://hungarytoday.hu/instead-illiberal-community-based-national-democracy/ (Accessed 22-06-2020).

[5] I collected news content from the most popular Hungarian on-line news portals (see the list at https://thepitch.hu/legolvasottabb-hirportalok-hazai-weboldalak-listaja/): *Index.hu, Origo.hu, 24.hu, hvg.hu*, and I have searched for the same stories in English-speaking sources (Accessed: 22-06-2020).

outlets is to show that public discourse covers the issue of risks of protest. Moreover, as Gamson (1992) points out, in addition to general public opinion and personal experiences, media content is crucial in shaping citizens' political opinions. Thus, we can assume that Hungarian university students, as part of Hungarian society, are also exposed to such influences.

In the media I have found four main types of risks regarding protest participation: (1) non-physical risks of repercussions at work, (2) friends' disapproval, (3) physical threats of counter-protesters and (4) police attacks.

Some Hungarian media report conflicts at work. Employers do not always like their employees' political activism and their open confrontation with political power. For example, the director of a state founded think-tank sent warnings to his employees not to like or post any Facebook content against the government's 'Olympic Budapest 2024' campaign.[6] The woman who made this letter public was subsequently dismissed.[7] In another case, a cook was fired from the high school where he worked. His dismissal happened shortly after he had attended and held a speech in a protest against the government's measures and communication against civil organizations.[8] A few weeks later, after high school students had protested in Budapest against the unjust educational system, a 17-year-old protester's home was searched and his computer was confiscated.[9]

Friends' negative reactions is another non-physical risk citizens are faced with. I did not find reports of that type of risk in the media, however researchers have documented cases of peers' negative reactions. A few years ago, a group of sociologists did interviews with volunteers and activists who in 2015 aided refugees near the Hungarian border. Tóth and Kertész cite an activist saying that helpers in the refugee crisis 'all had confrontations with their environment, family, acquaintances, colleagues' (2016: 116). Another 22-year-old woman said that Facebook acquaintances had broken ties with her due to her political activism (Tóth and Kertész, 2016: 302). These stories tell about the non-physical risks of protest participation or political activism at work.

In addition, media outlets have also been reporting physical attacks. For example, after a street demonstration against the government in 2017, a participant was beaten up by a group of counter-protesters.[10] Also, in 2012 a far-right military group turned up at a government-critical protest and disturbed the event.[11] In other cases, it was the police rather than the counter-demonstrators who tried to

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[6] https://meanwhileinbudapest.com/2017/01/18/if-you-dont-support-the-olympics-you-can-find-another-job/ (Accessed: 26-11-2019).

[7] https://budapestbeacon.com/court-orders-antall-jozsef-knowledge-center-to-pay-fired-employee-huf-7-million-for-wrongful-termination/ (Accessed: 26-11-2019).

[8] hvg.hu/itthon/20171221_Szombaton_felszolalt_egy_pecsi_tuntetesen_keddre_kirugtak_az_allasabol (Accessed: 26-11-2019).

[9] 24.hu/szorakozas/2018/01/25/rendorok-foglaltak-le-rekasi-karoly-es-detar-eniko-fianak-szamitogepet/ (Accessed: 26-11-2019).

[10] https://index.hu/belfold/2017/04/20/megvertek_egy_ferfit_a_szombati_tuntetes_utan/ (Accessed: 26-11-2019).

[11] https://index.hu/belfold/2012/01/02/zengett_a_viktator_az_alaptorveny_unnepen/ (Accessed: 26-11-2019).

threaten the dissidents. In the winter of 2018, the police incarcerated a protester without giving any reasons,[12] and two other participants were beaten up in a police car.[13]

These stories and reports are not part of risk analysis, and they are not the description of objective physical and non-physical risks of protest participation in Hungary today. The media content demonstrates that it is easy to find reports about risky protests. They make it explicit to everyone that organizing and participating in political protests may have high personal costs. Therefore, university students should also reckon with them.

As I explained in the theoretical sections, the effect of perceived risks is not obvious. The deterrence mechanism could demobilize potential participants, but through the indirect effect of the radicalization mechanism they may be spurred to protest.

4. Hypotheses

According to collective action theories (e.g. Opp, 2009), perceived risks decrease protest willingness. However, observational surveys have found that, contrary to expectations, perceived risks (through the radicalization mechanism) might increase the inclination to participate in protest (Ayanian and Tausch, 2016; Opp, 1994). Thus, I hypothesize that higher perceived risks are associated with higher willingness to protest.

H1: Both physical and non-physical forms of perceived risks positively predict protest willingness.

There seems to be no research so far to examine how perceived risks of protest participation are formed by social background (e.g. father's education, and the family's subjective financial status), by political attitudes (e.g. leftist or rightist ideology), or by party preferences. However, there are several studies about risk perception regarding terrorist attacks (Huddy et al., 2002; Huddy et al., 2005; Skitka, Bauman and Mullen, 2004; Lerner et al., 2003), natural disasters and global warming (Armas, 2006; Mayer et al., 2017; Sun and Han, 2018; Sund, Svensson and Andersson, 2015; Vasquez et al., 2018) and nuclear energy (Opp, 1986; Sjöberg, 2004; Sjöberg and Drottz-Sjöberg, 2009). Interestingly, irrespective of the source of threat, the literature is almost consistent in assessing the role of demographic background in risk perception. Studies in various countries have found that women and less educated people report higher levels of risks (Armas, 2006; Huddy et al., 2002; Huddy et al., 2005; Mayer et al., 2017; Sjöberg, 2004; Skitka, Bauman

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[12] https://hvg.hu/itthon/20181214_A_rendorseg_rendszereben_eltunt_tunteto (Accessed: 26-11-2019).
[13] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t21duwkpO1w; (Accessed: 26-11-2019).
 https://www.nytimes.com/2019/01/05/world/europe/hungary-protests-slave-law.html; (Accessed: 26-11-2019).
 https://hvg.hu/itthon/20181214_Videon_ahogy_a_rendorok_lerohanjak_a_21_eves_ferfit_a_Koruton (Accessed: 26-11-2019).

and Mullen, 2004). In the case of environmental and nuclear threats, age is a significant predictor: older people perceive greater risks of earthquakes (Armas, 2006) and nuclear waste (Sjöberg, 2004).

Income might predict perceived risks positively (Huddy et al., 2005) or negatively (Sund, Svensson and Andersson, 2015; Mayer et al., 2017), but most studies have found non-significant correlations (Huddy et al., 2002; Skitka, Bauman and Mullen, 2004; Sun and Han, 2018; Vasquez et al., 2018). In addition to socio-economic status, political attitudes and party preferences could also be important terms in the regression models (Huddy et al., 2002; Sun and Han, 2018; Skitka, Bauman and Mullen, 2004).

Recent studies show that ideology plays a significant role in protest participation in Central and Eastern Europe (Borbáth and Gessler, 2020; Kostelka and Rovny, 2019). Perceived risks of protests may act as proxies for party preference and ideology. The risk assessment of those who believe that police attacks are more likely may reflect their party or ideological preferences, which may be driving protest propensity.

Due to the exploratory nature of my research, I formulate my hypotheses for the explanation of risk perception in a general manner. I expect that perceived risks are shaped by respondents' political attitudes, party preferences and socio-economic background.

H2.1: Socio-economic status predicts perceived risks of protest participation negatively. Namely, respondents with lower social status (lower level of father's education, and lower subjective economic position) sense higher levels of risks.

H2.2: There are gender differences between male and female university students in perceived risks of protest participation. I hypothesize that women perceive greater risks than men.

H2.3: Perceived risks are shaped by political attitudes of left–right, liberal–conservative, moderate–radical orientations, satisfaction with democracy and interest in politics.

H2.4: Perceived risks are shaped by party preferences. I hypothesize that *Fidesz* supporters assess protest participation as less risky, whereas supporters of oppositional parties assess it as riskier.

5. Data and methods

Students are considered a highly important social group for social movement studies since young people at university are prone to take part in demonstrations (McAdam, 1986; Sloam, 2013; van Dyke, 1998; Schussman and Soule, 2005).

Over the last decade, young Hungarians at high schools and universities have been very active in political demonstrations. They organized protests against the government's education policy and university fees in 2011 (Gerő and Susánszky, 2014a; 2014b), and in 2016 against the former education secretary who called teachers 'dishevelled and unshaven types in checked shirts.'[14]

For testing the hypotheses, I use the fourth round of the Active Youth Survey conducted among Hungarian university and college students in February 2019.[15] The early months of 2019 were characterised by relative political calm, since national elections had been held in 2018, and the European Parliamentary election campaign only started in March 2019 (Susánszky and Kritzinger, 2020). Our quota sample (N=800) is representative of gender, faculties (e.g., Medicine, Arts, Humanities, Social Sciences, and Natural Sciences) and level of education (BA, MA, and PhD). Interviewers applied the random walk selection method within the campus, following the strict prescriptions of randomization and selection. More than a hundred students[16] helped the fieldwork as interviewers who conducted face-to-face interviews with their fellow students. The interviews lasted 22 minutes on average. The topics covered by the questionnaire included social background, political socialization in the family and at school, plans of emigration, political attitudes, democratic values, political activity, party preferences, and one section of the questionnaire focused on protest participation. We measured willingness to protest participation with the following question: 'Would you do or would you not do any of the following to protest against a government action you strongly opposed?''[17] Respondents answered on a six-point scale (1='I definitely would not' and 6='I definitely would'). After the willingness question, respondents were asked about perceived risks of protest participation: 'If you decided to participate in a demonstration against one of the government's actions you strongly opposed, in your opinion, to what extent would you risk that...'

1) your friends, relatives, and acquaintances might reprimand you due to your participation.
2) you might face repercussion at work or at school due to your participation.

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[14] https://www.smh.com.au/world/checked-shirts-begin-to-haunt-hungarian-authorities-20160325-gnr8qa.html (Accessed: 26-11-2019).
[15] Principal investigator: Andrea Szabó; more information about the project:
http://www.aktivfiatalok.hu/.
[16] The interviewers are sociology, political science or social sciences majors, thus they have all taken quantitative methodology courses. In addition, they attended an interviewer training session, supervised by one of the three senior researchers.
[17] Source of the question: 1996 International Social Survey Program (ISSP) Role of the Government III module of the General Social Survey (GSS).

3) you might be attacked by counter-protesters
4) you might be attacked by the police.

Respondents evaluated the risks listed above on a seven-point Likert-scale (1= 'not at all' to 7='very much').[18] The four items cover the two main dimensions of risk perception: non-physical and physical. Friends' negative reactions, disapproval and negative consequences at university (and at work) are non-physical risks. Police and counter-protesters' attacks count as physical risks that may result in physical injuries. The reliability check shows (Cronbach's alpha=0.64) that the four items do not provide a consistent scale of perceived protest risk. Presumably, this is because the four items grasp multiple dimensions of risk. Therefore, I do not aggregate them as a single factor, but analyse the four items separately.

        Since both the variables measuring perceived risks and the protest willingness items are non-normally distributed,[19] I recoded them into dummy variables. In the case of the four perceived risk items, I denoted a low level of perceived risks (0) if the risk scale value was lower than 5, and a high level of perceived risks (1) if the risk value was above 4. In the case of willingness to protest, however, values of 1 to 3 were recoded into 0, while values from 4 to 6 into 1. Thus, 1 denotes strong willingness, and 0 means weak or no willingness to participate in government-critical rallies.

        For measuring socio-demographic characteristics and economic status, I used the following variables:
• gender (male or female)
• father's level of education (primary, secondary, or tertiary level)
• subjective economic status (less than adequate, just adequate, or more than adequate)
• place of residence (rural, city, or Budapest)
• level of education (BA, MA, or doctoral studies)

For measuring political attitudes, I used ideological orientations (left–right, liberal–conservative, and moderate–radical) measured on seven-point scales, dissatisfaction with the working of democracy in Hungary (dummy variable 0 denotes 'satisfied', 1 denotes 'dissatisfied'), and political interest (dummy variable 0 denotes 'not interested', 1 denotes 'interested in politics'). The ideological

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[18] The perceived risk items were used in 2014 in the 'Crisis and Innovation' project (MTA-ELTE-Periparto Research Centre: 'Válság és Innováció' (2014). MTA-TK-KDK. https://doi.org /10.17203/KDK384 Periparto 2014), and thereafter in 2016 within the 'Immigration, Crisis and Values' project (MTA-ELTE-Periparto Research Centre: 'Bevándorlás, Válság és Értékek' (2016)) on an online sample. However, in the Active Youth Survey we have changed the wording and the range of the scale.
[19] According to the Shapiro–Wilk normality test, the distribution of these variables is significantly different from normal distribution. Test statistics for protest willingness, perceived risk of friends' disapproval, repercussion in university classes, counter-protesters and police attacks is W=0.92, W=0.84, W=0.87, W=0.93, W=0.91, respectively, p values belonging to the statistics are lower than 0.001.

orientation variables are standardized; thus, the scale has a mean of zero and a standard deviation of one.

To define party preferences, I used the following question: 'Which party would you vote for if parliamentary elections were held now?' I recoded the answers into five categories: (1) *Fidesz*[20] voters; (2) *Jobbik*[21] voters; (3) *Momentum*[22] voters; (4) voters for another opposition party[23]; (5) do not know, do not want to vote.

All analyses were carried out in the R environment.[24]

6. Results

6.1 Willingness to protest participation and its perceived risks

Hungarian university students have positive attitudes towards political protest participation. 38 per cent would participate in demonstrations if they were dissatisfied with a measure of the government (5 and 6 on the six-point scale), which indicates relatively strong political activity.[25]

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[20] The right-wing populist *Fidesz* has been in power since 2010.

[21] *Jobbik* is a nationalist, radical right-wing party that gained 19 per cent of votes in the last national elections in 2018. Since 2014, the party image has been changed, and *Jobbik* tries to work as a more moderate center-right party.

[22] The *Momentum Movement* is a recently founded centrist liberal party. *Momentum* is one of the most popular parties with university students.

[23] Other opposition parties are the leftist, liberal and green parties: MSZP, DK, and LMP.

[24] R Core Team (2013). R: A language and environment for statistical computing. R Foundation for Statistical Computing, Vienna, Austria. http://www.R-project.org/.

[25] Compared to the whole population this proportion seems quite high. According to the representative survey, conducted by the Peripato Research Group, in 2014, only 12 per cent of the people over age 18 would be willing to demonstrate against the government. Not only willingness is higher among university students but actual political protest activity as well. Nineteen per cent of students have participated in protest over the last 12 months, while this proportion was 3.2 per cent in the whole population in 2014. Thus, university students are more willing to protest, and they did in a higher proportion than the whole population. These results are in accordance with the literature on biographical availability (McAdam, 1986; Beyerlein and Hipp, 2006) and indicate that mobilization among university students is much easier and promises more success.

Figure 2: Percentages of students willing to participate in protest on a 6-point scale
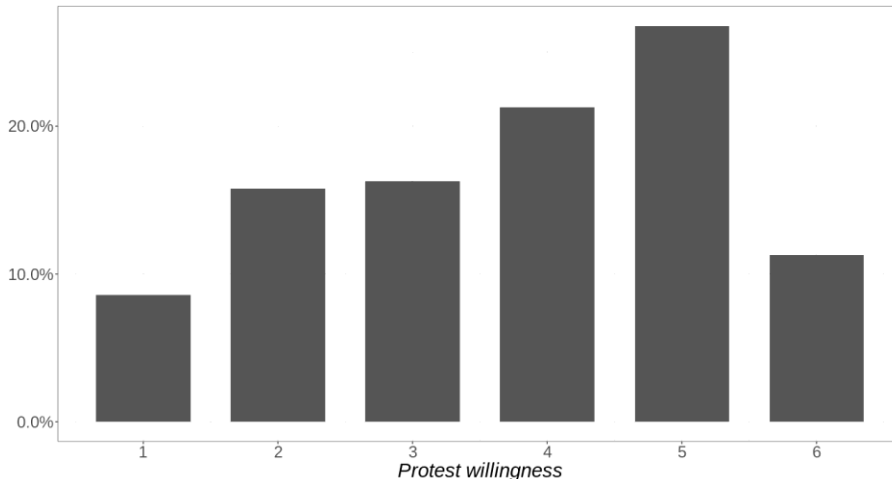
If we turn to the perceived risks of political protests in Hungary, we can see that there are important differences between the four types of risk. Distributions of friends' disapproval, repercussions in university classes, counter-protesters are left-skewed, while the perceived risk of police attacks is right-skewed (Figure 3). This means students at universities fear police attacks (and violence) the most, and they consider the three other types of risks as less likely. These differences appear in mean values as well: The least probable risk is friends' disapproval (mean=2.7), which follows repercussions at work and in university classes (mean=3.0), injury caused by counter-protesters (mean=3.5), and finally the risk of police attacks (mean=4.3).

Figure 3: Percentages of students willing to participate in protest on a 6-point scale
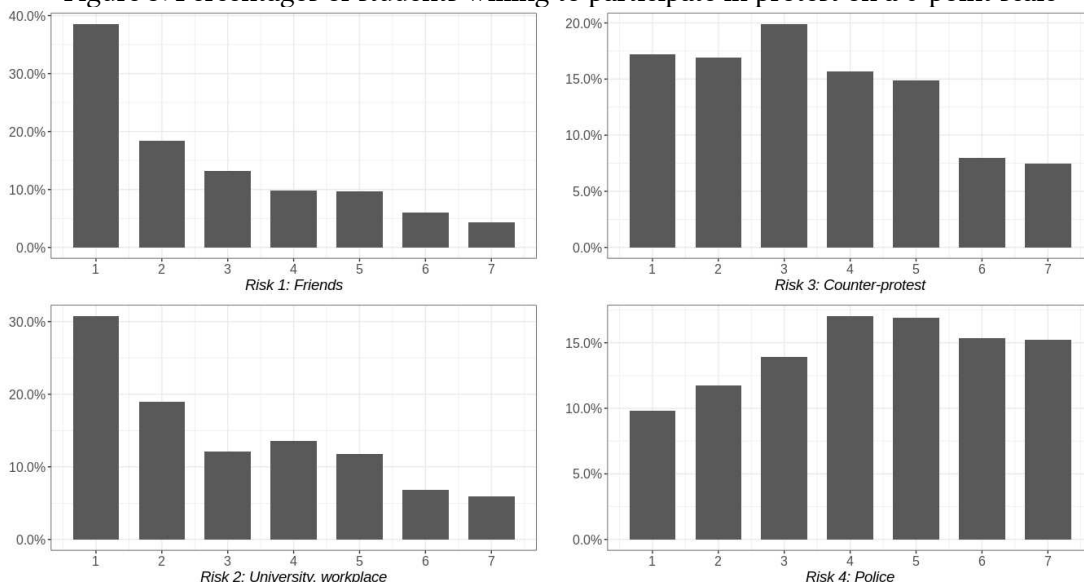
Due to the skewed distributions of items, it is worth comparing the proportions of those respondents who find demonstrations somewhat risky. These are the percentages of those whose answer was above the midpoint of the scale (5 to 7 on the seven-point scale). As we can see in Figure 3, 20 per cent of university students see the risk of peers' negative reactions, and 47 per cent see police attacks as a likely form of risk that would follow their participation (Table 1).[26]

Table 1: Perceived risks of protest participation

	Mean	Median	Proportion over the midpoint
Risk 1: Friends' disapproval	2.693	2	20%
Risk 2: Repercussions at work or in classes	3.009	3	25%
Risk 3: Counter protesters	3.478	3	30%
Risk 4: Police attacks	4.265	4	47%

6.2 How do perceived risks relate to protest willingness?

For revealing associations between risks and willingness, I have run logistic regression models.[27] Besides the four types of perceived risks, I added gender, father's educational level, respondent's educational level, place of residence and subjective economic position as controls for socio-economic status. Also, I added political preferences as control variables in a separate model (Model II in Table 2).

According to the results of the first model (Model I in Table 2), the four types of perceived risks predict willingness in different ways. The respondents who assess the risks of friends' disapproval and counter-protests as higher are also less inclined to protest. Furthermore, the perceived risk of police attacks positively predicts their willingness to demonstrate. The risk of repercussions at university, in turn, is a non-significant term in the model.

If party preferences are also controlled for in the model (Model II in Table 2), we can see that except for the risk of counter-protesters' attacks, the likelihoods of the other three risks have turned to be non-significant, which means that party preference is a strong predictor for protest willingness. Those university students who would vote for liberal or leftist opposition parties are more prone to protest than those who have no party preference, or support *Fidesz*. This result shows that party preferences might absorb a wide range of psychological factors (e.g. risks assessment, grievances, and dissatisfactions), political values, ideology and political identities.

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[26] The t-test and Fisher's exact test statistics show that all the differences between the four types of perceived risks are significant.

[27] Because of the skewed distribution of the dependent variable (willingness to protest), I have dichotomized it. See the details in the 'Data and methods' section.

Table 2: Logistic regression models explaining willingness to protest

Independent variables	Model I			Model II		
	Willingness to protest			Willingness to protest		
	OR	CI	p	OR	CI	p
(Intercept)	**0.46**	**0.21-0.98**	**0.045**	**0.36**	**0.15-0.81**	**0.015**
Risk 1: Friends' disapproval	**0.91**	**0.83-0.99**	**0.033**	0.92	0.84-1.01	0.085
Risk 2: Repercussions at work or in class	1.04	0.95-1.14	0.410	1.05	0.95-1.15	0.350
Risk 3: Counter protesters	0.90	0.81-1.00	0.051	**0.89**	**0.80-1.00**	**0.043**
Risk 4: Police attack	**1.11**	**1.00-1.23**	**0.049**	1.07	0.96-1.19	0.215
Gender: female ref.: male	**1.63**	**1.19-2.24**	**0.002**	**1.64**	**1.19-2.27**	**0.003**
Father's educational level (secondary) ref.: primary	1.28	0.83-1.99	0.269	1.36	0.91-2.03	0.135
Father's educational level (tertiary) ref.: primary	0.85	0.54-1.33	0.480	1.08	0.73-1.59	0.702
Place of residence: Budapest ref.: rural	**1.51**	**1.02-2.22**	**0.039**	1.34	0.86-2.11	0.199
Place of residence: city ref.: rural	1.12	0.77-1.65	0.545	0.84	0.53-1.33	0.454
Level of education: MA and PhD ref.: BA	1.38	0.98-1.95	0.063	0.93	0.56-1.57	0.782
Subjective economic status: coping on present income ref.: experiencing financial difficulties or living from salary to salary	0.92	0.56-1.53	0.754	0.88	0.50-1.57	0.671
Subjective economic status: living comfortably on present income ref.: experiencing financial difficulties or living from salary to salary	0.84	0.48-1.48	0.554	1.34	0.95-1.91	0.096
Party preference: *Fidesz* ref.: no preference				0.75	0.42–1.32	0.323
Party preference: *Jobbik* ref.: no preference				1.54	0.91-2.60	0.104
Party preference: *Momentum* ref.: no preference				**1.90**	**1.15-3.16**	**0.013**
Party preference: Other opposition parties ref.: no preference				**2.12**	**1.38-3.29**	**0.001**
N	716			715		
Tjur R²	0.044			0.074		

OR=Odds Ratio
Source: Active Youth Survey, 2019.

I hypothesized (H1) that perceived risks positively predict willingness to participate in demonstrations. However, the findings do not support these expectations. Only one of the four types of risks predicts protest willingness positively, namely the risk of police attacks. Police attacks turned to be non-significant after controlling for party preferences. The other three forms of risk predict negatively or do not predict the dependent variable. Based on these results, it can be concluded that our data do not confirm the first hypothesis. Thus, it is generally not true that perceiving higher risks radicalizes university students, and makes them more prone to participate in protests.

6.3 Explaining perceived risks

In the last section, I argued that the perceived risk of friends' disapproval and of counter protesters' attack decreases, whereas the risk of police attacks increases the chances of higher protest willingness. Holding the socio-economic status constant, these factors correlate the most with the dependent variable.

In this section, I examine how socio-economic status, political attitudes, and party preferences shape perceptions of the three types of protest risks: risk of friends' disapproval, counter protesters' attacks and police attacks.

I fitted three logistic regression models to explain all three types of risks (see Table A1, Table A2 and Table A3 in the Appendix). The first model (Model I) contains only the socio-economic variables. In the second model (Model II), political attitudes are added. Finally, in the third model (Model III) I added party-preference.

The dependent variables were recoded into a dummy variable. 1 denotes that the perceived risk is higher than the midpoint (5 to 7 on the 7-point scale), otherwise, the value of the variable is 0.

Results in Table A1 show that the peer effect, friends' disapproval does not hinge on respondents' socio-economic status. There are no significant differences between social groups regarding the perceived risks of negative peer reactions. It is also independent of dissatisfaction with democracy, and the moderate–radical ideology orientation (Model II in Table A1). Nor do party preferences have a significant effect on risk perception (Model III in Table A1). The only factors that could predict a higher level of perceived risks are the liberal and rightist ideologies and political interest. In Table A1, we see that political interest increases the chances of a higher level of risk assessment by 1.52 (p=0.042). Moreover, liberals and those with rightist attitudes are more likely to have a higher level of risk. A one-unit increase (one standard deviation) on the left–right scale increases the odds to perceive a higher level of risk by 1.3 (p=0.019). Also, the conservative–liberal attitude shows a similar, but somewhat weaker association (OR=1.26, p=0.051). It seems that those of liberal or rightist political orientations are more likely to fear their peers' negative reactions than conservative and leftist students.

The interpretation of these results is not easy. In Hungary, the left–right ideological polarization is among the highest in Europe (Patkós, 2017; Vegetti, 2019), but other ideological cleavages are also deemed important in party politics

(e.g. Kostelka and Rovny, 2019). The question we asked in the survey referred to the risks of a government-critical rally, thus I would assume that those students who accept and follow the government's rightist, anti-liberal, and conservative rhetoric[28] are more prone to evaluate their friends' disapproval as a risk of their participation. The coefficients of ideological orientations in the regression model (Table A1) however show a different picture. They rather suggest that there are differences between liberal, right-wing on the one hand, and conservative, left-wing political milieus, on the other. Liberal and rightist students think that their friends would react negatively to their political activism. This means that political ties and personal networks in the liberal and right-wing milieus may shape political participation in a different way. The fact that in the third model (Model III in Table A1) party preference does not predict risk perception and ideological stances remained significant factors that bolster this approach. Party preferences do not attenuate the effect of ideologies. Therefore, the above-described differences are between political milieus and are not due to partisan polarization.

Unlike friends' disapproval, perceived risk of counter-protesters' attacks could be significantly predicted by socio-economic status. The results of the first model (Model I) are seen in Table A2. Men tend to have a higher level of risk assessment regarding counter-protesters' attacks (OR=1.40, p=0.038) than women. Moreover, among those students who come from a more affluent family background (e.g. father's educational level and subjective economic status are higher) the odds to perceive a higher level of risk are significantly lower. If we add political factors to the regression model (Model II and III in Table A2.), we can see that dissatisfaction with democracy increases the odds of higher risk assessment (OR = 2.04, p=0.001).

There are also gender differences in estimating the likelihood of police attacks. Men have higher chance to perceive higher levels of risk than women (OR=1.59, p=0. 002). Also, respondents with a higher socio-economic status (father's educational level and subjective economic status are higher,) have a lower chance of perceiving higher levels of risks. Nevertheless, a higher level of education (MA or PhD) increases the odds of perceiving a higher level of risk of police attacks. Finally, there are no significant differences depending on participants' place of residence.

Turning to the role of political factors, we can see that dissatisfaction with democracy increases the odds to perceive higher levels of risk. Left–right and liberal–conservative ideological orientations and political interests do not have a significant effect on risk perception. However, more radical students consider police attacks as a more plausible risk of their participation (Model II in Table A2).

These predictions are stable after controlling for party preferences (Model III in Table A2); the coefficients remain almost the same and are still significant. Respondents who would vote for the governing *Fidesz* party show significantly lower odds to see police attacks as a plausible risk during an anti-government

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[28] Prime Minister Viktor Orbán often speaks against liberal values (Kopper et al., 2017) and the government uses measures to restrict civil organizations that represent liberal values or stand for human rights. (Gerő et al., 2020; Torma, 2016).

demonstration. Support for oppositional parties, however, does not positively or negatively predict the dependent variable (the reference category is the group without any party preference).

Results of the regression models (Model I-III in Tables A1, A2 and A3) indicate that there are important differences between the three types of risks that influence protest willingness. The risk of peers' negative reaction does not depend on socio-economic status. Liberal and rightist ideological stands increase the odds to perceive a higher level of that type of risk. On the other hand, the risk of police attacks seems to be more politicized, since those who are non-*Fidesz* supporters, are dissatisfied with democracy, or profess radical rather than moderate values regard police attacks as a more plausible type of risk.

It is likely that supporters of *Fidesz* and the Orbán-regime do not read news reports about protests, or at least they do not believe these stories and ignore the possibility of a repressive state. Otherwise, party preferences do not fully determine the level of perceived risks, since ideological orientations, interest in politics and socio-economic status have their own predictive power.

Based on the regression models, I cannot confirm all the hypotheses I formulated (H2.1–H2.4). Regarding the risk of friends' disapproval, neither socio-economic status nor party preferences seem to have a significant effect on it. Therefore, hypotheses H2.1, H2.2 and H2.4 are rejected. On the other hand, the hypothesis regarding the effect of political attitudes (H2.3) seems valid.

Although I do find gender differences in physical risk assessment, these do not point in the expected direction. It is men who have a higher chance to perceive higher levels of physical risks rather than women. This difference to earlier studies could be explained with the special character of our sample (young, Hungarian university students). However, because of the lack of other surveys, I cannot compare these results to other samples of university students, or to representative samples of the Hungarian population.

I find that socio-economic status, political attitudes and party preferences significantly predict physical risk perception (the risk of both counter protesters' and police attacks). Lower social status (H2.1) and dissatisfaction with democracy positively predict the likelihood of physical risks of protest (H2.3). Moreover, *Fidesz* supporters seem to perceive police attacks as less likely (H2.4). Thus, in the case of physical risks, the regression models using the Hungarian student sample lend support to three of the four hypotheses.

In the 'Hypotheses' section, I suggested that risk assessment may purely reflect party preferences and ideological orientations. However, the regression analyses above clearly show that perceived risks of protest participation do not work as a simple proxy for political preferences. They are politicized, but in different ways and at different levels.

7. Discussions and conclusion

This study reinforces my assumption that empirical work on collective actions should be extended to perceived risks. Findings of the Active Youth Survey project show that a significant proportion of university students regard demonstrating against the government as a risky political action. 20 per cent of our respondents see the risk of peers' negative reactions, and 47 per cent see police attacks as a likely form of risk that would follow their participation. Fear of repercussions at work or at school and of counter demonstrators' attack are between these two extremes (25 and 30 per cent, respectively). These young adults consider that protest participation can have some negative consequences on their personal life.

Regression models show that perceived risks predict protest willingness in a complex way. The non-physical risk of friends' disapproval and the physical risk of counter protesters' attacks predict protest willingness negatively, but police attacks predict it positively. According to the Opp theorem (Opp and Roehl, 1990), perceived risks impose their effect through either deterrence or radicalization mechanisms. The net outcome depends on the balance of the direct negative and indirect positive causal paths. Thus, in the case of non-physical risk, the negative deterrence mechanism outweighs the positive radicalization effect. On the other hand, regarding the perceived physical risks, the indirect radicalization mechanism seems stronger.

Regression models predicting different types of risks display that the perceived risk of friends' disapproval is not shaped by socio-demographic background, however students with a lower socio-economic status see significantly higher levels of both types of physical risks.

Statistical models also reflect that police attacks are the most politicized form of risk. In other words, both party preferences and political attitudes predict significantly the perceived risk of police attacks. My non-systematic news content overview has also demonstrated that there are numerous reports about police attacks, house searches and incarcerations. On the other hand, I did not find any stories about friends' negative reactions. Thus, physical risks are much more widely discussed in the public sphere than personal conflicts or disapproval of friends and relatives. Since the risk of police attacks is more politicized and publicly discussed, it may trigger anger, grievance, or other emotions and political attitudes which, in turn, evoke political activism. As friends' disapproval has not been interpreted in politics, it does not trigger any other political factor, and remains part of people's personal life.

As described above, the Hungarian state has been centralizing power, and is successfully squeezing out civil society organizations and opposition parties from decision-making processes. All the findings of my study broaden our knowledge about Hungarian illiberalism, since participating in demonstrations is not seen as risk-free. Thus, it appears that attending protests or government-critical political actions need more cautious decisions.

Further analyses aiming to explain risk perception in the context of protest participation will have to take into consideration the features of respondents' political milieu, and their psychological setup. Future work should also consider whether the content of protests and demonstrations reaches people and what citizens' reactions to these stimuli are.

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Appendix

Table A1: Logistic regression models explaining the perceived risk of friends'
condemnation

Independent variables	Model I			Model II			Model III		
	OR	CI	p	OR	CI	p	OR	CI	p
(Intercept)	0.35	0.18-0.62	0.001	0.36	0.17-0.74	0.006	0.38	0.17-0.85	0.019
Gender: male ref.: female	0.94	0.65-1.35	0.741	0.98	0.67-1.45	0.937	0.97	0.65-1.44	0.878
Place of residence: Budapest ref.: rural	0.79	0.50-1.25	0.317	0.80	0.50-1.28	0.350	0.81	0.50-1.31	0.401
Place of residence: city ref.: rural	0.66	0.41-1.04	0.075	0.62	0.38-1.00	0.052	**0.61**	**0.38-1.00**	**0.050**
Father's educational level (secondary) ref.: primary	0.75	0.45-1.24	0.259	0.67	0.40-1.13	0.136	0.65	0.38-1.11	0.115
Father's educational level (tertiary) ref.: primary	1.02	0.62-1.67	0.946	0.93	0.56-1.55	0.795	0.93	0.56-1.55	0.776
Subjective economic status: just adequate ref.: less than adequate	0.87	0.50-1.53	0.633	0.88	0.50-1.57	0.669	0.90	0.50-1.60	0.713
Subjective economic status: more than adequate ref.: less than adequate	0.77	0.41-1.44	0.408	0.70	0.36-1.33	0.272	0.70	0.36-1.33	0.275
Level of education: MA and PhD ref.: BA	1.34	0.91-1.97	0.139	1.25	0.83-1.87	0.282	1.28	0.85-1.92	0.233
Political interest				1.47	0.99-2.17	0.056	**1.52**	**1.02-2.27**	**0.042**
Dissatisfaction with democracy				0.81	0.53-1.25	0.344	0.96	0.58-1.57	0.864
(conservative-)liberal ideology				**1.26**	**1.00-1.58**	**0.051**	**1.33**	**1.05-1.59**	**0.020**
(left-) right ideology				**1.30**	**1.04-1.61**	**0.019**	**1.26**	**1.01-1.58**	**0.041**
(moderate-) radical ideology				1.14	0.94-1.38	0.191	1.13	0.93-1.37	0.209
Party preference: *Fidesz* ref.: Do not vote, do not know							1.17	0.60-2.26	0.650
Party preference: *Jobbik* ref.: Do not vote, do not know							0.84	0.45-1.56	0.580
Party preference: *Momentum* ref.: Do not vote, do not know							0.61	0.32-1.17	0.135
Party preference: Other opposition parties ref.: Do not vote, do not know							0.70	0.41-1.21	0.203
N	755			734			734		
Tjur's R²	0.013			0.034			0.040		

OR=Odds Ratio
Source: Active Youth Survey, 2019

Table A2: Logistic regression models explaining the perceived risk of counter-protesters' attack

Independent variables	Model I			Model II			Model III		
	OR	CI	p	OR	CI	p	OR	CI	p
(Intercept)	0.78	0.45-1.35	0.383	0.51	0.27-0.98	**0.044**	0.55	0.27-1.15	0.099
Gender: male ref.: female	**1.40**	**1.02-1.94**	**0.038**	1.40	0.99-1.97	0.056	1.40	0.99-1.98	0.056
Place of residence: Budapest ref.: rural	0.65	0.42-1.01	0.053	0.64	0.41-1.00	0.052	0.65	0.41-1.01	0.057
Place of residence: city ref.: rural	0.50	0.32-0.78	**0.002**	0.47	0.30-0.75	**0.001**	0.47	0.30-0.75	**0.001**
Father's educational level (secondary) ref.: primary	1.32	0.93-1.87	0.114	1.31	0.92-1.88	0.134	1.31	0.91-1.87	0.142
Father's educational level (tertiary) ref.: primary	**0.54**	**0.34-0.89**	**0.014**	**0.57**	**0.35-0.94**	**0.026**	**0.58**	**0.35-0.95**	**0.030**
Subjective economic status: just adequate ref.: less than adequate	0.61	0.35-1.04	0.067	0.62	0.36-1.09	0.095	0.63	0.36-1.11	0.108
Subjective economic status: more than adequate ref.: less than adequate	1.21	0.81-1.81	0.351	1.09	0.71-1.65	0.689	1.07	0.70-1.63	0.757
Level of education: MA and PhD ref.: BA	1.09	0.73-1.61	0.680	1.00	0.67-1.50	0.984	1.00	0.66-1.49	0.985
Political interest				1.02	0.72-1.43	0.927	1.02	0.72-1.44	0.929
Dissatisfaction with democracy				**1.94**	**1.32-2.88**	**0.001**	**2.03**	**1.32-3.18**	**0.002**
(conservative-)liberal ideology				0.84	0.69-1.02	0.078	0.84	0.69-1.03	0.098
(left-) right ideology				0.99	0.82-1.20	0.948	1.00	0.83-1.22	0.969
(moderate-) radical ideology				0.91	0.77-1.08	0.302	0.92	0.78-1.09	0.344
Party preference: *Fidesz* ref.: Do not vote, do not know							0.97	0.52-1.81	0.931
Party preference: *Jobbik* ref.: Do not vote, do not know							0.73	0.41-1.25	0.254
Party preference: *Momentum* ref.: Do not vote, do not know							0.86	0.50-1.46	0.571
Party preference: Other parties ref.: Do not vote, do not know							0.91	0.57-1.43	0.673
N	759			739			739		
Tjur's R^2	0.032			0.053			0.055		

OR=Odds Ratio

Source: Active Youth Survey, 2019

Table A3: Logistic regression models explaining the perceived risk of police attacks

Independent variables	Model I			Model II			Model III		
	OR	CI	p	OR	CI	p	OR	CI	p
(Intercept)	1.64	0.95-2.84	0.075	0.87	0.46-1.63	0.659	1.02	0.51-2.04	0.946
Gender: male ref.: female	**1.59**	**1.18-2.14**	**0.002**	**1.62**	**1.18-2.22**	**0.003**	**1.63**	**1.18-2.25**	**0.003**
Place of residence: Budapest ref.: rural	1.15	0.80-1.67	0.453	1.05	0.71-1.54	0.824	1.05	0.70-1.56	0.817
Place of residence: city ref.: rural	0.84	0.58-1.20	0.330	0.75	0.51-1.09	0.130	0.73	0.50-1.07	0.111
Father's educational level (secondary) ref.: primary	**0.63**	**0.41-0.96**	**0.031**	**0.64**	**0.41-1.00**	**0.048**	0.68	0.44-1.06	0.091
Father's educational level (tertiary) ref.: primary	**0.47**	**0.31-0.71**	**0.001**	**0.47**	**0.30-0.74**	**0.001**	**0.49**	**0.32-0.77**	**0.002**
Subjective economic status: just adequate ref.: less than adequate	0.67	0.41-1.09	0.105	0.74	0.45-1.21	0.231	0.70	0.42-1.15	0.161
Subjective economic status: more than adequate ref.: less than adequate	**0.55**	**0.32-0.93**	**0.026**	0.63	0.36-1.09	0.097	0.60	0.34-1.04	0.070
Level of education: MA and PhD ref.: BA	**1.42**	**1.02-1.96**	**0.036**	**1.48**	**1.05-2.09**	**0.023**	**1.53**	**1.08-2.16**	**0.016**
Political interest				0.89	0.65-1.23	0.485	0.90	0.65-1.26	0.554
Dissatisfaction with democracy				**2.38**	**1.67-3.39**	**<0.001**	**1.82**	**1.23-2.69**	**0.003**
(conservative-)liberal ideology				0.93	0.77-1.12	0.429	0.87	0.72-1.05	0.148
(left-) right ideology				0.96	0.80-1.14	0.586	0.98	0.82-1.18	0.870
(moderate-) radical ideology				**1.24**	**1.06-1.46**	**0.007**	**1.24**	**1.06-1.46**	**0.008**
Party preference: *Fidesz* ref.: Do not vote, do not know							**0.48**	**0.27-0.87**	**0.015**
Party preference: Jobbik ref.: Do not vote, do not know							1.12	0.68-1.86	0.657
Party preference: *Momentum* ref.: Do not vote, do not know							1.48	0.89-2.45	0.132
Party preference: Other parties ref.: Do not vote, do not know							1.10	0.71-1.69	0.680
N	756			736			736		
Tjur's R^2	0.049			0.092			0.106		

OR=Odds Ratio

Source: Active Youth Survey, 2019

DIANA MARGARIT AND HENRY RAMMELT *

The Revitalization of Social and Civic Participation in Eastern Europe? Industrial Conflict and Popular Protests in Romania

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Abstract

In the context of recent global economic and political changes, trade unions were forced to find new discursive and organisational strategies, as well as new means of imposing their agendas. However, the form and configurations of protests in Romania have shifted significantly from the workers' strikes of the 1990s to middle-class protests, often described as being founded on the interests of young people and mainly focusing on the quality of democracy. In this paper we explain the weakness of interaction and the absence of spillover effects between popular protests and trade union mobilization. We demonstrate that, despite the high level of social mobilization Romania witnessed in the period January 2017–July 2018, and arguably since 2012, trade unions and popular protests did not manage to build on each other's mobilization efforts. Although the mass protests might have positively influenced opportunity structures, trade unions were not able to benefit from them. Therefore, rather than looking at opportunity structures, in this paper we propose to understand the incapacity to join forces through an analysis of the mobilization claims of both parties and of their internal characteristics, such as their participants (by emphasizing the active involvement of young people), and organizational features. We argue that the lack of interaction between protests and unions is to be explained by incompatible mobilization frames: whilst unions also opposed the reform of the justice system, their main focus was the pension system and tax reform – moreover, they addressed issues specifically associated with work; popular protests, on the other hand, mobilized young people almost exclusively around the reform of the justice system.

Keywords: participation, unions, protests, mobilization frames, Romania.

1. Introduction

In the context of neoliberal globalization and recent global economic crises, trade unions have been challenged to find new means of imposing their agendas, even though this has sometimes supposed their radicalization (Upchurch and Mathers, 2011). In 2016, 150 million workers organized a National Trade Union strike in India, whilst more than one million people took to the streets of France against pension reform in late 2019. The worldwide annual May Day protests and the occasional and/or isolated actions of workers' unions prove that trade unionism is not only about some groups' labor rights, but is more than that: it concerns the urge of individuals to impose themselves as real participants and negotiators with and among economic and political decision-makers. From this perspective, the former can be perceived as a promoter of democracy (Erne and Blaser, 2018).

Along with the increase in economic pressure imposed by the global market for cheap labor and governments' decisions to favor companies often over their own employees, trade unions have had to reconsider their narratives and strategies for action. In the European context, 'the dominant tendency has been for union hierarchies to seek an accommodation with neo-liberalism through various forms of "concession bargaining" and "social partnership"' (Taylor and Mathers, 2002: 94). However, the most recent instances of social unrest in Europe have involved new forms of solidarity and the mobilization of trade unions and grassroots movements in joint activities (Greskovits, 2015; Hyman and Gumbrell-McCormick, 2017). Protests organized in Brazil in June 2019, Austria in July 2018, the UK in July 2017, Portugal in 2012, and Greece starting in 2011 are only a few of the many cases of collaboration between unions and civic grassroots initiatives that have exerted pressure on governments. All around Europe, including in Central and Eastern Europe, antigovernment protests have challenged political decision-makers to reconsider the austerity measures implemented in the aftermath of the economic crisis (Varga, 2015). The former have diversified their strategies by alternating protests and strikes, on the one hand, and negotiations with political authorities, on the other.

However, in Romania, the form and configurations of protests have shifted significantly from the workers' strikes of the 1990s to middle-class protests mainly focusing on the quality of democracy (Bădescu and Burean, 2014). Interestingly, young people have played a key role in the massive waves of popular protest that have struck this country (at least) since the 2013 environmental movement (involving Roșia Montană), the Colectiv protests at the end of 2015 (following a fire in the nightclub Colectiv that claimed 64 lives) and the more recent anti-corruption protests that continued throughout the years 2017 and 2018. The significant involvement of young people in the protests is also intriguing, as this age cohort has been known for its political apathy (e.g. participation in the 2016 parliamentary elections in the age cohort 18–24 was 29 per cent, and 32 per cent for those aged 25–34, as compared to 54 per cent for the age cohorts 45–64 and 49 per cent for those aged 65+; cf. Marin, 2016). This seems to confirm the conclusions of the intensifying debate about the low level of participation in elections of young

people (Zerka, 2019) but their increase in political involvement through non-conventional forms of participation (Dalton, 2008; Sloam, 2007). However, unlike in the country cases mentioned above, popular protests in Romania and protests organized by trade unions do not seem to have interacted. The fact that protests and trade unions have not overlapped might indicate a generational conflict between a 'new generation of citizens' and older people 'too set in their ways to be responsible for social and political change' (Franklin, 2004: 216).

In order to take stock of the cohort effects observable in the composition of popular protests and their relation to trade-union-organized events, this paper sets out to analyze the mobilization frames that were utilized therein. Whilst the former mainly relied on a salient anti-corruption and law-and-order mobilization frame, the latter mobilized around constituency-oriented claims. Generally, interactions between unions and movements against austerity politics have significantly differed from country to country, from tense relations to strong cooperation, as demonstrated by Della Porta (Della Porta, 2017) for several European countries, including Spain, Greece, Iceland, Portugal, Italy, Ireland, and Cyprus. What are the specific circumstances that conditioned the relation between trade unions and mass protests in Romania, and what form has their interaction taken in past years? In order to answer this question, we look at structural features and mobilization frames within both groups – trade unionists and popular protests–, thereby attempting to explain the weak cross-fertilization and absence of spillover effects between popular protests and trade union mobilization. We hypothesize that very subjective perceptions about the political and social problems of popular protest participants (namely, the overarching corruption/anti-corruption frame) and the narrow claims of labor unions have hampered the two from interacting in a mutually stimulating way. The rationale of this paper is elaborated by drawing on scholarship in the discipline, notably that related to framing and frame analysis (Section 2), whilst pinpointing the key characteristics of Romanian protests in the past years (Section 3). We then discuss the specific relationship of trade unions and mass protests in Romania and answer the question 'Why have trade unions and activists missed their date in the streets?' (Section 4), before offering concluding remarks about the relevance of the Romanian case and the conditions under which trade unions and mass protests can (potentially) stimulate one another (Section 5).

2. Theoretical framework

Trade unions represent hierarchical professional organizations that generally seek to provide workers with social and economic protection, and which struggle to express their voice in sectorial decision-making processes both at a local and national level (Fairbrother, 2008). Due to their capacity to create solidarity and their ability to challenge the political and labor-capital system, trade unions act as social movements. They create their own frames of mobilization, organization (membership and leadership), and discontent. They address economic and political leadership and formulate demands by engaging their members in a wide variety of

organizational, negotiation- and action-based strategies (strikes, marches, and picketing). Additionally, they express the labor and working-class struggles which influence their members' workplaces and day-to-day lives in terms of social justice, equity, and fairness (Ross, 2007; Webster, 2012).

Unlike other social movements, social movement unionism is rather focused on local features of workplaces and manifests sporadically; e.g. during economic crises that determine unpopular governmental decisions, such as budgetary cuts, fiscal austerity measures, inflation, and so on (Fairbrother and Webster, 2008). However, as Moody stresses, this involves a highly democratic, militant, politically independent form of activism that has the ability to associate itself with other forms of social and political activism not necessarily related to unionism (Moody, 1997: 4–5).

The impact of the labor movement on the evolution of human rights is undeniable. Moody's portrait of the former might seem idealistic, but the achievements of trade unions during the past two centuries have not only improved working conditions and citizens' rights, but have also dramatically changed societies (Scipes, 2014). Their diagnostic, prognostic, and mobilization frames have irreversibly contributed to the evolution of collective rights by proposing a more socially oriented perspective about how states and societies should work to become more equitable and fairer (Evans, 2015).

Frames are packages of meaning (Jasper, 2007: 76) – structures that help individuals and groups to observe and understand occurrences through their private and collective experiences. Thus, frames encode and decode experiences. In the case of collective action, frames express and shape the identity of a group, its values, norms, and environment (Gamson, 2015). According to Benford and Snow, frames are 'action-oriented sets of beliefs and meanings that inspire and legitimate the activities and campaigns of a social movement organization. […] [They] are constructed in part as movement adherents negotiate a shared understanding of some problematic condition or situation they define as in need of change, make attributions regarding who or what is to blame, articulate an alternative set of arrangements, and urge other to act in concert to affect change' (Benford and Snow, 2000: 614-615). In this respect, the framing perspective offers complex insights into how activists perceive themselves and their environment, how they present themselves to the rest of society, and the instruments they use to coagulate and disseminate these frames within society. Differently put, the former 'attempts to understand the way in which social movements and social movement actors create and use meaning' (Christiansen, 2011: 145). Framing processes can be diagnostic, prognostic, or motivational (Benford and Snow, 2000: 615–618). First, diagnostic framing refers to the way a movement understands and evaluates its issues or its resources and identifies those responsible for the situation they intend to change. Second, prognostic framing encompasses action plans aimed at solving problems, based on the diagnostic framing. Third, motivational framing helps members and bystanders to join the movement and act together by stimulating mobilization and creating cohesion.

Frames constructed by mobilizing agents determine why 'one set of meanings rather than another is conveyed' (Snow, 2016: 124). For effective mobilization strategies, frames need to accord with the preferences of the targeted audiences to generate *frame resonance* (Snow and Benford, 1988). In the Romanian case, trade unions on the one hand and popular protests on the other constructed separately their own activities and discursive frames and failed to create a common core, at least in those areas where their claims coincided. Thus, they were not able to negotiate, articulate echoing messages, or influence each other in order to transform bystanders and outsiders into adherents.

Movements have to define their boundaries within an ideological and social structure framework (Snow, 2004; Veigh, Myers and Sikkink, 2004), and whilst the post-communist context could undeniably provide at least a partial explanation of the low level of civic activism and apathy among citizens (Anderson, 1999), it does not explain why and how the framing activities of trade unionists and activists during the popular protests did not converge. In some cases, the content (the demands or claims) and activities (the tools used by movements to achieve their goals) are able to create an ad-hoc common framework for the combined work of several groups (Chesters and Welsh, 2004), whilst in others not.

3. Popular protests in Romania: Participants and claims

Massive anti-corruption protests broke out in early 2017 and continued, with fluctuation in participant numbers, until the summer of 2018. These protests highlighted a trend to increased social mobilization and participation in protest that has been observable since the anti-austerity protests of 2011, and that laid to rest the scholarly work on Romania that described that country's political culture as unfavorable to civic involvement (Bădescu et al., 2004; de Bellet, 2001; Mungiu-Pippidi, 2005; Pitulac, 2011; Stan, 2010). The recent waves of protest were often empowered by strong coalitions of often diverging actors (Margarit, 2018; Rammelt, 2018).

At least since the Roşia Montană protests in 2013, and later in 2015 with the Colectiv protests, participants have often been characterized as 'educated pro-West youth, fighting for values and "[a] moral revolution"' (Abăseacă, 2015a). Surveys of Colectiv protest participants (leaving aside any considerations about methodological problems) in 2015 and the anti-corruption protests of 2017 shed light on the socio-demographic profile of the protesters: they mainly belonged to the age cohort 22 to 45, were highly educated, and their unconventional political engagement was characterized by strong continuity (Chiş, Nicolescu and Bujdei-Tebeica, 2017; Pasti et al., 2015). Notably throughout the year 2017 the characteristics of this social group, amongst others, tended to stimulate left-leaning intellectuals and commentators in the region to take a critical stance towards the protests (Rogozanu, 2017; Siulea, 2017). Others asserted that the 'right-leaning middle-class' had gained control of the protests in Romania (Ţichindeleanu, 2017) or saw the 2017 protests as the culmination of a wave of 'middle-class activism' that started well before that year (Deoancă, 2017). G. M. Tamás described the

protesters' main stimulus as follows: 'The demonstrations are fueled by the contempt of the young liberal middle class for the poor who are regarded as the electorate of the governing party, the PSD [the Social-Democrat Party], considered old and decrepit and barbarian' (Bayer, 2017).

Whilst the anti-austerity protests of 2011/12 still included anti-capitalist themes (Țăranu, 2012) and were fueled by a perceived contradiction between former communist political elites and the neo-liberal politics they implemented (Deoancă, 2012), protests in the following years lost their anti-system character, increasingly integrating Western ideals about democracy and a capitalist meritocracy (Stoiciu, 2017). Consequently, corruption evolved as the identifiable source of discrepancy between European/Western aspirations and post-communist achievements. Nonetheless, corruption and a lack of respect for the rule of law of domestic elites was a central element in the mobilization of participants as early as in the Roșia Montană protests of 2013 (Abăseacă, 2015b). The constant attempts of the governing coalition since its inauguration in late 2016 to reform the justice system – mainly by targeting anti-corruption agencies such as the National Anticorruption Directorate (DNA) –, claimed by protesters to be weakening anti-corruption efforts, ultimately instituted 'corruption/anti-corruption' as the overarching axis of polarization in Romania (Craciun, 2017). The fire that broke out in the alternative club 'Colectiv' was an external catalyst of the pent-up discontent of broad segments of Romanian society with traditional political actors. 'Corrupt' politicians were able to be held responsible for actual lives being lost. Further, an image of secular and modern European societies was contrasted with that of a backward Romanian society, characterized by the collaboration of corrupt politicians with the Orthodox Church. Employing this image enabled the protesters to structure an alternative social identity by opposing the negative societal characteristics of the political establishment.

The protesters created a convincing diagnostic frame through which political elites could be held responsible for perceived misery by stressing discrepancies between European/modern expectations and post-communist achievements, whilst the in-group-outgroup distinction enabled them to define an effective identity frame in which the protest participants became the true representatives of Romanian society. 'We are the true Romanians. Not Firea, not Tăriceanu, not Dragnea. We are those representing Romania!' – a slogan used by a protest coalition throughout the year 2017 representative of the identity frame employed since the Roșia Montană protests, with the names of members of the domestic elite interchangeable. The consolidation of these mobilization frames provided the motivational basis for protest participation. It was notably the 2017/18 protests that showed how important the gradual construction of a unified vision of 'evil' in Romanian society was for mobilizing participants formerly not involved in protest activity.

Whilst employing this diagnostic frame, the prognostic one was strengthened through the externalization of protest claims. Appealing to foreign ambassadors and the international public, and 'calling out for help' on the EU level became means of counteracting the perceived lack of responsiveness of the

domestic political system. During the crisis of January/ February 2017, EU politicians were keen to express their disappointment with the incumbent Romanian government's stance in relation to anti-corruption efforts. The strong clientelism and corruption associated with the national government created a salient value-practice gap, further strengthening the motivational frame directed against national political elites. This frame was further amplified by criticism of EU officials and authorities related to the national government, and vice versa.

4. Discussion: Why did trade unions and activists miss their date in the street?

Following the mass protests held at the beginning of the year, Romanian trade unions mobilized for several rallies during the summer and fall of 2017. Notably, 'Cartel Alfa', a steel and mining labor union, and 'Sindicatul Sanitas', active in the health sector, managed to gather thousands of participants to protest in front of the parliament and the Romanian government. Their claims were focused on changes in the pension system ratified earlier by the Romanian parliament. Later that same year, trade unions adopted a strategy of reproducing the repertoire of contention used by the activists and proposed a joint initiative involving all union confederations on a Sunday in November 2017. They called upon society to support and join them in the protest, opposing a governmental decision to change the fiscal code and the justice system. They criticized, on the one hand, the idea of transferring the tax obligations of employment income from employers to employees, and, on the other hand, the amendments of the criminal code concerning the pardoning of the abuse of power, professional negligence, the use of voice or video recordings as evidence in court under certain conditions, as well as the subordination of prosecutors to the Ministry of Justice. Despite the massive protests against the amendments of the criminal code only a few months before, in February 2017 the unions' mobilization efforts were weakly rewarded. As a matter of fact, one of the union leaders admitted that the low rates of participation – only 20,000 people compared to almost 150,000 on February 1, 2017 (Marinas and Ilie, 2017) – was the result of the unions' hasty organization. Despite the massive wave of rallies and the associated (international) media coverage of the February 2017 protests, the unions not only failed to convince outsiders to join them but were also unable to mobilize their own members.

Although trade unions organized dozens of strikes and protests each year, their activities remained isolated and were not transformed into generators and diffusers of demand within society. Moreover, they failed to address bystanders and to encompass their claims in one common collective frame. The activities associated with popular protests and unions created their own diagnostic, prognostic, and motivational framings. Concerning the diagnostic frame, they addressed their complaints at the government and considered it as the main agent responsible for the perceived problems they had identified. At the prognostic level, their demands converged to the point where both groups demanded the prime minister's resignation. However, at the motivational level, the discrepancies

between the two groups created an insurmountable gap, as both the activists and trade unionists articulated different narratives about social change. The former aimed at the more profound and structural reform of the political system, only starting with the resignation of the government, whereas the latter had a narrower approach to change when referring to the amendments of the criminal and fiscal codes.

Given the decline in government legitimacy in broad segments of society caused by the mass protests at the beginning of the year, why did trade unions not get popular support, despite the antigovernmental character of their protests? The credibility of a movement or its leaders represents a salient aspect of the mobilization process and the diffusion of information (Sherkat and Ellison, 1997; Wilson and Sherrell, 1993). As Polletta states, 'how activists define a problem determines whether people will mobilize around it' (Polletta, 2008: 84). Activists create their own frames of understanding reality and solving acute and pressing issues. Thus, culture and agency play a decisive role in the configuration of collective action (Goodwin and Jasper, 1999). Within the cultural framework of distrust that dominated post-communist Romanian society after the fall of the pre-democratic regime (Rose and Mishler, 2011), the perception of the credibility and efficiency of trade unions and the low rate of individual participation of members of civil society evolved differently. Despite the formal democratization of the unionist movement on liberal grounds – i.e. involving the legal guarantee and protection of human rights –, the popularity of the former was severely damaged. Whilst in 1989 unionist membership comprised almost 100 per cent of the active population, this had declined to just 32 per cent by 2008 (Muntean, 2011).

In Romania, trade unionism suffered the first structural changes starting with the 1989 revolution and the fall of the communist regime. The national trade union that was used to gather all the workers together, and which functioned as a tool of control and domination by the ex-Communist Party, was dissolved. It was soon replaced by a locally and nationally decentralized unionism, which is still in place. The unionist body is structured into company unions (which have individuals as members) that are affiliated to national federations based on their fields of activity. National federations are in a similar manner part of national confederations. Five of these confederations (CNSLR-Frăţia, CNS Cartel Alfa, BNS, CSDR, and CSN Meridian) are represented in the Economic and Social Council, a national social forum for negotiations between unions, economic actors, and the government, whose role is only consultative in respect to social and economic strategies and politics. Notwithstanding these and other legal and structural impediments, until 2011 trade unions managed to support strong forms of mobilization, hence Romania witnessed higher levels of industrial conflict than other countries in the region (Varga and Freyberg-Inan, 2015: 682). Mass demonstrations and strikes were organized in October 2009 and May 2010, and trade unions also played a role in mobilizing against austerity measures in 2012 (Hayes, 2017: 22).

However, surveys of Romanians' trust in institutions regularly identify unions as being among the less trustworthy agents, next to the government,

political parties, parliament, and the banks (Eurobarometer 74, 2011: 27; Ionescu, 2018). At least from this perspective, young Romanian people share a common mistrust of unions, as is the case with other social and age categories. According to research commissioned by the Friedrich Ebert Foundation conducted in 2018–2019 which examines socio-economic status, values, norms, perceptions about life, work, religion, democracy, and political engagement, young Romanians not only distrust unions, but they also avoid engaging in them (Bădescu et al., 2019: 45, 68). Later enquiries into youth participation proved that patterns of engagement have changed dramatically in the last thirty years. They now involve less institutionalized, more informal forms of organization and mobilization (Burean, 2019; Mercea, 2014). This explains why the civic and political engagement of youth takes the form of spontaneous gatherings in public spaces, rallies, or marches, whilst avoiding membership in unions, political parties, and even NGOs.

Several reasons, both internal and external, for this distrust in unions are worth pointing out. These include the a) organizational; b) strategic; and, c) legal framework. From the point of view of organization, unions have been characterized by an increasing gap in the incomes and political opportunities of leaders and members, which has reduced the legitimacy of their leadership (Korkut, 2006; Varga, 2013a). Union activities have a higher chance of succeeding when leaders and members have congruent values and visions about present and future outcomes (Upchurch, Croucher and Flynn, 2012), or, in other words, share diagnostic, prognostic, and motivational frames. Additionally, a number of the leaders of Romanian unions have been accused of having an income ten times greater than that of their members (Tutulan, 2016), whilst others have used their positions to achieve political advantages or obtain personal benefits (V.M., 2013).

Another issue which has considerably affected the credibility of the unions is the strategies they have used when articulating their demands and negotiating with the management of companies or the government. In this regard, we stress here some of the crucial moments that reflect their inefficiency at representing workers' interests. First, during the 1990s, when most industrial sectors and many companies were privatized, unions did not manage to advantageously negotiate for workers in relation to the terms of budget cuts and massive waves of dismissals (Varga, 2013b). Second, during the past almost 30 years, those trade unions that preferred direct negotiations to strikes or protests failed on many occasions, especially when their claims related to increasing workers' wages. The instability of the political system, as well as the transitory nature of the terms of political actors appointed for negotiations, did not favor the unions. On the contrary, those unions that chose less time-consuming and more direct, percussive, and visible strategies (such as strikes) proved more efficient than the others.

A third relevant aspect in understanding the debilitation of unionism in Romania is related to the legal framework, especially the Social Dialogue Act (62/2011), which was adopted without any prior public debate. This stipulates that establishments must have a minimum of 15 employees as a condition for creating a union organization. This significantly affects more than one million people working in small companies with fewer than 15 employees. In the event of non-

compliance with the rule concerning the minimum number of members, the organization can be dissolved at any moment if a third party makes a solicitation in court. In addition, the law only considers as valid employees who have a work contract, thereby excluding other categories of people that engage in independent activities/temporary employment (translators, actors, freelance journalists, day-laborers, students, and so on). Concerning collective bargaining contracts, the same law requires that for negotiations to proceed the number of union members should represent at least half of the number of employees at the same establishment. Finally, the law makes it even more difficult for the different types of unions to reach agreement, both between them and the economic sector, on the one hand, and with the government, on the other (Stoiciu, 2016; Trif, 2013).

5. Conclusion

We have emphasized that, despite the high level of social mobilization Romania witnessed in the period January 2017–July 2018, and arguably since 2012, the mobilization efforts of trade unions and popular protests did not manage to converge. Although the mass protests might have positively influenced cultural opportunity structures, notably due to the 'dramatization of a system's vulnerability or illegitimacy' (McAdam, 1996: 28), trade unions were unable to benefit. Rather than looking at opportunity structures, in this paper we proposed understanding this incapacity to join forces through the analysis of the mobilization claims of both parties and their internal characteristics, such as their participants and organizational features. Very subjective perceptions about the political and social problems of participants of popular protests, and the prime importance of the anti-corruption mobilization frame, are the main impediments to interaction between mass protests and trade unions.

Amongst other reasons, the 'middle-classness' of the popular protests largely mobilized young people, with their intrinsic appreciation of Western models of democracy and meritocracy. This fact, combined with the quasi absence of the social dimension in the political discourse, did not appeal to those involved in trade union mobilization. On the other hand, the narrow claims of trade unions did not resonate with mass protest participants, and the nature of the latter excluded them from the constituency of the former. The fracturing of unions and legal restrictions limiting them to playing a consultative role has also contributed, at least since 2011, to their inefficiency at representing workers' interests. Also, a lack of credible leadership and the weakness of their horizontal organization impacted the perception of their credibility and efficiency following the regime change. All these elements combined with the chronic lack of solidarity that pervades all levels of Romanian society – a cultural legacy of the communist era embedded in a neoliberal post-communist background – have undeniably deepened the gap between unionists and mass protesters.

In brief, what the analysis underpinning this paper has revealed is that the lack of interaction between protests and unions is to be explained by their incompatible mobilization frames: whilst unions also opposed the reform of the

justice system, their main focus was the pension system and tax reform; popular protests, on the other hand, mobilized almost exclusively around the issue of the need for reform of the justice system. In the light of scholarly evidence about the decline of class identification (Evans, 2000; Heath et al., 2009), particularly amongst younger citizens, further research is needed about the class identification of protesters in Romania.

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ANNAMÁRIA SEBESTYÉN *
The Mobilization Potential of Political Parties among Hungarian Students

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Abstract

Situated in the literature that examines the reasons for the dearth of young party members, this article discusses the mobilization potential of political parties among the youth in light of research conducted among Hungarian university and college students (Active Youth Research, 2019). On the one hand, it analyses the mobilization propensity of Hungarian political parties, and on the other, examines to what extent party-political mobilization plays a role in encouraging young people's involvement in party activities compared to other predisposing factors. Making use of the unique dataset, the study also investigates what attitudinal features distinguish party-politically active students from the rest of the student population. The results show that parties' mobilization attempts are a principal factor in encouraging young people's party participation in Hungary, although parties per se are not able to motivate them; politically stimulating family and peer groups and events that shape political views are also needed to set the stage for involvement. The article also finds that the political interest of party-politically active students is demonstrably higher than that of their counterparts, but both groups have rather negative views about Hungarian politics and are dissatisfied with the country's democracy and present social conditions.

1. Introduction

It is established in the scholarship that, compared to older generations, today's youth are less inclined to join political parties, and it is taken for granted that the main reason for this is that they are less concerned with conventional politics and conventional forms of participation (see for example Norris, 2011; Dalton, 2013; García-Albacete, 2014; Pickard and Bessant, 2018). These assumptions, however, fail to take into account the fact that participation is not just a matter of individual propensity, but also of mobilization channels. The low level of willingness of youth to become involved in political parties cannot only be interpreted as a lack of interest but might also be because parties are less available to them (Hooghe and Stolle, 2005). Consideration of the issue only from the perspective of young people is therefore insufficient and can generate misleading conclusions. Accordingly, in this study, which focuses on the factors that encourage young people's party-political activity, we attempt to examine both aspects of the relationship between parties and youth.[1]

Youth research conducted in Hungary after the democratic transition has repeatedly identified the pronounced underrepresentation of young people within political parties (Stumpf, 1995; Bauer and Szabó, 2005; 2009; Oross, 2013). Recent data do not show any fundamental changes either – membership has stabilized at a low level (Bauer et al., 2016). The causes of this phenomenon, however, have not yet been investigated, therefore this study aims to take a step towards filling this gap. Following a bilateral approach, it can be said that the low level of youth participation in party organizations may either signal the weak mobilization propensity of Hungarian parties, or the unpopularity of these organizations to youth. It is therefore worth examining the parties' mobilization capacity and mobilization potential among young people – i.e., analyzing whether parties encourage the involvement of youth, on the one hand, and, on the other, measuring what proportion of youngsters would be willing to take part in party activities if the latter invited them to.

Despite the fact that parties can facilitate participation by recruiting citizens, we must not forget that mobilization per se is not necessarily enough to induce youngsters' involvement. The literature suggests that politically active people have distinct social and demographic features and political socialization experiences (Scarrow and Gezgor, 2010; van Haute and Gauja, 2015; Verba et al., 2018), therefore it is also important to look more closely at how potentially predisposing factors contribute to party participation, and at how extensive a role mobilization has in fostering young people's involvement in party activities compared to these effects.

In order to carry out this analysis, we examine survey data gathered from Hungarian university and college students by the Active Youth Research Group in 2019. The significance of this survey is the fact that it was the first initiative in

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Hungary to deal in detail with party mobilization among the youth and to place great emphasis on how to measure party-politically active students. Consequently, this study restricts its investigation to students, and its conclusions do not refer to the whole population of Hungarian youth. The article is structured in five parts. The first section briefly reviews some of the latest studies on party participation, while the second section presents the theoretical framework, questions, and hypotheses of the research. The third section introduces the data and describes the methods used, and the fourth section presents results. The final section summarizes the findings and highlights their implications.

2. Dwindling party membership, the aging of parties, and their amplified nature in the CEE region

Over the last couple of decades, almost all Western-European democracies have experienced a gradual decline in and aging of party membership (Mair and van Biezen, 2001; Scarrow and Gezgor, 2010; van Biezen et al., 2012), although it has also been shown that parties founded after World War II, and especially after 1980, tend to be less affected by these negative tendencies than those founded before the end of that war. Several newer parties, such as ecological-, radical right-wing-, smaller and regional parties, have managed to increase their membership in recent years, and also appear to have a higher proportion of younger members than their older counterparts (van Haute and Gauja, 2015; Kölln, 2016). These developments, though, do not alter the fact that people today are less inclined to join political parties, and that disengagement from parties is most acute among the younger generation. The common interpretation of this trend is that contemporary young people are less interested in party organizations that embody the 'old politics,' and are more enthusiastic about getting involved in non-conventional direct channels and more expressive ways of participating in politics (such as demonstrating, belonging to single-issue groups, wearing badges, or boycotting products for political or environmental reasons) instead of electoral activities and traditional parties (Norris, 2011; Dalton, 2013; García-Albacete, 2014; Pickard and Bessant, 2018).

The picture in Central and Eastern European countries differs in a number of ways. Political parties here, compared to their Western counterparts, are all new, except – to some extent – those parties that have roots in the distant past or in the communist era that were recreated to compete in the democratic system. Furthermore, being newer parties in a system in which most parties are relatively new means something completely different to what this situation in the West might suggest (Deschouver, 2017). The sudden and elite-driven democratic transition in the region led parties to focus on electoral mobilization instead of building mass-based organizations, and the fact that they emerged in a context in which modern mass communication tools were available to them to reach voters, and that state subsidies for parties were introduced at a relatively early stage of the democratization process, decreased the need for mass membership even in the longer term, resulting in the emergence of parties which have been successful

without a widespread and stable network of members and volunteers (van Biezen, 2003; Enyedi and Linek, 2008). The average level of both party membership and party activism in Central and Eastern Europe appears to be lower than that in most Western democracies, although a decline in party membership has been a shared feature of both since the late 1990s (van Biezen et al., 2012: 33; Kostelka, 2014: 952).

The east-west disparity is much less evident among young people. From an analysis of data from the International Social Science Programme (ISSP), Marko Kovacic and Danijela Dolenec did not find a significant difference in terms of party membership between 18–30-year-old Westerners and Central Eastern Europeans. The two groups show a similar willingness to participate in parties. Approximately the same proportion (5.1 and 4.35 per cent of youngsters, respectively) were party members in both regions at the time of research. In contrast, substantial differences were noted in terms of non-conventional forms of participation. The proportion of Western-European youth participating in political activities, such as signing petitions and taking part in protests and boycotts, was twice as great as that of their Central and Eastern European peers. In addition, the latter's participation in unconventional forms of politics was even lower, which suggests that their weak representation in parties cannot be interpreted as being due to the greater popularity of alternative or non-conventional forms of participation (Kovacic and Dolenec, 2018: 385–388).

Hungarian youth are at the bottom of the list in both dimensions, a claim also supported in Hungarian youth research. Only 1 per cent of young people aged 15–29 are engaged in political parties, and 2–3 per cent in non-conventional forms of participation (Bauer et al., 2016: 83). The situation has been similar over the past three decades. After a short period of upheaval in the second half of the 1980s, when more than 10 per cent of the latter were involved in the emerging political organizations, the engagement of youth dramatically dropped at the beginning of the first post-communist decade, and has remained stable at around 1 per cent until now (Stumpf, 1995: 114; Bauer and Szabó, 2005: 95; 2009: 117; Oross, 2013: 308). Consequently, the transformations of the party system during the past ten years are not reflected in the level of youth party participation, but changes in the level of support for parties might be observable.

After two decades of stability, in which for the most part the same parties were represented in the Hungarian parliament, and electoral competition was dominated by the two biggest left-wing and right-wing parties, MSZP (the Hungarian Socialist Party) and Fidesz (Fidesz – Hungarian Civic Alliance), with one or the other regularly receiving more than 40 percent of all votes, the 2010 parliamentary elections brought about pervasive changes, breaking the structure of the left-right, two-block party system (Soós, 2012). Public support for MSZP significantly weakened as Fidesz became the leading party with a two-thirds supermajority, and two former mainstream parties – MDF (Hungarian Democratic Forum) and SZDSZ (Alliance of Free Democrats) – lost their positions, while two newcomers entered the political landscape, disrupting the tendency to aging of the party system. The new political forces – namely, the far-right Jobbik (The Movement for a Better Hungary) and the green LMP (Politics Can be Different) –

expressed their difference from their mainstream counterparts and demanded radical system change based on different values. Jobbik campaigned for a change in the political elite on the basis of extreme-nationalist and right-wing values, while LMP aimed to break the polarization between left-liberal and right-wing camps by representing the principles of anti-globalist, environmentalist, and human-rights social movements. Both parties became popular very quickly among young voters, and especially among young students, although support for Fidesz remained stable (Kmetty, 2014). The success of these new parties was followed by the emergence of even newer parties. In 2011, former prime minister and president of MSZP Ferenc Gyurcsány formed a new social-liberal party named the Democratic Coalition (DK), while in 2013 the 'Together – Party for a New Era' (Együtt) party was established under the leadership of Former Prime Minister Gordon Bajnai from an alliance of three social movements (the Patriotism and Progress Association, the One Million for Press Freedom [Milla] and the Hungarian Solidarity Movement). In the same year, a group of radical left-wingers exited LMP and formed Dialogue for Hungary (PM), then in 2014 Hungary's first joke party, the Hungarian Two Tailed Dog Party (MKKP), appeared on the list of officially registered parties. At present, the two youngest parties are the liberal-centrist Momentum Movement founded in 2017, and the far-right Our Homeland Movement, launched by former Jobbik vice-president László Toroczkai in 2018. With the exception of Together (Együtt), all the new parties still exist and most have MPs in the national parliament (Jobbik, LMP, PM, DK), but none of them has so far been able to break the hegemony of Fidesz, which received a two-thirds legislative majority in both the 2014 and 2018 elections. The municipal elections of 2019, however, indicated the first crack in the Fidesz dominated system, as the opposition party candidates won the majority of capital districts and most seats in the Budapest city council, as well as almost half of the major urban centers. The governing party, though, retained its popularity in rural Hungary, demonstrating the weak influence of the opposition parties in most countryside areas (Bíró-Nagy and Sebők, 2020: 13).

All in all, although the number of Hungarian young party members has remained stable, the impact of the new parties can be presumed to be detectable, all the more so because most of them are 'movement parties' that pursue a bottom-up organizing logic, in contrast to the top-down organizational forms of their mainstream counterparts. These parties aim not only at getting elected, but also at radically reforming the political system by providing a more direct voice and form of participation to ordinary citizens both in terms of their politics and their activities. Due to this characteristic, and the fact that they are newcomers in politics, they are expected to be particularly inclined to expend greater effort on attracting young supporters and activists.[2] The advance of the Momentum

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[2] A distinction between parties and movements can be made. All parties used to be movements, but only some of them became big tent parties. Thus, this differentiation is based on the issue of organizational aging, and the temporality of political groupings, which is not the focus of the present study.

Movement is especially notable, as the latter defines itself as the new political generation of Hungary, and mostly consists of young intelligentsia who are in their 20s and 30s. The party has invested considerable energy in mobilizing young people during the past three years, which effort is still palpable as of today. In the 2019 European Parliamentary Election, Momentum was the second most successful Hungarian opposition party behind DK, winning a significant proportion of voters from earlier founded opposition parties (Bíró-Nagy and Sebők, 2020: 27). However, the question remains whether Momentum will be able to reach and exceed the popularity of Fidesz in the future.

3. In pursuit of the preconditions of party-political action

Mobilization is considered to be an important predictor of political participation; however, it is widely contested to what extent it helps explain it. This is especially because the focus of research has generally been limited to a few electoral activities (e.g. voting and campaign work) or political recruitment in general (Rosenstone and Hansen, 1993; Karp and Baducci, 2007; Grabarek, 2011; Green and Schwam, 2016; Verba et al., 2018).

Two theoretical models provide a useful starting point for the present investigation: a model by Bert Klandermans and Dirk Oegema on participation in social movements, and the Civil Voluntarism Model (CVM) of Sydney Verba and his colleagues. The central hypothesis of the former conception is that mobilization acts as a catalyst for enrollment among those who are included in the mobilization potential of a mobilizing organization. The notion 'mobilization potential' refers to those people who are ready to take part in the activities of an organization if it invites them to. On the one hand, the hypothesis suggests that such organizations have already reached the former through some kind of channel, and that they have a positive attitude towards the latter, and on the other that people who are not part of this mobilization potential will not consider participating, even if they are reached by mobilization attempts (Klandermans and Oegema, 1987: 519).

The CVM model also states that mobilization is neither a sufficient nor a necessary condition for political participation. One can participate without being requested to, and can refuse a request to participate too, but a request is an important indicator of how available mobilization channels are to individuals. Taking into account this aspect is crucial in Hungary, where most newcomer parties are concentrated in the capital, which inhibits the involvement of those who live in rural areas, especially smaller towns and municipalities. According to the model, being asked to participate encourages the involvement of those 'with the wherewithal and desire to become active.' The former refers to socioeconomic features that are closely related to resources such as time, money, knowledge, and the skills necessary to participate, while the latter refers to political socialization experiences that stimulate psychological engagement with politics. Socialization agents, and especially family, play a key role in both aspects as they provide the context in which the proper resources can be acquired and the learning process

through which the motivation to engage in political activities is nurtured (Verba et al., 2018: 50–51).

Despite the fact that neither of these conceptions was designed for use in the analysis of party participation, their assumptions may be important for increasing understanding of the latter. Based on the models, this study also presumes that party mobilization per se is not enough to induce young people to take part in party activities, and that mobilization will be unsuccessful among those who are not part of the mobilization potential of political parties. However, in contrast to the model of Klandermans and Oegema, it is supposed that a positive attitude towards a party is not a sufficient condition for responding positively to requests for participation, thus how social background and political socialization contribute to individual involvement in politics should be analyzed.

It is well known in the literature that neither mobilization nor party participation occurs in a scattershot fashion. Requests for participation are typically highly structured according to socioeconomic and demographic features. More educated and wealthier people are much more likely to become targets of mobilization attempts. Age and gender also play a role in recruitment, but their influence on the likelihood of mobilization is less than the factors of education and income. Older people and women in general are less likely to be contacted by mobilizing agents than younger citizens and men (Grabarek, 2011: 9; Verba et al., 2018: 62–63). With regard to party involvement, we also find significant inequalities, indicating that party members and activists are not socially representative of the wider population. In general, people who are male, middle-aged or older, financially better off, and/or highly educated are more likely to participate in parties (Scarrow and Gezgor, 2010; van Biezen et al., 2012: 38; van Haute and Gauja, 2015: 194–195).

As regards the development of political participation potential, scholars have assigned a prominent role to family, peers, and political events as elements of political socialization. Those people who have politically interested and involved parents and who grow up in families where political communication is part of the daily routine are more likely to become politically active and more likely to have the notion that participation is an indispensable part of everyday life. The second way in which family shapes one's political engagement is through parental socioeconomic status. Highly educated parents tend to have children who are also highly educated, fostering the probability of their becoming politically active (Verba et al., 2018: 65–66). Peer groups also have, at above a certain age (and in particular during adolescence), a significant effect on the development of political identity. Throughout this life period, cognitive functioning increases in importance relative to emotions, and one's knowledge, opinions, and attitudes crystallize. Exchanges of political views with peers are preparatory acts which help pre-adults refine and concretize their political identity. Young people who do not go through these processes are more likely to become passive in political terms. Peers may serve as partners in political participation, and play an important role in attracting youngsters to political parties and to other political organizations. Finally, crucial political events, such as election campaigns, political crises, and particularly

antagonistic policy decisions, are also believed to contribute to the decision to take part in politics (Bruter and Harrison, 2009: 45–57; Neundorf and Smets, 2017: 9–10).

According to these findings, this study was also expected to find significant social inequality in party mobilization, as well as in party participation among young students. However, since its target group consisted of youngsters whose average age was 22 and who were on their way to becoming highly educated at the time of the survey, the analysis does not incorporate the impact of age and education level on mobilization or participation. Instead, it broadens the scope of socio-demographic characteristics by including the respondent's place of living and field of education, and presumes that students who live in the capital and those who study fields related to politics, such as social sciences, are more likely to receive requests from political parties than the rest of the student population. We also assume that gender and income are significant predictors of mobilization attempts (thus men and those with higher incomes are more likely to be recruited by parties). These features, accompanied by intensive political socialization experiences and high parental socioeconomic status, are also considered to be important preconditions of party participation.

Viewing mobilization attempts as a tool for channeling students into politics, the study investigates with an exploratory aim to what extent party mobilization has a role in encouraging young people's involvement in party activities compared to other predisposing factors. Moreover, making use of the unique dataset, we observe what main attitudinal features distinguish party-politically active students from their counterparts.

In this regard, we anticipate that young party activists will be more interested in and have quite positive views about politics. Presumably, they will also be more ideologically extreme and more dissatisfied with Hungary's democracy and present social conditions compared to their non-party-politically active peers.

4. Research setting

The data used in this study is obtained from the Active Youth in Hungary survey, which was conducted with a representative sample of 800 university and college students in February 2019 (hereafter AFM, 2019). This survey was designed to explore the mobilization propensity of political parties among young students, and also provides data about students' socioeconomic and demographic character, field of study, previous and present political socialization experiences, and party preferences and political attitudes, which are all appropriate variables for testing our hypotheses.

With regard to mobilization, respondents were asked whether they had ever received a request from parties or their youth factions to participate in their work, and, if they said yes, to report the name of the organization. With this information, we were able to estimate the mobilization propensity of mainstream and newcomer parties. In order to determine whether there is an association between

the socio-demographic variables and being contacted by a party, we used a Chi-square statistic with the following explanatory variables:

▪ gender (0=female, 1=male)
▪ settlement type (Budapest, major urban center, other town, municipality)
▪ subjective perception of income (living comfortably on present income, coping on present income, living from salary to salary, experiencing financial difficulties)
▪ field of study (social sciences, natural sciences, humanities, applied sciences)

The proportion of successfully recruited young people provides significant information about the scope of the mobilization potential of parties among the student population, while the proportion of those who participate in parties on the basis of their requests tells us something about the importance of mobilization attempts in party involvement. AFM, 2019 individually measured party participation with three questions: 'Are you a member of any political party?'; 'Are you a member of any youth organization within a political party?'; 'During the last 12 months have you taken part in the activities of a political party?' The variable was coded '0' if the respondent reported not having been a member, or not having taken part, and '1' if the respondent reported having been a member or having taken part in the activities of a party. These three participation modes represent different – stronger and weaker – degrees of engagement, but due to the overlaps it is not useful to separate them into groups. Slightly more than one-third of those who had taken part in party activities during the past year had formal party membership, and nearly 30 per cent of those who were formally engaged in a party or its youth faction had not been involved in party activities within the previous 12 months. By filtering out certain segments, we risked losing important information about the factors leading to party participation, thus under the term 'party-politically active students' we mean all three groups in the analysis. The latter comprise 5.1 per cent of the total sample, which indicates that a substantial proportion of Hungarian party-political active youth are university and college students.

To identify the socio-demographic and socialization preconditions of party participation and explore which variables have the strongest effect on the likelihood of joining a party, after pre-testing the relationship between each potential predisposing factor and the aggregated party participation dummy variable we developed two explanatory models using binary logistic regression with party involvement as the binary dependent variable.[3] The first model excludes party mobilization from the series of independent variables, while the second one includes it so as to ascertain the relative importance of mobilization attempts in party participation. The socioeconomic status of parents is measured here by their

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[3] Logistic regression was used with the enter method. The regression table in the appendix summarizes the explanatory variables, regression coefficients (B), odds ratios (ExpB), and the goodness-of-fit of the models. Instead of the two statistics – COX-SNELL and NAGELKERKE R² – offered by SPSS, we used R_L^2 statistics, which refer to how the involvement of independent variables diminishes the value of -2LL(0) *(D0)*.

level of formal educational attainment, while political socialization by events shaping respondents' political views and the frequency of discussing politics with family and peers throughout secondary school and presently – namely:

- level of educational attainment of respondent's father (lower than high school graduate, high school graduate, graduate),
- level of educational attainment of respondent's mother (lower than high school graduate, high school graduate, graduate),
- event/s shaping the respondent's political views (0=no, 1=yes; which event/s:…),
- political communication with family throughout secondary school years (never, occasionally, regularly),
- political communication with friends during secondary school years (never, occasionally, regularly),
- political communication with family (never, occasionally, regularly),
- political communication with friends (never, occasionally, regularly).

Finally, to help evaluate which attitudinal features make a difference between party-politically active young people and the rest of the student population, the analysis observed common ideological orientations (left wing-right wing, liberal-conservative, moderate-radical), interest in and associations with politics, and satisfaction with democracy and the present social, economic, and political conditions of Hungary.

5. Findings

On the basis of responses gathered by the Active Youth in Hungary survey, requests from political parties for participation are far from universal among college and university students. Figure 1 illustrates the proportion of those contacted by party organizations in the sample, indicating the weak mobilization propensity of the Hungarian parties. Only 15 per cent of the sample of students have ever been asked by a political party or a party youth organization to join their activities. We are unable to specify the exact number of requests, although it is surely somewhat higher than the number of students who were invited to participate, because those who named the party organization in many cases reported receiving more than one request.

Figure 1 Degree of mobilization (per cent)
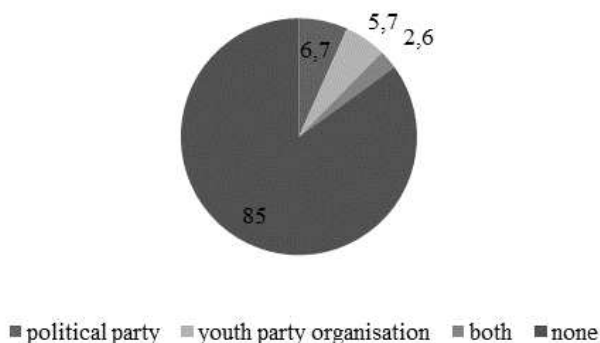
Source: Active Youth, 2019 N=800

As Table 1 reveals, with regard to mobilization the governing party (Fidesz) and two newcomer parties, the Momentum Movement and the far-right Jobbik, account for the first three places on the podium, with the same order in the case of the youth organizations. Fidelitas[4] (the youth wing of Fidesz) is the forerunner in communicating with youth, the youth faction of Jobbik takes second place, followed by Momentum TizenX (the youth section of Momentum), Societas (the youth organization of MSZP), and the Future Can Be Different (the youth wing of the green party, LMP).

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[4] Here it is important to note Fidesz itself started as a liberal youth party founded by university students in the turbulent years before the fall of the Soviet Regime. It later, however, became one of the establishment parties, accompanied by a conservative ideological shift. Fidelitas, their youth faction, was created more as a recruitment asset for the party, and less in resemblance of the original, 1989 image of Fidesz. The other newcomer parties (Jobbik, LMP, and Momentum) were also mainly created by students, and their youth factions are designed to provide ideological education and socialization, besides having a recruitment function. MSZP is an exception as it is the successor of the ruling communist party of state socialist times, thus it has traditionally been considered a party favored by the older generation, not a grassroots movement.

Table 1 Order of parties and youth party organizations that mobilize students (number of requests)

Political party		Youth party organization	
Fidesz	27	Fidelitas	25
Jobbik	20	Jobbik IT	17
Momentum	10	Momentum TizenX	5
MSZP	6	Societas	3
DK	6	Future Can Be Different	2
LMP	5		
PM	3		
KDNP	3		
MKKP	2		
Our Homeland	1		

Source: Active Youth, 2019

Party mobilization does not seem to be fruitful at first sight, with only 7.4 per cent of the students who were invited joining a party organization. In this regard, parties' youth wings were a bit more effective (9 per cent) than their mother parties (2.6 per cent). Despite this, we should not underestimate the power of mobilization, because the data shows that half of all students who were formerly party members, and more than half (53 per cent) of those who had taken part in party activities over the previous 12 months without membership, had participated on the basis of a party's or youth party organization's request. These results seem to confirm the hypothesis that being asked to become involved is more likely to stimulate the participation of students whose political involvement was part of their socialization than those who lacked the predisposing socialization experiences.

Contrary to our expectations, there was no interaction between socio-demographic features and party mobilization attempts. In terms of gender, settlement type, field of study, and financial background, the likelihood of being recruited by parties appears to be randomly distributed among students. Analysis of participatory activities, however, shows crucial gender differences, underlining the fact that gender socialization plays an important role in students' becoming involved in party activities. Party-politically active students are substantially more likely to be male (66 per cent) than female (34 per cent) compared to their non-party-politically active peers, for whom the proportion of women and men is more or less balanced (52 and 48 per cent). In contrast, differences based on the field of study cannot be identified, nor in terms of socio-demographics, or parental education attainments. Neither do respondents' subjective perceptions of income vary significantly with party participation. This suggests that the 'social slope' previously identified in research into party members and activists (Scarrow and Gezgor, 2010; van Biezen et al., 2012; van Haute and Gauja, 2015), as well as by the Hungarian youth research with regard to conventional forms of participation (e.g. voting, or organizational membership) (Bauer and Szabó, 2005; 2009; Bauer et al.,

2016), does not prevail among Hungarian college and university students. Youngsters from different social layers show a similar willingness to participate in party organizations. This conclusion, however, should be revised from the perspective of social status. Students who are in a financially advantageous position (88 per cent), and those who have at least one parent with a university degree (59 per cent), make up a relative majority of the student population. Perhaps this privileged status is reflected in the results described above.

The impact of the type of settlement is again not significant, which may predict the strong preference for the ruling party among party-politically active students. Taking a look at those respondents who shared their party preference with us, this assumption is supported. More than one-third of party-politically active youngsters are Fidesz voters (12 people), the next most popular party is Momentum (10 people), and the third is the Hungarian Two Tailed Dog Party (MKKP) (5 people), followed by Jobbik and LMP (each with 3 supporters), while MSZP and DK have the least supporters (one each). Thus, in contrast to the order that can be observed in the case of party mobilization, support for the far-right political force is not among the strongest and is replaced by support for MKKP, which, according to the data, was not as active at recruiting young people, but its format as a joke party and subversive activities seem to be sufficient to make it attractive to students, without the need for direct contact.

We find empirical evidence that the variables tapping respondent's mobilization and political socialization experiences are related to the likelihood of party participation, thus it is necessary to find out which variables have the strongest influence. Table 2 presents the results of logistic regression analysis. This allows us to determine which differences between party-politically active students and the rest of the student population persist once other factors are held constant. As discussed in Section 4, we excluded party mobilization from the first explanatory model, while it was included in the second one to estimate the relative importance of party requests in party activity.

Table 2 Determinants of party-political participation: results of logistic regression analysis

Variable	Model 1			Model 2		
	B	Sig.	Exp(B)	B	Sig.	Exp(B)
Gender						
male	0.203	0.58	1.225	0.220	0.56	1.246
Political socialization						
political communication with family	1.145	0.02	3.141	1.200	0.01	3.321
political communication with family throughout respondent's secondary school years	0.081	0.83	1.085	-0.067	0.86	0.935
political communication with friends	-0.201	0.59	0.818	-0.270	0.76	0.763
political communication with friends throughout respondent's secondary school years	0.726	0.02	2.067	0.613	0.05	1.845
event shaping respondent's political views	0.956	0.00	2.602	0.795	0.03	2.215
Mobilization						
party-political mobilization				1.797	0.00	6.031
Constant	-3,860	0,00	0,021	-4,336	0,00	0,013
N	724			724		
Goodness-of-Fit: R_L^2	0,141			0,218		

Source: Active Youth, 2019

In the results produced by Model 1, the first surprising thing is a lack of a relationship with gender, which leads to the conclusion that the strength of gender socialization differences is much more marginal than that of other socialization factors. Based on the model, the latter factors are linked with family, personal experiences, and peers at secondary school. It has been widely acknowledged that a politically rich home environment, in which frequent political discussions take

place, has a sensitizing and participation-orienting effect – a claim that is also reflected in our analysis. Controlling for other independent variables, the regularity of discussing politics within family undoubtedly increases the likelihood of party participation. Besides family, the effect of experiences outside the family is also significant and positive (albeit somewhat weaker), indicating that those who had an experience that shaped their political views are far more likely to take part in party activities than those who did not, even after controlling for other explaining variables. This result was somewhat foreseeable, as 60 percent of party-politically active students reported to having experienced an event that had strongly affected their political orientation, whereas less than 30 percent of the non-party-politically active group reported the same. The spectrum of experiences that left their marks on the young students' political socialization process is considerably wide. Party-politically active youngsters mentioned international events (e.g. the economic crisis of 2008; immigration) and national ones (e.g. the 2010 parliamentary elections; student protests involving demand for the reform of the public education system in 2018), as well as personal (e.g. a party member parent; party activist friends), object-related (e.g. books) and environmental effects (e.g. lack of women politicians). Peers are included among these, but it is worth referring separately to their role in political participation.

The main conclusion of Model 1 is that peers have a significant impact, but rather during secondary school years, not at the time of surveying. Those young people who were frequently involved in political conversations with friends throughout high school were more likely to be open to political parties. The particular relevance of this factor in channeling youngsters into politics should be highlighted in the case of Hungary, since one of the first legal measures after the democratic transition was to eliminate party organizations from schools, thereby discontinuing a guaranteed level of recruitment. This process, however, entailed not only the exclusion of parties, but the exclusion of politics in its entirety from public education, while even mentioning the term 'politics' became problem ridden within the walls of schools. Party politics and political socialization were brought under the same umbrella, with the consequence that emerging generations during their formative years do not receive proper knowledge about democracy and political systems at school (Csákó, 2004: 545). Peer groups from politically stimulating homes therefore comprise an important compensating force, especially during the time of adolescence, which is also evidenced in our model. A further remarkable result is that the variable representing family political communication during secondary education was not significant, which suggests that different agents have influences of different magnitude at various periods of life, but both family and friends are needed for the development of party-political action.

The findings of the second model uphold the patterns outlined by the first explanatory analysis. The involvement of party mobilization, however, improves considerably the goodness-of-fit of the model, demonstrating the robust impact of party requests on student involvement. In fact, the strongest predictor of party participation in the model is mobilization. Controlling for other variables, students who are asked to participate by party organizations are over six times more likely

to be party activists than those who have been omitted from this process. This supports the idea that the persuasion of parties serves an important function in attracting those young people who already have a desire to become politically active to participate in party activities. Family remains the most powerful predictor among the socialization preconditions, even when the impact of party mobilization is taken into account. Besides these two factors, although to a lesser extent, events and peers also affect the likelihood of joining in with party-related activities.

Turning to the attitudinal dimensions, Figure 2 reveals that party-politically active students' interest in politics is unarguably above average.

Figure 2 Interest in politics
(average score of responses on a scale of one to five, where 1= very uninterested, and 5= interested a lot)
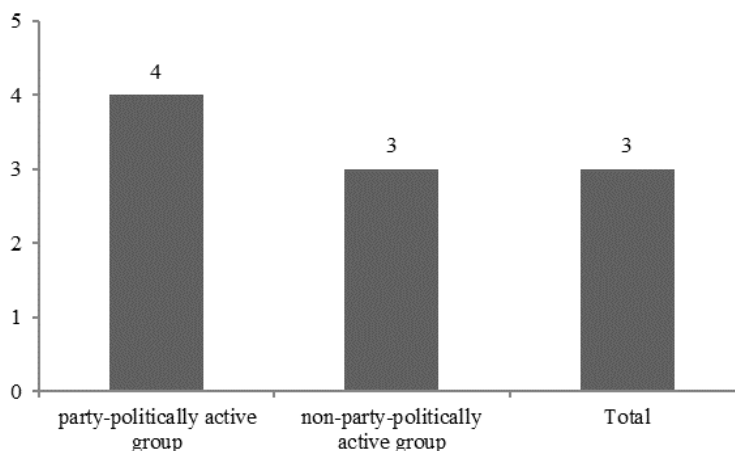
Source: Active Youth, 2019 N=800

Their strong political affinities, however, do not go hand in hand with more positive opinions about politics. Earlier Hungarian youth research pointed out that the term 'politics' had become discredited and associated with negative connotations in the minds of the public after the political transition, and this is strongly echoed in young people's subjective interpretations of politics (Szabó and Kern, 2011). This is also reflected in the present data, and party-politically active students are no exception in this sense. Their politics-related associations are very similar to that of the student majority. The word 'corruption' dominates in both groups' responses, and a relatively large proportion of the party activist students mentioned words associated with a lack of transparency (e.g. 'obscure,' 'ambiguous,' and 'chaotic'). We conclude that, compared to their non-party-politically active counterparts, active students were more likely to mention 'power' and 'interest,' and less likely to associate politics with the words 'cheating' and 'lying.' With regard to satisfaction with democracy and with the country's present economic, social, and political state, party-politically active students' answers are

also very similar to those of the rest of the student population. Most of them reported they are dissatisfied with democracy (61 per cent) and with the present social conditions (63 per cent).

We cannot identify large disparities in relation to ideological orientations either, which is largely consistent with the results of previous studies.

Table 3 Self-categorization into ideological categories (average score of responses given on a scale of one to seven)

	party-politically active group	non-party-politically active group	Total
left wing-right wing	4,2	4	4
liberal-conservative	3,9	3,5	3,5
moderate-radical	3,8	3,3	3,3

Source: Active Youth, 2019 N=800

Ideological extremism is no longer an immanent characteristic of party activists (Scarrow and Gezgor, 2010: 839). In terms of a left-wing-right-wing continuum, active students are divided approximately equally among the left, the middle, and the right wing, and are thus not significantly different to their non-party-politically active peers. A somewhat smaller proportion of them evince moderate values and a higher proportion extreme ones – this was particularly true among Fidesz sympathizers. The same conclusion applies regarding the liberal-conservative scale, whereas the situation was reversed in terms of the moderate-radical spectrum (a larger proportion located in the middle, while a smaller proportion chose an extreme score). However, it can also be said that party-politically active students seem to be somewhat more radical than their counterparts.

6. Conclusions: What makes the small fraction of Hungarian youth party-politically active?

The starting claim of the study was that the weak party involvement of young people cannot only be the result of their lack of their interest, but also of the low availability of parties. This issue is especially relevant in Hungary, where, similarly to other Central and Eastern European countries, the elite-dominated transition led mainly to the emergence of top-down party organizations with weak social embeddedness and dependence on the public sector instead of on party volunteers. The empirical analysis corroborated the weak mobilization propensity of Hungarian political parties, and showed that the majority of students have not yet

encountered requests for participation. A small group, however, has been mobilized by party organizations, but interestingly these young people are likely to have been randomly contacted. In opposition to the findings of the literature, we find that neither socio-demographic variables nor place of living nor field of education matter in terms of students' becoming targets of parties' mobilization attempts.

The findings also demonstrate that the mobilization potential of party organizations is very narrow within the student population, which leads to less effective recruitment. Despite this, it is also true that parties differ both in their willingness to recruit young students, and in their mobilization potential. The governing party enjoys a dominant position in both dimensions, having a stranglehold on the young population, although the recruiting efforts of the Momentum Movement are hardly invisible. Momentum has succeeded in rising to second place behind Fidesz in a short period of time with regard to the number of student participants. The Hungarian Two-Tailed Dog Party (MKKP), which in contrast to Fidesz and Momentum does not excel in contacting young people, also appears on the political landscape. The example of MKKP demonstrates that 'movement parties' can be attractive to youngsters without the need for direct invitation, especially when their revolutionary sense manifests itself not just in discourse but also in practice. The creative- and awareness-raising activities of MKKP, such as wry campaigns against the right-wing government, repainting faded crosswalks, building bus stops, and drawing graffiti on broken sidewalks and around potholes, calls local governments' and citizens' attention to common problems, effectively guaranteeing that the party is seen to be taking its aims seriously and fulfilling its promises. Nevertheless, mobilization should not be dismissed as an insignificant effect, since we find that a sufficiently large proportion of party-politically active students participate on the basis of party requests; furthermore, mobilization dominates among the factors predisposing party activism. Students are more likely to get involved in the work of parties when they have been contacted by them. However, our results suggest that mobilization per se is not enough to motivate young people to participate: politically stimulating family and friends and events that shape political views are also needed to set the stage for involvement. In fact, due to the privileged social status of the student population, political socialization is what really matters in terms of student involvement in parties.

Another result worth mentioning is that the political interest of party-politically active young students is above average, but this does not mean they hold positive views about politics. Similarly to their counterparts, they interpret politics within a national context, and associate it with words that suggest that politics is not a respectful and attractive activity but rather a corrupt, or at least a doubtful one. This raises the question why young people still choose to take part in politics at all. It is conceivable that the students who participate have accepted what they consider to be distasteful conditions fully or superficially, and have political career ambitions (in contrast, others are bitter but have a desire for change). Based on its incumbency, Fidesz may attract students that conform to the

former scenario, while extra-parliamentary opposition parties such as Momentum and MKKP mainly attract those who represent the latter position. In order to clarify this issue, we would need to investigate further. However, the fact that most party-politically active students express their strong dissatisfaction with democracy and the present social conditions of the country may outweigh the change-oriented vision.

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Why Nationalism? Biographies and Motives of Participants
in the Polish Nationalist Movement

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Abstract

The article is based on an analysis of four selected biographies of nationalist activists in Poland – taken from a larger sample of 30 biographical-narrative interviews conducted with members of organizations such as the All-Polish Youth, National Radical Camp, and National Rebirth of Poland (2011–2015). During the analysis of all of the collected interviews, three main biographical paths to the nationalist movement were distinguished: (a) an individual project (with two subtypes), (b) the influence of significant others, and (c) being 'found' by an organization. The paper explores four individuals' life stories – each representing one of the paths – and takes a closer look at all three main paths, including the role of family political orientation, circle of friends, and interests. The analysis shows that the Polish nationalist movement can be seen as a space that allows individuals to meet their various needs (the need to resist the political and social situation in the country; to express their values, discontent, and opinions; to maintain a feeling of doing something valuable and important; to carry out social work, promote patriotism, and to engage in educational activities). Moreover, when it comes to explanations of the growing popularity of nationalism nowadays, it can be said that the nationalist movement involves people who are dissatisfied with politics and looking for grassroots alternatives; feel endangered by cultural (liberal) changes; are seeking a return to tradition and Catholicism; and who are looking for stronger narratives (those opposed to liberalism and postmodernism).

Keywords: *biographical-narrative interviews, biographical paths, the nationalist movement, Poland.*

1. Introduction

Public and academic discussions about young people's potential political choices and their disengagement from institutional politics are ongoing. On the one hand, younger generations are seen as the driving force behind change, and on the other, as some research shows, their political engagement, including voting, has declined (Henn and Weinstein, 2006; Zielińska, 2015; Pazderski, 2018). Some researchers argue that we need to take into consideration a broader understanding of political participation, including new channels of mobilization, and diversification of agencies, repertoires of actions, and targets whom participants seek to influence (Norris, 2002). This would allow us to produce another picture of young people's political engagement. The latter individuals would rather choose to become involved in alternative, more informal means of political engagement, like protesting, demonstrating, or online engagement (ibid.).

In the case of Poland, there are two main tendencies concerning young people and politics: decreasing interest in official politics, and an increase in support for right-wing and anti-system political parties (e.g. Messyasz, 2015; Mrozowicki, 2019). The discussion about this turn to the right emerged following the results of parliamentary elections in 2015. In this poll, young people (18–29) were more likely to vote for the Law and Justice party (26.6 per cent), the Kukiz 15' committee (20.6 per cent), KORWiN (16.8 per cent), and the Civic Platform (14.4 per cent). While Law and Justice is a right-wing, conservative party, Kukiz 15' committee gathers different anti-system supporters, including representatives of the National Movement, while KORWiN is a conservative and neoliberal party, which since December 2018 has been one of the main actors (together with the National Movement) in the new political coalition Confederation Liberty and Independence. In the most recent parliamentary elections (October 2019), young people voted a bit differently: the Law and Justice party (26.3 per cent) was still the most strongly supported choice, Civic Platform was placed second (24.3 per cent), followed by Confederation Liberty and Independence (19.7 per cent), and The Left (18.4 per cent). The results of the elections in 2015 were part of a more general increase in the presence of nationalist, conservative, and right-wing ideas and organizations that has been observed in the public sphere in Poland as well as in other European countries. The amount of nationalist demonstrations and events, as well as the number of people who join them, have been on the rise in Poland in recent years. The scale of the Independence Day March that is organized on November 11 by nationalist organizations has been surprisingly large since 2011, and was still huge in 2019. Moreover, the establishment of the National Movement in 2012 as a social-political movement and later on as a political party has resulted in the growing presence of representatives of nationalist organizations in the media and public discourse. In 2015, a few members of the National Movement got into parliament as well; this 'success' was repeated in the recent elections of 2019.

Both the National Radical Camp and All-Polish Youth[1] played an important role in these processes. The organizations refer to their historical predecessors (from the interwar period) and present themselves as continuing the ideological and political activity of national democrats and national radicals. Taking into consideration the varieties of nationalism, the movement described in the paper represents radical nationalism, which – in contrast to banal or civic nationalism – is nativist, calls for the defense of an (ethnically, culturally, religiously) homogenous nation, refers to national pride, and opposes liberal democracy (seen as one of the threats to the desired vision of the nation). Radical nationalist movements can be seen as a part of the broader picture of the radical right, extreme right, or far right (see Minkenberg, 2017, Pirro, 2015; Félix 2015; Blee, 2007) – different scholars use these labels interchangeably to refer to the same organizations and movements. In order to define the researched organizations in the most adequate way and avoid the potential risk of blurring the differences between radical right-wing political parties and nationalist movements, the term radical nationalism is applied here. This is also based on the fact that the interviewees belong to those organizations for which nationalism is the most important component of identity, and they see themselves as nationalists rather than right-wingers.

The growing interest in nationalist discourses and movements has led to questions about the people who co-create and join these organizations. How and why do people decide to commit themselves to the nationalist movement? Do they reproduce their family's political views, or are they drawn in from outside family circles? Based on interviews with participants in the (radical) nationalist movement in Poland, this paper explores the biographical paths to nationalist organizations. The aim is to analyse both the trajectories and motives of young participants of the Polish radical nationalist movement, and hence to contribute to the literature and partially fill research gaps about radical nationalism. Despite the growing interest in these movements, relatively little scholarly attention has been paid to the biographical paths and motives that drive people to engage with radical nationalist milieus. Most studies focus on the results of elections or, in the case of extra-parliamentary nationalist organizations, discourse analysis of their speeches and online materials. The novelty of the paper lies in its combination of biographical method and its theoretical inspiration from social movement studies. It focuses on activists' biographies – four selected cases involving members of the All-Polish Youth and National Radical Camp.

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[1] These are the most known extra-parliamentary nationalist organizations with branches across Poland. It is hard to estimate the number of members. The Independence Day marches attract around 50,000–70,000 participants, but the event attracts various milieus and individuals. Despite some internal conflicts and (economic- and political-system-based) diversity, they share a vision of 'Great Poland' as an ethno-culturally homogenous nation based on conservative values, a family focus, and Catholicism.

2. Explaining support for and involvement in (radical) nationalism in Poland

There are different ways to explain support for right-wing politics and the popularity of radical nationalism among young people. However, research has thus far focused on analyzing mostly passive support – e.g. voting (Winiewski et al., 2015; Messyasz, 2015) – rather than exploring active involvement in such movements. To simplify the existing approaches to explaining right-wing sympathies, we can divide them into three main types. First, there are socio-economic explanations that focus on economic deprivation and the results of processes of modernization. Contemporary nationalism constitutes here the answer to growing social and economic inequalities caused by neoliberal capitalism (Ost, 2007). However, other studies show that people who support (or are involved in) nationalist organizations do not necessarily evaluate their own economic situation as bad. Surveys conducted during Independence Day marches show that the participants are typically not economically disadvantaged: in 2015, the latter individuals tended to discern a worse economic situation for Poland in comparison to other nations, but – similarly to data from 2018 – did not report to feeling poorer than the average Pole (Malinowska et al., 2016: 5); in 2018, their average income was 5545 PLN/1237 EUR (more than 20 per cent higher than the national average wage), while 68,4 per cent of them had a university degree (Kocyba and Łukianow, 2019). As Krystyna Szafraniec states, young people may feel disappointed with the direction of transformation after 1989, as they were supposed to be its biggest beneficiaries. The author stresses the fertile context for young people's dissatisfaction in Poland – a situation that has been created by growing tensions. While new cultural options and ideologies have been accepted due to a trust surplus, economic development and changes in the social structure have not occurred quickly enough (2012: 11). Similarly, Adam Mrozowicki (2014: 71–72) focuses on the consequences of processes of precarization. He sees support for right-wing rhetoric as a way of mobilizing dissatisfaction outside the job market and as a response to local cultural resources (such as national pride, national identity, and religion). Second, there are socio-political explanations that point to a crisis of democracy and a feeling of detachment from politics (Messyasz, 2015; Mrozowicki, 2019). Despite the general increase in pro-democratic attitudes among Poles – from 65 per cent in 2011 to 71 per cent in 2017 (Feliksiak 2017) – young people are tired of long periods of political polarization (when two main political parties compete – in this case, the Law and Justice, and the Civic Platform), and do not feel represented in politics – in 2017, 31 per cent of young people (18–24 years old) stated that they felt a complete lack of political representation (Cybulska and Pankowski, 2017). They see politicians as self-interested people who do not represent the people's voice (Messyasz, 2015: 65). Third, there are cultural explanations that point to cultural changes in late modern societies and an identity crisis in postmodern life. The turn to contemporary nationalism can be seen as cultural backlash, a conservative reaction to the growing dominance of postmodern values and lifestyles (Inglehart and Norris,

2016). It is also a reaction to the growing number of opportunities, choices, and potential identities. Postmodern reality is believed to be associated with emotions such as feelings of being endangered, lonely, or insecure, thus nationalism, as a popular ideology with its strong, black-and-white narrative, may be the answer to ontological uncertainty and identity confusion (Billig, 2008; Szafraniec, 2012). When we focus on the socio-cultural processes in Poland in the 2000s, we can observe growing cultural clashes between cultural liberalism and conservative Catholicism. The milieu associated with the latter helped (re)construct the notion of Polishness as inseparable from religion and traditional values (Kotwas and Kubik, 2019; Pankowski, 2010). Right-wing parties and organizations invoke this idea and offer a sense of belonging to the nationalist community – in opposition to cultural Others, and liberal and EU elites – and address feelings such as national pride and symbolic cultural significance (Gdula, 2018).

These three explanations should be seen as complementary rather than competing with each other. Generally speaking, all of them refer to feelings of relative deprivation, exclusion, and being not represented – in economic, political, and cultural senses. Different factors can be combined in an individuals' life. For instance, one survey conducted before the parliamentary elections in 2015 showed that the popularity of right-wing political parties in 2015 among young people (18–29) should be viewed in the light of relative deprivation (a subjective feeling of a worsening material situation among Poles), authoritarian tendencies (the need for strong leadership and a call for a unified worldview across society), and anti-immigrant prejudices (Winiewski et al., 2015: 10). The context of the refugee crisis in 2015 was reflected in young people's decisions. Those who supported right-wing, anti-system political parties more often emphasized their attachment to patriotic values and voiced support for a homogenous vision of the nation, as well as opposed homosexual relationships and agreed with the need for changes in the system and of elites (Winiewski et al., 2015: 5–6). The complex nature of individual motives also appears in the analysis of biographical-narrative interviews with young precarious right-wing supporters in Poland and Germany (Mrozowicki et al., 2019). There are two main paths to that support. The first one is connected with socio-economic insecurity and the precarious state of family relations. Right-wing ideas offer here 'some ready-made patterns for interpreting biographical predicaments and find favorable ground in the broader context of various biographical problems' (ibid.: 232). Others, such as refugees, become scapegoats: i.e. seen as potential competitors and a threat. The second path is rather tied to a more market-individualistic orientation, and involves anti-establishment views and criticism of the welfare state, including of 'undeserved' social support for disadvantaged groups, such as refugees and welfare claimants (ibid.).

Both the surveys and the analysis of the interviews show the complexity of motives and help us better understand the turn to the right in 2015. However, the increase in the popularity of nationalism began at least a few years earlier. To get a wider perspective and foster understanding of this increase in nationalist attitudes, it is necessary to focus on the individual experiences of young nationalists.

The present research is anchored in the cultural perspective of social movement theories, and, more specifically, in a socio-psychological approach (Jasper, 2007a; Klandermans and Mayer, 2009) which suggests that it is relevant to concentrate on the values, beliefs, and motivations of individuals. Focusing on individuals' biographies and categories such as identity, morality, and emotions lets us understand why people join and actively participate in social movements (Jasper, 2007a). In reference to James Jasper's approach, as well as other scholars' calls for a more internalist perspective to radical right studies (Goodwin, 2006; Blee, 2007), the research involved the biographical method (Schütze, 1992), which is a new approach in studies of Polish radical nationalism. Biographical-narrative interviews let us 'reconstruct the path of involvement in specific forms of political participation, the role of networks in socialization, the continuities, but also the turning points at the intersections between individual experiences and environmental transformations' (Della Porta, 2014: 266). They allow us to learn more about individuals' understanding of their biographical paths to the movement, their motives, emotions, and the biographical consequences of their involvement, as well as to locate the former within broader social, political, and cultural contexts. Similarly to identity, biography is reconstructed and reinterpreted. In the framework of the biographical method, the category of biographical identity was invented to refer to individualized self-perceptions and the idea of 'who we think we are.' The other important category here is biographical work, which means the effort an individual makes to (re)construct and interpret his/her biographical experiences in relation to identity, decisions, and actions (Strauss, 1984: 99). Biographical work allows the individual to maintain his/her integrity and continuity, especially at biographical turning points.

There are some examples of research conducted from an internalist perspective (focused on intra-organizational dynamics and the movements in participants' activity and discourses), including the biographical method (Blee, 1996; Fangen, 1999; Félix, 2015; Goodwin, 2010; Klandermans and Mayer, 2009), but none of these have focused on the Polish case. Although they constitute a point of reference for the analysis described in this paper, it is necessary to be aware of the role of the type of researched group, as well as the national context. What is common to similar research is the search for the main types of motives and routes to the movement. Interestingly, in all studies the most important reasons for joining the movement involve a complex interplay of motives, as proposed by Bert Klandermans and Nonna Mayer (2009): these include instrumentality (a willingness to change and influence social and political circumstances); ideology (the need to make one's own life more meaningful and express one's own feelings) and identity (the need for belonging, and a desire to meet like-minded others) (ibid.: 8). In research on the Norwegian skinhead milieu, the most important motive is 'the need to be noticed by others, to feel important and to belong somewhere' (Fangen, 1999: 367). In the case of research on the British National Party, ideological factors were discovered to be the most relevant: ethnic nationalist beliefs and the need to defend the dominant national group from

threats caused by immigration, minority ethnic groups, and more general democratic change (Goodwin, 2010: 45).

Regarding the routes to the movement, the abovementioned studies find different answers. While in the case of research on the Ku Klux Klan most female activists interviewed by Kathleen Blee were recruited by friends, acquaintances, and family (Blee, 1996: 689), family was not found to play such an important role in British (Goodwin, 2010) and Norwegian (Fangen, 1999) studies, where activism was seen as more individualized and rarely a consequence of family socialization. Annette Linden and Bert Klandermans distinguished three main trajectories of involvement: continuity, conversion, and compliance: *continuity* refers to life histories wherein movement membership and participation are a natural consequence of prior political socialization; *conversion* refers to trajectories wherein movement membership and participation involve breaking with the past; and *compliance* is when people enter a movement because of circumstances that they do not always control (2007: 185). A similar typology is proposed by Matthew J. Goodwin, who writes about longer-term old guard activists, new recruits, and political wanderers (2010: 43).

3. Methodological note

The empirical part of the paper is based on the analysis of four biographical narrative interviews (Schütze, 1992). They are taken from a larger sample of 30 interviews[2] which were carried out in the framework of the author's research project between 2011 and 2015 among members of three Polish nationalist organizations: the All-Polish Youth (*Młodzież Wszechpolska*), the National Rebirth of Poland (*Narodowe Odrodzenie Polski*), and the National Radical Camp (*Obóz Narodowo-Radykalny*). The narrators were 27 men and 3 women, aged between 18 and 29 years, mainly university students or graduates.

Interviews were designed according to Fritz Schütze's (1992) method and had three parts: the first, narrative part started with an open question designed to help reveal the entire life history of the interviewee; the second part included additional biographical questions about issues not covered in the first part; and the third part was dedicated to topics such as involvement in the related organization, cooperation with other nationalist organizations, political views, notions of nationalism, nation and patriotism, and values and counter-values. The analysis followed grounded theory methodology (Glaser and Strauss, 1967; Charmaz, 2006), with open and selective coding.

Two relevant points should be noted here. First, one needs to be aware that the results of qualitative research cannot be generalized in a statistical sense, and that such analysis increases knowledge of only some part of the nationalist movement. Second, since the fieldwork was conducted (2011–2015), the socio-political context in Poland has changed: the right-wing party Law and Justice has been in power since 2015 and the dark – illiberal – side of civil society, including

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[2] An overview of the narrators is presented in Appendix 1.

nationalists, has had wider political and discursive opportunities (Ekiert, 2019; Płatek and Płucienniczak, 2017). Additionally, interviews were conducted before Brexit and the refugee crisis, which influenced both nationalist and public discourse and (re)created new enemies for nationalists. However, despite the changing repertoire of action and enemies (Płatek and Płucienniczak, 2017) nationalists' biographical paths, motives, and movement-related values do not change so much. Moreover, even if joining a nationalist organization is more popular now than at the time of the research, the participants still see themselves as a part of an anti-system movement and do not support the governing party.

The presentation of selected cases enables us to show possible paths to organizational support in a more detailed way – through the individuals' experiences of becoming nationalist activists. As the same time, the narrators exemplify the types of paths which were distinguished based on the analysis of all 30 cases (Kajta, 2020). The particular cases were chosen in order to present (a) cases that are as representative as possible of a given path, but also (b) the activists' trajectories within the movement, and (c) the heterogeneous character of the movement. It can be argued that the selected interviews illustrate not only distinguishable biographical paths but also a more general picture of the collected material.

4. Biographical paths to the nationalist movement

Based on the analysis of 30 biographical-narrative interviews, three main patterns of becoming involved in the movement have been distinguished: individual projects (with two subtypes: enhanced by significant others, or not), the influence of significant others, and being 'found' by the organization. While Linden and Klandermans (2007) and Goodwin (2010) based their typologies more on the level of fluidity between life before and after joining the movement, this study focused more on the circumstances in which individuals met with nationalist ideas and organizations. It should be noted that, regardless of the type of pattern, joining the movement was not completely random – it was connected with particular interests and activities that made meeting with such organizations more probable. The paths are presented below through the stories of the narrators.

5. Individual project: The cases of Wiktoria and Radomir

In the case of an individual project, joining a movement is usually a consequence of previously acquired knowledge about – and hence awareness of – the concept of nationalism, although sometimes the activists considered themselves to be nationalists before their official involvement. However, the first meetings were not always preceded by obtaining a lot of knowledge about the movement or by sharing a nationalist worldview. To some extent, all members' histories constitute individual projects, as it was always the individual's decision to join an organization. What is different in the case of the 'biographical project' path is that it involves the individual's search (which sometimes lasts a few years) for

ideological belonging, which results in their independently finding nationalism and/or specific nationalist organizations. We can talk about two subtypes of the latter path: some narrators (Wiktoria) stress their complete independence, but most of them (Radomir) highlight the role of significant others (family and friends) in shaping their worldview.

5.1 Wiktoria

Wiktoria grew up in a big city where she was still living (with mother and sister) at the time of the research. She had generally negative memories of her childhood: her father spent most of the time abroad (where he works), and her mother and grandmother had serious illnesses. The experience of taking care of ill relatives has made her very tough and self-reliant. Her mother is described as a friend, but her father seems to be a more influential figure: her way of talking about him combines anger and a desire for his appreciation. She is a dissenter – even her descriptions of school experiences refer to pupil-teacher conflicts and criticism of the education system (too little history at school). Because of truancy from her gymnasium (secondary school) she was transferred by her father to a private school. This was a turning point in her life: she started to think about her life more seriously and volunteered at a hospice. She also started to work. At the time of the interview, she was working as a babysitter and cleaner. She also was a candidate for membership of the All-Polish Youth. To be a regular member, she had to pass an exam about the movement's ideology.

Wiktoria started the narrative by making reference to her field of study (pedagogy), which is the opportunity to *influence the new generation and its moral backbone*. The notion of being a living role model arose a few times: Wiktoria believes that by demonstrating some specific (moral and applied) rules and behaviors, she can influence other people to do the same. She is especially committed to anti-abortion activity (an activity shared by other female activists):

> I think that my decision to join the nationalist movement was caused by… the political debate about abortion, and it made me think that it [the topic] needs to be shown [publicized], taken to the streets… to resist and openly talk about it, even though they will call you a fascist later on.

Her political views began to be shaped even earlier: their emergence was connected with her boyfriend going away on a military mission. Wiktoria sought out people with political opinions, as well as a space for young, like-minded people, which is how she found All-Polish Youth, applied to it, and started to get invitations to meetings. She was driven by two main types of motivation: personal-based, and instrumental. Activism represents to her an opportunity to change the world (according to her values), but also a kind of personal strategy and therapy, as she has not overcome her family problems yet:

> I have been trying to show my father that everything I do has a goal, all the more so because I was always told that pedagogy is nothing, that I won't achieve anything [...] that I won't even be able to rent a flat. But doing such work for people is important for me, because when I take to the streets and show that it is possible to resist, maybe other people can follow it [copy my behavior]. That is why I do what I do now.

Wiktoria even described how she had looked for some connections between the history of her family and the scope of her current activity, but her involvement was rather the result of rebelliousness than continuity. She referred to the sins of her grandfather, who was involved in the Red Army, and the fact that her father was part of a Polish paramilitary police formation during communist times (ZOMO). Her political involvement does not meet with her parents' approval, as she calls them 'leftists'. However, participation in nationalist movement gives her space to express her views and shape the desired changes:

> We have to show through our lives that we can change something in the country, because I do not like the direction Poland has been going in. I do not want my kid to be raised in such a country [...] If we can help one person not to have an abortion, the issue is worth it, worth that one candle.

The narrator criticized abortion, in vitro fertilization, the public visibility of homosexuals, as well as the EU's economic influence and the condition of historical politics in Poland. She held some of these opinions prior to her involvement (although the organization gave her space to express them more openly), but some seem to be a consequence of political socialization within the movement. Interestingly, she appears to have 'selectively adopted' the nationalist agenda (Blee 1996: 693), as she dissociates herself from anti-Semitic attitudes. Wiktoria's doubts about her commitment dissipated after a 'winter school' organized by the movement – this represented an opportunity to obtain a lot of knowledge, as well as become integrated with other members. The organization gives her a sense of belonging and safety, a social network and satisfaction – her friends from the organization constitute an important, trust-based circle for her. Wiktoria is a type of revolutionary, and the movement is an instrument for changing the world as well as for meeting like-minded people (Linden and Klandermans, 2007: 199). Despite the fact that instrumentality dominates her narrative, the narrator's history also combines two other motives: identity and ideology (Klandermans and Meyer, 2009).

5.2 Radomir

Radomir grew up in a working-class area in one of the biggest cities in Poland. From the very beginning he presented himself as an independent outsider. He was brought up by his mother (his father had left and was living abroad with a new wife). There were other important male role models in his life: his grandfather, and

uncles. As army officers, they transmitted to him anti-communist and anti-system values. Despite his distance from his father, he stressed that he grew up in a decent family in a favorable economic situation. Initially, he decided to move away to start studying (medical sciences) and settled in a bigger city. Because of the high cost of living, he went back to his home city after two years and continued his studies there.

Attachment to values such as God, honor, and homeland (some of the slogans of the nationalist milieu in Poland) are presented as a *natural resource,* obtainable from the family home and traditional society. In this sense, his history is different to Wiktoria's and is more based on continuity (Linden and Klandermans, 2007: 184). In the course of his involvement in nationalism, these values became well thought out and more internalized:

> [My lack of interest in football] somehow made me stand out from the others, I was not interested in that, I adhered to some ideals... all the more so because my family, especially my uncles, they fought against communism in its time... so maybe I had always been turning somehow against that system... what else... I was 16 years old and I could see that the world was incomplete... that people around me did not follow any ideals [...] not even those three basic words which we believe in – God, honor, homeland.

His contact with the National Radical Camp started when he was 16 years old as the result of his reflexive search for an ideological path. In contrast to his schoolmates, he felt the need to have some ideological points of reference. What made him different from others was also his reflexivity and interest in the world. During his search, he met with different authors and ideas (Nietzsche, Hitler's national socialism, Dmowski's national democracy, and finally, national radicalism). As he did not have like-minded friends, he looked on the internet and read books. Hence, he presented himself as an ideological *pioneer* among his friends, who, according to him *were strongly attached to the attitudes imposed by society*. He joined the National Radical Camp in 2006 and was impressed with their way of thinking:

> I found myself on a good track with national democracy, but it was not exactly what was I was looking for, because I did not get on very well with democracy then or now... I found the National Radical Camp as a young person because I decided that I wanted to see what it looked like... I met people who surely impressed me somehow with their... not even worldview, but rather their refinement, with what they presented... it was a harmonious group of people adhering to some values and somehow, over time, I started to adapt it to some extent.

As he states, the reaction of his mother was negative. She was afraid for his safety and potential legal problems. In contrast to most of the individual cases, the destigmatization Radomir underwent did not help much. Interestingly, Radomir

often referred to the associations many members of society have about nationalists – connections with Nazis and fascists, as well as the notion of the 'stupid skinhead'. Being a nationalist can be felt as a stigma (Goffman, 2005), which is connected with social disapproval and potential exclusion from social interaction (Fangen, 1999: 358). The sources of such stigmatization are the whole of society, the state, and counter-movements (Klandermans and Mayer, 2008: 272) as well as the media (Kajta, 2017). Destigmatization in this case involved the biographically important process of becoming a member of a nationalist organization: it involved a (self-reflexive) taking over of the narrative of the organization, and a reconfiguration of the individual's own identity, while also negotiating an unwanted identity imposed by others.

At the time of the interview, Radomir was the vice-coordinator of a brigade, and was dedicating a lot of his time to his organizational work. The organization seems to be a safe space that can, taking into consideration its reach throughout Poland, make changes in life easier to manage. For instance, moving to another city was easier for the narrator because he contacted people from a brigade there:

> I found my feet pretty fast, also because of the brigade there... I found a handful of people with similar views with whom I started to do something... of course, our worldview is to some extent... to some extent it makes us excluded from society... let's not delude ourselves... everyone has... when somebody hears [the word] nationalist... [...] he sees... thinks of some dimwit skinhead with whom you cannot talk about anything... that a nationalist is just out of touch with social life, is someone from outer space... that is what everyone thinks... at least I've met such images of us... that we just, I do not know, walk and salute, right.

The brigade is presented as a family, with strong bonds and a shared ideological understanding among its participants. It is also space where he can feel like a socially and politically active person. Radomir's story also shows how the organization changed – when he started there were just a few people – into a much more hermetic circle. Their activity was originally (in hindsight) irrelevant. Since then, the repertoire of action has changed: from putting up posters to more influential educational and ideological work. The narrator does not see himself as entering politics; his life plans are focused on graduating, applying for a Ph.D., getting a job, having a family, and continuing to participate in the organization.

Radomir is an example of a revolutionary who found his ideological path and organization at a relatively young age. Since then he has just developed and enhanced his commitment to the radical nationalist world. His contestation is value driven, since he has a very specific worldview. Although he mentions family influences, he presents himself as a very individualistic outsider who found his path on his own. What is more, he diminishes the role of his absent father, but his very conservative, religious, and radical statements may be a kind of rebellion against his father's life choices. The hidden nature of the organization may have meant that at the beginning of the research Radomir avoided elaborating on

internal organizational issues, and he was also quite suspicious. He made some anti-Semitic statements, but also tried to mitigate them and to destigmatize the image of nationalists.

6. *The influence of significant others: Ireneusz*

The second path, the influence of significant others, refers to histories in which first meetings with an organization happened at others' (family members', friends') prompting and invitation. Such meetings were more likely to happen with history students, historical reconstruction groups, or, as in the case of Ireneusz, football supporters' clubs.

At the time of the interview Ireneusz was a student who lived in a dormitory in a big Polish city. He grew up in a working-class family in another part of Poland and moved to the bigger city to study. The beginning of Ireneusz's involvement was related to his commitment to a club of football supporters. As such milieus are often connected with nationalist ideas, one of his friends started to think about becoming involved in the National Radical Camp, and later persuaded others to do the same. As Ireneusz had not heard of the National Radical Camp before, he started to search for information. At first, his interest was aroused by his friend, but after making contact with the organization, a new acquaintance started to be a relevant figure in terms of his commitment. Besides his new interest, the narrator wanted to do something meaningful:

> I don't remember well. What was interesting to me? I think that... I don't know, I have no idea what it was. I don't know, in the beginning, I wanted to do something because I was already keen, frankly speaking [...] I just knew that I wanted to do something. I was young and didn't know how to start, so I put a question to Marcin [member of the National Radical Camp] about how to start. I guess it was that I started to put up some posters in the street or something? Any kind of activity satisfied me.

Participation in his first demonstration – an anti-feminist picket on March 8 in 2008 – made him feel accepted and he was invited to other meetings. The need to belong to a strong group and to make his life more meaningful were important factors. Ireneusz also received a list of ideological reading, which was supposed to make his embedding into the organization easier. Based on some parts of the interview, it can be said that Ireneusz's worldview is still not well-grounded. For example, he presented opinions about economics with hesitation, based on the book he was reading at the time. Similarly to Wiktoria, he did not accept the whole discourse connected with nationalist milieus – for instance, he refused to listen to some skinhead musicians who, according to him, are not only anti-Semitic but also anti-Catholic.

His case – similarly to that of others which represent this path – shows that the nationalist worldview and calling oneself a nationalist can be a secondary factor compared to the phase of initial involvement – which may encompass

obtaining knowledge, reading specific literature, and participating in meetings. It seems that what connects Ireneusz most with the organization is social networks and the kind of appreciation that makes it possible for him to feel active, needed, and safe. Although he has rather good relations with his family, the organization is perceived as the milieu in which he has been brought up:

> [The organization] has raised me in a national spirit, polished my ideas, and I am thankful that now I know what I could fight for if needed. What else does it give to me? What? A feeling of safety. I'm sure that if at any time I had a problem, someone from ONR [...] would help me [...] What else? Actually, [it gave me] an upbringing [...] I'm trying to not drink alcohol, thanks to that idea... because there is a movement [a straight edge] – at the beginning, it was leftist, now it's been overtaken by the nationalist milieu.

Similarly to the case of Radomir, being in the organization also helped Ireneusz when he moved to another city. Since he was already involved in the National Radical Camp in his home city, moving to continue his studies was followed by changing his brigade. Hence, he was able to meet new people very quickly. Turning to the 'straight-edge' movement has increased his critique of football supporters' groups – as pathological and alcoholic. This does not mean breaking up with the football milieu, but the nationalist organization now seems to have taken first place, not only as an ideological point of reference, but also as a behavioral lodestar. Since religion plays an important role in nationalist discourse and is seen as an integral part of Polish national identity, he is even trying to find his position in that sphere of life.

Taking into consideration his biographical path, he appears to have been prone to the influence of others, but family was not such an important factor in his political socialization. His parents do not have a specific worldview, and we may observe here a kind of reversal of the typical direction of transmission of political views. After initially working on destigmatization, including presenting a counter-narrative about the organization (i.e. opposing the image presented by the media), he started to convince his parents and sisters to support the National Movement, a political party:

> Generally, I had to explain it to them. Now they obviously see the differences between fascism and national radicalism, but I had to fight with that label a few times – 'fascist organization' – and I fought with that at home as well [...] I had to explain to them, from the beginning to the end, what ONR [the National Radical Camp] was before the war. I left them, I don't know, I'm still leaving them [literature and newspapers] to read. Everything is explained in them. The whole story of ONR is there, so I think they read about it.

Similarly to some other cases, Ireneusz's path was enhanced by his commitment to the milieu associated with football supporters. As the other research shows, in the

Polish case this may be characterized by the following factors: a lack of left-wing alternatives in the football stadium, references to history – including the anti-communist fight – conservative values, Catholicism, xenophobia, anti-establishment attitudes, and a lack of trust in politicians (Woźniak et al., 2019). Similar issues co-create (radical) nationalist discourse, thus these two social worlds are linked, and being a football supporter may be one of the first stages in the biographical path to nationalism.

7. Being 'found' by an organization: Cezary

The third type of path involves being 'found' by an organization. However, this is not due to coincidence – it becomes possible because of the narrators' previous interests and activities. What is important here is that they are invited to meetings by unknown people: through internet forums or during chance meetings on the street.

Cezary grew up in a small-sized city and moved to a bigger one because of his studies. He was always focused on school and education and graduated with a degree in European studies (this choice he explained as being related to job opportunities). At the time of the interview he was working as an educator in a Catholic association, where he could combine his interests with his professional life. He also was married and living in a village close to the big town in which he works. His relations with his family he defined as 'fine', but not close. Although the narrator referred to his parents' patriotism, he was not able to define their political views.

Meeting with the organization happened at a crucial point in Cezary's life. After receiving a bachelor's degree, he took a gap year. He spent it working, reading, and thinking about his future life. As a result, he decided to become more active in terms of his studies and socio-political life. Additionally, during that year he also experienced a religious conversion, and returned to the Catholic Church. These two biographical processes, which both happened within the same year, seemed to be crucial in terms of his path. They influenced his interest in patriotism and history, as well as his turn to religion and traditional values. Eventually, through his interest in the Independence Day march, it brought him to the nationalist organization. He met the representatives of All-Polish Youth in the street, in front of a church, and congratulated them:

> By chance, I met people from the All-Polish Youth, I recognized them because it was shortly after the Independence Day march in 2010, and I saw their faces and recognized them because I had watched some movie [about the march]. I started talking to them and somehow I wormed my way in. I was kind of doing things before, reading about National Democracy politicians, but here [in the organization] I was polished up, let's say.

The representatives of the organization took his phone number and he started to receive information about the meetings. What made Cezary ready to get more

involved was his participation in a winter school organized by the group. He was impressed with the merit-based discussions and level of historical, political, and ideological knowledge:

> There was a little bit of euphoria. I mean, during that gap year, when I used to work, I decided to be more socially active. There was a kind of euphoria, actually, this is a good term. After that winter school, when I started to be active for good [...] And that excitement (laugh), [I was] a little bit excited because that was it, that was exactly it [what I was looking for] and I was happy that it was easy, that I didn't have to get my fingers burnt, I didn't have to search for different... Actually, the first organization I met, and it turned out that it was that one.

Similarly to Ireneusz, Cezary wanted to do something with his life (this was one of his resolutions) but he also made some calculations about the profitability of such engagement. With time, Cezary became more and more involved. He was made responsible for the educational department of the organization and for conducting the exams which candidates need to pass. It seems that the narrator's scope of interest in the organization shaped the image he has of All-Polish Youth as a space of political and historical education aimed at the formative education of new generations; a school of social activity. His activity in the organization can be seen as an opening point: he also began to become more involved in other organizations, including a Catholic association and patriotic associations. An important part of this activity was connected with history and working with veterans. The more involved in this other work he became, the less time he had for All-Polish Youth. Additionally, he got married and got a job. Hence, at the time of the interview (2013) Cezary was in a phase of more passive activity – he was still a member, but without any specific function, and he even distanced himself by calling members 'them', not 'us'. He admitted a few times that he was not interested in becoming actively involved in some of the internal conflicts within the right-wing milieu, and also wanted to distance himself from official politics. He was seeking calm, local, grassroots work in favor of historical, patriotic, and Catholic education. He also seems to have developed a more strategic, instrumentalized way of thinking, thus the organization constituted for him a phase and point of departure for other more professional activity and personal development. His case represents one of the potential trajectories of participants in the nationalist movement – from full enthusiasm and organizational engagement at the beginning to more specific and calmer forms of 'national activity' later on. This is a trajectory of transfer, whereby people change organizations but remain politically engaged (Corrigall-Brown, 2012: 67).

8. Conclusions

The paper has explored the routes of participants towards the nationalist movement; it looked at biographical paths to nationalist organizations and

individual motives. The four selected cases represent various biographical paths to the movement which were distinguished on the basis of the analysis of 30 biographical narrative interviews with activists. The individuals underwent different political socialization processes at home: in one case (Radomir), family was seen as a very important source of the protagonist's worldview and political engagement. In three others, similarly to Goodwin's (2010) and Fangen's (1999) findings, family socialization did not occupy a central role in the activists' pathways. However, regardless of the family's political orientation, becoming an activist involved the need for the development of destigmatization strategies.

Interestingly, no stories of converts who had completely changed their views were identified in the sample: regardless of path, joining the movement was rather a consequence of previous interests, worldviews, and activity, or perhaps the slightly coincidental result of looking for spaces of belonging, social engagement, role models, and a more meaningful life. Therefore, we may talk about value-oriented (illustrated by the stories of Wiktoria and Radomir) and action-oriented (Ireneusz, Cezary) paths to an organization. While nationalism was connected with a prior worldview at least in one case, it can also be a space which allows participants to meet their various needs (the need to resist the political and social situation in a country; to express their values, discontent and opinions; to maintain a feeling of doing something valuable and important; to undertake social work and promote patriotism, and to engage in educational activities). While for some of the participants (such as Radomir) activism was an ideological way of life, for others it was an instrument with which to change the world and deal with personal problems (Wiktoria). For some it was more of a phase and educational tool (Cezary), but it also represented a safe space of belonging that offered an opportunity to be active and do something meaningful (Ireneusz). In fact, a desire to make one's life feel more meaningful and to belong to a like-minded group of people was something shared by most of the narrators, but not always a key source of motivation for their involvement.

It seems that the narrators, in representing biographical, individual paths, tended to think more about their organization in ideological terms – their values emerged prior to their organizational work. However, while Radomir was focused on nationalist ideology itself, Wiktoria's priority was anti-abortion activity. The two other narrators could probably have ended up in other, non-nationalist organizations if these had been capable of giving them an opportunity for fulfilment and activism. Nevertheless, as the result of their interests and others' influences, they had become involved in the nationalist milieu.

While in Norwegian (Fangen, 1999) and British (Goodwin, 2010) cases activists referred strongly to their working-class backgrounds, the Polish narrators did not present an awareness of such class (self-)consciousness and saw themselves as Poles, Catholics, and patriotic social activists. Economically driven arguments were not presented as a source of motivation for their activity either – confirming the survey results mentioned above (Malinowska et al., 2016) and showing that the nationalist movement in Poland appeals rather to cultural repertoires and political dissatisfaction rather than class- and economic-based factors. The four young

nationalists – similarly to the most of the narrators in the wider sample – avoided defining their activity in politicized terms. They rather framed it as grassroots social work, and a kind of educational, moral mission. Being in a nationalist organization seems to be part of the spectrum of broader social processes of political disengagement (involving anti-establishment attitudes), the cultural backlash (calling for a return to tradition and Catholicism), and the search for stronger, concrete narratives (those which oppose liberalism and postmodernism). Interestingly, the initial analysis of newer interviews (conducted since 2019)[3] with members of the nationalist milieu in Poland confirms the cultural- and political-based character of such movements. What is more, even if people spoke more openly about their commitment to a nationalist organization, this did not necessarily change the movements' identity – with participants still seeing themselves as excluded from public discourse, stigmatized, not represented in official politics, or even intimidated by the currently governing party. The image of the 'unfairly excluded' is thus a relevant strategic resource of such movements' identity. Regardless of changes on the political scene, this position allows them to maintain the favored element of identity construction in social movements (Jasper, 2007b): the image of participants as victims of the system, and as heroes who struggle for truth and real values.

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[3] The new biographical-narrative interviews are being collected in the framework of project 'Right-wing populism among young Germans and Poles: the analysis of biographical motives of support for right-wing parties and organizations', financed by the Polish-German Foundation for Science (2019–13). Project leaders: Mateusz Karolak (University of Wrocław), Katharina Bluhm (Freie Universität in Berlin). Project co-leaders: Adam Mrozowicki (University of Wrocław), Vera Trappmann (University of Leeds).

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Appendix: Details of narrators

No.	Narrator's name	Field of study/occupation	Type of path to the organization
1	Krzysztof (ONR)	history/casual job as bodyguard	individual project enhanced by significant others (friends)
2	Andrzej (ONR)	European studies /casual job at his father's company	individual project enhanced by significant others (schoolmate)
3	Edward (ONR)	graduate of political science/looking for a job	individual project enhanced by significant others (family)
4	Eryk (ONR)	history	influence of significant others' (schoolmate)
5	Dominik (ONR)	interrupted studies in history/uniformed services' course attendant	individual project enhanced by significant others (football fans)
6	Radomir (ONR)	medical sciences	individual project enhanced by significant others (family)
7	Ireneusz (ONR)	environmental protection	significant others' influence (football fans)
8	Marian (ONR)	graduate with history/electrician	individual project
9	Artur (MW)	European studies/casual jobs	being 'found' by the organization
10	Ilona (ONR)	graduate of Polish philology/internship in cultural institution	individual project enhanced by significant others (family and schoolmates)
11	Alicja (MW)	history	significant others' influence (family)
12	Wiktoria (MW)	pedagogy/casual job as babysitter	individual project

No.	Narrator's name	Field of study/occupation	Type of path to the organization
13	Bartosz (MW)	history	influence of significant others (fellow students)
14	Robert (MW)	history	influence of significant others (fellow students)
15	Piotr (MW)	technical college student	individual project
16	Tadeusz (MW)	history, law	individual project
17	Grzegorz (MW)	PhD studies in law/casual job at hotel	individual project enhanced by significant others (family)
18	Wojciech (MW)	information technology/casual jobs	individual project enhanced by significant others (family)
19	Patryk (MW)	law/own small company	individual project enhanced by significant others (family and friends)
20	Henryk (MW/NB)	graduate of mechanical engineering/ professional job	influence of significant others (friends)
21	Jan (MW)	international relations	individual project enhanced by significant others (schoolmate)
22	Krystian (ONR)	graduate of mathematics/ journalist	individual project enhanced by significant others (family)
23	Ryszard (MW)	interrupted studies in political science/ administrative work in private sector	individual project enhanced by significant others (family)
24	Filip (MW)	history	influence of significant others (fellow student)
25	Jerzy (MW)	history	influence of significant others (fellow student)
26	Tomasz (MW)	history	individual project

No.	Narrator's name	Field of study/occupation	Type of path to the organization
27	Cezary (MW)	European science/ job in Catholic association	being 'found' by the organization
28	Michał (MW)	history	being 'found' by the organization
29	Waldemar (ZŻNSZ)	post-secondary school/security manager	individual project
30	Dariusz (NOP)	national security	individual project enhanced by significant others (family)

MARGIT FEISCHMIDT *

The Nationalist Turn in Youth Culture: Far-Right Political Sympathies and the Frames of National Belonging among Hungarian Youth

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Abstract

This paper points to an important turn in youth culture which underpins increasing radical-right political sympathies and a propensity to national belonging and dignity-seeking among the youth. Qualitative analysis of 14 focus group interviews conducted in Hungary proves that the desire for political engagement of a significant segment of youth who have positioned themselves in opposition to a globalized youth culture and the apolitical stance of their generation. Inspired by cultural theories in political sociology that are also applied in the study of youth, and working with qualitative methods, this paper investigates the cultural dimension of radical-right politics and youth culture. The paper states that new forms of nationalism play a major role in the radical right turn among the youth by emphasizing the role of a general sense of disempowerment and disillusionment and claims for collective dignity which are framed in a hierarchical and mythical discourse about the nation. The major claim of this paper in this regard is that the renewal of nationalism and the commitment to the far-right in Hungary are closely connected.[1]

Keywords: far-right, political engagement, youth, nationalism, political culture.

1. Introduction

The research which this paper relies on was conducted – as part of a larger project on new forms of identity politics and nationalism – eight years ago, prompted at that time by an alarming increase in support for far-right politics among young Hungarians. This trend had been visible since 2009, the year that the far-right party Jobbik entered the European Parliament. Since then, the political actors on the far right have changed immensely. Nevertheless the lessons of our investigation concerning the social and cultural background of the far-right's support among youth are still relevant.

The aim of the paper is to reveal the discourses which frame far-right views and commitments, as well as to identify the social experiences and cultural perceptions on which these discourses are founded. In other words, it seeks to deconstruct young people's political sympathies with a view to understanding those aspects of their social relations, cultural consumption, social activities, and imaginations that tend to move them in the direction of the far right. More concretely, the paper applies a cultural perspective to understand the political turn of a considerable segment of Hungarian youth, which leans upon the cultural approach in political sociology, as Mabel Berezin (1997; 1999) has defined it.

To answer these questions, the paper starts with a short introduction to the study of youth on the far right, and to cultural theories in political sociology; two approaches which this paper aims to combine. The third section displays the methodology applied for data gathering and analysis. With the description of the composition and the dynamics of the focus group discussions, I aim to provide an introduction to the social and situational circumstances which shaped the discursive interventions that were analyzed. The results section of the paper has three parts. In the first section (4.1), I analyse the influence of peer groups on our young respondents and make a claim for the importance of belonging and tradition, which are opening up new avenues for youth culture that contradict pre-existing individual, consumption-oriented, and globalized trends. Section 4.2 deals with discursive strategies that seek to reclaim the nation in the form of historical nostalgia and racist othering. The last section (4.3) investigates the ways that socioeconomic problems and far-right responses to these problems are perceived and interpreted. I will conclude the paper by specifying the causes why nationalism plays a major role in the radical right turn among the youth by emphasizing the role of a general sense of disempowerment and disillusionment and claims for collective dignity, which are framed in a hierarchical and mythical discourse about the nation.

2. Background

2.1 Youth and the far-right

The sociology of youth proved a long time ago that the global leisure and entertainment industry is playing an overwhelming role in the formation of youth culture and the solidification of sub-cultural groups around the world (Firth, 1996; Futrell, Simi and Gottschalk, 2006). Significantly, this role appeared to be even more preponderant in the post-socialist world, where the global cultural industry has not only been incredibly successful in marketing the commodities of youth culture, but has managed to secure a hegemonic position by distributing the symbolic markers of a westernized middle-class status. Since this gatekeeping role has obviously been dependent on the economic growth – which has provided a growing number of young people with the means of entering the cultural market as consumers – the question what happens when growth stops is warranted and raised in this paper.

This moment, as this paper will show, is related to the disillusionment of the young generation and their succeeding turn toward traditional values and culture, as well as toward the populist far right concerning politics. The empirical investigation was aimed at increasing understanding of this political and cultural turn; more exactly, of the motivations of young people who, in contrast to previous generations and the apolitical mainstream of their generation, have become committed to public matters and are involved in the political and cultural activities of the far-right. Researchers have pointed out that youth are more likely than adults to support far-right-wing parties (Mierina and Koroleva, 2015). But, as Cas Mudde points out, most young people do not vote, hence engagement with the far-right occurs not through formal voting, but through engagement in extreme and radical-right subcultures (Mudde 2014: 5). This is exactly what I try to disclose in the Hungarian context: the transformation of youth culture in a way which opens the door to the new cultural and political entrepreneurs of the far right.

Throughout the previous decades, survey-based studies have shown that the majority of Hungarian youth are indifferent about or suspicious of politics. This is not unique in international comparison. Ø. N. Seippel and Å. Strandbu (2016) also claimed, in a publication about support for the populist radical right among the youth in Norway, that young people are less concerned, less interested, and less involved, and are more apathetic and cynical than previous generations, although trust in government and related institutions is still comparatively high. A different study of young people's political participation in Britain revealed that young people still profess a commitment to the political process, although they consider that there are relatively few opportunities available for them to intervene effectively in formal political life (Henn and Foard, 2013). Apathy in Hungary has been explained either as resulting from disbelief in and estrangement from political institutions (Szabó and Örkény, 1998), or by the inadequacy of the political socialization effectuated by the school system.

Certain interpretations claim, however, that the rejection of politics does not necessarily mean the denial of public concerns generally (Szabó, 2012), and starting in the 2000s the rise of a new 'political generation' was considered possible (Szabó and Kern, 2011). In line with the critique of political apathy thesis in the international literature, which claims that young people are interested in political matters but take part in diverse forms of political action (Norris, 2003; Henn and Foard, 2013), the research project Active Youth in Hungary[2] revealed that alongside a constantly passive majority, youth who are politically active exist at both ends of the ideological spectrum (Szabó and Oross, 2012; Róna and Sőrés, 2012). Other research dating back to the mid-2000s has shown the steady flow of young electorate towards the far right (Krekó, Juhász and Molnár, 2011). It has also been revealed that the most powerful explanatory factor of sympathy for the far-right is age: in other words, generational differences affect to a much greater degree far-right sympathy than social or economic status, or level of education (see, for example, Listening to Radicals, 2011).

2.2 Approaching the far-right from a cultural perspective

Although various studies bring up the role of culture – i.e. culture consumption, the role of subcultures, and new trends in youth culture – hardly any of them have consciously and consequently used culture as a starting point for understanding the change in political attitudes, demands, and visions of the new generation. This is the research gap which this paper aims to address. More concretely, I apply a cultural perspective to understand the political turn of a considerable segment of Hungarian youth, which leans upon the cultural approach in political sociology, as Mabel Berezin (1997; 1999) has defined it. This goes back to the analysis of culture as a symbolic toolkit, and defines political culture as a sub-field which covers 'meanings embodied in expressive symbols, practices and beliefs that constitute ordinary politics in a bounded collectivity' (Berezin, 1997: 265). In relation to the far-right, culture is considered either as part of the cause, meaning that certain cultural preferences, perceptions, and values make the appropriation of far-right – as well as participation in activities associated with the far-right – more probable, or as a special dimension of expressions which can be apprehended in the form of symbols, rituals, or discourses. As Cynthia Miller-Idriss notes, approaching the far right in the cultural space means on the one hand unfolding what attracts youth to the cultural components of the far right (e.g. what attracts them to far-right music, festivals, or consumer products), and on the other paying closer attention to the production and appropriation of symbols, images, and subcultural scenes (Miller-Idriss, 2018b: 13).

Not independently of the new waves of youth culture, a renewed emphasis on collective emotions, like feelings of belonging and a desire for the reinforcement of local communities, has been identified. Our paper reveals how 'Hungarianness' became the narrative frame of these emotions. This is why I focus

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[2] See http://aktivfiatalok.hu/

on performances and discourses and point out how they operate with new forms of nationalism. Concerning nationalism, I follow Banks and Gingrich (2006), who draw attention to the fact that the revitalization of 'national ideas,' although it originated from politics, is fundamentally connected to cultural performances.

A major claim of this paper in this regard is that the renewal of nationalism and the commitment to the far right in Hungary are closely connected. This is similar to what Cynthia Miller-Idriss has found concerning far-right youth in Germany. She claims that redefining national belonging happens in relation to commitment to the far right; consequently, there is a significant generational difference in national feelings in Germany; even a fight between generations. Her book *Blood and Culture* (2009) shows that young Germans who define their resistance and identity in terms of national identity are in fact reclaiming the nation, whereas their parents' generation resist this position because they are convinced that strong national feelings lead inevitably to fascism or Nazism. Her most recent book, *The Extreme Gone Mainstream* (2018), examines the commodification of the far-right scene and claims that far-right engagement is driven by two emotional impulses: the urge to belong and be part of a group, and the desire to rebel and reject mainstream society and its taboos (Miller-Idriss, 2018b: 29).

3. Methods and data

The empirical investigation applied focus group interviews, a method of examining a group of individuals (ideally five to eight in number) about a particular subject using a thematic guide and a set of projective techniques (images, film clips, and collective tasks). The interviews were taped, transcribed, and analyzed with Atlasti software. I am convinced that focus group interviews are especially useful for eliciting the views of young people. This is – as Bagnoli and Clark formulated in a recent methodological paper (2015) – because they enable researchers to recruit interviewees from a variety of backgrounds and foster the collaborative engagement of people who otherwise would be less willing to be participate.

Our focus group interviews followed an interview guide, the themes of which were selected partly for empirical and partly for theoretical reasons. Following two prompts that reminded interviewees of two festivals (one associated with global youth culture, the other with its local nationalist alternative) the discussion began with themes of music and youth culture. This was followed by a discussion about public affairs related to the participants' own activities whereby activities labelled as 'traditional' or 'national' took priority. The third topic was introduced through a short film that reported on a conflict between the Roma and far-right militia in a Hungarian village. This was because, at the time of the interviews, mobilization against the Roma and the poor was common, and had surprising levels of public support. The last part of the interviews dealt with social and economic problems personally affecting the participants and Hungarian youth in general, as well as the ways in which various political actors and especially far-right actors treat these problems.

A core intention of the research was to identify active youth groups in various cultural and political domains and to enter into discussion with their members. 'I'm looking for youth active in public life' – this is what I said at the beginning of my short fieldwork visits effectuated in five localities with the aim of identifying and meeting youth organizations and groups. The proper focus group discussions happened on the occasion of the second or third visit to each locality. The focus groups thus became mixed concerning the organizational affiliations of the participants, but the latter were in certain cases limited to the membership of one or two organizations. Before plunging into the analysis of our interviews, I will provide a brief overview of the fourteen groups and interview situations, mentioning their location, the social background of participants, and the focal points of their interaction. The fieldwork was effectuated in 2012 and 2013, making some details outdated; nevertheless, most of our research findings and – first of all – the ways that nationalism has been mobilized and crystallized in a new set of discourses and beliefs to frame and legitimize the demand for belonging and revolt are rather enduring. Fourteen focus group interviews were organized in five localities in Hungary (Budapest, Dunaújváros, Miskolc, Pécs, and Tamási) plus one in a Hungarian community abroad (in Cluj, Romania) with the participation of 5–8 people each (in total, 84 participants, including women and men in similar proportions).

The first interview (INT1) took place in one of Budapest's traditional working class districts. The president of the local far-right political organization helped us to organize the interview, although as someone reporting from a traditional female position she failed to become an opinion leader. This position was taken by two young men: a skilled worker who drew on his power as a male, and a young university student. Participants of the second group (INT 2) live in Pécs and its surroundings and are involved in youth heritage organizations. Participants of the third group (INT 3) were university students in Miskolc, active partly in the preservation of their school's historical patrimony and partly in the student union. Their discussion was mainly focused on Hungarian history; nevertheless, many participants adopted an exceptive stance vis-à-vis global youth culture. This, however, did not prevent them from following the activities of far-right (amongst them, paramilitary) organizations present in Eastern Hungary and appearing to draw on their discursive repertoire, especially when it came to defining their relations with Roma. Political allegiance was even more important for participants of the fourth group (INT 4). All of the participants were members or sympathizers of a Hungarian youth organization based in Transylvania who were fighting to strengthen the ethnic perception of the nation, which also includes Hungarians living abroad. There were two further focus groups for which participants were recruited from a minority background. While both groups (INT 5 and INT 6) were mainly composed of Roma, they differed according to social status. A crucial factor uniting the two groups was the shared understanding that Roma do not have a place in the imagined community of the Hungarian nation. The seventh interview (INT 7) was conducted among inhabitants of the most disadvantaged neighborhood in Miskolc and included members of a Christian

NGO. INT 8, conducted in Pécs, involved university students and graduates fresh out of university. Participants exhibited individualism combined with political apathy and realism. Importantly, these 'mainstream youths' depicted far-right political actors as responding to real social demands. Two interviews (INT 9 and INT 10) conducted in the former bastion of socialist industry, Dunaújváros, followed a somewhat similar track. One interview was conducted among university students, the other among skilled workers. While both discussions produced polarized debates about issues related to youth culture, history, and politics, they were united by the same kind of hegemonic anti-Gypsyism. INT 11, conducted in Budapest with the involvement of skilled workers and high-school graduates, did not revolve around politics but rather around music, including a debate about global or national rock music. INT 12 was attended by university students and young professionals in Budapest, and was the only interview in which a critical stance towards nationalist and racist discourses emerged. Our youngest focus group interviewees (INT 13) live in a small town in the Transdanubia Region. As in group 10, the opinion leader obtained their position by raising and dominating the discussion of historical topics. The last group (INT 14) differed significantly from the others as it was attended only by two people, but because the latter were leaders of Jobbik's youth wing in the small town, I considered the interview content worthy of closer scrutiny.

To sum up, in this section I have briefly introduced the methods and data which underpin the claims of the following sections. Certainly not all the elements of the interviews are going to be presented; our emphasis will be on those aspects of youth culture which help us to understand far-right political sympathies and the propensity to national belonging and dignity-seeking among Hungarian youth.

4. Results

4.1 Traditionalist moves in youth culture

Researchers who deal with youth culture in Hungary have pointed out that the *Sziget* Festival – one of Europe's biggest music festivals – is the most important reference point for Hungarian youth culture (Gábor, 2000). This, of course, means that the multicultural ambiance radiated by the 300,000 to 500,000 participants who gather every year in Budapest exercises a powerful influence over young people's cultural outlooks and imagination. It is for this reason that I kicked off each focus group interview with a video focusing on the festival, and asked our participants to share their experiences (in the case of those who had already taken part in the event), or their motives (if they had not yet paid a visit to 'The Island'). This discussion was immediately followed by similar probing of modes of relating to another cultural event which has been invented as the nationalist or traditionalist antipode of *Sziget:* the '*Magyar Sziget* Festival.'

Focus group participants who had taken part in the *Sziget* Festival tended to come away with rather positive impressions. The focal point of their experience was what our young participants described as 'euphoria' or as 'a sense of freedom.'

Significantly, these emotions were in some way usually connected to the variegated music and the multicultural ambiance offered by the festival. There is, however, a wholly different mode of relating to the *Sziget* Festival – one that is best described as a moralizing approach, and which was mostly shared by participants who had not attended the event (and probably never would) – and, very importantly, was in evidence in the testimony of the majority of our focus group participants.

Those who most firmly condemned the Sziget Festival tended to simultaneously reject 'individualistic materialism,' thereby valuing community and belonging above individualism, and national heritage above the pursuit of liberty. It is also noteworthy that this resistive stance came in the form of a roughly sketched anti-globalism, of which a critique of cultural liberalism was an explicit-, and anti-capitalism an implicit element. One of the focus group participants put forward precisely the same arguments as were applied in the denial narrative:

> AB: - 'Exhibition of sexual deviancy is also quite common at the Sziget. …'
> CD: - 'There is a FankaDeli song called New Magyar Conquest.[3] One of the verses reads: "*The gathering of Magyar-haters, its name is Sziget Festival, where it's uncool to be Magyar and to say you don't smoke [weed]."* That's it, that's the essence of the Sziget.'
> AB: - 'By the way, the Sziget Festival symbolizes how today's leaders, those who run the world, want to see young people behave and look like….'
> EF: - 'There's a huge difference, because the Magyar Sziget is characterized by sacrality and tradition, whereas the "Zsiget" [a conflation of the word *zsidó* – meaning Jew or Jewish – and the word *Sziget*], 'cause that's how I call it, is exclusively profit-oriented. It's all about the money. I would add one thing to the video. It gives you the impression that everyone is happy, chilled, and behaving in a civilized manner. Well, let me tell you that the reality is something else. You see people stumbling and lying around all over the place. They really do nasty and wicked things, without giving them a thought, out of their minds, and that's, … that's intolerable for any decent person.' (INT 1)

The above passage exemplifies how the refusal of the global music scene operates using enemy images: the enmification of sexual minorities is strongly connected with an anti-Semitic discourse. A dislike of homosexuality and the strong expression of male comradeship leads to the venting of anger against other perceived enemies (the Jews, the elites, the authorities) who in Hungary are somewhat protected by the taboos of mainstream society. Probing the motivations, sensibilities, and fantasies of the critics of globalization, I found cultural values that draw their power from supposed ancient origins and particularity, and which are objectified in national symbols and in collective activities aimed at reinvigorating

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[3] FankaDeli is an entrepreneur in the nationalist music scene who plays rap music with nationalist lyrics.

them. This engagement in national values is grounded in an acute sense of alienation that our young respondents increasingly tend to connect with the workings of unpatriotic elite groups. Cosmopolitan elites are perceived as simultaneously bearing responsibility for the dispossession of working-class people, and the disempowerment of Hungarians – the first being achieved through neoliberal policies, and the second through the denationalization of the social imaginary.

Furthermore, the change in youth culture can be explained not only by a rejection of global culture, as stated above, but also by the creation of an alternative supply of the latter. Miller Idriss found that the growth of an extremist commercial market and the mainstreaming of an extremist sub-cultural style have coincided with one of the most significant waves of far-right popularity in Europe (Miller-Idriss, 2018b: 6). Similarly, in Hungary, national clothing brands (Molnar, 2016) and music (Feischmidt and Pulay, 2017) have created a new nationalistic and far-right popular culture ('*rechtextreme Alltagskultur*,' Langebach and Raabe, 2009).

Although nationalist music[4] was the most commodified form of nationalist pop culture at the time of our interviews, music was not the only and not even the most prevalent reference point of 'the national' in our interviews. Focus groups participants who found refuge in the primacy of belonging and community usually reported their engagement in activities they call 'heritage work.' I quote in the following the introductory part of a focus group discussion when the interviewees introduced themselves in relation to their personal experience with heritage work.

> GH: - 'I am G., and my life is heritage work and the fatherland.'
> IJ: - 'My name is I., I am doing environmental studies. My life is natural medicine, nature, and heritage work.'
> KL: - 'My name is K., my life is also heritage work. (…) The whole thing began when I was nine or ten years old…. It was the first time I had ridden a horse and held a bow in my hands. And that stayed with me. I got hooked on archery….'
> MN: - 'I am M. and I was an awfully depressed youth. My high school kicked the chair out from under my feet with its religion. It was martial arts that saved me from self-pity. This was the first thing that made me feel strong, that showed me some other way than lying on the floor under the influence of some cheap and shitty drug, than lamenting my past. (…) It helped me stand straight, and to show that I have strength.'
> KL: - 'So we respect and nurture this heritage and that's also important. It's a good feeling that we are able to hand over a piece of the past. For instance, we go to schools to hold lectures. We are also going tomorrow. We usually bring an authentic dinner set with us.' (INT 2)

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[4] 'National rock' was born from a fusion of skinhead rock music and folk rock music. Lyrics typically blend radical political critique (anti-establishment, anti-globalism, anti-liberalism) with old national mythology.

So what is heritage work? In practical terms, it means volunteering in historical re-enactment activities, in the revival of 'old' rituals, crafts, and cultural traditions. Importantly, participants do not interpret their activities as leisure, but as collective engagement bent on strengthening social bonds and recreating a sense of community. They characterize themselves as following a 'value-centric' approach that transcends individual desires and which allows them to evade the mistakes of their generation: dishonesty and immoral behavior.

To sum up, this section claims the palpable influence of an emergent discourse that rejects middle-class cultural ideals and the concept of leisure promulgated by the global cultural industry among the participants of our focus groups.[5] If the Hungarian youth sociologist Kálmán Gábor (2008) was correct in stating that there was a generational shift in youth culture in the 1990s (when the norms of the Western European middle-class became entrenched in the post-socialist space), then I may now formulate the claim that there is a similar, albeit opposite move under way in Hungary. As highlighted above, this shift is motivated by the overall rejection of the secular, cosmopolitan and individualistic agenda of globalized elites and promotes a return to the trenches of local community, mostly framed in historical and ethnonational terms. The conservative and collectivist ethos that underpins this reactive tendency appears to us to be part of a wider European trend which anthropologist Douglas Holmes described as an integralist move driven by people's desire to maintain their ethnic identity and solidarity within a globalized world (Holmes, 2000).

4.2 Reclaiming the nation: historical revisionism and the exclusion of perceived enemies

The two issues that most powerfully energized our focus group interviews were the so-called 'Gypsy-question' and so-called 'Trianon-trauma,' both interpreted in relation to 'the nation.' The importance of the latter was immediately manifested as it triggered powerful reactions irrespective of the composition of the focus group. The topic of 'Trianon' opened up the discussion to more general questions concerning the nation; and significantly, those who introduced this issue usually managed to retain a leading position throughout the whole of the discussion, which shows the strength of the topic.

What is Trianon? The term refers to *Grand Trianon,* the palace where the treaty between Hungary and the victors of the First World War was signed on 4 June, 1920. Among our young participants there was a consensus that the treaty, which forced Hungary to give up two-thirds of its former territory, constitutes a 'national tragedy.' In the words of one participant: 'This was a gigantic nation, and they cut off its legs and arms. They left a small piece in the middle to show that there was once such a thing.' (INT 10) The grief caused by this loss is particular in that it possesses significant mobilizational power; its discussion triggers feelings of

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[5] We do not know what focus group participants' cultural consumption patterns actually are, but this was not the focus of interest.

indignation, hatred, revenge, and revolt – emotional responses that are consequently framed in discourses about the nation's enemies (who are responsible for the tragedy) and speculation about the possibility of redressing the injustice. As revealed elsewhere in detail, Trianon and 'Greater Hungary' have been revived by the Hungarian far-right scene (Feischmidt, 2018) with the aim of creating a powerful object of fantasy that could become the cornerstone of a new nationalist discourse. In geographical terms, 'Greater Hungary' refers to the territory of the Hungarian Kingdom before 1920. Far-right actors have spent a great amount of energy infusing this symbolic space with positive meanings that are associated with the country's glorious past, contrasting it with the hated, shameful predicament of today's 'smaller Hungary.'

National myths, as Miller-Idriss (2018a) notes in relation to the reinvigoration of German mythology, filter and reconstruct cultural memory and invoke nostalgia for an imagined past. The cultivation of mythic narratives depends on the 'memory vacuum,' a concept introduced to express the lack of rational discourses about national history (Sik, 2015: 54). Mythical narratives are likely to be more powerful and more appealing to a disenfranchised youth for whom alternative narratives that promise success in the fragmented, modern, rational, globalized economy appear either false or impossible to achieve (Miller-Idriss, 2018b: 101). Stéphanie Dechezelles (2014) argues that the discourse of far-right Italian youth activists includes a 'teleological project concerning the ideal society' that is linked to a historical legendary and a symbolic territory (Dechezelles, 2014: 52–54).

Similarly, our case shows that for those participants who stress the importance of remembering the 'Trianon disaster,' the cultivation of 'Hungarianness' is an avenue for redressing their dignity, which has been undermined by disenfranchisement and uncertainty. This was brought home to us by the frequent mentioning of 'pride,' which our focus group participants described as something that they could establish by learning and teaching Hungarian history; participating in (and in some cases, organizing) commemorative events; wearing or displaying 'ancient' and once repressed historical symbols (the map of Greater Hungary or the Árpád-striped flag); or listening to 'national rock music' disseminated by an emergent cultural industry.

Now I turn my attention to the strategies of othering that are used to delineate the boundaries of the national community. The Roma issue was not only the topic that generated the most intense exchanges in our focus groups, but also the one that mobilized the highest number of participants, involving virtually everybody in discussion. Crucially, the intensity of the exchange was *not* the result of deep disagreements between representatives of different viewpoints, but was rather the outcome of the urge of participants to contribute to one-sided discussions with personal stories. Those who attempted to temper or criticize anti-Roma discourses were quickly marginalized by other participants.[6]

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[6] We note that three of the fourteen groups constituted an exception in that the majority of participants adopted an anti-racist stance. In two of these the majority of participants were Roma. In

Several studies have identified connections between youth engagement with far-right and xenophobic, Islamophobic, or racist attitudes (Mudde 2014: 10), including van der Valk`s (2014) research in the Netherlands which found that ethnic prejudice is more important than political ideas in motivating youth to engage with extreme right-wing movements. Mierina and Koroleva (2015) have shown, based on the MYPLACE dataset of 14 European countries which explored young people's support for the ideas voiced by far-right parties, that there is variability in negative attitudes towards minorities, xenophobia, and welfare chauvinism within Europe: youth from post-socialist settings, along with Greek youth, hold stronger anti-immigrant and xenophobic attitudes compared to the youth of other West European countries.

Our research is not the first to call attention to the existence of a powerful anti-Roma public discourse in Hungary. Numerous studies have highlighted the preponderance of ethnic stereotypes and prejudice in different segments of Hungarian society (Csepeli, Fábián and Sik, 1998) and among supporters of different political parties (Krekó, 2012). What is much less clear is how this anti-Gypsy cultural hegemony emerged in the first place, and what keeps it in place. Concerning this latter crucial point, our knowledge is mostly limited to a few analyses that demonstrated the extreme permeability of mainstream media to negative stereotyping in the field of media studies (Juhász, 2010), and research that emphasized the role of far-right political entrepreneurs in the solidification of the image of the unruly and dangerous Gypsy (Stewart, 2012; Feischmidt and Pulay, 2017; Bíró-Nagy and Róna, 2013). Our own data allow us to make a modest contribution to this line of inquiry by highlighting the existence of a discourse of fear of the Roma amongst those who regard themselves as members of the ethnic majority, the lack of credibility of critical anti-racist discourses, and the current efficiency of historical discourses of Magyar supremacism.

The prevalent attitude of rejection vis-à-vis members of the Roma minority (which, in terms of its objective forms of expression, ranges from avoidance to calls for ethnic cleansing) was legitimized in two ways by our focus group participants: first, by reference to crime statistics and crime events that are widely circulated in mainstream and social media, and second, by reference to minor criminal acts – typically theft, robbery, or bodily harm – disseminated in personal and informal narratives. Most of our participants used these sources of legitimization simultaneously, mixing allusions to 'well-known' facts or events with personal stories to buttress generalized statements. If this combination of collective traumas (such as the lynching of a teacher by members of a frightened Roma family in 2006, or the murder of a handball player in 2009) and personal complaints is explosive, it is because they mutually reinforce each other and generate a climate of fear and paranoia that is upheld by the fantasy image of the 'brutal Gypsy.' The power of this climate is demonstrated by the fact that hate-

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other words, there was only one non-Roma group whose participants successfully countered anti-Roma narratives: this was the group recruited from Budapest's cosmopolitan elite circles.

crime incidents that took place in 2008/9, causing the death of six Roma people, were only mentioned by the Roma participants of our focus groups.

The link between crime and ethno-racial background is of course not something that solidified overnight, or spontaneously for that matter. Since our focus group interviews cannot shed light on this critical process, I will constrain myself to analyzing the effectiveness of strategies aimed at countering the prevalent anti-Gypsy discursive hegemony. I begin by stating that participants who attempted to counter the dominant discourse on Roma by citing positive personal experiences were rebuffed: their experiences were simply shut out and ignored. The few participants who attempted to legitimize their personal positive experiences by recourse to professional expertise were slightly more successful, managing at least to spark a debate. The least successful were those individuals who attempted to argue against racism from a purely ideological position, citing egalitarian principles and universal human rights. This suggests that the interpretation of the Roma / non-Roma divide is being left to those who argue for the existence and salience of biologically or culturally grounded differences and hierarchical relations.

The racist discourse targeting Roma creates a consensus around special policy measures that are presented as 'solutions' to the 'Gypsy-threat' but which in fact serve the function of controlling an inherently 'unruly' and 'inferior' group, as the following discussion from one of our interviews shows:

> MN: - 'It's unmanageable. The solution would be quite drastic, so I won't mention it.'
> OP: - 'Unmanageable. What can you do? Put them in prison?'
> MN: - 'No, because then their number will grow... And anyhow it costs seven to ten thousand forints per day to keep them there. So no way.'
> QR: - 'If you take away those subsidies and support they will steal and rob.'
> ST: - 'They would have to be exterminated, ... seriously. This has to be said. They have to be exterminated.'
> MN: - 'It's not a bloodbath that is needed, but birth control. That would solve the problem in thirty years... I don't specifically care who is a Gypsy. There should be a committee to check whether someone is capable of bringing up a child in Hungary.'
> *Are you thinking of Gypsies or everyone?* (Interlocutor)
> ST: - 'About everyone.'
> MN: - 'It [the policy] should be applied to everyone, so that the Gypsies cannot claim that it's discriminatory.'
> QR: - 'But 95 per cent of inmates are Gypsies anyway.' (INT 10)

As revealed in this quote, those who subscribe to the biological approach did not hesitate to raise the possibility of sterilization, the reintroduction of the death penalty, and even the option of the 'Magyar majority taking justice into its own hands.' This shows that while some of the measures proposed by our radical interviewees are aimed at disciplining the racialized 'other' through the

reorientation of state policies, others go beyond the sphere of modern biopolitical intervention (understood in Foucaultian terms) by raising the possibility of popular justice in relation to a group whose members can be defined as *homo sacer* – as people who can be killed without the killer(s) being regarded as murderer(s).

The 'politics of fear,' characteristic, as Ruth Wodak and her co-authors argue, of far-right discourse, depends on performative strategies which claim victimhood through reporting dramatized and exaggerated events (Wodak et al., 2013). I conclude this analysis by reemphasizing the prevalence of such reports in relation to Roma among our Hungarian respondents. I have argued that the discourse of fear is driven by personal anxieties that are embedded in a culturally and biologically grounded supremacist discourse that shuts out non-congruent aspects of social reality and establishes the racialized image of the unruly 'other' that must be controlled, disciplined, and – according to some – physically persecuted if necessary.

4.3 The nationalist framing of political engagement

The political moment which our research has documented was the rise of the far-right which started in Hungary about ten years ago. I will contextualize our data with a view to its antecedents and consequences, keeping in mind that the main interest was understanding how civic and political engagement has been engineered by a traditionalist shift in youth culture and by the desire to belong, framed in national terms.

In the interviews I offered participants the option to discuss three topics which political parties pursue in characteristically different ways: the Roma issue, the country's relationship with the European Union, and the heritage of state socialism. Since I have already dealt with the first topic, and the third one seemed to be less relevant to our young interviewees, I will concentrate in the following on the second topic. Concerning the relationship to the European Union, which I introduced with a picture documenting the burning of an EU flag by one of Jobbik's leading politicians, I found that while most participants did not share the anger communicated by the act, the majority agreed with the critique. While university students used the occasion to expose in more general terms the negative consequences of Hungary's membership in the EU, workers from Pécs and Dunaújváros related personal stories to reflect on the economic difficulties and social problems that they associate with membership. This shows that criticism of the European Union underscores a broader criticism directed at Hungary's transition to capitalism. In the groups where such systemic issues were raised there was a general consensus that the parties that managed the process of transition are guilty of mismanagement, as well as of silencing voices that criticized the process and outcomes of the transition. The following short quote represents well the consensus that emerged in these groups: 'Jobbik deals with the issues that other parties don't engage with or only pretend to engage with. Criminality, the emigration of young people, multinational companies, agriculture, these are the popular issues they deal with' (INT 1).

While precarity is one of the pillars on which the young generation's collective sensibilities are based, I do not see it as the only one. Fatigue with the consumer lifestyle offered by the global cultural industry is another factor I identified as a key driver. The success of the alternative cultural scene centered around (and feeding) the far-right resides in its protagonists' ability to recognize the new generation's disillusionment with the master narrative of 'freedom' and young people's longing for more stable and durable forms of identification.

Our focus group interviews showed how the success of the far-right lies in its movement-like character which differentiates it from other parties and magnetizes youth who have become disillusioned with the way other political formations engage in the art of politics. The grassroots approach that affiliates the party with other social movements was considered a unique trait that differentiated Jobbik from other parties at the time our interviews were conducted. Jobbik has also capitalized on the social and symbolic capital amassed by local groups that have been involved in 'heritage work' in the last ten years, as well as the emergent 'nationalist subcultures.'

The fact that young people who are interested in cultural and political activity have turned to the far-right and to the subcultures that are within its orbit is not only connected with the attractiveness of what these initiatives have to offer, but also with the lack of alternatives, as one of our focus group participants – a self-identified 'liberal or leftist' – formulated it:

> The main problem with Hungarian public life is that liberal and left-wing thought has not been able to create a youth organization, or rather any kind of organization. It cannot formulate itself in a way that is attractive to anyone. [...] It looks like most of us are liberal or left-wing here. And still, we cannot – none of us can – name an organization or group about which you could say 'I sympathize with this, I will support it.'

Our focus group interviews revealed the social and cultural grounds that complete the political factors which explain the success of far-right mobilization among the Hungarian youth. As I have documented, resentment because of the 'failed transition' and the desire to belong created by manifold actors in the civic and cultural scene in neo-nationalist terms not only precede far-right politics, but have bought into being a sociocultural imaginary which political actors have swiftly picked up on and instrumentalized. The main political player to recognize this potential a couple of years ago was the far-right party *Jobbik*, which nevertheless was replaced by *Fidesz* after the latter party took over the nationalist and xenophobic discourse in 2015.[7] Subsequently, Jobbik lost one-third of all its supporters, and, as a survey-based study about party support from July 2018 shows, the biggest loss was among the youth, besides losses among more educated

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[7] https://www.politico.eu/article/hugary-right-wing-trading-places-fidesz-jobbik/
https://foreignpolicy.com/2018/04/06/how-hungarys-far-right-extremists-became-warm-and-fuzzy/
See also Pirro and Rona (2019) and Grskovits (2020)

social categories.[8] Thus, although political actors change, on the level of collective emotions and social perceptions our focus group interviews revealed quite stable tendencies. Social resentment – including a tendency to social disillusionment, Euroscepticism, antiglobalism, and antielitism – and revolt, as well as a desire for the recovery of collective dignity in terms of a ethno-nationalism that includes historical nostalgia and an exclusionary logic are issues which resonate with many young people, first of all those engaged in public matters. This is part of what Szombati – after an investigation of the rise of anti-Gypsyism within the context of the crisis suffered by the Hungarian rural population as a result of capitalist transformations connected to global economic trends and Hungary's accession to the EU – called the 'making of right-wing hegemony' (Szombati, 2018: 12).

5. Discussion

In agreement with Cynthia Miller-Idriss, who investigated far-right youth in Germany from a cultural perspective, this investigation shows that the public engagement of youth in Hungary is also successfully influenced by far-right political actors, the commodification of the far-right scene, and new forms of nationalism. Hence, this paper points to another explanatory fact too: an important shift in youth culture, which I see as one of the key factors underpinning political sympathies and allegiances. While the 14 focus group interviews are clearly not sufficient to support the making of general statements, I believe that this empirical material allows for the formulation of a few modest claims.

First, one can conclude that certain segments of the 18–30 age group formulated positions against global youth culture, which they perceive as being materialist and individualist and too much centered on the idea of freedom. Some of the focus group interviews featured working class youth who do not have the means to keep up with global youth culture and whose diatribes against cosmopolitan elites, and whose celebration of 'little men' and communities are discursively linked to their own precarious situation. However, similar criticism was encountered from interviewees who also conveyed their strong disillusionment with the master narrative of 'freedom' and expressed a more general sense of alienation, as well a longing for more stable and durable forms of identification. Since I would need more biographical information, as well as an understanding of local histories, to establish evidence-based links between cultural and structural tendencies, I will constrain myself to noting that it appears to be a critique of establishment and a search for respect (and other means of empowerment) that push young people from different social backgrounds to look for an alternative ideology.

I am in agreement with scholars who claimed long before me that the populist radical right is not merely a political option. Its incredible success can be explained by the fact that its political views are embedded in a broader cultural

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[8] http://www.zaveczresearch.hu/lejtmenetben-a-jobbik/

context. Michael Stewart (2012), who led a piece of comparative research into European anti-Gypsy mobilization, formulated the claim – referring back to Douglas Holmes – that what nationalist populism makes remarkable is the reformulation of social solidarity in terms of cultural particularism. The former aims – according to Stewart – to undermine the idea of a cultural diversity supported by transnational political actors, first of all, the European Union. I accept the role of anti-EU aspirations; nevertheless, I argue that the discourse which legitimizes far-right thinking, with its changing political actors among Hungarian youth, is not only a new discourse premised on racialized exclusion but also a discourse about national pride. This, as a reaction to a very general sense of disempowerment and disillusionment, aims to reestablish collective dignity through the construction of a hierarchical and mythical discourse which combines national and race categories.

The outcome of the shared frustration with the mainstream, as I have pointed out, is according to my second statement a traditionalist turn characterized by a celebration of national traditions and a desire for collective activities that re-enact a glorious past in the present, while also allowing participants to build defensive bonds. This is a nationalist turn in youth culture which is characteristic not only of Hungary but which is present throughout the whole region, as comparative studies on far-right movements and their social power have proven. (Pasieka, 2017). Moreover, recent analyses have confirmed that the rise of youth nationalism has also been made possible in Poland due to the entanglement of an anti-establishment and Eurosceptic political discourse with national historical symbols and youth pop culture (Junes, 2016).

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MICHAL PINK AND ADAM FOLVARČNÝ*
The Czech Pirate Party: A New Alternative, Not Only for the Young

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Abstract

In 2017, in addition to the traditional, old, and more recently established political parties, a new formation – the Czech Pirate Party – espousing more participative principles, including the use of online platforms for discussions – arrived on the political scene in the Czech Republic. This newcomer to the parliamentary ecosystem, shortly after achieving success at the national level, also managed to attract significant support in local elections. For this reason, there is currently a Pirate Party parliamentary group present in the Chamber of Deputies (the lower chamber of the Czech parliament), while simultaneously the mayor of Prague and members of the ruling coalition in Brno – the second biggest city in the Czech Republic – also represent the Pirate Party. Furthermore, recent opinion polls show support for the Pirates running at about 14%. This is coupled with another new feature: the young age of the party's elected parliamentarians and local councilors, which brings new challenges to politics. After the elections, a number of commentators immediately dubbed the Pirate Party a 'youth party.' But is this really the case? What forms of participation do the party and/or its members use and encourage? This article offers answers to these questions. In particular, it presents the electoral base of this new political party through interpretative analysis. The data are based on election results triangulated with other sources – specifically, a Czech election study is juxtaposed against a quantitative survey carried out by three academic institutions in the Czech Republic (the Faculty of Social Studies at Masaryk University, Brno; Palacký University, Olomouc; and the Institute of Sociology at the Czech Academy of Sciences, Prague). These statistical tools enable us to identify in great detail the demographic and socio-economic characteristics of Pirate Party voters (for instance: age, education, their views about contemporary democracy, and the timing of their decision to vote) and map their attitudes towards other parties and their leaders. The article reveals how popular the Czech Pirate Party is among the younger generation of voters, where the latter come from, and what political preferences they had previously.

1. Introduction[1]

In the autumn 2017 elections to the Chamber of Deputies of the Parliament of the Czech Republic,[2] nine political parties won seats, and some of them took their places on the parliamentary benches for the very first time. In addition to the long-established parties of previous years, these included the extreme-right and populist Freedom and Direct Democracy, which drew upon the legacy of its predecessor, the Dawn of Direct Democracy; the candidate list of Mayors and Independents likewise managed to cross the electoral threshold. Though this latter party had previously been represented in the Chamber, it was as part of the liberal TOP 09 parliamentary party group. The third newcomer was the Czech Pirate Party, or 'the Pirates' for short. Polling 10.79 per cent of the vote and returning 22 MPs, it became the second most successful party of the opposition. Thus, a new party managed to breakthrough into parliament; one that in the previous term had attracted attention by organizing protest rallies and vigorously criticizing the established order. The Pirate MPs rank among the youngest in the Chamber. Their average age is under 35, only two MPs are over 40 years old, and the others are significantly younger. In addition to their age, they are characterized by their professions – over two-thirds of the Pirate MPs indicated that they worked in IT, while other common occupations included teaching and local politics. Thus the face of Czech politics has substantially changed since autumn 2017, with new, young MPs under the Pirate Party brand appearing alongside the politicians of other parties, many of whom have long-term experience as MPs, regional politicians, or mayors.

This paper starts by describing the Pirate Party's emergence, internal formation, and electoral successes preceding its entry to parliament, and the essential characteristics of its electorate. The first section is based on published articles and party documents, especially their on-line discussion forums. The paper also uses election results and data obtained by an election study undertaken by the Institute of Sociology at the Czech Academy of Sciences and other social science institutions. Personal interviews were conducted with 1,559 respondents – Czech citizens over 18 years of age – immediately after the parliamentary elections. This created a rich store of information, organized around more than 230 variables related to how voters decided in the elections, what motivated them to vote, and other circumstances of electoral decision-making. The major findings of the article are summarized in the conclusion.

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[2] Elections are held using a system of proportional representation in 14 electoral regions. A modified d'Hondt method is used to convert votes into seats, and fragmentation is prevented by a 5 per cent threshold (additive for coalitions). The voters choose a party candidate list and may award preferential votes on the list.

2. The Pirate Party in Czech politics and beyond

The Czech Republic has some historical experience of various 'mock' parties. The most recent conspicuous example was a successful local outfit, *Žít Brno,* or Live Brno, which attracted popular attention for its satire of the country's second-largest city Brno and the workings of its city council (for example, *Žít Brno* renamed the city 'Krno'). This was a form of protest combined with political activism that achieved success in the 2014 local elections, and also in 2018 (Macková and Macek, 2014).

Earlier activities of this kind include Václav Linkov's efforts to establish a Liberal Party, but his application was rejected by the Ministry of the Interior. He was only allowed to establish the party and stand for election after a decision of the European Court of Human Rights. He also forced the Czech Supreme Court to pronounce on whether it was acceptable to play noughts and crosses on a ballot paper (Neviditelný pes, 2006; Český statistický úřad, 2006).[3]

Yet pirate parties can hardly be considered the political descendants of such "mock parties." As for the core Pirate policies, the crucial issue in 2006 was the legalization of file sharing on the internet. Issues related to and forms of file sharing were the subject of a court case in Sweden involving the representatives of what was then still more of a Pirate initiative than a party. The Swedish Pirate Party (*Piratpartiet*) had Its success – notably in the 2009 European elections, where it polled 7.1 per cent of the vote –, which was due not so much to its program as to the trial of its representatives (Frederiksson, 2015). The impacts of the trial and the example of the Swedish party were was considerable in that they directly led to the foundation of a wider movement and other pirate parties – even if many of these tend not to contest elections (Almqvist, 2016a).

The pirates focused mainly on issues such as the protection of personal rights and opposition to strict intellectual property rights, but these were often found difficult to grasp or failed to mobilize electorates (such as issues concerned with threats to democracy). In terms of social and economic issues, there were considerable national specifics and differences among pirate parties, but this needs to be considered in the context of their post-materialist character (the German pirates, for instance, embraced left-wing economic and social positions more than others; Uszaki and Vică, 2012; Charvát, 2015). Pirate parties tend strongly to emphasize the individual, and to overestimate the importance of the internet and its society-wide implications.

Linked with the issue of locating the pirates on a left-to-right axis is the unclear make-up of their electorates. The assumption is that these are primarily young voters (or first voters) from large cities with a higher level of education who embrace post-materialist values to some extent and use the internet extensively on a daily basis. The pirate parties' profiles and characteristics tend to target this type

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[3] Another example is the Hungarian Two-Tailed Dog Party. This student initiative unsuccessfully competed in two recent parliamentary elections. Embracing a form of satire and protest, it promised two sunrises a day, and lampooned Orbán's nationalist policy (Case and Palattella, 2016; Hájek, 2018).

of voter – yet detailed information about this is often lacking or remains rather generic. The success of these parties, then, substantially depends on their ability to mobilize the younger electoral core – but these people tend to choose pirates on the basis of issue voting, and do not choose them *a priori* as a form of protest vote (Zulianello, 2017). Significant mistrust in politics in a country might favor the pirates, as long as they maintain their libertarian approaches (Otjes, 2019). Maškarinec (2017) argued that in the previous parliamentary Czech elections, the pirate voters were recruited from areas with substantial development potential that used to be the strongholds of right-wing parties (such as ODS) – this is somewhat surprising. Support for pirates varied substantially across regions – they did best in Prague and Central Bohemia, but were well behind in Moravia. In Germany, support was homogeneous across the country (Baldini and Bolgherini, 2016).

The pirate parties' efforts were largely unsuccessful, as best shown by the examples from Germany and Sweden, where they failed to penetrate the national level of politics. Attempts to broaden the appeal of their manifestos were not always met with understanding within the parties themselves, leading to conflicts. The parties met with limited success in the European Parliament elections in 2009 and 2014. The German Pirate Party (*Piratenpartei Deutschland*) in particular failed to exploit the potential created by its successes in two states (Berlin and Sararland), or to capitalize on the NSA spying scandal (Almquist, 2016b; Baldini and Bolgherini, 2016).

In the Czech Republic, the Pirate Party has enjoyed much greater success.[4] Whereas the Swedish and German pirates have likely gradually exhausted their potential, given the declining importance of their primary topic (internet regulation), the Czech Pirate Party scored a substantial success only several years later – and under circumstances very different from those of its establishment. The founding of the Pirate Party in Czechia is also linked with the judgment in the Swedish trial. In the Czech Republic, the computer programmer Jiří Kadeřávek took the initiative, and gradually an inner online circle formed on the website *Pirátské forum* (issues discussed included the name, logo, and statutes of the future entity).

Although initially established as a movement, the Pirates did not remain so for long, as a preparatory committee was quickly formed under Kadeřávek's chairmanship and an online petition was set up to win popular support for the establishment of a political party. This was registered by the Ministry of the Interior on 17 June 2009. Thus the Czech Pirate Party (ČPS) was quickly formed at the national level, but building a territorial organization proceeded only gradually. Some aspects of the party's functioning continued to be rather *ad hoc* in character and bore the marks of a social-political movement rather than a political party (for example, its rudimentary structures, the prior existence of the *Pirátské fórum* as the

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[4] The Pirate Party (*Píratar*) in Iceland is an exception to this: it polled 14.48 per cent of the vote in 2016, and 9.20 per cent in 2017, and has six MPs as of early 2020 (i.e. about a tenth of the total). The party responded particularly well to the issue of corruption in politics and the corporate world (Almqvist 2016b; Parties and Elections in Europe 2020).

communication platform, and the limited scope of issues on which the party sought to establish its profile). The online *Pirátské forum* is one of the hallmarks of the party's identity, affording the option of using contemporary technology for mobilization purposes and for articulating political ideals (Lupa, 2009a; Ministerstvo vnitra, 2019; Almqvist, 2016; Frederiksson, 2015).

3. The Czech Pirate Party's internal formation, participation, and program

From the outset, the party endorsed a policy of reviewing intellectual property rights, support for civic freedoms (such as freedom of speech and access to information) and a democratic orientation (Pirátská strana, 2009b). However, for a long time its program was limited in character with just a few general aspects and essential points on which pirate parties had previously established their profiles. It focused solely on the key pirate priorities as far as the internet and copyright were concerned, with some emphasis on public administration reform and direct democracy. The program hampered the electorate's ability to identify with the party on the basis of concrete proposals or demands as it was silent about matters such as foreign policy or the party's socio-economic profile. The party contested the 2010 parliamentary elections with a similar manifesto, with added calls for greater transparency (Pirátská strana, 2019).

With this as background, the ČPS can hardly be considered a typical political party, at least in its early days. It established its overall political profile very gradually. Inspired by the Swedish example, the Czech party was established and gained support quickly, but regarding the party itself and its program, the creation of a coherent structure took time (Security Portal, 2009; Pirátská strana, 2010). The party only presented a complete program that demonstrated its positions clearly in all crucial policy areas in the run-up to the 2017 parliamentary elections; this manifesto did not avoid such matters as foreign policy, defense, and agriculture (Pirátská strana, 2017).

At the party's founding forum in June 2009, a representative of the preparatory committee, Kamil Horký, was elected the first chair. It is not surprising perhaps that a party which was very much focused on internet and networking issues initially elected an IT specialist to the leadership position. As soon as autumn 2009, Horký was replaced by Ivan Bartoš, who served as chair until 2014. He was then replaced for some time by Lukáš Černohorský. The party contested the 2017 election – in which it achieved its crucial success – under Ivan Bartoš again. Remarkably, the members of the first party presidium elected in June 2009 were aged 21–39 years (Ministerstvo vnitra, 2019; Lupa, 2009b).

Throughout its existence, membership of the party has been limited, and currently (early 2020) it has 1,008 members. There are no major official obstacles to membership; it seems that the Pirates are not interested in mass membership (Fórum pirátské strany, 2019). From the outset, the party permitted two main forms of participation: people could be either members or registered supporters (who were not full members, and whose votes were purely advisory – they could

not be elected to party offices). More recently, the party has introduced the option of suspending membership, an internal protective element for the functioning party (Pirátská strana, 2009b, Deník, 2019). Thus the party offers two levels of participation, with differing degrees of affiliation with the party.

As in the Swedish case, the party's internet forum offers another form of participation, allowing more informal involvement to members and non-members, as well as those interested in membership. This reflects the openness and transparency which form part of the Pirate Party's identity. The internet forum not only provides a communication platform, but through various polls and referendums across the country serves as a kind of virtual party congress[5] (what they call *celostátní forum*, or country-wide forum; see Helios, 2019). Thanks to its nature, which makes it accessible practically all the time, the forum and the party do not disadvantage, for example, the more flexible members of the party, who can dedicate more time to engaging in party activities (as has been the case with the Green Party; see Kitschelt, 1989), but it clearly may benefit people who have a better command of modern technology (i.e. the younger generation). Recently, this relatively free platform has been criticized by some MPs, and as of 2020 it has included several discussions accessible only to party members (the 'virtual party congress') (Michalčák, 2018, Fórum pirátské strany, 2019)

Judging by its program and discourse, the Pirate Party can be described as a modern liberal party that defends post-material values, opposes corruption, and promotes a large measure of intraparty democracy, something that was typical of the pirate parties in Germany and Sweden (see Jääsaari and Hildén, 2015). As a party of the opposition, the Pirates are among the main critics of the current prime minister, Andrej Babiš. In its utterances and statements, the party focuses on political transparency, the personal responsibility of politicians, promoting e-government, support for small and medium-sized enterprises, and preventing tax avoidance and capital outflows from Czechia via firms owned by entities located abroad. The funding of local development and popular participation in decision-making are important points in the party's program. This was demonstrated by the party's activities in local politics in Brno, where they sponsored a participative budgeting project. This model, in which a part of the city budget is earmarked for projects citizens vote for – who thus decide the activities on which capital is expended –, has become integral to the Pirate Party's program.

To communicate, the Pirate Party uses the internet – not just the party website and various forums, but also Facebook and Twitter. This is entirely typical of pirate communications in other countries. A list of members, including their contributions to the discussions on the party's forums, alongside links to their personal websites, etc., is published on the internet.

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[5] A party body that meets in person once a year, but operates continuously online and is only accessible to party members. Thus it can be said to be in permanent session, deciding certain issues by polls, referendums, etc. (Michalčák, 2018).

The Freedom of Information Act, adopted in Czechia in 1999, is of cardinal importance to the pirates.[6] They consider any restrictions on the exercise of the rights granted by the act as inadmissible, and are in favor of minimal or no regulation of the internet. For that reason, any surveillance of internet users, mobile communications, etc. is likewise unacceptable to the Pirate Party.

In 2010–2013, before the party entered parliament, it openly promoted cannabis legalization and advocated a reassessment of the Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs then in force (Pirátská strana, 2009a; Plesníková, 2016; Pirátská strana, 2013). In economic matters, the Pirates support the sharing economy (such as Airbnb) and reject increasing public debt. Like their counterparts in Germany, Czech Pirates call for increases in the minimum wage and the introduction of a minimum pension (Uszkai and Vicã, 2012). Their economic position overall is somewhat ambivalent, as is also the case with other pirate parties. The party's actual position on the Czech membership of NATO has long been subject to doubt and ambiguity (see Kopecký, 2017). Today, the Pirates essentially support membership without enthusiasm and they do not hesitate to criticize, in particular, the involvement of NATO forces outside their home countries (Pirátská strana, 2017b). The Pirates are a pro-European party, supporting EU membership, although they are particularly critical of the democratic deficit (see, for example, criticism of the way the current president of the European Commission, Ursula von der Leyen, was elected/selected) and of spending funds abroad (Pirátská strana, 2017a).

From the contemporary perspective, it is evident that the issue of copyright in particular has been pushed to the background to some extent to the benefit of new issues, such as transparency and e-government. The party is also being forced to take positions on economic issues. In this, it follows other pirate parties, which have likewise sought to broaden the scope of their programs (Jääsaari and Hildé, 2015; Almqvist, 2016b).

4. Entry into the electoral arena

Despite the Pirates' initial declaration that they aimed to achieve an 'intellectual shift in society' rather than become a party and fight elections, they were quick to change their position and contested the 2010 elections to the Chamber of Deputies (the lower chamber of Czech parliament; Idnes, 2009, Security Portal, 2009). This national strategy was twice unsuccessful, in 2010 and 2013, when the party polled 0.80 per cent and 2.66 per cent of the vote, respectively. The 2013 performance made the party eligible for state subsidies (Ministerstvo finance, 2013). This double failure moved the party to change its strategy: to orient itself towards elections at other levels of politics, and to establish a more solid base for itself in a bottom-up fashion. The party fared better in 2014 (4.78 per cent of the vote in the European elections, thus narrowly failing to cross the threshold) and in the subsequent local

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[6] The Freedom of Information Act, no. 106/1999 Coll. enables free access to information. It is a key law for Pirates and their pronounced aim of transparency of policy.

elections. Although not an overwhelming success, the Pirates won seats (not least thanks to electoral coalitions) primarily in the councils of the larger cities such as Brno, Hradec Králové, and Olomouc. In the 2016 regional elections, they won seats in Hradec Králové and, thanks to cooperation with the Green Party, also in South Moravia (Český statistický úřad, 2014; 2016). But it was the 2017 parliamentary elections that indicated a genuine breakthrough: the party took 10.79 per cent of the vote and 22 seats. Thus the Czech Pirate Party became only the second in the world to obtain fully-fledged representation at the national level. As the preceding description shows, this represented not an immediate success, but rather the gradual establishment of the party linked with its gains at lower levels and in so-called 'second-order elections,' alongside a gradual broadening of its program and profile to encompass matters that went beyond what are considered typical 'pirate' issues.

Table 1: Pirate Party votes and state subsidies

	%	Votes	Seats	State subsidies in €
2010	0.80	42,323	0	0
2013	2.66	132,417	0	520,000
2014 EP	4.78	72,514	0	85,000
2017	10.79	546,393	22	4,700,000 approx.
2019 EP	13.95	330,844	3	390,000

Source: www.volby.cz

The limited personnel of the party proved a significant handicap, and this was manifest, among other things, in its incomplete candidate lists for parliamentary elections, even though the Pirates contested the elections in all 14 regions. In 2010, the party only had 141 out of 343 possible candidates across electoral regions, and this placed limits on its potential success. Even in the 2017 elections, ČPS did not field all 343 possible candidates (volby.cz).

The make-up of the candidate lists for elections might suggest a lot about the character of the Pirate Party as an alternative for young people. In 2010, only 9.2 per cent of the candidates were aged 50+. Thus, representatives of the younger and middle-aged generations aged 21-49 entirely dominated the lists. A similar trend was repeated in 2013, when of the 192 total candidates, 125 were in the 21–34-year-old age bracket (i.e. 65 per cent), 48 (i.e. 25 per cent) in the middle-aged bracket of 35–49, and only 19 (i.e. 9.9 per cent) were 50+. In 2017, as the number of candidates increased, there was also a slight increase in the representation of older age groups on the Pirates' candidate lists. Still, of the 338 candidates, 177 (i.e. 52.3 per cent) fell into the category 21–34 years, 107 (31.7 per cent) into the category of middle-aged (35–49 years), and only 54 (i.e. 16 per cent) were aged 50+. Overall, it is evident that the 50+ age bracket has long been underrepresented on the Pirate Party candidate lists. By contrast, younger and middle-aged candidates, especially those aged 21–34, clearly dominate. The older candidates tend to occupy unelectable, complementary positions on the lists (Český statistický úřad, 2010; 2013; 2017).

Beyond the elections to the Chamber of Deputies described here, local elections in early October 2018 posed another challenge to the party. These could be seen as a popularity test for the incumbent parties of the government – largely ANO and ČSSD, though the government is propped up by KSČM – and they fared badly. By contrast, increasing support for the opposition – ODS and the Pirates – was evident.

The 2018 local elections confirmed that large cities (Prague and Brno) constitute the Pirates' electoral core. Especially in Prague, leader Zdeněk Hřib did not hide his ambition to win the election The polls differed in their predictions of the Pirate share of the vote, though they expected it to be highest in Prague. And so it was: the party placed second, taking more than 17 per cent of the vote. Less than one percentage point separated it from the victorious party, ODS (which polled 17.86 per cent of the vote). Thus winning 13 seats, the Pirates brokered a coalition with the liberal group of TOP 09, STAN, and KDU-ČSL, led by former justice minister and previously a popular ODS politician Jiří Pospíšil, and the local group Praha Sobě, led by a local politician, Jan Čižínský. The three partners had 13 seats each, thus commanding a majority of 13 seats in the 65-strong assembly (39 out of 65) and taking the office of the mayor, which was given to the Pirate leader Zdeněk Hřib. The Pirates are also represented in the executive body in Brno, where they have formed a coalition with KDU-ČSL, ČSSD and ODS.

Most recently, the Pirate Party received feedback from voters in the 2019 European Parliament elections, where they were placed third, polling a little less than 14 per cent of the vote and taking three seats. Thus the Pirates' representation in the EP is comparable to that of other Czech parties. At the time of writing (early 2020), pollsters indicate that the party are supported by over 10 per cent of voters, and in some months even more (STEM, CVVM, and Medián agencies). Thus, the party has repeatedly confirmed that it is attractive to voters; but what shifts there will be in its support in future is an open question.

5. Pirate voters

Who are the Pirate Party voters? Here we can refer to a study undertaken during the four weeks after the elections to the Chamber of Deputies and during local elections in Czechia's second-largest city, Brno. As Table 2 indicates, its voters are young – about half of them are under 35. With increasing age, their proportion decreases, and those aged over 55 constitute less than 10 per cent of the Pirate electorate. Compared with other parties, the Pirates are the exact opposite of the long-established parties, especially KSČM and ČSSD, and partially also of the government party ANO.

Table 2: Age of voters in 2017 (in %)
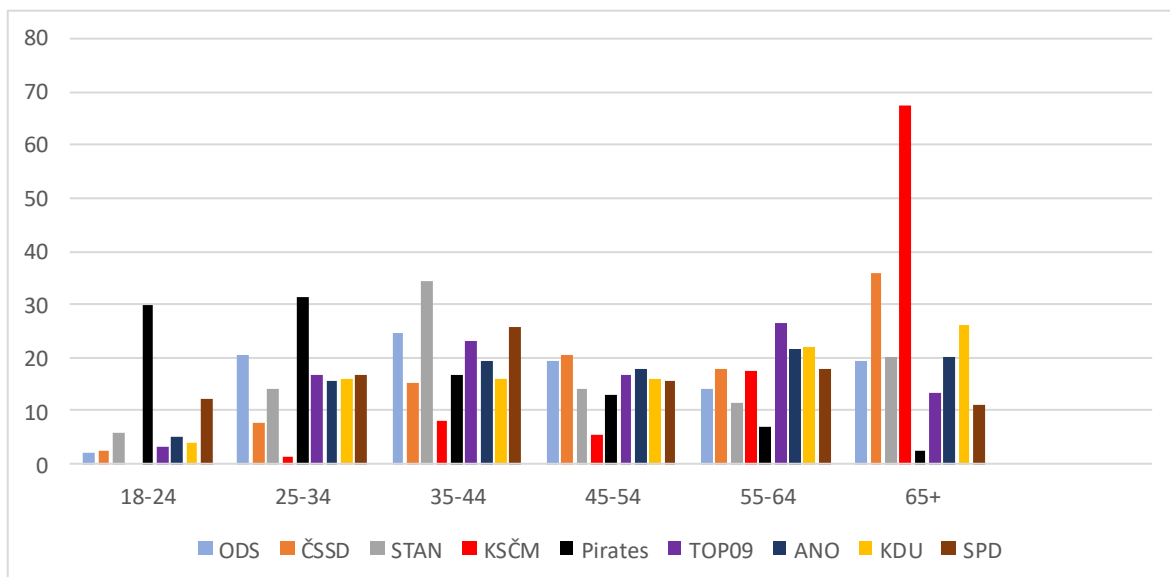
Source: Institute of Sociology, 2017

According to Table 3, Pirate voters are largely satisfied with their everyday lives, although the greatest proportion – about one-third of the party's electorate – felt ambivalent about this matter. The proportion of very dissatisfied Pirate voters, which might serve to distinguish opposition and anti-system parties on the fringes of the political spectrum, is low compared to most other parties. The share of very dissatisfied voters is particularly large in the electorates of the far-right Freedom and Direct Democracy (SPD) and Communist (KSČM) parties, which are considered extremist or anti-system – as such, the dissatisfaction of their voters could be expected.

Table 3: Personal satisfaction in 2017 (in %)

	Very satisfied	Rather satisfied	Middle	Rather dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied
ODS	2.0	16.0	30.0	33.0	19.0
ČSSD	2.5	21.0	32.1	32.1	12.3
STAN	0	17.6	29.4	35.3	14.7
KSČM	2.7	13.3	20.0	42.7	21.3
Pirates	**2.9**	**30.1**	**34.6**	**25.0**	**7.4**
TOP09	3.2	16.1	29.0	35.5	16.1
ANO	6.3	37.8	29.9	17.8	7.2
KDU	2.0	23.5	37.3	31.4	5.9
SPD	2.2	20.0	23.3	28.9	23.3

Source: Institute of Sociology, 2017

It is interesting to observe how sympathetic Pirate Party voters feel towards other parties. Immediately after the elections to the Chamber, the party took on an opposition role and in the two largest cities, Prague and Brno, formed coalitions with parties that were in opposition nationally, such as KDU-ČSL, ODS, TOP 09, and STAN. In Prague, the pirate mayor is supported by a local association led by an MP close to KDU-ČSL, Jan Čižínský. In Brno, the Pirates together with KDU-ČSL and ČSSD – the latter party is gradually being marginalized – support the ODS mayor.

We see that the Pirate electorate is very unsympathetic towards the Communist Party and the far-right populist SPD, STAN as well as towards the government Social Democrats and ANO. By contrast, closest to the pirates are the liberal TOP 09, as well as the conservative ODS. This is less true of another opposition party, KDU-ČSL, towards which the Pirate electorate are nevertheless more unsympathetic than sympathetic.

Table 4: Sympathies for other parties among Pirate Party voters in 2017 (in %)

	Very unsympathetic	Rather unsympathetic	Neither sympathetic nor un-sympathetic	Rather sympathetic	Very sympathetic
ODS	11.0	27.0	17.0	33.0	7.0
ČSSD	30.9	42.0	8.6	13.6	1.2
STAN	28.6	25.7	5.7	31.5	2.9
KSČM	38.3	38.7	6.7	6.4	1.3
Pirates	0.7	1.4	2.2	24.2	71.3
TOP09	13.0	22.6	19.4	32.3	6.5
ANO	27.4	32.6	12.2	20.8	2.4
KDU	17.6	31.4	13.7	23.5	2.0
SPD	34.4	11.1	17.8	29.8	1.1

 Source: Institute of Sociology, 2017

Table 5 shows when the Pirate electorate decided who to vote for. The party derives its legitimacy largely from voters who decided how to vote in the last few days before the elections. With the addition of those who made their decision in the few weeks before the elections, this accounts for more than 60 per cent of its electorate. The only comparable party – in terms of obtaining support from voters who decide at the last minute – is the local politician party, STAN. By contrast, the proportion of the electorate showing long-term support for the Pirates is the lowest of all parties in parliament. With traditional parties, such as ODS, ČSSD, and KSČM, the share of long-term supporters ranges from 54 to 81 per cent, and the share of first-time voters is much smaller.

Table 5: When voting decision was made (in %)

	Always un-changed	Long time ago	During last year	Several months ago	Several weeks ago	Several days ago	On polling day	Sympatie
ODS	30.0	24.0	6.0	14.0	11.0	11.0	4.0	7
ČSSD	35.8	33.3	6.2	8.6	1.2	9.9	4.9	1,2
STAN	2.9	8.6	5.7	17.1	22.9	34.3	8.6	2,9
KSČM	49.3	32.0	5.3	1.3	4.0	4.0	2.7	1,3
Pirates	1.5	9.5	8.0	17.5	26.3	30.7	5.8	71,3
TOP 09	29.0	16.1	16.1	12.9	16.1	6.5	3.2	6,5
ANO	8.2	35.3	18.3	15.0	9.8	10.8	2.6	2,4
KDU	47.1	21.6	5.9	7.8	3.9	11.8	2.0	2,0
SPD	5.6	20.0	13.3	33.3	10.0	13.3	3.3	1,1

Source: Institute of Sociology, 2017

A distinctive characteristic of the Pirate electorate was the large proportion of those who voted for the first time in 2017, or had not voted in the previous elections of the same type. The proportion of first-time voters is much greater than for any other party, as nearly 20 per cent of the voters in 2017 could not vote in the previous elections due to their young age, thus confirming the very young character of the Pirate electorate. Further, nearly 30 per cent were voters who did not participate in the previous elections. Thus, the candidate lists of the Pirates brought those who do not regularly vote to the polling booths, and this was the resource from which the party derived a substantial proportion of its electoral support in 2017. The only other party able to draw on this resource in a comparable manner in 2017 was SPD, with 24.4 per cent.

Table 6: Participation in the 2013 parliamentary election (in %)

	Yes	No	No – I was younger than 18
ODS	84.0	13.0	0.0
ČSSD	87.7	9.9	1.2
STAN	71.4	20.0	5.7
KSČM	92.0	5.3	0.0
Pirates	48.2	**28.5**	**19.0**
TOP09	80.6	16.1	3.2
ANO	82.0	13.4	1.6
KDU	92.2	3.9	2.0
SPD	60.0	24.4	7.8

Source: Institute of Sociology, 2017

Table 7 gives us a better idea of where voters for the Pirate Party came from. We know from Table 6 that nearly half of them were recruited from among previous non-voters. In Table 7 it is apparent that, in smaller measure, Pirate supporters had previously voted for the Social Democrats, TOP 09, ODS, or KDU-ČSL. Compared to other parties such as KSČM, ČSSD, and KDU-ČSL, the Pirates' electorate was more heterogeneous.

Table 7: Electoral swing between 2013 and 2017 parliamentary elections (in %)

2017/2013	ODS	ČSSD	KSČM	Pirates	TOP09	ANO	KDU	SPD (Dawn)
ODS	68.7	4.8	0.0	0.0	12.0	3.6	2.4	0.0
ČSSD	0.0	98.6	1.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
STAN	12.5	12.5	8.3	4.2	20.8	4.2	12.5	0.0
KSČM	0.0	4.4	88.2	0.0	0.0	1.5	0.0	0.0
Pirates	7.8	15.6	1.6	15.6	9.4	2.3	4.7	1.6
TOP09	8.0	4.0	0.0	0.0	72.0	12.0	0.0	0.0
ANO	2.9	24.1	2.0	1.2	2.9	58.4	0.4	0.4
KDU	0.0	8.5	0.0	0.0	6.4	0.0	80.9	0.0
SPD	11.3	17.0	7.5	0.0	0.0	22.6	5.7	20.8

Source: Institute of Sociology, 2017

A frequent topic of campaigning is the conviction, widespread among the electorate, that politicians are corrupt. The emergent political parties in 2010 and 2013, such as Public Affairs and ANO, built their campaigns on criticizing corruption among the ruling elites (Gregor, 2019). Similarly, those who voted for the Pirates were largely (85 per cent) convinced that corruption was 'very' or 'fairly' widespread – this is in line with the opinions of the electorates of other parties. Interestingly, voters of the incumbent government parties were even more convinced that corruption in politics was widespread. Despite their younger age, the Pirate voters were not very different in this respect from the general population, and thus it cannot be argued, despite the party's emphasis on transparency, as it has not succeeded in owning this issue, or made it particularly salient. What is more, the issue of corruption was present in earlier elections: if in 2013 it helped ANO to win votes, in 2017 it might have helped the Pirates.

Table 8: How common is corruption among politicians according to voters (in %)

	Very widespread	Fairly widespread	Not very widespread	Nearly absent
ODS	28.3	52.5	9.1	2.0
ČSSD	34.6	54.3	7.4	0.0
STAN	20.0	60.0	8.6	0.0
KSČM	45.3	44.0	4.0	1.3
Pirates	32.4	52.9	7.4	**0.7**
TOP09	25.8	51.6	12.9	0.0
ANO	31.6	53.6	10.9	0.0
KDU	23.5	58.8	17.6	0.0
SPD	52.3	36.4	4.5	0.0

Source: Institute of Sociology 2017

During most of the second half of the twentieth century, a non-democratic regime ruled in Czechoslovakia, and the positions of the electorate towards democracy

and authoritarianism are repeatedly ascertained by polls. Tables 9 and 10 show that most Pirate voters considered democracy the best form of government; somewhat greater support for the claim was found among the supporters of the liberal TOP 09 and conservative ODS. By contrast, voters for the Communist Party were not among those who considered democracy the best form of government. These positions are investigated further in Table 10, which details what proportions of the electorate found non-democratic regimes to be more acceptable in some circumstances. Pirate Party voters were certainly not among those people who opposed the current political system; rather, they tended to think that liberal democracy was the best option.

Table 9. Democracy is the best form of government (in %)

	Strongly agree	Moderately agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Moderately disagree	Strongly disagree
ODS	55.6	31.3	11.1	1.0	0.0
ČSSD	27.2	44.4	19.8	4.9	1.2
STAN	26.5	55.9	14.7	2.9	0.0
KSČM	12.0	30.7	**34.7**	12.0	2.7
Pirates	43.3	36.6	14.9	0.7	0.7
TOP09	67.7	22.6	9.7	0.0	0.0
ANO	36.7	39.3	14.8	3.6	2.3
KDU	41.2	33.3	19.6	2.0	0.0
SPD	24.0	32.0	16.0	9.0	2.0

Source: Institute of Sociology, 2017

What is shown very clearly is the position of the Communist Party voters, who were the least critical of a non-democratic regime, with nearly half of them admitting that under certain circumstances an authoritarian or other non-democratic form of government might be better, and nearly 19 per cent of them claiming that they did not care what kind of regime was in power. Going back to the Pirates, the electorates of KDU-ČSL, TOP 09, STAN, and ODS exhibited a similar or greater proportion of those believing that democracy was the best form of government. Is the Czech Pirate Party critical of liberal democracy? The data suggest that their voters certainly are not. Despite their young age, as a group they were the second most likely (after TOP09 voters) to endorse democracy most strongly as the best form of government. Thus, they are not radical in this sense, and this may have important implications for the system in the future.

Table 10: Democracy and the form of government (in %)

	Democracy is a system of government that is better than any other system	In some circumstances, authoritarianism or another non-democratic regime is better than democracy	For people like me, it doesn't matter what government regime there is
ODS	82.0	10.0	5.0
ČSSD	58.0	19.8	13.6
STAN	73.5	17.6	5.9
KSČM	25.3	48.0	18.7
Pirates	76.1	11.9	8.2
TOP09	83.9	16.1	0.0
ANO	64.6	18.4	11.5
KDU	70.6	5.9	15.7
SPD	56.7	21.1	16.7

Source: Institute of Sociology, 2017

The size of town from which parties recruited their voters is a variable that is worthy of note. Data suggest that the Pirate Party's electoral base was spread relatively uniformly across all settlement sizes and there was no clearly identifiable rural/urban divide with this party. Support for the German Pirate Party was similarly uniform during the elections to the Bundestag in 2013 (Baldini and Bolgherini, 2016). The Czech Pirates' support in smaller settlements (of up to 1999 inhabitants) was largely due to the make-up of the municipalities in the Central Bohemia region, which are immediately adjacent to the capital – an area where the party is popular. It is less popular in similarly-sized municipalities such as the Moravia-Silesia region.

Table 11: Settlement size

	Fewer than 799 inhabitants	800–1,999	2,000–4,999	5,000–14,999	15,000–29,999	30,000–79,999	80,000–999,999	1 million and more
ODS	6.0	11.0	7.0	10.0	17.0	17.0	10.0	**22.0**
ČSSD	6.2	17.3	4.9	13.6	18.5	13.6	13.6	12.3
STAN	**17.1**	14.3	11.4	20.0	5.7	11.4	20.0	0.0
KSČM	8.0	14.7	5.3	18.7	17.3	17.3	13.3	5.3
Pirates	13.1	11.7	**8.0**	16.8	10.9	12.4	12.4	14.4
TOP09	6.5	16.1	16.1	3.2	3.2	9.7	19.4	25.8
ANO	8.5	12.7	10.8	11.4	17.6	15.0	11.8	12.1
KDU	13.7	17.6	5.9	13.7	7.8	5.9	19.6	15.7
SPD	6.7	11.1	11.1	18.9	15.6	16.7	11.1	8.9

Source: Institute of Sociology, 2017

Given the relatively young age of Pirate Party voters, as noted above, we investigated their marital status. In a comparison of voters of all parties represented in the lower chamber of the Czech parliament, single voters were clearly dominant in the Pirate electorate, accounting for more than 60 per cent. The second-highest proportion of single voters was in the electorate of the far-right SPD, while TOP09 took third place with about a quarter of its electorate in this category. The share of the widowed was minimal among Pirate Party voters, and the proportion of those divorced much smaller than in the electorates of other parties.

Table 12: Marital status (in %)

	Single	Married	Divorced	Widowed
ODS	19.0	55.0	19.0	7.0
ČSSD	14.8	54.3	14.8	16.0
STAN	22.9	62.9	14.3	0.0
KSČM	5.3	42.7	17.3	34.7
Pirates	60.6	29.2	8.8	1.5
TOP09	25.8	51.6	19.4	3.2
ANO	21.0	55.1	15.1	8.9
KDU	17.6	58.8	9.8	13.7
SPD	37.5	37.5	20.5	4.5

Source: Institute of Sociology, 2017

6. Conclusion

In conclusion, let us ask: who are the Pirates, the new Czech political party, and what new information have we learned from their activities in politics? The Pirate Party has been successful in appealing to young voters, especially first-time voters and previous non-voters. Its success is due to a number of circumstances, which the party has been able to exploit well. First of all, its emphasis on modern communications is made possible by information technologies. The party also capitalized on the mood in society at a time when restrictions on the internet were under protest, and, thanks to state funding for political parties, obtained money to finance its campaign for the 2017 parliamentary elections. The party found a way of appealing to young people – half of its electorate was under 35 and had made their voting decision in the days or weeks before the elections. The party did not enter into a coalition immediately after the elections, taking an opposition role in relation to other parties that its voters mostly found sympathetic. Members of its electorate are clearly supporters of a liberal-democratic regime, which they consider the best form of government.

 Since 2017, the party has established a distinctive opposition profile, and does not hesitate to criticize the prime minister, Andrej Babiš. The Pirates highlight that the prime minister is being investigated for EU subsidy misuse for private gain; the party has refrained from supporting the PM on a number of measures and does not curry favor with President Miloš Zeman. All of this

increases its popularity with the young generation, who do not support the current elite. The position of the Pirate Party is aptly summed up in their slogan 'We shall not support a government that threatens the foundations of liberal democracy, and relies on the votes of KSČM or SPD.' For this reason, it is among the more electorally successful parties in large university cities with a greater concentration of young electorate, such as Prague and Brno. In such places the government coalition finds it harder to build any legitimacy, and this is one of the reasons why the Pirates were successful in appealing to 'metropolitan liberals' and winning enough votes to obtain representation in the lower chamber of the Czech parliament. Ahead of the 2017 elections, the Pirates were a good alternative for the former voters: they were no extremist party, and they had a presence in popular awareness as they had been involved in the political system for some time. Of course, they had the advantage of being relatively fresh and a protest party; they capitalized on the disappointment created by incumbent parties; they had no problematic past; and their manifesto, with its emphasis on digitalization and marijuana legalization and a novel style, was intelligible to the young generation. Despite this, they were able to create a professional appearance, and did not look like a random, incoherent grouping. The party's leading figures and candidates were largely young people – the leader was 36 years old at the time of his election to parliament – and this corresponded to the young age of its electorate. Considering how many people decided to vote for the Pirates at the last minute, the timing of their campaign was probably propitious. They were able to present themselves as a convincing liberal alternative in time for the 2017 national elections, compared to more conservative parties on the right such as ODS, TOP 09, and KDU.

The results of the upcoming elections will tell us more about the future of the Pirate Party, indicating whether the results of 2017 represented just a short-term swing in electoral support in a more modern direction, or whether the Pirates will find a permanent place for themselves in Czech politics.

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Book Review

Sarah Pickard and Judith Bessant (eds.) (2018) *Young People Re-Generating Politics in Times of Crises.* Cham: Palgrave Macmillan. 410 pages.

Youth political engagement is a very well researched topic not just in Europe but across the world. Where Pickard and Bessant excel is the broad range that this edition covers. It starts with a very expansive description of the *Political* itself and it helps the authors in exploring youth civic engagements from the mainstream and traditional all the way to the progressives as well as the radicals. Even whilst dealing with this wide range of topics, the authors succeed in structuring the book to perfection not just in challenging the stereotypical portrayal of young people as *apolitical*, but also in the myriad portrayals of their civic engagements themselves. The benefit of such an approach is that it includes formal as well as informal modes of youth participation; however, the limitation of this approach is that it equates the civic to the political.

One of the major emphases of this book is that even though young people find themselves disenchanted with the current political systems, it does not result in them becoming passive politically, instead it only makes them passive towards the traditional modes of political participation, therefore opening the door to a broader description of the political. Throughout the various chapters in the book, the authors attempt to bring out into the mainstream the non-traditional, sometimes underground or even the illegal modes of participation of the youth in various regions of the world. Times of crisis bring out the best as well as the worst among humans and it has similar effects on youth as well. As much as youth involvement in crime increases, it also leads to an increase in their civic engagements (White and Cunneen, 2015). Various chapters in the edition bring about a multitude of modes through which young people exercise their political agencies in different regimes, both mature democracies and otherwise.

The four themes that the authors have identified in order to classify various modes of the *Political* that young people identify with matches with the broad description of the political itself and at the same time is able to justify the non-traditional methods used by young people in their activism. The book is also very relevant today because of the crisis filled last three decades of our lives. The 1990s started with the gulf war and created an environment of perpetual strife in the Middle East. The 2000s started with this strife expanding its tentacles into the living rooms as far as New York with the 9/11 attacks on the World Trade Centre and Pentagon and the subsequent war on terror. The Neo-Liberal policy regime led to the global financial crisis in 2008 and at the same time the climate of the world has taken a turn for the worse.

Youth in every corner of this globalised world have been directly or indirectly affected by these continuing crises. In today's world, with rising unemployment, devaluation of acquired skills, devaluation of educational degrees and diplomas, and rising student debt a large proportion of young people would be categorised into Standing's precariat (Gouglas, 2013). In some cases, the result has been quite disappointing with young people getting radicalised and even getting involved into subversive activities, but as the authors point out very successfully through the various qualitative studies conducted in different parts of the world, young people have more often than not found a way to express their anxiety through the civic and the political.

As pointed out earlier, the authors divide the book into four parts: student activism, online activism, community building, and political protests. In part 1 of the book the authors deal with the most common and also the most important mode of youth participation, student activism. Chapters 2, 3, 4 and 5 deal with various kinds of student movements in Africa and North America ranging from issues like environmental activism in Kenya, to violence, use of weapons and corporeal punishments meted out to young students in Los Angeles Unified School District in USA, the unaffordable tuition fees black students were forced to pay in South African Universities and a broad opposition to neo-liberal policies of the state that adversely affected students in Quebec, Canada. The four qualitative studies bring about important aspects of how students mobilise and what factors lead to such mobilizations irrespective of the final outcome. The studies show that contrary to popular opinion students may not believe in the traditional political institutions, but they still have faith in their own mobilization capabilities and are willing to make sacrifices to achieve their goals. For Black South African students, it was important to highlight the fact that in spite of the end to apartheid, the white minority was still privileged. The leaders may have wanted to unite the white and black South Africa together, but black students were very clear in their view that without achieving economic equality, it was impossible to achieve any other kind of equal treatment. Similarly, for young school kids in Los Angeles (especially Hispanics) it was difficult to comprehend that they could be arrested and imprisoned for being truant. Even more appalling was the fact that the school district acquired armoured vehicles and automatic weapons to arm the school security in order to deal with truant kids. The students in Kenya felt that the traditional modes of politics were for sycophants and it was important for them to be professionals rather than political and for these young people therein lies the success of their activism.

In chapter 5, the authors present the results of a qualitative study of 20 young people in the Quebec province of Canada, and uncover the vast majority of underground and non-traditional modes of protest and activism, including illegal graffiti, and cultural movements like punk/skinheads and anarchists. The authors discuss in detail why the youth believe that all political parties will only ever follow a neo-liberal policy framework and therefore participating in the traditional forms of political institutions is useless to them. Although, the study revealed the vast repertoire of activism that young people are involved in the small sample of

interviews left a lot to be desired in terms of methodological representation. The 20 youth who were interviewed may have been involved in such forms of activism, however, whether it is an accurate representation of the youth in Quebec particularly or in Canada generally is doubtful.

Part 2 of the book deals with the most popular form of activism today, online activism. The authors start with the umbrella movement in Hong Kong and the Momentum and Corbynistas in the UK and finally go on to explore the extreme Right like the Daily Stormer and even the radicalization of the Muslim youth and how they deal with it by cracking ethnically charged jokes and memes online. In the case of Hong Kong, the young people already had a huge online presence and were using various online forums to exchange their views. When the umbrella movement started, it did so with the exchange of ideas on such underground forums as were used by the youth in Hong Kong to exchange pornography. The authors very succinctly extend Habermas' public sphere to the online public sphere in discussing how the hash tags, memes and the keyboard fighters dominated the politics during the Occupy movement.

Chapter 8 brings out the brazen methods of the young populists who are actively involved in creating propaganda material online, trolling, personal insults through the use of post-truth politics and alternative facts. The radicalisation of Muslim youth in the west discussed in chapter 9, firstly criticises the change in the semantic description of radical and compares it to the radical civil rights movements in the USA and then goes on to critically analyse the various stereotypes that young Muslims face on a daily basis with regards to their appearance and clothing from a Foucauldian perspective.

In part 3 of the book the authors deal with youth involvement in community building. The Gezi movement in Turkey where more than 50 per cent of the protestors occupying the Gezi park were aged 25 or below, and authors highlight how the movement turned into a struggle against conservative policies that promoted restrictions especially on women's bodily functions and practices in the model family way. Chapter 12 again discusses the non-traditional modes of youth activism especially through voluntary work in Australia. The chapter recognises that despite voting being mandatory in Australia, like most other democracies the number of young people registering to vote was declining after the effects of the economic crisis led to an increase in unemployment. However, the young people may have lost faith in the traditional political institutions that were only interested in austerity measures; they were very much involved in the political through solidarity institutions and voluntary work. Similar austerity policies led to the young Scotsmen targeting the right-wing Westminster government which was inclined to blame immigrants for the loss of jobs due to its own austerity policies and the 2008 economic crisis. The authors successfully use the late modernist and post-modernist approaches in explaining how and why young people today are not inclined to follow the beaten path of traditional political methods but are involved in a more radical, non-traditional, post-materialistic approach based on community networking and volunteering.

Various forms of political protest dealt with in part 4 of the book bring to the fore the more visible and reactionary form of the political that young people everywhere around the world readily identify with. One of the biggest issues with the way democracy works is that it almost always politically marginalises certain groups, especially minorities. When these minority groups are unable to have their issues resolved through the traditional representative platforms, they are inevitably forced to make their demands visible through protests, marches, demonstrations and blockades which will then force the political elites to pay attention to the voices of the marginalised.

What forms the background for chapter 16 is even more relevant at the time of writing this review because of the ongoing Black Lives Matter protests in the USA. At the time this chapter was written these protests had not taken the form and the extent that they have taken today. These protests were localised and most participants were people of colour. Today it is no longer a minority issue, the participation of young people from all over the world has brought this movement into the mainstream and it just goes on to prove the point of the authors that youth political actions are bringing marginalised issues into the mainstream of politics.

In chapter 17 the authors attempt to expand the definition of democracy itself and introduce agnostic democracy 'as a source of transgressive enjoyment [...] to solicit democratic engagement, in a way that more banal, procedural versions of democracy, with their limited focus on regular "free and fair" elections' (Bright et al., 2018: 317) are unable to provide. The ethnographic study not only establishes that young people recognise the plurality of opinions, but also the fact that such decisions or choices always come at a cost. The apathy among the youth that we are so clearly able to see, is not towards the political itself but towards the political defined by the narrow neo-liberal procedural democracy that they are forced to exist within.

The same idea is further explored in chapter 18 by introducing Rosanvallon's 'mutations of democracy'. It critically looks at why young people are more and more inclined to lose faith in traditional liberal democracy and for them political participation or doing politics is much more than making speeches on town squares or making petitions to the elected representatives.

After reading the book, the question that comes first to mind is if there is any other kind of democracy that exists anywhere in the world, that is not liberal, representative and procedural in character? And this brings us to an even more important question; if we can describe political in such a broad manner, is it any different from the civic then? Furthermore, where does it leave any space for ideologies in the political? Another limitation of this book lies in its methodology. There is no doubt that qualitative work has the strength of looking very critically and in depth into issues under consideration and the authors have done an exceptionally good job in bringing to the fore the various kinds of political participation that young people are involved in around the world today. However, it does leave the question of being representative open to critique. A million visits

to an online portal at the height of a protest do not necessarily mean that a million young people were active participants.

The biggest limitation of the book though lies in it completely ignoring the fact that young people may be more attracted to non-traditional or radical modes of political because they do not have to worry about the burdens of social life at a young age. People in their 40s and above have to feed their families, consider the future prospects of their kids and are more motivated by their personal social commitments rather than the prospect of political participation.

For anyone who wishes to understand in detail the intricacies of youth political participation today, why young people are disenchanted with the traditional public sphere and are looking to expand the concept of democracy itself to a new political through non-traditional and radical modes of participation and activism, this is the perfect book. Despite the limitations pointed out above, the book covers almost every aspect of young peoples' political participation and describes in detail how young people feel and engage themselves in the unorthodox ways that they create and share amongst each other.

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Book Review

Shelley Streeby (2018) *Imagining the Future of Climate Change: World-Making Through Science Fiction and Activism.* Oakland, CA: University of California Press. 168 pages.

Although nowadays 'imagining' the future of climate change seems like an uncomplicated task, it took a long time – to be exact, decades – for scientists, writers, artists and thinkers to prove how enormous the problem is and to draw attention to other aspects of climate change (e.g. its' influence on economy, culture, education) as well.

In recent book, Shelley Streeby invites us to understand the history of climate justice activism through sci-fi stories so that we can learn about how the imagination of climate change and the activism overlap and how these possible scenarios can be lessons in 'the art of world making'. In Streeby's book, indigenous people and people of colour are in focus, as in the author's own word 'Their stories and movements—in the real world and through science fiction—help us all better understand the relationship between activism and culture, and how both can be valuable tools in creating our future.'[1]

Shelley Streeby is a literature and ethnic studies professor at the University of California, San Diego. The author is also the director of the Clarion Science Fiction and Fantasy Writer's workshop; as mentioned in her biography, she was a science fiction fan ever since she started reading. Streeby's enthusiasm towards science fiction led to this book combined with the author's research topics of American Studies and Critical Ethnic Studies. And while interdisciplinarity is not just a recent trend in environmental studies, including science fiction literature certainly is. Streeby's aim is not only to present the climate change – and the climate change movements in general, but rather to introduce the diverse world of activism, which exists not only in real life but also in fiction. Through the demonstration of the key players of the American climate movement the goal of the author is to explain why our world's future is dependent on understanding the relationship between activism and culture.

The book is divided into four sections along these aims: three chapters and an introduction, and each chapter is about the same length. 'Introduction: Imagining the Future of Climate Change' introduces us to the most important concepts and theories which are later discussed in the following chapters and gives a historical overview of the American climate change movement and politics. Chapter 1, '#NoDAPL: Native American and Indigenous Science, Fiction, and Futurism' presents how digital technologies and social media can be in favour of mobilization and activism, even against global oil companies. In the second

[1] See https://literature.ucsd.edu/people/faculty/sstreeby.html

chapter, 'Climate Refugees in the Greenhouse World; Archiving Global Warning with Octavia E. Butler', Streeby demonstrates why Butler's work, especially in the 1980s and 1990s was extremely important in understanding climate change as a slow disaster, and presents how Butler engaged in race, class and gender while discussing global warming problems. The last chapter, 'Climate Change as a World Problem: Shaping Change in the Wake of Disaster' through the work of *adrienne maree brown,* Streeby emphasizes how important a role indigenous people and people of race have in imagining the future of climate change not only in the history of climate movement but also in the forms of culture. While the book title would indicate an international overview of imagining the future of climate change, if we look at the brief description of the chapters, it may become clear that this book is in fact – not surprisingly, knowing the author's background – rather an American overview. This, of course, does not detract from the value of the book, especially if the reader has a freer expectation to read it and even if the title does not necessarily express what is in the book.

The ambitious aims of the author are presented in the Introduction and that provides the reader knowledge on the analytical framework; it also familiarizes them with definitions and a brief history of climate change. Streeby from the very beginning reaches out to the authors of the science fiction literature and introduces the concepts they use in connection with climate change. In parallel to the emerging science fiction literature, Streeby presents the history of climate movement and climate politics in the United States. The advantage of this chapter is that it provides a comprehensive science fiction book review that navigates the average reader to a completely new world. However, if someone who is more interested in the subject of climate change takes the book in their hands, they may soon lose interest as the chapter is concise and requires background knowledge in science fiction literature. Nonetheless, the brief history of climate change is a fascinating part of the introduction, especially for non-Americans, as it demonstrates the most significant events in the field of climate change in American politics. But the greatest strength of the introduction is the enormous archival overview that Streeby provides the reader. The author's knowledge on both climate change history and science fiction is unquestionable and the love for the subject permeates the reader as well.

With the first chapter, we immediately jump in time to today, where the author discusses through the American perspective how the development of technology affects climate movements. The example of the Standing Rock Lakota Nation and other Lakota, Nakota and Dakota citizens against an oil pipe is a symbol of how native Americans and people of colour benefited from the use of social media and modern journalism, and how these digital technologies could be helpful for future climate movements and activists. While we could comprehend their success as a utopia, according to Streeby this was not the case. We are now actually living the utopia that was imagined by several science fiction authors in the past. With the example of the anti-pipeline movement, #NoDAPL, the author takes the reader back in time again to present the history of the Native American resistance. Even though this is again a very American-specific issue, it can serve as

a lesson to many of us who find our voices unheard in the fight against climate change due to cultural, race, class or gender issues.

The second chapter is dedicated entirely to Octavia E. Butler's work, whose main message was that humanity needs to change the way they living to prevent the Earth from the ecological catastrophe. It is clear for the reader (and it is explicitly confirmed by the author) that the chapter serves as a compliment for Butler's work and ideas. Butler was one of the first climate change intellectuals who not only inspired many activists and artists with her work but was also able to vocally critique the American climate politics. In the Parable novels, Butler 'imagined' and predicted how destructive the future will be and how climate change will become a major world problem. Butler also raised attention on the role of education, as she advised: 'we might instead start preparing people for the climate changes to come, partly by changing the ways we educate'. (Streeby, 2018: 100.) In this chapter, Streeby again proves the extraordinary amount of research and data processing which was involved the preparation of this section. But while Butler's impact on the environmental and climate movement is inevitable, the chapter would have benefited from other imagined climate scenarios from similarly significant authors. For the reader, Butler's vision could have been reinforced if the author had also provided real-life cases where Butler's predictions were realized. Without such cases, this chapter remains a fully detailed overview of Butler's work but free from criticism.

adrienne maree brown, whose work is presented in the third chapter is known as a successor to Butler. What makes brown's unique is how she includes social and cultural issues into the climate change movement, and how she highlights important issues such as the proper use of media or education in the people of colour and indigenous communities. brown is not 'only' the voice for young Americans, she also works together with them to teach direct action, which is 'central to the creative and future-shaping work brown does with youth and other movements' (Streeby, 2018: 114). The example of brown's work acts as a closure of the book, as this is where the problems discussed so far come together. Namely, climate change and social-cultural justice issues. As Streeby quotes brown: 'If we want to bring new worlds into existence, we need to challenge the narratives that uphold current power dynamics and patterns [...] explores current social issues through the lens of sci-fi; conscious of identities and intersecting identities; centers those who have been marginalized; is aware of power and inequalities; is realistic and hard but hopeful; shows change from the bottom up rather than the top down; highlights that change is collective; and is not neutral – its purpose is social change and societal transformation' (p. 120).

This quote represents the core message of Streeby's book: with the help of science fiction literature it provides a future possibility for the reader who wants to fight against climate change and for climate justice. The whole book can be seen as an overview of book recommendations, and on the other hand, it can be considered as a summary of possible suggestions for the climate movement. While the intention of the author is valuable and transparent, the selection of the discussed authors is arguable, as non-Americans are under-represented. The

presented future imaginations of climate change are not contested as Streeby accepts the authors' arguments without questioning. All in all, this book is a great example of why interdisciplinarity is crucial in environmental studies and researches and how the sometimes underrated genres can serve as examples in such global problems as climate change. Streeby's well detailed research can be interesting for both activists and scientists, and especially for someone who is interested to learn about the climate justice movement in the United States of America.

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Book Review

Felix Dodds (2019) *Stakeholder Democracy: Represented Democracy in a Time of Fear.* New York: Routledge. 262 pages.

The interconnectedness of democracy and sustainability has been widely discussed in the academic literature since the 1990s (Goodin, 1992). Research on environmental issues was found to be fertile ground in political sciences when the relevance of the notions of citizenship, grassroots organizations, and green political parties were discovered (Bomberg, 1998; Burchell, 2002; Frankland et al., 2008; Mitchell, 2016).

This is also true the other way around. Political science and political theory have started to benefit from the experiences of sustainability research. Democracy, a continuously contested research topic, has been the subject of several studies that demonstrated how the contemporary challenges of sustainable development can help conceptualize this established but always renewable term (Morrison, 1995; Lafferty and Meadowcroft, 1996; Mason, 1999; Doherty et al., 2003). Most recently, and responding to the latest trends in the discussion about stakeholder involvement, new research articles have been published about the interrelation of sustainability and stakeholder democracy (Pickering et al., 2020). The book *Stakeholder Democracy* fits this agenda. The authors introduce it as follows: it is a book 'about democracy in the context of sustainability' (p. 1). As argued, this topic is now more important as ever, since 'the liberal democratic order is in crisis and has lost legitimacy' (p. 126).

Felix Dodds examines stakeholder engagement by relying on decades of experience. Stakeholder democracy is the focus of this discussion, since the authors, in trusting their own experiences in the field, are convinced that as far as policy development related to sustainability is concerned, multi-stakeholder partnerships provide the solution. The book relies on the knowledge of numerous practitioners and scholars who have been and are now continuously involved in different programs involving the environment and sustainability, ranging from cooperation with local NGOs to long-standing expertise with global UN organizations. The book is about multi-stakeholder policy engagement and multi-stakeholder partnerships. The conceptual framework attempts to illuminate the space between them with the help of theories about participatory democracy.

The book informs the reader about the theoretical foundations of stakeholder democracy (Chapters I, II, IV, and V), provides an overview of stakeholder engagement in relation to the globalization of environmental issues (chapters III and VI), and finally, in a 'trilogy' involving the last three chapters, offers a guideline for successful multi-stakeholder partnerships. The argument targets the global scale, while national, sub-national, and local examples are also

introduced. The authors unfold the lessons they have learnt about creating meaningful multi-stakeholder policies and partnerships.

Major parts of the book are authored by Felix Dodds (chapters II, III, IV, and VI), but the complex overall picture is framed by several authors. Dodds was the executive director of the Stakeholder Forum for Sustainable Future for 20 years, but he has had further diverse experience in the field of environmental studies that has been channeled into the book. The main concepts and definitions are introduced by Jan Gustav Strandenaes (Chapter I), who has long-standing experience working for the UN and NGOs, while also being an independent researcher. Strandenaes shares his views about successful multi-stakeholder partnerships (Chapter VII). Caroline Duque Chopitea provides a literature review of the most important concepts that are being transformed by stakeholder democracy: namely, legitimacy, representation, and accountability (Chapter V). Minu Hemmati, a clinical psychologist, helps with understanding the principles for multi-stakeholder processes (Chapter VIII). Finally, a guideline is provided by Susanne Salz, Bernd Lakemeier, Laura Schmitz, and Jana Borkenhagen about how to design multi-stakeholder partnerships (Chapter IX). The book ends with a concluding chapter (Chapter X) by Dodds that identifies the challenges stakeholder democracy could tackle in the upcoming few years.

However, the book offers more than the advice of practitioners. The individual chapters can even be read independently. Students of political science could benefit from the reinvention of the vocabulary therein, and practitioners involved in sustainability programs could profit from its theoretical foundations. The theoretical basis of the book relies on classical academic literature that discusses the historical roots of democracy, while the empirical basis builds on the field experiences of the scholars.

As Dodds claims, the story of sustainability is being told. Storytelling remains characteristic of the entire book. If the narrative is stakeholder democracy, the plot is the sequence of events that have led to different stakeholders becoming involved in sustainability programs, and the characters are the stakeholders who are being engaged in this plot.

The first chapter lays down the foundations; the context of the story. In the train of thought of the authors, multi-stakeholder democracy covers two key elements: 'that of the engagement of stakeholders in policy development and that of engaging them in delivering global agreements in partnerships' (p. 8). Throughout the book, these policy-related measures are introduced, and how these and other global agreements can be fulfilled through relying on stakeholders is discussed. The latter are defined as follows: '[those] who have an interest in a particular decision, either as individuals or representatives of a group. This includes people who influence a decision, or can influence it, as well as those affected by it' (p. 7). Strandenaes provides in this section a glossary, which is useful, since the book is generally packed with technical terms and the unique language of international organizations. These terms might not be new to the reader, but, since the context is sustainability and focuses on multi-level linkages,

their application may be different (for example, different forms of participation and partnership are defined on p. 17).

Further theoretical grounding for the book is provided by the second chapter, which is designed to present a short history of democracy. Admittedly, this is a nearly impossible task, but what can be done is give an introduction to the path to representative democracy; here, the author perceives it to be most appropriate to listen 'to voices in a more inclusive, transparent and accountable way [, which] can only be beneficial and can address some of the risks we are now observing' (p. 22). As argued, democratic society 'has a shared social contract on issues such as truth, justice and free speech. If this is undermined, then justice will suffer as well as democracy' (p. 23). The author introduces the different obstacles that could undermine this social contract (such as the arbitrary use of big data), and suggests that well-functioning – namely, transparent – stakeholder engagement could address these issues.

The emergence of stakeholder democracy in the next chapter is closely associated with the global level. Here, the development of stakeholder engagement is introduced particularly in the area of sustainable development. The role of globalization is unpacked by showing how the UN is growing into more than an organization of member states. This chapter is rich in information from primary sources, reports, and interview excerpts. By relying on these documents, the author is able to exhibit the genuine face of this development.

Chapter Four broadens the framework and introduces another character to the story: civil society. Here, how power relations have changed, and how the devolution of power has made space for local stakeholders is investigated. Important contemporary political dilemmas are addressed, such as whether civil society actors and advocates have consistent values, or if the 'civil society actors, advocates and academics in the northern hemisphere [are] dictating the terms of global discourse' (p. 99). The chapter offers a framework that might be useful for understanding what representation in a stakeholder democracy should look like. It is argued that civil society is of vital importance, but in 'developing and implementing policy, it has proved to be limiting' (p. 119).

The literature review in Chapter Five will be a helpful part of this book for people who are not familiar with the vocabulary. It offers a clear understanding of the key terms. Legitimacy, representation, and accountability are familiar terms to readers of political theory, but in this chapter they are located in the specific context of sustainability. Through this, the reader becomes familiar with the literature on sustainable development, multi-stakeholder governance, and partnerships. Only this specific portion of the literature is introduced, although the scope could have been extended to the representation of legitimacy – a broader component of discussions in political science (see Benhabib, 1994; Mansbridge, 2011).

Building on the international arena introduced in Chapter Three, Chapter Six informs us about the successful methods of developing a dialogue that could contribute to policy developments. Global, national, sub-national, and local levels are introduced. Relying on the experiences of the UN Conference on Human

Settlement (Habitat II), a new design for meaningful dialogue was developed. This process is introduced in depth, starting with the preparations and focusing on the outcomes. By providing this information, the reader is given a comprehensive overview about the functioning of multi-stakeholder dialogues. The operation of national-level committees, as well as the activities of sub-national and local-level governments, are presented.

The final three chapters (labeled a 'trilogy') basically form a handbook (within a book) for practitioners. Chapter Seven illustrates how multi-stakeholder partnerships were first created. It argues that 'successful partnerships bring each partner's core competence and experience to the table, building synergies to co-create new and impactful strategies for achieving sustainable development' (p. 166). This quotation might also be seen as the plot for these three chapters, since it is discussed here how such multi-stakeholder partnerships that are instrumental for stakeholder democracy to function can be established and maneuvered. Chapter Eight moves on to discuss how such partnerships are created, and even provides a list of the most important books on the topic, while manuals and websites are also catalogued. By sharing their advice, the practitioners here provide a user manual for anyone who to wishes to design their own partnership.

Chapter Ten concludes by asserting why similar books are of crucial relevance today. Dodds reemphasizes the relevance of stakeholders in strengthening representative democracy so that it can move towards participatory democracy. The author neatly addresses the reader: 'If you are only interested in understanding how to engage in multi-stakeholder partnerships, there are ideas here on how to do that while improving the work that you already do. If you are interested in how stakeholders have helped develop policy, we have tried to share some examples that you might build from' (p. 226).

In one single page, Dodds lists the crucial challenges that different governments will face in the coming years. In this book, a strategy is offered regarding how these challenges can be dealt with in the policy arena, while the authors have also attempted to conceptualize how such a strategy may impact well-known democratic institutions.

The book covers a topic that is subject to rapid change and advances. It was published in 2018, but the work the authors started could be reiterated repeatedly since change never ceases, and the continuous reevaluation of democratic institutions would be beneficial. The book is conscientious in the way that it increases transparency in relation to the organizations involved in policymaking by discussing not only success stories, but also the lessons that we can learn from pitfalls.

The story that is introduced is diverse, and the authors attempt to colligate diverging threads. This means it would be worth reading by anyone interested in the involvement of stakeholders in different global sustainability programs.

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