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Editors' foreword to the studies included in the thematic issue "Two Decades of Large Sample Youth Research in Hungary"

Levente Székely – Georgina Kiss-Kozma

The studies published in the present issue are based on non-panel large-sample youth surveys – entitled Youth 2000, Youth 2004, Youth 2008, Hungarian Youth 2012, Hungarian Youth 2016, and Hungarian Youth 2020 – conducted every four years, starting in the early 2000s. While each wave of research was followed by the publication of flash reports and volumes of studies, no English-language summary has yet been authored based on the results of the series of sociological research on youth that has spanned more than twenty years and is of significance both at the domestic and international level. This thematic issue is an attempt to compensate for this shortcoming.

Developing the questionnaire for the current wave of data collection in a way that is comparable with the results of previous research has always been a priority for the research team working on the Large Sample Youth Survey. The last two waves, the fifth and the sixth, saw a total of 12,000 15-29-year-old respondents interviewed; in addition to the 8,000-person sample for Hungary, 4,000 young people belonging to ethnic Hungarian communities in neighbouring countries were also interviewed, thus providing a comprehensive picture of Hungarian Youth throughout the entire Carpathian Basin. However, it should also be pointed out that the most recent wave of data collection took place in late 2020, during the second wave of the COVID-19 pandemic, meaning that this external factor should always be factored in when interpreting the research findings for 2020.

While each essay stands its ground individually, the various papers are linked to the editors' concept of presenting readers with an adequate image of Hungarian youth. The study entitled *The History of the Hungarian Large Sample Youth Survey* summarizes the history of the series of research in youth sociology spanning two decades. In the study *Tomorrow's Parents? – Exploring the Fertility Intentions of Young Adults in Hungary*, the reader can learn about the childbearing plans of potential future parents. This question is relevant, among other things, because the current fertility rate in Hungary is below the level required for reproduction, making family formation plans among young people in Hungary a key issue for the future of Hungarian society. When examining an ageing society and a declining population, it is important to look beyond demographic aspects and consider the issue of emigration.

The paper *Emigration Intentions Among Hungarian Youth* delves into the demographic and social characteristics of young Hungarians with plans to emigrate, as the societal and economic consequences of emigration are largely determined by the social and demographic composition of the emigrating population. The study entitled *Examination of Young People's Vulnerability in the Context of the Hungarian Youth Survey 2000-2020* focuses on youth as a period of vulnerability and aims to identify the most vulnerable groups of Hungarian youth society in terms of education and the labour market, both priority areas on the youth scene. *Changes and Factors Associated with the Social Stratification and Material Situation of Hungarian Minority and Majority Youth (2001-2020)*, a further study, focuses on ethnic Hungarian youth living in minority situations in countries neighbouring Hungary and thematically examines two issues. On the one hand, the paper focuses on labour market positions, as well as the occupational and material stratification, of Hungarian minority youth over a period spanning almost two decades. On the other hand, it examines the multidimensional socio-cultural stratification of Hungarian minority youth. Finally, the essay *Crisis Perception and Experience of Resilience Among Young People in the Early and Late Stages of the Coronavirus Epidemic* addresses how young people experienced the epidemic, how they coped with the period's challenges, the extent to which they can be considered a resilient group compared to older people, and which groups were at the greatest risk, taking advantage of the fact that the most recent phase of data collection took place during the second wave of the coronavirus pandemic.

While Large Sample Youth Surveys provide ample opportunity for further analysis, the editors are confident that this thematic issue, based on a selected number of key themes, will bring the reader closer to understanding Hungarian youth.

The History of the Hungarian Large Sample Youth Survey

A nagymintás ifjúságkutatás története

Levente Székely¹

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Abstract: In this paper I would like to summarize the last two decades of this major research program, which was launched in 2000. In the history of youth research in Hungary following the transition to democracy, the Hungarian large sample youth survey is one of, if not the most, important research program seeking to provide a detailed picture of 15–29-year-olds by regularly collecting data every four years. The last round of surveys was conducted in 2020. It is worthwhile to summarize the findings and experiences since the launch of this research program with respect to a given aspect as so far, this has only been done in part.

In this paper on the history of the Hungarian large sample youth survey, I review the history of youth research in Hungary; in general terms, I will provide a chronology of sorts on the most important research and organizations in this field in the period before the fall of communism. I want to deal with the relationship between the empirical results of the large sample youth survey and the discourses on youth theory to present the major theoretical approaches that the large sample youth survey has been instrumental in developing or empirically testing, and to draw attention to the role of the research program in academic thinking regarding youth. In my study, I will present the history of the research series with a thematic and methodological focus, including the circumstances of the research organization. I want to show how it has evolved and what has remained constant over the past two decades. I also aim to evaluate the research series, i.e. to take stock of its strengths and weaknesses and to look at future directions for improvement.

Key words: history, large sample, youth survey

Összefoglaló: Az írásban a 2000-ben indult nagyszabású kutatási program elmúlt két évtizedének összefoglalásával szeretnék foglalkozni. A rendszerváltást követő magyarországi ifjúságkutatás történetében a nagymintás ifjúságkutatás az egyik, ha nem a legjelentősebb kutatási program, amely négyévenként végzett adatfelvételével kísérletet tesz részletes képet nyújtani a 15–29 évesekről. A legutolsó adatfelvételre 2020-ban került sor, az indulás óta eltelt húsz év tapasztalatai megértek az összefoglalásra, amelyre eddig csak részben, egy-egy aspektus bemutatásával került sor. A nagymintás ifjúságkutatás történetét bemutató írásban

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át kívánom tekinteni az ifjúság kutatásának történetét Magyarországon – részletekbe nem menően egyfajta kronológiát kívánok nyújtani a fontosabb kutatásokról, szervezetekről a rendszerváltást megelőző időszakra vonatkozóan is. Foglalkozni kívánok a nagymintás ifjúságkutatás empirikus eredményei és az ifjúságelméleti diskurzusok kapcsolatával, be kívánom mutatni azokat a fontosabb elméleti megközelítéseket, amelyek kialakításában vagy empirikus tesztelésében szerepe volt a nagymintás ifjúságkutatásnak – ráirányítva a figyelmet a kutatási program szerepére a fiatalokkal kapcsolatos tudományos gondolkodásban. Tanulmányomban a kutatássorozat történeti bemutatását a kutatásszervezés körülményeit is érintve elsősorban tematikai és módszertani fókusszal kívánom elvégezni. Be kívánom mutatni hogyan változott és mi maradt állandó a két évtized alatt. Célként tekintek a kutatássorozat értékelésére is, azaz eredményeit és hiányosságait mérlegre téve a jövőre vonatkozó fejlesztési irányokkal is foglalkozni kívánok.

Kulcsszavak: történet, nagymintás, ifjúságkutatás

Introduction – Youth research in Hungary

Although the history of youth research in Hungary spans the past two decades, the Hungarian large sample youth survey launched at the turn of the century is undoubtedly the most important research program. Bauer et al. (2017) cite Katalin Katona's 1965 study as the first to contain references and raise issues concerning youth sociology.

Following post-1956 reprisals, scholarly activity aimed at getting to know youth was reborn and began developing in parallel with sociology. In a tighter or looser sense, inquiries before the transition to democracy were linked to the institutional system of the party-state; however, their content typically sought to move away from communist ideology. The first professional research centers engaged (partially) in youth research were associated with the communist state party and operated within its structures. These included the Youth Research Group within the Institute of Social Sciences of the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party (MSZMP) and the Youth Research Group established by the Communist Youth Association (KISZ). Additionally, the Youth Research Unit of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences Pedagogical Research Group, the Department of Press and Public Opinion Research at the Youth Newspaper Publishing Company, and the Mass Communication Research Institute mainly carried out basic research on youth affairs in the domain of social sciences (Diósi – Székely, 2008).

To begin with, youth research in Hungary focused on pedagogy, with research projects of the time focusing primarily on the method of integrating members of new generations into socialist society. The focal point of analysis was the political worldview of youth (Csákó, 2004. Bauer et al., 2017). In the 1970s, the scope of research was broadened to cover methodological issues and areas concerning the lifestyle of youth specifically. For example, this was when the first time-budget survey was carried out (Gazsó et al., 1971).

In addition to surveys directly or indirectly organized by the state, Hungary also joined international surveys such as the HBSC (Health Behavior in School-aged

Children), which has overseen data collected among general and secondary school students on health, well-being, and lifestyle every four years since 1985.

Following the transition to democracy, organizations and research groups set up by the party state were shut down or transformed. Private enterprises appeared in the research sector, coinciding with a change in research subjects. Issues linked to the political socialization of youth were joined by analyses on the impact of the transition to democracy (Gazsó – Stumpf, 1992) and research on the life stages of youth (Gábor, 1992). In the middle of the decade after the transition to democracy, two major youth research schemes were launched: in 1995, ESPAD (European School Survey Project on Alcohol and Other Drugs), the European school survey on the alcohol and drug-use habits of young people, was started. In 1997, this was joined by so-called Sziget surveys based on the theory of youth epoch change (Gábor, 2000).

The turn of the millennium brought about a significant change in the practice of acquiring knowledge about youth with the establishment of the National Youth Research Institute, which launched an extensive sample youth survey. The questionnaire survey was directed at young people between the ages of 15 and 29 residing in Hungary using an 8,000-item sample. The survey can be regarded as a milestone because it produced comprehensive findings on changes among youth in the two decades after the transition to democracy on a large sample. The following year, the MOZAIK2001 survey assessed young ethnic Hungarians between the ages of 15-29 in neighboring countries, with young people living alongside them belonging to the majority ethnic group. Throughout the research, 5,500 Hungarians and 2,000 majority respondents were questioned in five regions.

Subsequent waves of large sample youth surveys (Ifjúság2004, Ifjúság2008, Magyar Ifjúság 2012) were confined to the situation within Hungary. In 2016 and 2020, data was again collected on ethnic Hungarians living beyond the country's borders, simultaneously and according to the same syllabus as within Hungary. During the 2020 and 2016 surveys, 12,000 young people between 15 and 29 filled out the in-person questionnaire. In addition to the 8,000-item sample within Hungary, interviews were conducted with 4,000 ethnic Hungarians living as minorities in neighboring countries, thus producing a comprehensive image of Hungarian youth in the Carpathian Basin. Data was compiled in regions outside Hungary with the largest ethnic Hungarian communities. In Transylvania (more exactly, in the regions of Partium, Szekler Land, and Inner Transylvania), 2,000 young people were interviewed. The sample was comprised of 1,000 individuals in Felvidék (Slovakia) and 500 each in Vojvodina (Serbia) and Transcarpathia (Ukraine).²

² The methodological specifications of surveys conducted outside Hungary were devised by the research group in 2016 in cooperation with the Max Weber Foundation (Transylvania), the Il. Rákóczi Ferenc Transcarpathian Hungarian College (Transcarpathia), the Identity Minority Research Center (Vojvodina). In 2020, it involved the Szekeres László Foundation (Vojvodina) and the Research Institute for Nation Policy.

Leading narratives in getting to know youth

In recent decades, two frameworks have emerged within international literature that have provided interpretive frameworks for youth-related theoretical work, empirical research, and international comparative studies, among others. These two key themes are the discourse of 'transition' based on the presentation of life situations and the discourse of 'youth culture' focusing on lifestyle (Szanyi, 2018). Three of the most important narratives that fit more or less into international discourses but are specific to Hungary (Nagy – Tibori, 2016) are the theory of youth epoch change (Gábor, 2004), the narrative of youth affairs (Nagy, 2013), and the paradigm of the new silent generation (Székely, 2014)³. Empirical testing of all three theoretical approaches is based on the results of the Hungarian large sample youth survey.

Gábor (2004) examined the theory of transition among youth based on Zinnecker, who distinguished between two youth phases: the transitional youth phase characteristic of industrial society and the school youth phase characteristic of post-industrial society (Fazekas – Székely, 2016). Following Zinnecker, Kálmán Gábor considered the two eras worth examining according to three dimensions: (1) the dimension of time, in which the chief question is how much of their time young people spend in their youth life stage; (2) social space, in which the focus of research is the impact of adult society's institutions and groups on the youth life stage; and, (3) the level of cultural autonomy and the resulting issue of the autonomy of youth culture.

According to Gábor's (2004) suggestion, the 1990s saw the emergence of an educational youth period, meaning that the change of era among youth was delayed by 15-20 years in Hungary compared to Western tendencies. This is largely due to general belatedness and suppression prior to the transition to democracy. The model calculates with two scenarios, namely the unemployment scenario (the reproduction of the social stratum lowest in society) and the leisure scenario, implying the expansion of the middle class. The youth phase is one of crisis in employment, resulting in unemployment and the relativization of work (consumption and existence within the educational system may also be considered as work). In the case of the unemployment scenario, the sub-society stratum, identified by Kálmán Gábor as the group of young people who become excluded from the school system and, therefore, face hardship in social integration, became apparent very early on. The leisure scenario envisages the increasing prevalence of the middle class in society and examines the increasing social weight of the middle classes in the dimension of consumption. According to Gábor (2004), young people are increasingly becoming market actors and consumers, resulting in their possession of a growing number of consumer assets (entertainment devices). However, the theory does not describe

3 These theories do not speak of young people along the same dimensions: the narrative of youth affairs seeks to find answers to who the young people are, the new silent generation focuses on what they are, and the theory of youth epoch change mainly seeks answers to why young people are the way they are. At the same time, each of the models can be linked to international discourses: the theory of youth epoch change is closely related to the discourse of transition, while the narrative of youth affairs fits into developmental psychological approaches, and the concept of the new silent generation is formulated along generation theories.

youth exclusively along the variables of educational attainment, labor market position, free time, or consumption. Focusing on social reproduction, it also addresses the delay in reaching milestones such as starting a family and having children and detachment from the family of origin. It acknowledges the contradiction between cultural independence as follows from the model and continued dependencies such as existential dependence upon the family of origin or the state. The theory envisages a life period of youth that is manifold and fragmented, surrounded by a multitude of uncertainties. All this is true despite the fact that, in a certain sense, today's youth lives in a fundamentally safe world; consequently, its vulnerability and the source of uncertainty are presumably largely existential or psychological, such as a possible increase in risk behavior (Gábor, 2004). The empirical confirmation of the theory of transition among youth is provided by the data set of the Hungarian large sample youth survey in 2000. In criticisms of the theory (Nagy-Tibori, 2016), it is raised that in Giddens's (1992) interpretation, the electable life stage is more of a reflexive process. The theory of change of era among youth focuses merely on the protracted period of adolescence prior to entering adulthood, thus excluding the shrinking childhood from its calculations.

The youth affairs narrative (Nagy, 2013) attempts to describe the particular characteristics of youth based on the role of the individual and the group, as well as the competences of individuals to make decisions and accept responsibility. It claims that groups defined by age are not necessarily equivalent to the youth life phase. The maturation (coming of age) of the individual is outlined by taking on responsibilities such as bearing responsibility for oneself (decision-making) and others (responsibilities brought on by decisions). Based on this, three groups can be identified: (1) from the appearance of responsibility to biological maturity, (2) from biological maturity to psychological maturity, and (3) from psychological maturity to sociological-social maturity. This definition of youth may contradict categorization according to age (the traditional statistical model) as biological, legal, and sociological adulthood do not necessarily coincide. Analysis of data produced by the 2012 Hungarian large sample youth survey (Nagy, 2013) reflects the inconsistency between the theoretical youth group between the ages of 15 and 29 and maturity. It can be suggested that young people are biologically mature, psychologically either mature or immature, and socially immature individuals who can be categorized into the 15-29-year-old age bracket.

As opposed to this, data reflect that less than half of 15-29-year-olds belong purely to the group of young people (i.e., those between childhood and adulthood), with the remainder not corresponding to the traditional statistical model. This proves the validity of a definition based on maturity, which may reflect a more realistic image of youth than a categorization solely based on age. In criticism of the model, it can be pointed out that while it is a more adequate solution than the simplistic, single-dimension age-based categorization, its subjective elements mean

that the interpretation of group categorization and measurability is more difficult. A further problem of the model is that its conclusions are based on cross-section rather than longitudinal data.

As suggested by Szanyi (2018), generation theories have reappeared with fresh impetus in international youth sociology discourse over the past decades. The vigor of the generation approach also achieved significant success outside of scholarly circles in everyday public discourse. Books, articles, and lectures on human resource management and marketing that address various facets of generational differences, mainly from a psychological approach, are popular. Paradigmatic changes, due to which we search for points of guidance in the changing world, are the chief driving force behind the everyday interest in generations. Following Mannheim (1969), the imprint of changes in the world can be identified in the character of generations because the differences between these derive from differences in experiences of socialization. If the impact of socialization changes, and these changes prove lasting and their sphere of influence is disseminated into the most important period of acquiring social norms (childhood and youth), this can define the character of a generation. All this means that the origins of each generation's character are to be found in changes in socialization. Mirroring global trends, mass media and spheres of the digital world have joined the similarly changing traditional socialization environments (the family and the school); these have proven to have significant impacts regarding both the intensity of attachment and the norms represented. Based on Mannheim's thoughts (1969), the theory's starting point is that an event or process that, as a (typical) experience or a defining circumstance that separates a generation from others, is necessary to create a characteristic generation. The character of various generations is defined by the social and emotional environment in which their socialization occurs. According to Strauss and Howe's model (1991; 1997), generations follow each other at an interval of roughly 20 years, and consecutive archetypes result in those born from the early 2000s onwards being similar in character to the generation born before World War II, the so-called silent generation; therefore, they can be identified as a new silent generation (Székely, 2014).

At the same time, the delay during socialism and the shock following the regime change can be felt in the lives of young people in Hungary, which phenomena did not or only slightly affected the Western world. It can be deduced from Strauss and Howe's model that the regime change crisis has created the character of a new silent generation in Hungary. An empirical test of the theory was provided by the Hungarian large sample youth survey of 2012, which can be used to delineate three main characteristics of the character of this new silent generation: conformity, uncertainty, and passivity. The main criticism of the theory is that the theoretical basis applies to American generations, so it may not be suitable for describing Hungarian youth. Another problem is that the narrative does not discuss the reasons for the silence (Nagy-Tibori, 2016). At the same time, the narrative of the

new silent generation says no more than that – accepting Mannheim's along with Strauss and Howe's basic ideas about the effects of socialization on the generational character, the Hungarian generation born and growing up around the regime change shows quiet attitudes. In addition to the role of crises, it does not analyze the possible causes of silence and accepts Strauss and Howe's thoughts on the silence of generations born during crises.

Recent Hungarian interpretations of youth build on the empirical results of Hungarian large sample youth surveys both in their original conceptions (Gábor, 2004; Nagy, 2013; Székely, 2014) and during the verification of theories (Székely, 2018a; Székely, 2021a). Thus, the Hungarian large sample youth survey has been an essential tool for empirically testing major Hungarian-related theoretical concepts in recent decades.

The research themes

The focus of a questionnaire survey is determined by the number of questions per topic and the time it takes to complete each block of questions. A comparison of the questionnaires used in the Hungarian large sample youth survey will show the cornerstones the researchers felt were important when designing the research. A comparison of the questionnaires in the research series shows a range of 161 to 319 questions (*Table 1*). However, when comparing the number of questions in the whole questionnaire, it is difficult to draw clear conclusions because the structure of the questions can be quite different. A simple yes/no question can be asked in a fraction of a minute, while a table with many sub-questions can take several minutes to complete. To get an idea of how the total length of the questionnaire has changed over the data collection period, we can start by estimating the time needed to complete the questionnaire by the interviewer and the length of the questionnaire recorded by the data collection system after the 2012 survey.

For the last two surveys, data recording took 43 minutes (2020) and 41 minutes (2016) according to the data collection system, while the latter indicated 70 minutes for 2012. Interviewers conducted interviews (based on their own administration) averaging 66 minutes in 2008, but no such data are available for previous waves.⁴

The other option is to look at each database to see how many sub-questions, i.e., items,⁵ it contains. If we effectively count the items from the first question asked to the interviewee to the last, we find that the questionnaire length was fixed in

⁴ The 2000 and 2004 survey documentation does not include data on interview time, nor does the questionnaire include such a question. It is difficult to imagine, however, that interview time was not recorded; the 2004 research focused on the effect of questionnaire length on interview quality. This is evidenced, for example, by the questions asked of the interviewer: 'At [what number of] questions did the interviewee get tired or bored of answering?'

⁵ It is worth comparing the number of items by bringing the datasets into common denominator, by excluding the different variables trained and by ignoring the interviewer questions before and after the interview.

the previous four waves, and about 1,000 items were included in each database. The number of questions and the number of items are only weakly related; the order of the shortest questionnaires is also reversed if we sort each questionnaire by the number of items instead of the number of questions (*Table 1*).

Table 1. Number of questions and items

Survey wave	Number of questions	Number of items
2000	161	824
2004	235	772
2008	319	1019
2012	272	1055
2016	237	955
2020	246	965

Since its inception, the Hungarian large sample youth survey has been designed to provide a comprehensive picture of young people aged 15-29. To paint this picture, it is necessary to look in depth at life situations and lifestyle issues, which leads to many topics and, in practice, even more questions and lengthy questionnaires. But to get a complete and comprehensive picture, we need even more, because youth is a specific period of life in which we finish school, start working, get paid for the first time for our work, choose a partner, start a family, and leave our parents. These life events are key to entering independent adulthood, but learning about adulthood involves asking fundamental questions that go beyond the present to reveal aspirations and intentions for the future.

The themes addressed in the questionnaires⁶ include four priority areas, which were much more prominent than average in each of the previous waves. These are basic demographic variables, issues related to starting a family and having children, school and labor market paths, social well-being, and politics. The emphasis is due to the importance and complexity of the topics, the fact that these are the topics that this research explores most extensively (e.g., addiction research is more concerned with health and risk behavior) and, finally, the identification of the issues to be studied is not only the researcher's competence but also the client's competence, i.e., the topics that are of most interest to the client. Looking at the larger thematic units of the questionnaires used in each wave (*Table 2*), we observe that the weight of each topic varied from wave to wave. A more detailed analysis also shows that since the turn of the millennium, the most significant increase in the number of questions has been in the area of digital culture, while the most visible decrease is seen in the area of risk behaviors, with a particular decline in the number of questions on drug use (Székely, 2020).

⁶ The separation of topics may not be perfectly clear-cut; there are some questions that can be grouped into several sub-topics, and there are some summary topics that could be grouped together. Even a single topic could be split into several sub-topics.

Table 2. *Themes with numbers of questions*

Theme	2000	2004	2008	2012	2016	2020
Demography, life events, starting a family	16	41	36	49	37	41
School life	10	21	45	27	24	25
Labor market history	24	24	46	46	31	26
Social well-being, politics	29	23	32	23	29	38
Household, housing, finances	31	41	40	28	20	17
Leisure, sport, health	20	31	54	42	21	21
Culture, (new) media	18	19	28	27	33	27
Values, identity, religion	9	10	9	12	20	18
News, other	4	13	20	10	15	26
Questions for interviewers	0	12	9	8	7	7
Total	161	235	319	272	237	246

The number of questions alone cannot show how much the content of the thematic units, the way questions are asked, etc. has changed.⁷ The 2020 survey also used recurring elements, e.g., a question based on Inglehart's (1997) value assessments, as well as new questions that were formulated by the experts who proposed them during the professional consultation, e.g., questions on volunteering or youth programs, and some changes were required by the current situation, such as the inclusion of questions on the coronavirus epidemic.

The current Hungarian large sample youth survey aims to meet the need for a comprehensive approach and comparability. Policy-makers and youth professionals expect research to be able to provide a comprehensive and detailed analysis of young people's lives and lifestyles. The 2020 survey, like the 2016 survey, should serve to get to know young Hungarians in Hungary and young Hungarians abroad⁸ and should be able to be compared with previous large sample youth surveys in Hungary and abroad.⁹ All of this had to be taken into account in the design by examining the areas of research outlined in the tender documents¹⁰ and by considering the suggestions of the client and external experts. This multi-perspective approach was designed to be consistently reflected in the theme of the 2020 Hungarian questionnaire (*Figure 1*).

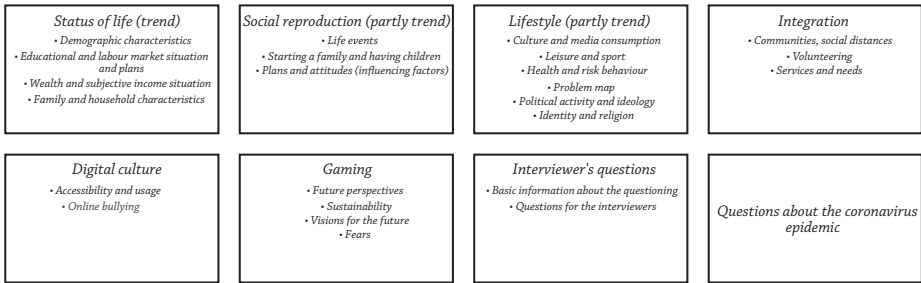
7 For a detailed analysis of the research themes between 2000-2016, see Székely, 2020.

8 The questionnaires in other countries (Romania, Serbia, Ukraine, and Slovakia) are based on the themes of the Hungarian questionnaire and are identical to the Hungarian questionnaire in terms of trend questions. In addition to the trend questions, the questionnaires abroad also contain a common block of questions for the foreign region that is not included in the questionnaire in the home country and can only be interpreted in the foreign regions. This block of questions contains almost exclusively questions related to identity, which tries to relate to the overall theme, thus dealing with the individual's connections to the local Hungarian community, to the majority society, and to Hungary. In addition to subjective attitudes, it mainly examines language use, from the school system to everyday practice and content consumption.

9 The questions used in the questionnaire are based on the previous waves (Ifjúság2000; Ifjúság2004; Ifjúság2008; Magyar Ifjúság 2012; MOZAIK2001 and MOZAIK2011); the themes of the questionnaires were designed to be comparable with previous research and to allow for the identification of trends. In addition to the Hungarian large sample youth survey, we have also taken into account the solutions of the following research studies: ESPAD survey series; HBSC survey series; YRBS 2013; ESS survey series; EVS survey series; Youth Living Conditions Survey KSH, 1996; Youth Survey, 1991.

10 The 2016 and 2020 waves were completed under the EFOP-1.2.3-VEKOP-15-2015-00001 priority project.

Figure 1. Themes for the 2020 Hungarian questionnaire



The status of life blocks included basic demographic trend questions, which are included in previous surveys and are usually part of all surveys (gender, age, place of residence, education, labor market activity). Similar to the demographic questions, we also examined the issues of work, unemployment, working abroad, education (studying abroad), income, and wealth in a comparable way to previous waves of research. In the block of questions dealing with learning, in addition to the precise recording of the educational career and level of qualification, a new element was the nature of the institution (provider), the experience with talent management and developmental programs, and the teachers' perception. Questions were also asked about the level and use of language skills. As in previous waves, we also looked at educational plans, including plans for studying abroad. In questions on work, we sought to explore previous work experience. The questionnaire included questions on employment conditions, perceptions of job security, experience of unemployment, circumstances (facts and attitudes) that help job search and placement, and job hopes. In this section, we look in more detail at experiences and plans for working abroad and the incentives and deterrents to working abroad. We have also addressed the potential consequences of a labor-scarce economy in terms of overtime and new forms of activity. We also formulated questions on income and wealth to understand the objective and subjective financial situation, including the presence of debts and savings in young people's lives. In addition, the use of financial services and financial autonomy from parents were also part of the block of questions. The questions focused on housing, conditions, satisfaction with housing, household size, the identification of relationships with household members, and plans to move.

Questions on life events have been included in the questionnaire for several waves, where we can also examine events experienced and plans for the future. In relation to 15-29-year-olds, starting a family and having children is a priority area of investigation for the purposes of the research. Therefore, the social reproduction questions are also primarily suitable for trend analysis. The questions in this theme aim to describe the current situation as accurately as possible and to provide insights into plans, partly by adapting the previous approach to focus on influencing factors and needs for assistance. In line with these two objectives, the current marital

status, the type of relationship, the perception of marriage, and related marriage plans were addressed. In the questionnaire, we looked in detail at the current and desired number of children, reasons for postponing/refusing to have children, attitudes towards starting a family, the related perception of the compatibility of family and work, and knowledge and use of youth and family benefits.

The lifestyle questions in the 2020 survey are grouped into six thematic units, which are also partly suitable for trend analysis, but the nature of the questions gives much more freedom to examine current issues. In the thematic area of culture and media consumption, we examined the consumption of traditional media (electronic and print media and traditional books) and visits to cultural sites, as in previous practice. We examined the amount of leisure time and leisure activities in leisure time. Among the leisure activities, we detailed sporting habits, including examining the incentives to participate in sports. The health questions include a question on mental health and those used previously. At the same time, the module on risk behaviors covers the three areas used previously: smoking, alcohol, and drugs (with a partially related question on gambling and adult content consumption). The module aims to examine the extent of smoking and alcohol consumption, the presence of drug users in the network of contacts, and the possibility of accessing drugs. The problem map has collected the reflections of young people on their own generation since the beginning of the research, so in 2020, it was also part of the questionnaire, with partly renewed content, and a separate volume was also produced on this issue (Pillók - Székely, 2022).

In the context of political activism and ideology, we have looked in detail at young people's political interests, opportunities for youth participation, and participation practices. Along the lines of previous research waves, satisfaction was examined along several dimensions, including the state of the country, the functioning of democracy, and opinions on joining the European Union. This included an assessment of trust in social institutions and an examination of formal and informal relationships with organizations. The details of identity were explored by looking at ethnicity and national identity. The questions on religion were essentially based on previous questionnaires, providing an opportunity for comparison.

The integration thematic unit on belonging to communities explored social distances mainly using the same questions. Two significant new blocks were added to the 2020 questionnaire: volunteering (11 questions) and youth services and needs (4 questions).

In the digital culture section, we have included the characteristics of the ownership and use of info-communication tools and the use of online social media and gaming habits. In this section, we also looked at the perception of the importance of media. A new element that emerged in the last wave is the issue of bullying, and within this, online bullying.

In the 2020 survey, there was a strong emphasis on examining visions, particularly in terms of environmental and sustainability aspects. In addition to the questions used

previously to capture expectations for the future, the presence of fears about the future (climate change, pandemics, economic crisis, etc.) was also part of the questionnaire.

The postponement of the spring fieldwork enabled two broad questions on the coronavirus epidemic to be added at the end of the questionnaire, which sought to assess the impact of the epidemic situation.

Building on previous practice, some questions were asked in a self-completion block, covering risk behaviors (smoking, alcohol, drugs), national identity, and political preference.

Methodology of the survey

The methodological principles of sample selection in youth research have not changed since the turn of the millennium, thanks to the work of the distinguished mathematician-sociologist member of the research team, István Nemeskéri. In all cases, the aim was to ensure that the sample was as representative of the target group as possible and that the research results would characterize young people aged 15-29 as accurately as possible. According to the data and statistics available for each region, the research samples were designed based on similar criteria.¹¹ The ('achieved') samples are nationally representative of the 15-29 age group in the given survey year – i.e., they ensure the sample validity of population proportions – by sex, age, education, type of municipality, and region. One of the undisputed values of the survey is that all waves of the Hungarian large sample youth survey, launched in 2000, are comparable and can be analysed longitudinally.

For the sample in Hungary, we used the data set of the Ministry of Interior and its predecessors, which contained the number of men and women of the age group with valid residence and the number of inhabitants of the given age group per municipality, split by year of birth. Sampling was done in several stages using a stratified probability sampling method. The primary sampling frame consisted of a list of municipalities in Hungary (PSU), and the secondary sampling frame consisted of young people aged 15-29 living in these municipalities and having a permanent residence in Hungary at the time of sampling (SSU). As a first step, the municipalities were stratified according to their geographical location and the number of young people living in the municipality and then randomly sampled by layer. In the second step, a random probability sample was selected from the address register database in the selected municipalities in proportion to the number of elements in each stratum to choose those included in the sample.

During the 2008 survey, the good practice was developed to sample four samples of settlements (4x2,000 inhabitants), which separately represent the settlement structure of the country by regional location and settlement size. In the sampled

¹¹ Nemeskéri (2001) based the sample selection on the sub-regions and, in the case of Budapest, on the districts, with the aim of interviewing in each sub-region.

municipalities, the respondents were selected based on two demographic criteria (sex and age) from the address register data. It is important to note that these are the two criteria that allow for sample selection; other criteria, such as marital status, ethnicity, and education, are not included in the address databases used for sample selection. Partly for this reason, education was included in the multi-criteria mathematical weighting procedure to eliminate the slight bias arising from sampling. As a result, the four sub-samples of 2,000 respondents from the most recent waves, taken separately, and the pooled sample of 8,000 respondents, are also representative of the 15-29 age group by sex, age, educational attainment, type of municipality, and region.

The reason for using a sub-sample of 2,000 respondents is that the planned thematic would have increased the average time of the questionnaire to at least 60-70 minutes, which would have clearly reduced the quality of the questionnaire, so in the case of the Hungarian questionnaire, the sub-samples were used to reduce the length of the questionnaire and the sample size along each question or question area. The schematic structure of each sub-sample and questionnaire was as follows (Table 3).

Table 3. *Structure of the questionnaire by sub-samples*

Common questions (basic survey data; trend questions; interviewer questions) N=8,000			
'purple' block (N=2,000): political socialization	'yellow' block (N=2,000): life events; labour market attitudes; geographical mobility; volunteering	'green' block (N=2,000): starting a family - having children; health; leisure; environment; religion	'blue' block (N=2,000): youth programmes; digital culture; consumer awareness; cultural consumption

It is important to note that the specific modular structure of the questionnaire and the sub-samples adapted to it also strongly influence the possible angles of analysis, presenting a clear limitation in the combined analysis of the two blocks of questions. The Hungarian large sample youth survey is significant as a research program – the high number of interviews conducted in each wave of data collection is also unique, allowing for a 95% confidence level with a +/- 1.12 percent margin of sampling error. The low margin of sampling error, due to the large item number, means that our reported national distributions may deviate by roughly one percent from the value we would have received if we had asked each target group member. The number of items, the wide range of topics, and the two-decade data series of the Hungarian large sample youth survey provide an opportunity to produce a variety of analyses, not to mention the possibility of comparison with Hungarian young people living as minorities in neighboring countries.

Professional and Other Criticisms

The past two decades of large sample youth surveys in Hungary have not been immune to debates transported into the professional and political arena. The latest results of the most significant Hungarian research program concerning youth consistently attract attention. The media typically shows considerable interest in brief reports, and the current databases are widely used. However, heightened interest is present not only in the results but also during the planning and data collection phases of the current research.

The recent waves of the research series allowed the broadly defined professional audience to review and provide feedback on the research plan and tools (questionnaire), influencing the research with their suggestions. The implementation of these suggestions was ultimately decided on by the given research group conducting the study and the head of research, who is also the author of this article. These sometimes challenging decisions prevented changes justified from a professional standpoint and the inclusion of current issues while keeping in mind the integrity and feasibility of the entire research project. Professional debates arise partly from this, partly because questionnaire-based research has been facing severe challenges for decades. A significant portion of these challenges stem from low response rates, raising questions about the applicability of probability sampling and the representativeness of those samples. Another difficulty with research projects based on surveys arises from the fact that some of the answers are, in a sense, erroneous, as demonstrated by studies examining xenophobia with the involvement of fictional populations (e.g., Sik, 2022). Conflicting results do not inspire confidence in the method, especially as elections approach. Despite the criticisms, however, we cannot speak of a consistently better solution for survey-type approaches. Regarding examining election forecasts, the often-criticized method continues to be widely used and delivers valid results. Some of the criticisms of the large sample youth survey stem from the decreasing response rates as we approach younger age groups. The criticism is valid, but innovative solutions (e.g., social media-based recruitment, smartphone applications, big data methods) have not yet achieved breakthrough successes. It is important to note, as a one-time case, that the research in 2020 took place during the COVID-19 pandemic, providing methodological insights into reaching respondents: due to the pandemic, individuals aged 15–29 were easily reached based on their legal addresses, resulting in above-average accessibility (Székely, 2021b). However, this success should not divert attention from the aforementioned criticisms about questionnaire-based research; the methodological reform of large-sample youth surveys is more relevant than ever.

The timing of a large sample youth survey is also relevant in political terms. The first set of results was consistently ready for publication at the start of the year preceding parliamentary elections – solidifying their political relevance. Due to the unique target group and the high percentage of non-respondents and undecided, the research cannot serve as the basis for election forecasts, and the researchers did not publish data on this

in their brief reports. However, it is precisely this data that interests many stakeholders who are interested in young people. Although access to the research databases is freely available — unlike the practice of the Hungarian research sphere — the form and timing of this access have been a continuous subject of debate. In accordance with the rules established throughout the past decade, access was provided transparently; the data was made public when the study volume was published. Following this, additional publications were released using this data. After the publication of the study volume containing detailed results of the 2016 surveys in Hungary and abroad (Székely, 2018c), an independent publication focusing exclusively on Hungarian data was also released (Nagy, 2018). A comparable situation occurred in connection with the 2020 research. Following the first study volume, which was focused on Hungarian data (Székely, 2021c), another one with a Hungarian focus (Nagy, 2022) was published. The studies processing the 2020 data on Hungarian minorities living in the Carpathian Basin were delayed until the end of 2023 (Vita-Veres, 2023), but this did not cause tension either in professional or political circles. The focus of the publications processing Hungarian research results is relatively similar overall; their results do not show significant differences.¹² However, their media representation and emphasis differ.

Conclusion and vision for the future

In this paper, we have summarized a brief history of the Hungarian large sample youth survey that started at the turn of the millennium, showing that this is an outstanding research program by international standards. Its uniqueness lies primarily in its sample size – thus the possibility of segmentation and deep drilling – and the possibility of trend analysis. In addition to providing detailed trend data, the Hungarian large sample youth survey has also gained undisputed merit in relation to testing the hypotheses of theoretical work. Over the past decades, two frameworks have emerged in international literature that have provided interpretative frameworks for youth-related theoretical work, empirical research, and, among them, international comparative studies. In addition to the major theories, the research provided empirical data for a number of academic and professional publications. It formed the basis for the situation analysis of the National Youth Strategy and other policy documents. The Hungarian large sample youth survey is also a public good since, in addition to the publications, the unprocessed results are also freely available, which is not at all self-evident in the case of similar research and, indeed, is not the case at all. For the last three waves (2012, 2016, 2020), access has been organized and transparent.

Nevertheless, the most vocal criticism of the research has been about the accessibility of the databases, with critiques of how they are accessed and, even more

¹² There have also been miscalculations and erroneous conclusions that have been partially discussed in the professional forums.

so, the timing of access. This again points to the importance of research and whether the criticism is justified.

Over the last two decades, the program has provided us with a wealth of methodological experience, the most important lessons of which are precisely those that challenge the framework. With few exceptions, the main characteristic of the Hungarian large sample youth survey – the large sample – is typically not exploited by researchers. The four-year data collection interval is too infrequent, and the measurement instrument and the associated preparatory and processing work are too long. Among questionnaire research, the methodology of the Hungarian large sample youth survey is both old-fashioned with its personal, address-list approach but also highly innovative with the use of 2,000 subsamples built into a core sample of 8,000 respondents and tablet-based interviewing (Székely, 2018b; Székely, 2021b).

The need to follow trends and gain a comprehensive knowledge of youth calls for the continuation of the research, but the renewal of the previous framework cannot be avoided. The ever-lengthening questionnaire and the associated shorter attention span of respondents makes it impossible to maintain high data quality. It is therefore necessary to renew this research program that has been in place for two decades. The study of the new generation is one of the most popular areas of contemporary social science, and there is vibrant professional work going on in several centers in Hungary. I am convinced there is a justification for continuing the research series and that by retaining the virtues and incorporating innovations, research on youth can be given a new impetus.

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Tomorrow's parents? Exploring the fertility intentions of young adults in Hungary

Jövőbeli szülők? Egy feltáró kutatás a hazai fiatal felnőttek gyermekvállalási terveiről.

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Abstract: In Hungary, where current fertility is below replacement, it is important to explore the fertility intentions of potential future parents. In our paper, we use a novel representative database to explore the future childbearing intentions of young adult Hungarians (18–29) and to estimate the potential effect of a wide range of demographic, socioeconomic and value-related independent variables. According to our results, fertility intentions are shaped by the individual's economic status, current domicile, parental education, religiosity, parental separation, relationship status and positivity towards Hungary. Additionally, interaction models show that fertility intentions vary by age and gender: a critical period of late young adulthood is highlighted when stronger intentions notably decline for women. Finally, using subsamples, we examine the effect of climate anxiety and green behaviour. Results suggest that those who plan to have more children are more likely to behave in an environmentally conscious way.

Keywords: Fertility intentions, young adults, childlessness, demography, climate anxiety

Összefoglaló: Magyarországon, ahol a jelenlegi termékenységi szint nem éri el a reprodukcióhoz szükséges szintet, fontos vizsgálni a potenciális jövőbeli szülők gyermekvállalási terveit. Elemzésünkben egy új, reprezentatív adatbázis felhasználásával feltárjuk a fiatal magyar felnőttek (18–29) gyermekvállalási terveit és megbecsüljük különböző demográfiai, társadalmi-gazdasági és értékhez köthető változók hatását a tervekre. Eredményeink szerint kiemelt hatása van a terveknek az egyén gazdasági helyzetének, lakóhelyének, a szülői végzettségi háttérnek, a válásosságnak, a szülők szeparációjának, a jelenlegi párkapcsolati helyzetnek, valamint az országgal szemben érzett pozitív attitűdnek. Továbbá, az interakciós modellek rávilágítanak arra, hogy a tervek nemenként eltérnek, és életkorban változóak: e tekintetben kritikus időszak a kései fiatal felnőttkor, amikor a magasabb gyermekvállalási tervek háttérbe szorulnak a nők esetében. Végül, almintákon megvizsgáljuk a klímaszorongás és a zöld viselkedés hatásait is, mely esetben a több gyermeket tervező személyeket környezettudatosabb viselkedés jellemzi.

Kulcsszavak: Gyermekvállalási tervek, fiatal felnőttek, gyermektelenség, demográfia, klímaszorongás

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1. Introduction

The issue of sub-replacement fertility levels, changing fertility behaviour, and their subsequent consequences are a major part of the demographic and political discourse in Europe. The second demographic transition (SDT) brought major changes to the region, including the rise of non-married cohabitation and singlehood, increasing age of first marriage and first birth, lower fertility and a greater likelihood of childlessness (Lesthaeghe 2010, 2020; Brini 2020). These developments are theorized to be rooted in ideational changes towards individualism, self-actualization and post-materialistic needs (Inglehart, 1970). Importantly, the SDT process is present in Central and Eastern Europe as well, especially after the fall of the communist regimes in 1989 (Lesthaeghe 2010; Billari and Kohler 2004).

Hungary, the focus of our study, is not an exception to the transformation of demographic behaviour. Although there were some major upturns due to policy changes, such as a brief ban on abortion in the fifties, the total fertility rate (TFR) declined after the Second World War and reached a decade-long low point (below 1.30) around 1999–2011, followed by a period of recuperation (Óri and Spéder 2020). While fertility in Hungary in recent years can be described as average from a comparative European perspective, the current upturn in the TFR is (at least partially) attributed to pronatalist policies and the weakening effect of postponement (Kapitány and Spéder 2021). Overall, fertility behaviour in Hungary has shifted as well. Spéder notes that changes in fertility have been accompanied by later first births, increasing heterogeneity in timing, and greater division based on educational attainment (2021). Life-course analyses also reflect this emerging heterogeneity, as multiple paths of late childbearing (after education or early entry into the workforce) coexist with earlier timing scenarios in Hungary (see Murinkó 2019).

In this context of below-replacement fertility, individuals' childbearing intentions are a key issue. In the scientific literature, the intended number of children is well established (see Schoen et al. 1999) to be a strong determinant of realized fertility, and demographers often use intentions to help predict future fertility rates (Philipov 2011). However, this evident linkage is not deterministic in nature, as underachieving or overachieving can often be observed, forming a gap between intentions and actual behaviour (Demeny 2003). For example, in the United States, Quesnel-Vallée and Morgan (2003), and later, Morgan and Rackin (2010) demonstrated that by age 40–45, less than half of all respondents fulfilled their childbearing intentions, with underachieving being a more common phenomenon. Some results also show that fertility desires eventually adjust to sub-replacement levels of actual fertility, as in Austria and Germany, low fertility goes hand-in-hand with the intention to have fewer than two children (Goldstein, Lutz and Testa 2003; Sobotka 2009).

In summary, a link between intentions and behaviour exists, and studying the former should provide insights into the latter. Based on this, our study aims to contribute to the understanding of fertility in Hungary by exploring a wide variety of

factors that influence the childbearing intentions of childless Hungarian young adults using a new representative sample. First, we present the major theoretical approaches to fertility intentions to provide a theoretical background, then we present possible influential factors. After establishing the theoretical framework, we discuss the unique Hungarian social context of fertility. Finally, we present our modelling strategy, interpret the main results, and discuss the implications and limitations of our study.

2. Theoretical framework

2.1. *Understanding fertility intentions*

In the effort to understand fertility intentions, the most often-used approach is the theory of planned behaviour (TPB) (Ajzen 1991). TPB proposes that an individual's intention to have a child is shaped by three factors (Ajzen 1991; Ajzen and Klobas 2013; Klobas and Ajzen 2015): (1) behavioural beliefs which encompass the perceived consequences of having a child and the evaluation of these consequences, which together result in childbearing attitudes; (2) normative beliefs about having a child and the social pressure to adhere to these norms, creating the subjective childbearing norms of an individual; (3) and perceived belief of control (such as overcoming constraints and adversity) concerning having a child (or not) which stems from beliefs about enabling and interfering circumstances. These three factors that shape intentions (and, in turn, realized fertility) are affected by a range of socioeconomic, demographic and personal characteristics (Ajzen and Klobas 2013).

While TPB offers a concise framework for understanding intentions, critiques highlight that it puts too much emphasis on conscious behaviours and beliefs, while realized fertility is often an unintended outcome as unplanned pregnancies happen en masse (Morgan and Bachrach 2011). Bachrach and Morgan (2013) proposed an alternative approach to reconcile this issue – the so-called cognitive-social model (CSM), which posits that intentions are complex mental states originating both from deliberative (conscious) and automatic (not conscious) cognitive processes.

According to the CSM, automatic cognitive processes create schemas, which contain knowledge, sensations and feelings, and the system of these schemas defines “what and who we are in relation to the world” (Bachrach and Morgan 2013: 462) and have a motivational force in our life. Schemas are created during interaction with social structures and are triggered by a relevant context or situation (Bachrach and Morgan 2013: 465), shaping decisions. The different choices of individuals come from the fact that people interact with dissimilar social structures during their life course.

According to the CSM, the intention to have a child is based upon schema(s) related to parenthood (positive experiences, values, knowledge about children, being a parent, etc.), which the individual incorporates as a part of their self because of their positive nature. However, the essential notion is that positive schemas can be related to childbearing without intentions (Bachrach and Morgan 2013: 466). Specifically, an intention requires

a commitment to act in a given situation, motivated by a strong link between positive schemas and necessary actions. But positive schemas can also result in the same outcome without previous intentions. For example, positive attitudes about motherhood can reduce the likelihood of an abortion in the event of an unwanted pregnancy. Additionally, unrelated intentions can have similar outcomes, such as the intention to have intercourse, which can result in childbearing. Finally, intentions affect the content of other schemas: the intention to become a parent weakens the positivity of schemas related to career development, which becomes a less important part of the self.

To summarize, with TBP, we can claim that if a factor is positively (or negatively) related to intentions, it is due to its influence over at least one of the three components (consequences, norms, or control). With CSM, we can similarly argue that a given factor plays a role in forming strong positive schemas (or the absence of them), which becomes an important part of the self, creating a commitment to act (or not). An added benefit of CSM is that it highlights age-specific variability: at older ages, with a better-formed self, intentions might be more clearly established.

From a theoretical perspective, the intention to voluntarily (as opposed to involuntarily, see Veevers 1980) remain childless has to be highlighted as a unique outcome, as forgoing parenthood altogether is distinct compared to having a certain number of children. For our study, the difference between early articulators, late articulators and perpetual postponers has to be made: the former two make an active decision to be childless early or late in their life course, while the latter passively postpone and eventually abandon the idea of childbearing (see Avison and Furnham 2015). For late articulators, the preference for childlessness is thought to be more stable (Albertini and Brini 2020).

In understanding the decision to remain childless, theoretical perspectives offer economic, personality-based and societal frameworks. From an economic viewpoint of childbearing, having children can be disadvantageous as the cost (both in terms of financial resources and opportunities) of raising offspring overshadows the gains from parenthood (Blossfeld and Huinink 1991; Becker 1991: 138). From a personality-based viewpoint, men and women have specific preferences (Hakim 2003), which compete (Demeny 2003) with parenthood. If someone has a stronger disposition for having a career than being a parent, then the probability of childlessness increases. However, for both economic and personality-based explanations, the societal context has to be emphasized, as it plays a role in demographic decisions (Liefbroer and Billari 2010). Simply, in a context where socially prescribed conditions prior to childbearing are not met by the couple (Gribaldo, Judd and Kertzer 2009; Bernardi, Mynarska and Rossier 2015) or prevailing norms accept childlessness, forgoing parenthood is a more likely option.

Studies generally confirm all three theories. Couples with high-earner women are more likely to opt for having no children (Gobbi 2012), and tertiary-educated women have a more positive outlook on childlessness (Waren and Pals 2013) as the opportunity cost for them is higher (Merz and Liefbroer 2012). Also, childless persons generally score higher on independence and lower on agreeableness (Avison

and Furnham 2015) traits. Regarding the societal effect, family-oriented values reduce the odds of childlessness for both men and women (Waren and Pals 2013), and Albertini and Brini (2020) note that normative pressure plays a part in abandoning plans to remain childless. In their detailed multilevel approach, Liefbroer, Merz and Testa (2015) show that cross-country variance in the acceptance of childlessness is high, and more progressive countries accept childlessness to a greater degree.

2.2. *What influences intentions?*

So far, we have established that beliefs and schemas affect fertility intentions and that voluntary childlessness can be regarded as a distinct category of possible intentions. As both TPB and CSM note, background factors shape the elements of intentions, influencing outcomes. Consequently, it is important to review recent results on possible determinants. It should be reiterated that realized fertility is different from intended fertility, and due to this, our review of empirical results is limited to studies focusing on intentions in general, or specific outcomes such as voluntary childlessness or higher-order intentions.

Age. A primary candidate for an influential factor in childbearing intention is the age of the respondent, as intentions are revised due to age-specific circumstances, experiences and other life-course events. In their recent study, Iacovou and Tavares note (2011) that younger people are more likely to adjust their expectations (both upwards and downwards), and for women, there is a gender-specific effect of reduced intentions after 30. Liefbroer's results (2009) also indicate an adjustment (on average downwards) after the age of 18. However, he notes that in addition to the adjustment effect, intentions become more heterogeneous with older age.

Socioeconomic factors. Results clearly support the influence of socioeconomic factors on fertility intentions, as better economic circumstances are related to a higher degree of control and greater affordability of children. Studies demonstrate that employment (Fahlén and Oláh 2015) and household wealth (Modena, Rondinelli and Sabatini 2013) are positive determinants of stronger childbearing intentions. Conversely, worsening employment conditions increase the risk of abandonment of fertility intentions for men and women (Hanappi et al. 2017). In Germany, Berninger, Weiß and Wagner (2011) found support for the direct effect of income, job security and partner's employment on the intention to have a first child for men only, which they interpret as a consequence of the gendered division of labour and the normative pressure for men to be the main breadwinners. Novelli et al. (2021) highlight the role of country-level economic uncertainty: after the 2007–2008 recession, employment status and housing conditions became more important determinants of short-term fertility plans in Italy. Vignoli et al. (2022) corroborate this by studying the effects of economic narratives on intended childbearing in Italy and Norway. Their data show that both genders react strongly to changing economic situations regardless of objective economic position, as negative prospects are linked with lower intended fertility.

From the plethora of socioeconomic factors, educational attainment has received considerable attention in recent empirical research. Analyzing 27 European nations,

Testa (2014) found an individual and macro-level positive association between women's education and fertility intentions. As highly educated women have more resources (and therefore control) to overcome the negative costs of childbearing, and tertiary educated women observe the possibility of reconciling parenthood with a career (from other mothers), women's higher educational attainment increases fertility intentions. Conversely, from an examination of 11 European countries, Beaujouan and Berghammer (2019) note that highly educated women are more likely to display intentions to remain childless if reconciling parenthood and careers are difficult in a given societal setting. Apart from additional control and resources, tertiary educated women (possibly due to their better bargaining position in a relationship) also receive more help from their partners, which increases the likelihood of wanting to have more children after the first birth (Cheng and Hsu 2020). De Wachter and Neels (2011) highlight that a positive educational gradient can be observed for women, not just regarding their own, but their partner's education as well, as those with tertiary-educated male partners have higher fertility intentions. However, the positive influence of education might not be present for all intended outcomes: in their meta-analysis of 86 studies from 13 European countries between 1990 and 2011, Testa and Stephany (2017) only found a positive educational effect for first and second-intended births, but none when examining third or higher-order intentions.

Exposure to parental and relationship dynamics. As all theoretical perspectives put significant emphasis on beliefs about parenthood and the social structure from which an individual gathers experiences regarding childbearing and parenthood, they are important determinants of fertility intentions. Kotte and Ludwig (2011) demonstrate that fertility preferences are transmitted intergenerationally, as having more siblings is related to a higher intended number of children in Germany. In their detailed analysis, Lois and Becker (2014) also note that a social network with more parents is positively related to the intention of having children, especially for younger persons. Regarding negative events, Karhunen, Jokela and Golovina (2023) show that growing up in a single-parent household and the negative perception of parents is associated with a lower number of ideal children, and Merz (2012) posits that the experience of parental divorce in the childhood increases the intention to remain childless / to not have more children in the Netherlands.

Another important factor is the difference between singlehood, cohabitation and marriage. Being in a partnership is evidently important, as it is a prerequisite for realising childbearing intentions (Testa and Toulemon 2006). However, the difference between relationship types is less evident. Cohabitations are generally thought to be relationships with different dynamics, lower levels of commitment and institutionalization compared to marriages, depending on the country-level prevalence of cohabitation (Liefbroer and Dourleijn 2006). Hiekel and Castro-Martín show that marital intentions and marriage are positively related to fertility intentions, while the opposite is true for cohabitation without marriage or specific plans to marry (2014).

Norms and values. As discussed earlier, norms, values, and their related normative pressure are theorised to affect fertility intentions. A principal variable in this regard

is religiosity: results generally show that higher religiosity is associated with higher fertility intentions (Hayford and Morgan 2008) regardless of gender (Buber-Ennser and Berghammer 2021), but cross-country variability is notable, as research indicates that religiosity has a stronger influence in more traditional countries. Results from Poland also uncover an important mechanism: religiosity moderates the perceived costs of childbearing for women, and religious people see more positive benefits of childbearing than non-religious ones (Bein, Mynarska and Gauthier 2021).

Another aspect of an individual's values is their subjective attitude about gender roles. In Finland, Miettinen, Gietel-Basten and Rotkirch (2011) find that childless men with more egalitarian attitudes had higher fertility intentions, while Lappegård, Neyer and Vignoli (2021) highlight the multidimensional nature of the issue. Mothers with egalitarian attitudes about fathers' roles are inclined to have more children. However, egalitarian attitudes about women in the public sphere also reduce fertility intentions for childless women and mothers. Okun and Raz-Yurovich (2019) note that women who do more housework tend to form a consensus with their partners about the intention not to have more children and that progressive gender attitudes reduce the intention to have at least one more child due to the already unequal division of labour paired with the newer need to have a career. A recent analysis of 25 European nations (Han, Gowen and Brinton 2023) corroborates this, finding that country-level gender ideology affects fertility decisions: for full-time working women in countries where norms prescribe dual responsibilities (work and household), the intention to have a second child is less likely to be present.

Finally, in recent years, the importance of attitudes about climate change and their link to fertility intentions has been proposed. Although still an under-researched field of study, some empirical results exist on which we can base our expectations. In their multilevel model, De Rose and Testa (2015) show that while around a fifth of all men and women (ages 20–45) in the EU-27 highlight climate change as the biggest problem for the future, they find a positive effect in relation to fertility intentions instead of a negative one, as individuals who are concerned with climate change plan to have more children. This suggests that future parents worry about the changing climate and its effects to a greater degree. This corresponds well with more recent studies that highlight younger individuals' greater concern for climate change and the well-being of their existing and future expected children (Schneider-Mayerson and Ling 2020) and that living a more climate-friendly life and/or educating future children about environmentalism resolves the ethical dilemma of having/planning to have children in an age of climate change (Bodin and Björklund 2022).

3. The Hungarian context

From a theoretical standpoint, both TPB and the CSM emphasize the importance of the social environment, which affects childbearing intentions through expectations and norms. In this regard, Hungary shows a complex picture. While early studies after the transition link the post-socialist period with the pluralization of values (Füstös

and Szokolczai 1994, 1999), traditionality is still noted to be prevalent (Keller 2009). However, the contradiction of traditional opinions paired with progressive behaviour is often observable (Utasi 1996; Dupcsik and Tóth 2008). For example, Pongráczné and S. Molnár (2011) show that women's paid work and financial contribution are increasingly important for couples, while Murinkó (2014) notes that Hungarians are also likely to think that women's higher relative income is detrimental to marriage. These contradictions imply that SDT theory (which proposes both behavioural and value changes) has limited applicability in the Hungarian context.

Regarding childbearing, parenthood and overall gender norms, the picture is similar. Even though Hungarian women entered the workforce early after the Second World War, the traditional norm of familism still remains dominant today (Pongráczné 2005) as there was no particular alternative after the transition, and it remained unchallenged from a political standpoint (Dupcsik and Tóth 2008). Corresponding to this, recent results show that the majority of adult Hungarians still think that childbearing is essential for happiness (Szalma and Takács 2016), and even for young university-educated women, motherhood as an identity is very important (Pápay et al. 2014). After the economic crisis in the late 2000s, when women's economic contribution became essential and, in turn, could have accelerated a change towards egalitarianism, traditional familism remained and was later supported by the subsequent conservative policies (Gregor 2016), as gender-based inequalities and a gendered role division were further legitimized (Csányi 2019). Consequently, in an environment where women participate in the workforce and their financial contribution is regarded as important (Pongráczné and S. Molnár 2011), women are expected to do all the housework and childrearing while men are still characterized as breadwinners (Pongráczné 2005; Blaskó 2005, 2006; Makay and Spéder 2018), although some empirical analyses also highlight the presence of dual expectations for men (Spéder 2011; Makay and Spéder 2018).

In this unique Hungarian context, several recent studies examined childbearing intentions. Educational attainment and socioeconomic attributes are especially important determinants of fertility intentions: Veroszta and Györgyi (2021) found that for mothers expecting their first child, higher education is linked with future intentions to have more children, and Spéder and Kapitány (2009, 2015) observed that higher educational attainment is associated with an increased probability of realizing fertility intentions. Conversely, negative socioeconomic factors such as unemployment and low household wealth are connected with weaker intentions (Spéder and Kapitány 2009, 2015; Veroszta and Györgyi 2021). However, employment might have a gender and parity-specific effect. According to Bognár (2008), a couple is more likely to plan for a first child if the man is employed but less likely to plan for a second one (after the first one) if the woman is in employment. It should be noted that childbearing plans differ across regions in Hungary: in rural, economically deprived villages, women plan to have more children and aim to have their first birth earlier in the life course (Boros and Bucher 2020).

Individual and societal norms also exert an influence over intentions in Hungary. In a comparative study, Philipov, Spéder and Billari (2006) noted that religiosity and the importance of children compared to work have a positive effect, while high societal anomie and low social capital negatively influence fertility intentions. Other studies also highlight that religiosity in Hungary is linked with a positive attitude towards marriage and a higher number of intended children (Ragadics 2018), and general social pressure increases the probability of realized fertility intentions (Spéder and Kapitány 2021).

A few studies have also examined the topic of voluntary childlessness in Hungary specifically. Miettinen and Szalma (2014) show that voluntary childlessness in Hungary is low compared to other countries (around 4% for men and 5% for women of ages 18–40), and Spéder and Kapitány (2007) emphasize that even amongst this small group, intentions to remain childless might not be permanent for some individuals. According to their results, 16.2% of childless persons would reconsider if certain circumstances changed, and 10.3% would be open to changing their opinions later on. Other results imply the importance of family dynamics, education, employment and green attitudes for childlessness. Based on qualitative interviews, Nagy and Pári (2021) demonstrate that voluntary childlessness is linked with exposure to bad parental dynamics: those who expressed an intention not to have children mentioned a previously difficult family life, conflict and neglect. Szalma and Takács (2012) found that women with a tertiary education and a career are more prone to postpone first childbearing. Green behaviour might also influence decisions about childlessness. Some respondents in the study of Nagy and Pári (2021) said they do not want to expose potential children to the effects of climate change. This corresponds with the fact that most adults (79.2%) in Hungary are concerned with the future of their children due to the changing environment (KINCS 2020).

4. Data and methods

To explore the fertility intentions of young Hungarian adults, we used data from a survey of Hungarian youth conducted in 2020 (Magyar Ifjúság Kutatás 2020). The survey has been administered every four years since 2000, and the 2020 wave has an original sample size of 8,000 and is representative of the 15–29-year-old Hungarian population in terms of age, gender, domicile, region and education. Respondents were interviewed on various topics such as family, health, environmentalism, politics, life-course events, plans, and consumption-related habits, with smaller subsamples ($N = 2,000$) responding to different survey modules. The 2020 wave was conducted using computer-assisted personal interviewing (CAPI), with an average interview duration of 41–43 minutes, depending on the subsample. Because the fieldwork was done between September and December of 2020, results are potentially impacted by the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, as the first documented case was in early March, and restrictions that impacted the life of young adults (such as those attending

universities) were introduced shortly after. Luppi, Arpino and Rosina (2020) note that people under 30 have potentially been more impacted by the crisis, resulting in the abandonment of fertility plans, especially in countries where the labour market and economic situation is less optimistic.

As we are interested in the fertility intentions of childless young adults, from this original sample, we selected a sample of adult men and women (ages 18–29) who were childless, born in Hungary, and who provided answers to the main dependent and all independent variables (sample selection and non-response detailed in appendix table A1).³ The final sample consists of 4,340 respondents. In our analysis, our main dependent variable is long-term fertility intentions. Respondents were asked to state the number of children they want to have without specifying an exact time frame.⁴ Responses ranged from 0 to 10 children. As intentions of four children or more were rare amongst the childless at the time of the survey, these respondents were omitted. We argue that grouping them with persons of other outcomes would have biased our results, as they have highly distinct aims representing unique circumstances, personalities, and social mechanisms. Therefore, we study fertility intentions from voluntary childlessness to planning to have three children.

Corresponding to the previously detailed possible determinants of fertility intentions, we employed a wide range of independent variables in our models. From the socioeconomic factors, we included employment (as a dichotomous variable), subjective household economic status (collapsed from four categories into a dichotomous variable indicating the presence or absence of considerable economic hardship), and the respondent's domicile (measured as Budapest, city or village) which (in part) accounts for regional socioeconomic differences. We measure educational attainment as a four-category variable, indicating elementary or lower, secondary or tertiary education, with secondary education split into those who are enrolled into tertiary education and those who are not to account for respondents without a finished educational track. We also included parental education (elementary or lower, secondary or tertiary) as an indicator of socioeconomic origin, following the dominance method: either the highest educated parent's attainment or the one with a valid answer is used as an indicator of origin. The second group of variables entail the gender of the respondent, parental separation (separated or not) as a proxy for childhood parental dynamics and relationship status (single, cohabiting or married).

The third and final set of dependent variables are related to the individual's norms and values. First, we measured religiosity as a three-category variable, differentiating between non-religious, religious but in their own way, and religious (church-following)

3 It could be argued that while 18 is the legal age of adulthood, from a sociological sense, those in education might still be considered not full adults. All analyses presented in our study were redone on a sample of individuals whose main activity was not being in education. Results did not change substantially compared to those presented in this paper.

4 The original question stated: "How many children do you want to have?". If respondents already had children or were pregnant at the time of the survey, the question refers to the number of children they want together with those they already have/are already expecting.

persons. Second, we included a scale (0 to 7) of political attitudes, where higher values indicate more conservative attitudes. Third, we created an index of positivity towards Hungary from the mean of six items in the survey,⁵ with higher values signalling a more positive attitude. In our interpretation, this latter variable partially reflects young adults' evaluations of their country, their level of patriotism and adherence to the country's prevalent pro-natalist norms, which affect plans for the future.

It is important to note that a fairly large number of respondents refused to answer/ did not provide any meaningful response to the intention question (see Appendix Table A1). Supplementary analyses (available from the authors) using a binary logistic model where the outcome variable was refusal / non-response revealed that men, younger individuals, those in a bad economic situation and those who were less positive towards Hungary were less likely to provide meaningful answers. Therefore, our results are potentially biased in this regard.

Table 1: *Fertility intention according to gender*

Intention	Men	Women
Childless	13.9%	9.8%
1 child	22.6%	18.8%
2 children	54.2%	58.6%
3 children	9.3%	12.8%

Note: N = 4,340.
Source: Magyar Ifjúság Kutatás 2020.

Table 1 shows fertility intentions by gender, and Table 2 presents the descriptive statistics of the final sample. Gender differences in intentions are not significant: slightly more men intend to be childless or to have only one child, while women lean towards having two or three children to a greater degree. The mean age of our sample is 23.3, and men are slightly better represented (52.6%) than women due to the fact that we selected childless respondents and as women's first childbearing age is lower in Hungary, this results in potential bias. Two-thirds of the sample is employed (67.9%), and only 3% reported daily economic hardships at the time of the interview. Nearly a fifth of the sample lives in Budapest (17.7%), more than every fourth in a village (27.7%), and more than half in a city (54.6%) other than the capital. Half of all members of the sample have a secondary education (49.4%), with an additional 23% secondary educated respondents attending tertiary education at the time of the survey. Only a tenth (11.2%) have an elementary or lower education, and 16.4% already

5 The items asked the respondent to rate whether he or she agrees with certain statements ("I feel Hungarian", "Generally, I like Hungarian people more than people from other nations", "I am proud to be Hungarian", "I love the Hungarian language", "I love Hungary", "I am proud to be a Hungarian citizen") on a 1-5 scale, where higher values indicate agreement. Two questions were not used because they tapped into future plans ("I want to live the majority of my life in Hungary") or questions that were more economic in nature ("Hungary is the best country to live in"). As such, they loaded into a different factor in exploratory factor analysis (results available from authors). The remaining six items were loaded onto one common factor (71% cumulative variance, with Cronbach alpha = 0.92).

have at least a BA diploma. Regarding parental educational background, the highest-educated parent of most of the respondents has a secondary degree (71.2%), followed by tertiary (22.6%) and elementary or lower (6.2%) education. Only every tenth person has separated parents (10.5%). Most respondents were single (78.7%), 15.8% had a cohabiting partner, and 5.5% were already married. Looking at attitudes and values, only 5.2% reported that they were church-following religious persons, while most are either religious in their own way (50.7%) or non-religious (44.1%). Most respondents leaned towards centrist and non-conservative values (with a 3.6 mean on a 0–7 scale) and had a positive attitude towards Hungary (with a mean of 4.3 on a 1–5 scale).

Table 2: Descriptive statistics of the sample

Variable	Mean / Percentage
Age	23.3 (3.3)
Gender	
Male	52.6%
Female	47.4%
Employment	
Employed	67.9%
Not employed	32.1%
Subjective economic status (of the household)	
At least managing	97.0%
Economic hardships	3.0%
Domicile	
Budapest	17.7%
Other city	54.6%
Village	27.7%
Educational attainment	
Elementary or lower	11.2%
Secondary	49.4%
Secondary. in education	23.0%
Tertiary	16.4%
Parental educational attainment	
Elementary or lower	6.2%
Secondary	71.2%
Tertiary	22.6%
Parental separation	
Separated parents	10.5%
Non-separated parents	89.5%
Relationship status	
Single	78.7%
Cohabiting	15.8%
Married	5.5%
Religiosity	
Non-religious	44.1%
Religious, own way	50.7%
Religious	5.2%
Political attitude	3.6 (1.5)
Positivity towards Hungary scale	4.3 (0.8)
N	4340

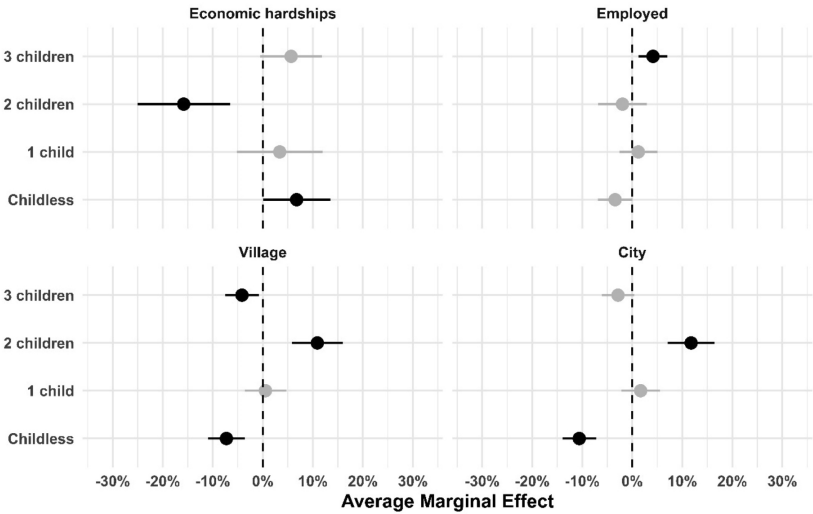
Note: Values in parentheses indicate standard deviations. Source: Magyar Ifjúság Kutatás 2020.

To estimate the childbearing intentions presented in Table 1, we used multinomial logistic regression models (Korosteleva 2019: 71–105), which treated the four distinct intentions (childless, one child, two children and three children) as separate outcomes. Although other methods are also applied in relevant studies (such as OLS linear regressions, ordinal models or count-based estimations), we argue that these intention outcomes are very different, especially childlessness, and should be modelled using an approach that properly distinguishes them.⁶ Apart from a main model containing all the selected independent variables, we examined possible interactions based on age and/or gender. For ease of interpretability and comparability across models, we present the average marginal effects (AME) of the models, which is an unbiased measure in the presence of unobserved heterogeneity (Mood 2010; Bartus, Kisfalusi and Koltai 2019). All multinomial models with multiple specifications and AMEs are available in the online supplement.

Results

4.1. Main effects

Figure 1: Effect of economic hardships (ref.: at least managing), employment (ref.: not in employment) and current domicile (ref.: Budapest)

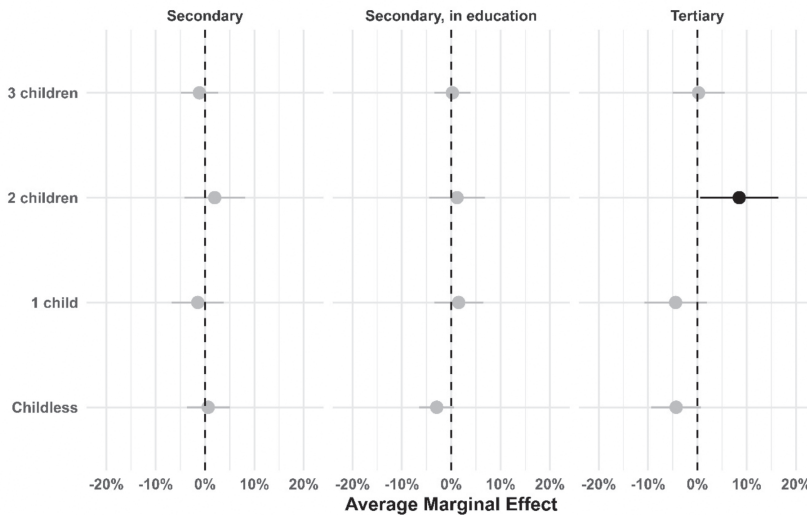


Note: N = 4340. Estimates stem from multinomial logistic regression models. The dashed lines indicate zero effect. The ranges represent the 95% confidence interval of the estimates. Black data points are significant, at least at the 0.05 level. Source: Magyar Ifjúság Kutatás 2020.

6 As an alternative approach, we also fitted a model using an ordinal instead of a multinomial logistic regression. In the case of the ordinal model, the proportionality assumption (at $p < 0.05$ and $p < 0.01$ as well) did not hold for nearly all included variables, which required that outcome-specific effects had to be specified – which resulted in a final model specification highly similar to the multinomial logistic models presented in the paper.

First, we start the discussion of our results based on the main model, where we control for the effect of all independent variables without interactions. Looking at socioeconomic attributes, Figure 1 presents the AMEs of economic hardships, employment and current domicile. Results show that young adults who struggle economically are more likely to consider childlessness (+6.8%) and, conversely, less prone to having two children (-15.8%) than those in a manageable situation. Employment only had a weak effect, as those who are employed have a slightly higher probability of planning to have three children (+4.2%). Current domicile has an interesting influence: compared to those who live in the capital, individuals from other cities or villages are less likely to aim for a childless future (-10.6% and -7.3%, respectively) but intend to have two children (+11.8% and +10.9%). We also detected a weak (-4.2%) negative effect of village-living for three children. All in all, socioeconomic variables, especially economic hardships and current domicile, have a detectable effect on childbearing intentions.

Figure 2: Effect of respondent's education (ref.: elementary or lower)

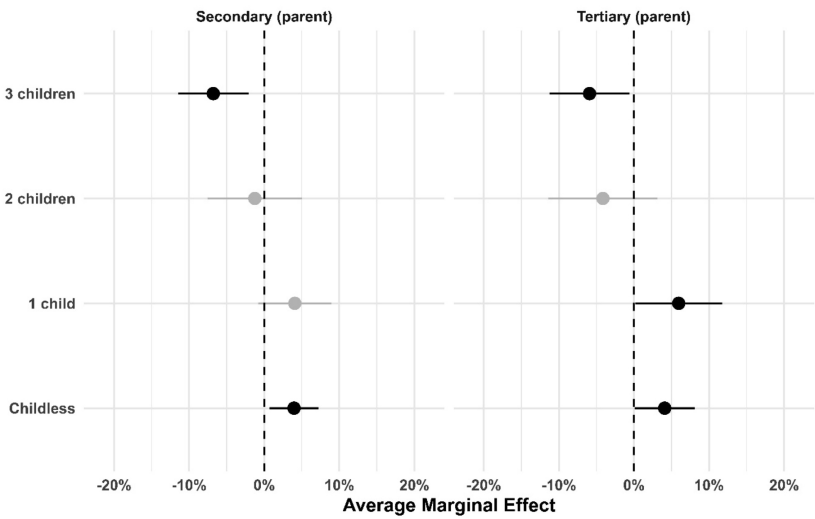


Note: N = 4340. Estimates stem from multinomial logistic regression models. The dashed lines indicate zero effect. The ranges represent the 95% confidence interval of the estimates. Black data points are significant, at least at the 0.05 level. Source: Magyar Ifjúság Kutatás 2020.

While previous Hungarian results emphasized the role of education, educational attainment (Figure 2) has no overarching influence over fertility intentions based on our models. We only found a positive, significant result for tertiary education; compared to those with elementary or lower education, tertiary-educated young adults are +8.6% more likely to intend to have two children. Because the models also include parental

education, we tested whether the omission of parental educational background affects the above-presented results. Comparison of the two models (available from authors) indicates that without the inclusion of parental education, the individual educational attainment of young adults still has the effect presented in Figure 2. Also, significant interaction between individual and parental education is not present.

Figure 3: Effect of parental educational attainment (ref.: elementary or lower)



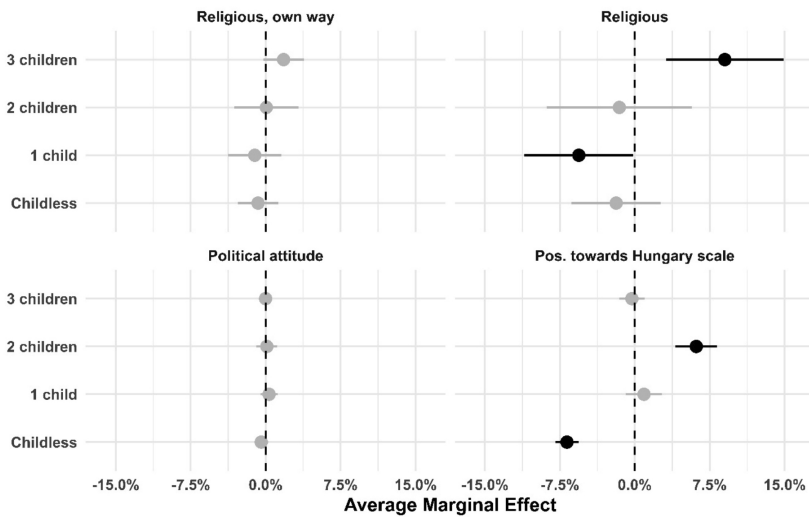
Note: $N = 4340$. Estimates stem from multinomial logistic regression models. The dashed lines indicate zero effect. The ranges represent the 95% confidence interval of the estimates. Black data points are significant, at least at the 0.05 level. Source: Magyar Ifjúság Kutatás 2020.

Compared to individual educational attainment, parental education proved to be more influential (Figure 3) in relation to the fertility intentions of young adults. Unlike those with elementary or lower educated parents, those with secondary/tertiary educated parents are slightly more likely to consider forgoing childbearing (+4.0% and +4.1%) and less likely to aim for three children (-6.8% and -5.9%). Also, tertiary parental education increases the likelihood of single-child intentions (+6%). In further models (not shown), we tested whether there is a two-way interaction between respondent and parental education or a three-way interaction between gender, respondent education and parental origins. However, both models failed to show significance for the interactions.

Figure 4 depicts the AMEs of the value-related variables. Compared to non-religious persons, only church-following religiosity had a significant effect, as these young adults are more likely to intend to have three children (+9%) and less likely to plan to have only one (-5.6%). The individual's political attitude had no effect. Last, those who are more

positive towards Hungary are more likely to intend to have two children (+6.2% per scale point) and less likely to choose childlessness (-6.8% per scale point).

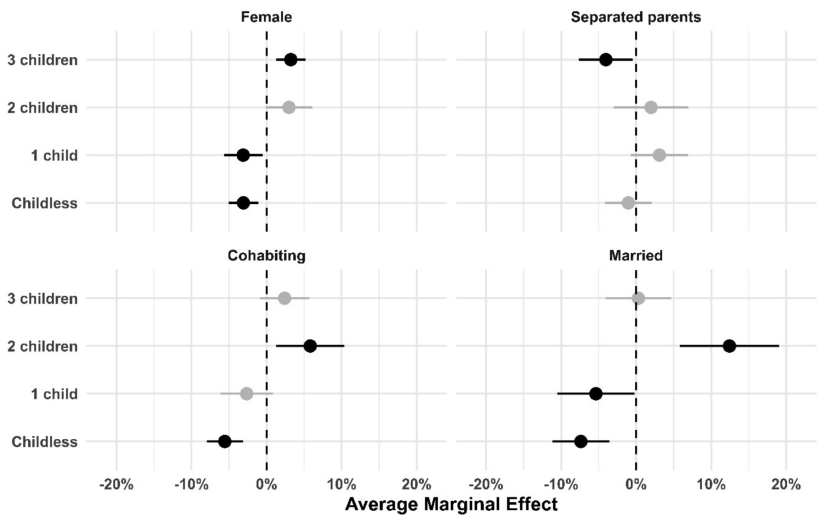
Figure 4: *Effect of religiosity (ref.: non-religious), political attitude (higher indicates more conservative) and positivity towards Hungary scale (higher indicates more positive attitudes)*



Note: $N = 4340$. Estimates stem from multinomial logistic regression models. The dashed lines indicate zero effect. The ranges represent the 95% confidence interval of the estimates. Black data points are significant, at least at the 0.05 level. Source: Magyar Ifjúság Kutatás 2020.

Looking at the final set of variables, the gender effect mirrors the results of Table 1; compared to men, young adult women are somewhat less likely to intend to be childless (-3.1%) or want to have one child (-3.1%), but more prone to aim for three children (+3.2%). Parental separation has a negative effect according to our model: if the individual's parents separated, then they have a lower probability of intending to have three children (-4%). Those in partnerships generally want more children, especially if they are married. Both cohabiting (-5.6%) and married (-7.4%) young adults are less likely to aim to be childless or intend to have only one child if married (-5.4%) but have a higher probability of wanting two children (+5.8% for cohabitators and +12.4% for married persons).

Figure 5: Effect of gender (ref.: male), parental separation (ref.: not separated) and relationship status (ref.: single)



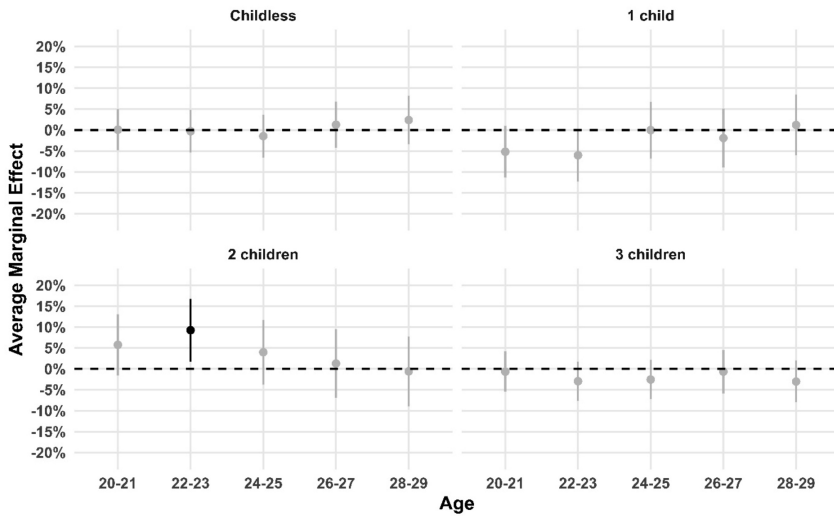
Note: $N = 4340$. Estimates stem from multinomial logistic regression models. The dashed lines indicate zero effect. The ranges represent the 95% confidence interval of the estimates. Black data points are significant, at least at the 0.05 level. Source: Magyar Ifjúság Kutatás 2020.

4.2. Variability of intentions by age and gender

In our second model, we further explored the age and gender effect on fertility intentions. To avoid overly uncertain estimations and to facilitate the understanding of the interaction, we created six two-year age groups and included an interaction term between the age groups and gender. According to our results, age has a significant effect, which varies by gender. Figure 6a shows the AMEs for men and Figure 6b for women. Our results reveal that intentions do not seem to change substantially for male young adults compared to those aged 18–19. Only in the case of the two-children outcome do we see a positive increase at ages 22–23 (+9.2%).

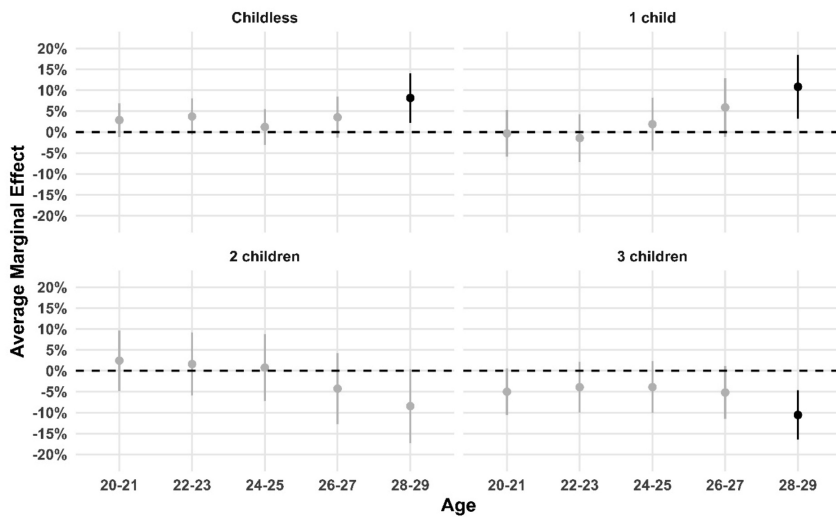
For women, the picture is quite different. Compared to the age group of 18–19, women who are at the end of their young adulthood change their fertility intentions substantially. They are more likely to opt for childlessness (+8.2%) or having one child (+10.8%) and less prone to aim for three children (-10.6%). Opinions regarding the intention to have two children do not seem to change across age groups for women.

Figure 6a: The effect of age on fertility intentions, men



Note: N = 4340. Estimates stem from multinomial logistic regression models. The dashed lines indicate zero effect. The ranges represent the 95% confidence interval of the estimates. Black data points are significant, at least at the 0.05 level. Source: Magyar Ifjúság Kutatás 2020.

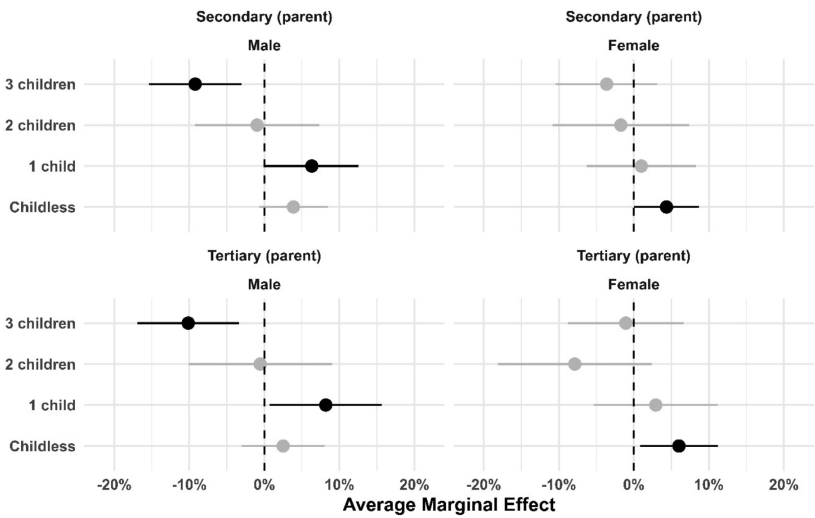
Figure 6b: The effect of age on fertility intentions, women



Note: N = 4340. Estimates stem from multinomial logistic regression models. The dashed lines indicate zero effect. The ranges represent the 95% confidence interval of the estimates. Black data points are significant, at least at the 0.05 level. Source: Magyar Ifjúság Kutatás 2020.

4.3. Gender interactions

Figure 7: Gender-specific effect of parental education (ref.: elementary or lower) on fertility intentions

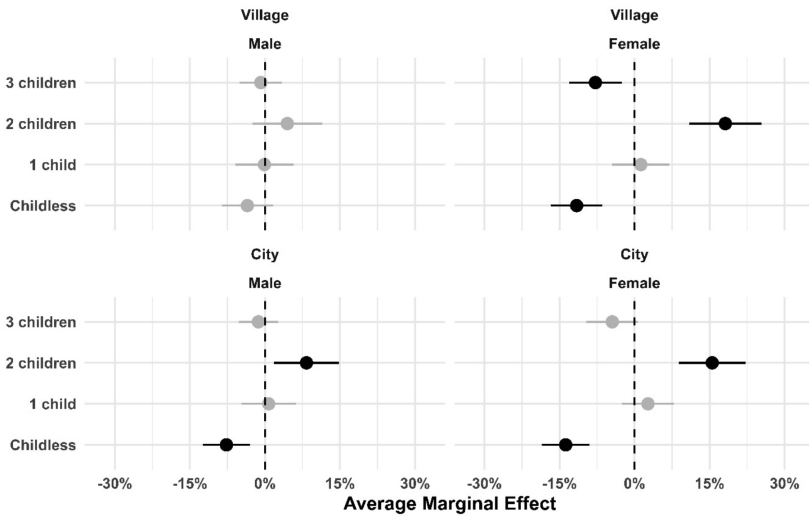


Note: N = 4340. Estimates stem from multinomial logistic regression models. The dashed lines indicate zero effect. The ranges represent the 95% confidence interval of the estimates. Black data points are significant, at least at the 0.05 level. Source: Magyar Ifjúság Kutatás 2020.

In the third part of our analysis, we examine gender interactions for all independent variables that were included. Results show that parental education (model 3) and current domicile (model 4) have a gender-specific influence on fertility intentions. Regarding the former, while the main effect model suggested that both secondary and tertiary-educated parents have weaker intentions to have three children, the interaction suggests that this is only true for men (-9.2% and -10.1%). For men, compared to elementary or lower educated parents, both secondary (+6.3%) and tertiary (+9.2%) parental education increases the probability of intending to have only one child, but this effect is not visible for women. The previously observed childlessness effect of parental education is observable only for women (+4.4% for secondary-educated parents and +6.3% for tertiary).

In the case of current domicile, the previously described effects from the main model hold true for women (-11.6% for childlessness, +18.1% for two children and -7.8% for three for women in villages, and -13.8% for childlessness and + 15.5% for two children for those from cities) and men who live in cities (-7.7% for childlessness and +8.3% for two children). However, interestingly, men who live in villages have no different fertility intentions than those from the capital.

Figure 8: Gender-specific effect of current domicile (ref.: Budapest) on fertility intentions



Note: $N = 4340$. Estimates stem from multinomial logistic regression models. The dashed lines indicate zero effect. The ranges represent the 95% confidence interval of the estimates. Black data points are significant, at least at the 0.05 level. Source: Magyar Ifjúság Kutatás 2020.

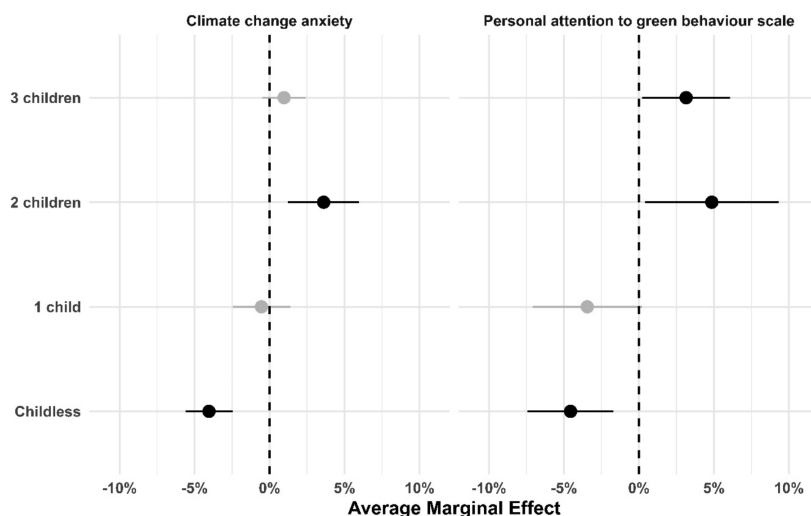
4.4. Exploring the effect of climate change anxiety and green behaviour

In the final part of our analysis, we selected two subsamples ($N = 1.115$ and $N = 1.161$ childless young adults aged 18–29) from the original survey in which respondents answered questions about their anxiety concerning climate change or their personal green behaviours. As detailed earlier, the subsamples reflect the different modules addressed to specific respondents instead of the whole sample, hence the smaller sample size. While the anxiety variable is a single-item scale (1 to 5, where higher values indicate more anxiety), we created a simple mean scale from four items where individuals indicated on a 1–4 scale how likely they are to behave in a way that is beneficial to the environment.⁷

As these samples were associated with considerably fewer responses, we could only control for gender and age effects in the multinomial logistic regression models (model 5a and model 5b). Figure 9 shows the results. Generally, it can be said that those with higher climate change anxiety (–4% per scale point) and attention to green behaviour (–4.6% per scale point) are less likely to intend to be childless and more prone to plan for two children (+3.6% and +4.9% per scale point, respectively). In the case of green behaviour, a positive effect is visible for three children as well (+3.1% per scale point).

⁷ The questions included whether the person pays attention to collecting garbage selectively, tries to create the least amount of waste, chooses to travel in the least climate-impacting way and tries to conserve electricity, heating or water. The four items were loaded onto one factor according to exploratory factor analysis (74% cumulative variance and Cronbach alpha = 0.91).

Figure 9: Climate change anxiety and green behaviour



Note: $N = 1.115$ for the climate change anxiety scale and $N = 1.161$ for the green behaviour scale. Estimates are from different subsamples of the main sample, using multinomial logistic regression models. Models only control for gender and age. The dashed lines indicate zero effect. The ranges represent the 95% confidence interval of the estimates. Black data points are significant, at least at the 0.05 level. Source: Magyar Ifjúság Kutatás 2020 subsamples.

5. Discussion

In our study, we explored the fertility intentions of Hungarian young adults using a novel representative survey. From a theoretical perspective, we proposed that a wide range of factors shape beliefs (TPB) and schemas (CSM), which result in expressed childbearing intentions. In the Hungarian context of sub-replacement fertility, changing childbearing behaviour and enduring familism / pro-natalism, our study makes an important contribution to understanding childlessness, childbearing, and changing intentions.

While we highlight multiple important mechanisms, our examination is not without limitations. First, the sample is restricted to childless young adults, which introduces selection bias, as those who already had a child before age 30 are absent from the sample. Second, as the fieldwork was done during the COVID-19 pandemic, intentions might be biased due to the negative effect of the crisis on young adults' fertility plans (Luppi, Arpino and Rosina 2020). Third, the refusal / non-response is fairly high regarding fertility intentions. Men, younger individuals, those experiencing economic hardships and those who are less positive towards Hungary were less likely to provide meaningful answers. Fourth, we only studied intentions of having up to three children. Therefore, we cannot formulate conclusions about those who intend to have large families during their life course. Fifth, most studies we cited as previous results (from Hungary or otherwise) do not employ samples of just young adults;

therefore, the comparability of our data to other empirical work is limited. This is especially true for childlessness, as we mainly examine early articulators. Sixth, we used a simplistic measure of regional differences due to sample size limitations, and the issue of regionality should be examined more thoroughly. Finally, although the effect of climate anxiety and environmental issues is an emerging topic which needs systematic examination and contribution, we could only analyse the topic on restricted samples with limited controls.

In our empirical approach, we used multinomial logistic regression models where the outcome variable was fertility intentions from childlessness to having three children. Apart from testing the main effects of the selected socioeconomic, demographic, parental, relationship-specific and value-related variables, we also analysed possible interactions with age and gender. Our main findings can be summarized as the following:

- (1) The socioeconomic circumstances of young adults clearly influence fertility intentions. Those who experience economic hardship are less likely to aim for two children but lean towards childlessness, and employed individuals are more likely to intend to have three children. Those not living in the capital city are less prone to choose childlessness and instead plan to have two children, especially women. Overall, these results confirm previous international (Fahlén and Oláh 2015; Modena, Rondinelli and Sabatini 2013; Hanappi et al. 2017) and Hungarian (Spéder and Kapitány 2009, 2015; Veroszta and Györgyi 2021) data on the importance of socioeconomic factors and current domicile (Boros and Bucher 2020). However, our interaction models did not find evidence for the gendered effect of employment (Bognár 2008) for young adults.
- (2) While educational attainment is emphasized as a major factor in childbearing intentions across countries (Testa 2014; Beaujouan and Berghammer 2019; De Wachter and Neels 2011; Testa and Stephany 2017) and in Hungary (Veroszta and Györgyi 2021; Spéder and Kapitány 2009, 2015), we only found limited support for this effect for those aged 18–29, as tertiary educated young adults intended to have two children with increased probability. Interaction models did not show any evidence of age- or gender-specific effects. Additionally, these results do not change with the omission of parental education, and there is no significant interaction between the two (models available from the authors). It can be proposed that individual educational attainment has less influence on the intention of childless young persons than previously thought, or perhaps the relatively recent (conducted in 2020) nature of our data indicates a certain level of convergence of intentions across educational groups in Hungary.
- (3) Contrary to the relatively weak influence of individual educational attainment, parental educational origins had a more profound and gender-specific effect according to our models. Young adult men with non-elementary educated parents have weaker intentions to have three children and an increased

probability of aiming for only one child. However, the probability of voluntary childlessness is slightly higher for women with non-elementary educated parents. In summary, our results indicate that parental education exerts a complex influence on fertility intentions, which can partially be attributed to the role of parental education in socioeconomic origins.

- (4) Regarding individual values, our results confirm that church-following religiosity increases fertility intentions for both genders (Hayford and Morgan 2008; Buber-Ennser and Berghammer 2021; Philipov, Spéder and Billari 2006; Ragadics 2018). Political attitude had no noticeable effect, while positivity towards Hungary was related to stronger intentions of having two children and a smaller likelihood of childlessness. As the positivity scale is built from items related to feelings of national identity, we propose that this variable taps into young persons' evaluation of their country, patriotism, and adherence to the dominant norms, which can be described as pro-natalist. Expectedly, those who are more positive about being Hungarian at the time of the interview might feel more content with the country's overall state and, therefore, plan to have more children in the future.
- (5) Experience of parental dynamics and current relationship status influences fertility intentions in an expected way. Verifying previous results, those with separated parents (implying a non-positive dynamic) are less likely to plan for three children (Karhunen, Jokela and Golovina 2023; Merz 2012; Nagy and Pári 2021). Although the effect was found to be relatively weak and the number of children exposed to parental divorce is decreasing in Hungary, the total divorce rate of marriages is still 0.33 (Makay and Murinkó 2021), implying that it can affect a relatively large proportion of future men and women of childbearing age. Our results also corroborate the findings of Hiekel and Castro-Martín (2014) and general observations regarding the difference between cohabitation and marriage (Liefbroer and Dourleijn 2006). Although there is a level of similarity between both relationship types (reducing the likelihood of childlessness and increasing the probability of having two children), marriage has a stronger positive effect on two-children intentions. Also, it reduces the risk of aiming for only one child. Marriage seems to be a more positive determinant of stronger intentions than cohabitation, which is important as marriage rates are on the rise in Hungary (Murinkó and Spéder 2021).
- (6) Age and gender have a complex and interacting influence on young adults' fertility intentions in Hungary. Compared to younger respondents, women at the end of their early adulthood (ages 28–29) turn towards childlessness or having one child, with a smaller probability of intending to have three children, while men's fertility plans are not as age-dependent as women's. Although the results are from a cross-sectional comparison instead of a longitudinal study, they have important implications. First, we corroborate that intentions are

age-dependent, as other studies noted earlier (Iacovou and Tavares 2011; Liefbroer 2009; Spéder and Kapitány 2007). Second, in light of the fact that the average age at first birth is 28.3 (Kapitány and Spéder 2021), the late twenties for women are highlighted as a critical period in the formulation of fertility intentions before realized fertility behaviour. We argue that this is the time when young adult women finalize their transition into adulthood, consider the competing aims of childbearing and a career, and examine the possible pros and cons of larger family size (Murinkó 2019) – which, at the end of the day, results in a weakening of intentions.

- (7) Finally, we used two separate models to estimate the effect of climate change anxiety and green behaviour using two smaller subsamples. Although our results should be considered in light of their limitations as we could not control for some important factors such as education, we found that those who are more anxious about climate change and behave in a more environmentally conscious way intend to have two or three children instead of opting for childlessness. This cross-sectional association may be a sign that those who plan to be future parents worry more (Schneider-Mayerson and Ling 2020; Bodin and Björklund 2022) about climate change and the environment (which entails the future conditions under which their children will have to live), corroborating the evidence presented by De Rose and Testa (2015). Still, this question requires further examination with more controls and larger sample sizes.

As our study is exploratory, we encourage future work that challenges our results and methods, examines specific topics in greater detail, and employs different methodologies to study fertility intentions. Potential avenues of future research include the issue of regionality for young adults and the deeper examination of effects related to living in villages, cities and the capital. Another interesting topic is the role of education, where parental origins seem to have a more substantial influence than individual attainment in young adults. A comparative approach (young adults compared to a general adult sample) could perhaps illuminate potential mechanisms. The effect of parental dynamics should be examined with finer measures as well. Depending on the timing of separation and the severity of the conflicts leading to it, effects on childbearing intentions can differ. While our analyses shed light on gendered age-specific changes in intentions, their scope is limited due to the cross-sectional nature of our sample of young adults. Using longitudinal samples, trajectories of intentions and their fulfilment may be tracked more precisely and for longer. Finally, the link between climate anxiety, environmentalism and fertility has to be explored further, as the current literature with representative samples is highly limited. All in all, the topic of childbearing intentions still raises many unanswered questions.

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Appendix

Table A1: Sample selection

Reason for omission	Omitted N
Original sample	8,000
Not adult	1,354
Missing fertility intentions	913
Too high intention (4 or above)	109
Missing current number of children	34
Not childless	1,021
Not born in Hungary	20
Missing data on independent variables	209
Final sample size	4,340

Source: Magyar Ifjúság Kutatás 2020.

Emigration Intentions Among Hungarian Youth

Emigrációs szándékok a magyar fiatalok körében

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Abstract: In our study, we examine the demographic and social characteristics of young people in Hungary who have plans to move abroad based on the last dataset of the Hungarian youth sociology research project, the Hungarian large-sample youth survey. Over the course of the research, 8,000 young Hungarians between the ages of 15 and 29 were interviewed in 2020, and the questionnaire also included questions about moving abroad. The social and economic consequences of emigration are largely determined by the social and demographic composition of the emigrating population.

Keywords: youth, migration, Hungary, large-sample surveys

Összefoglaló: Tanulmányunkban külföldi tervekkel rendelkező magyarországi fiatalok demográfiai és társadalmi sajátosságait vizsgáljuk a magyarországi ifjúság-szociológiai kutatási projekt, a nagymintás ifjúságkutatás utolsó adatállományának a felhasználásával. A kutatás során 8000 15–29 év közötti magyarországi fiatalot kérdeztek meg, s a kérdőívben külföldre költözéssel kapcsolatos kérdések is helyet kaptak. Az elvándorlás okozta társadalmi és gazdasági következményeket nagyban meghatározza az elvándorló népesség társadalmi és demográfiai összetétele.

Kulcsszavak: ifjúság, migráció, Magyarország, nagymintás ifjúságkutatás

1. Introduction

For the demographically aging Europe – including Hungary – the evolution of demographic change is vital from a social, economic, and geopolitical perspective. At the level of the nation-state, the age pyramid is also substantial, and in addition to the trends in fertility and mortality, international migration is significant in

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the development of natural population change. However, as a consequence of significant systematic developments in recent decades, in particular with regard to globalization and the rise of the Creative Age (Florida, 2002; Gertler et al., 2002), gaining experience abroad can be an advantage for individuals on the labor market due to language learning and familiarization with other cultures. As a result, the main question can already be better rephrased as how many people leave their birthplace and for what purpose and go abroad on a temporary or permanent basis.

Globalization and international migration, both processes driving systemic change, are closely linked. Globalization has brought about fundamental changes in economic, social, and cultural terms. The concept encompasses several phenomena, some of which can be interpreted as explanatory in relation to the structural factors shaping international migration. On the one hand, the term denotes the emergence of a market-based global economy in which financial and investment capital flows freely; on the other hand, it concerns the emergence of regional economic units within which capital and labor can move completely freely. The European Union is an illustrative example of the latter (Melegh, 2004).

In the second chapter of this paper, we present the theoretical and methodological challenges that make it difficult to measure emigration, analyze migration flows, and characterize emigration. Furthermore, we outline the theoretical approaches behind the migration decision and discuss the social and demographic factors determining the latter at the micro level, as well as their effects. The data used for the analysis are presented in the third chapter and the results of our analyses in the fourth and fifth chapters. In the fourth part, we present the socio-demographic background of young people between the ages of 15 and 29 in Hungary with plans to emigrate, and in the fifth, we present the reasons behind the decision to migrate, examining the explanatory power of the classic push-and-pull migration model. In the last part, we summarize the results we obtained.

Migration potential, i.e., the intention to migrate, refers to a future event, hence it can rather be considered an attitude. To understand and interpret the international mobility of young people, it is also necessary to explore the driving forces behind migration plans, as various motivations result in different social impacts. For example, young people may go abroad to gain experience or because they see this as an escape route. They often go abroad in order to gain experience, to lay a solid foundation for a secure financial future, or to broaden their horizons, and therefore expect a positive impact from their decision to migrate. At the same time, in the country of origin, the issue of youth emigration is receiving particular attention from social, demographic, and economic points of view, as it can have a decisive and even negative impact on these processes. In connection with the emigration of youth, we can observe a conflict of individual and social interests, although both can benefit from return migration.

Migratory processes include at least two components, which can be analyzed most generally by comparing the number of immigrant foreign citizens and emigrant domestic citizens based on national and international statistics (Gazsó, 2020:358). According to Mishra (1981: 227-228), migration can be defined as an inflow or outflow of population from a defined region to another region for permanent or semi-permanent settlement. In this paper, we focus on emigration in relation to this two-way process. Due to the intensification of the emigration process since the early 2010s, the main questions have focused not only on the insufficiency of the statistical system related to migration but also on the number of migrants, their socio-demographic background and the drivers of emigration (cf. Blaskó, 2012; Gödri, 2013; Hárs, 2012, 2013; Gödri et al., 2014; Gödri, 2015; Hárs, 2016; Kapitány-Rohr, 2014; Blaskó-Gödri, 2014; Hárs-Simon, 2016). At the same time, due to the intensification of the wave of refugee migration³ in the mid-2010s, the topic of immigration has again experienced a renaissance (cf. Bernát et al., 2015; Sik et al., 2016; Sik-Szeitl, 2016; Barna-Koltai, 2018; Bernát et al., 2019). However, it is important to underline that it has become increasingly relevant to examine other forms of migration, such as return migration or circulation,⁴ which can no longer be considered atypical. Circulation refers to a repetition of legal migration by the same person between two or more countries. It includes seasonal migration related to agricultural, construction, or mass tourism and commuter migration (resulting from cross-border labor movement), as well as leisure, vocational, or shopping tourism (Illés-Kincses, 2009:731-732).

2. Theoretical background

2.1. *Conceptual distinctions*

Migration has been present in public opinion and scientific thought for a long time. The Latin origin of the term “migration” suggests that the phenomenon was already known in antiquity (Hautzinger et al., 2014:5). The intensification of emigration to America from the second half of the 19th century onwards aroused the interest of European decision-makers and researchers, leading to the emergence of parallel and often competing research approaches (Szabó, 2006:65). Since then, a variety of theoretical models have emerged to explain the causal relationships involved in migration, often starting from different assumptions and using different concepts and frames of reference (Hautzinger et al., 2014:23).

Having begun in the 1990s, marking the end of the bipolar world order, migration research in Europe was stimulated by concerns about East-West migration. Besides regime changes in Central and Eastern European countries, cross-border mobility

3 As Ruff (2022) states, research on migration in Hungary from the late 1980s until the full opening of the EU labor market in 2011 focused primarily on immigration.

4 Research on this topic has been published in recent years (cf. Hegedűs-Lados, 2017; Siskáné-Halász, 2018; Kajdi et al., 2019; Gábori-Horváth, 2020), although there remains a lack of empirical data, mainly of large-sample, representative surveys.

was also catalyzed by the expansion of the European Union and the free movement of labor, and migratory processes were further strengthened by economic and income differences between countries (Gödri, 2016; Ruff, 2022).

The intensity of the subsequent waves of emigration has been shaped not only by the expansion of the European Labour Market⁵ but also by factors such as the global economic crisis. This is because the decision to migrate is always the end result of a complex process, which, in addition to the individual life situation, is influenced by exogenous factors such as changes in the external political, social, and economic context. In recent decades, globalization, economic crises, epidemics, and wars have continuously altered and shaped the intensity of migration.

2.2. *Migration potential*

According to the generally accepted approach in migration research, migration is a process consisting of several stages (Rossi, 1955; Goldsmith–Beegle, 1962; Fawcett, 1985; Kley–Mulder, 2010; Kley, 2011; Gödri–Feledy, 2013). The process begins with the decision stage, consisting of two parts: migration consideration and migration planning.⁶ Consideration is influenced by individual preferences, goals, and external opportunities, while planning is determined by facilitating and inhibiting factors (Kley–Mulder, 2010).

The analysis of migration plans primarily reveals the beginning of the selection process but also the individual sociodemographic characteristics, attitudes, and expectations that influence the migration decision. However, migration intentions do not always lead to actual emigration, which is also strongly influenced by individual resources, such as lack of financial and relational capital or language skills, and by inhibiting factors, such as unexpected costs, legal obstacles, and other unforeseen events. Moreover, labor migration is also strongly impacted by demand in the destination country, which is, in many cases, a major factor in the failure of migration plans. There is also a selection process between the planning and implementation of migration, which requires a panel study to investigate. In order to understand why some migration plans can be realized while others remain dreams, it is also necessary to explore which factors determine the evolution of such plans and which factors determine the actual realization of migration. It can be assumed that these factors differ (Gödri–Feledy, 2013; Van Dalen–Henkens, 2008; Chort, 2012). Furthermore, to decide to what extent migration potential can be considered a suitable indicator for predicting migration processes, it is also necessary to analyze the relationship between migration plans and actual action, meaning migration itself (Gödri–Feledy, 2013).

5 Citizens of new member states, including Hungary, were allowed access to EU labor markets. For example, Germany and Austria opened their markets in 2011. These two countries rank highly as destinations for emigrants.

6 The terms 'intention' and 'plan' are often used synonymously when referring to migration potential, but the degree of migration potential is largely determined by the questioning technique used by researchers. In the Hungarian large-sample youth survey, the 'plan to' approach was used, which is one of the more restrictive questioning techniques (e.g., compared to 'Have you thought about it?' or the more permissive 'Would you like to go...?').

However, in analyzing the data of the Hungarian large-sample youth survey, only the first stage of selection can be explored because longitudinal panel studies would be necessary for following the selection process in its entirety, i.e., from the formation of intentions and plans to their realization, and revealing the factors actually influencing the latter. Conversely, the Hungarian large-sample youth survey, although repeated every four years, was targeted at young people aged 15–29 who were asked not only about their migration plans but also other issues. In migration research, the need for longitudinal studies to map migration as a selection process was pointed out earlier (Gardner et al., 1985; Coleman–Salt, 1992). In Hungarian migration research, studies focusing on migration potential have been conducted regularly; however, in most cases, they have not been accompanied by the monitoring of the realization of such plans (Gödri–Feleky, 2013; Nyíró, 2013).

In summary, the migration potential indicator measures the degree of the intention to emigrate and work abroad; at the same time, migration potential is mainly capable of reflecting the supply side of the labor market. However, in order to estimate migration flows actually taking place, it is also necessary to explore the demand side. Therefore, migration potential can be used for estimating expected migration flows to only a limited extent (Gödri–Feledy, 2013, Sik–Szeitl, 2016). Thus, migration potential cannot be considered a direct indicator of actual migration (Chort, 2012), and it is more accurate to say that it can be used primarily to understand the extent, and even more the composition, of the expected labor market supply. In the present study, we therefore look at the stage of the migration decision-making process without being able to foresee all factors that influence the actual realization of the intent to migrate (the activity itself) or that assist or even limit it while unforeseeable events influencing the actual realization of migration should also be taken into account. In conclusion, the present model is of limited use in predicting the likely trend and composition of migration.

2.3. Methodological challenges in migration research

There is no consensus in the literature regarding the conceptual definition of or theoretical approaches to migration, and as a result, the development of the sampling frame involves methodological difficulties (Várhalmi–Kováts, 2014:9–10). In addition to the diversity of conceptual and theoretical approaches to migration, the focus of the interpretations is on specific human behavior, i.e., migration (change of residence) (Hautzinger et al., 2014:18). Migration can be examined from different perspectives. For example, our examination can relate to the present (current residence abroad), the past (foreign experience, migration trends), and the future (migration potential, migration plans). For the different approaches, various statistical sources, databases, and research results can be used.

In identifying and analyzing the emigration process, we can rely on administrative records and empirical research. However, methodological difficulties can be identified in both cases. In the case of administrative records, data may come from domestic registers and foreign mirror statistics (e.g., Eurostat, Destatis,

Statistik Austria, etc.). Another difficulty in measuring emigration is that emigrants are not adequately represented in official statistics since the databases involve only emigrants who have reported their departure to the authorities. Therefore, registers covering the target population are fundamentally lacking (Várhalmi–Kováts, 2014; Ruff, 2013:152-153). The estimation of emigration is mainly based on statistics on administrative data sources such as health insurance registers, tax registers, population registers, registers of foreigners, registers of residence or work permits, empirical research, and labor force surveys, e.g., the EU Labour Force Survey (EU-LFS) (KSH: Migration of Hungarians according to statistics).⁷

Another complicating circumstance is that population surveys in the countries of origin do not reach persons who have moved abroad together with their entire household. The labor or immigration statistics of the countries of destination – i.e., mirror statistics – can provide a more accurate estimation of the size of the migrant population, so it is common practice to compare the emigration data of national migration statistics with these. However, apart from helping estimate the number of emigrants, they are inadequate for identifying the drivers behind migration decisions or providing information on the demographic background of emigrants. Nor do they help identify the purpose of their movement or the expected duration of time.

Analyzing migration based on statistical data can refer to the migratory process, i.e., the focus may be on the development of migration (trends), and the analysis based on migration flow data, such as the number of migrants entering or leaving a country during a specific period of time. Migration stock data, such as the number of migrants living in a country at a given point in time, are used to estimate the size of the emigrated population. What these two basic demographic concepts have in common is that they are mainly used for estimates, and we can only aim for the most accurate estimate. Thus, estimating the exact size of migration and analyzing the character of emigration is beset by a number of methodological difficulties (Várhalmi–Kováts, 2014).

3. The Hungarian context: The Hungarian large-sample youth survey 2000–2020

In our study, we examine the demographic and social characteristics of young people in Hungary who plan to move abroad using the last dataset of the Hungarian youth sociology research project, the Hungarian large-sample youth survey. Over the course of the research, 8,000 young Hungarians between the ages of 15 and 29 were interviewed in 2020; the questionnaire also included questions about moving abroad. The Hungarian large-sample youth survey started in 2000 and was repeated every four years thereafter. The target group of the survey was young people living in Hungary. Given the target group, the research lacks input from Hungarian young

7 https://www.ksh.hu/sajtoszoba_kozlemenyek_tajekoztatok_2017_03_02

people who left the country for a shorter or longer time; that is, we cannot examine the actual reasons for migration abroad using this dataset.

However, in examining the details of the thematic structure of the questionnaires used in each wave and the weight of the individual topics covered in the questionnaires, it can be observed that the latter has changed a lot over the course of the research series. The topic of migration has always been present in the Hungarian large-sample youth survey, but with varying degrees of intensity; at the same time, it can be said that foreign travel, study, and migration plans were always considered to have less weight in terms of the number of questions (2000:0; 2004:5; 2008:7; 2012:8; 2016:9; 2020:10) (the analysis was carried out using IBM SPSS Statistics 24 software).

The first survey (2000) did not appear to address migration as an independent topic but mainly in questions related to work, where working abroad was one of the potential responses. In the second survey (2004), the possibility of migrating abroad was not only mentioned in the context of previous work and education experience but also directly addressed in the form of specific questions asking young people whether they had studied or worked abroad and whether they planned to study and work abroad for a period of time in the future. The Youth 2008 survey asked more questions about mobility abroad than formerly, with some questions similar to those asked in 2004. In 2012, only young people who answered a previous question by agreeing that they could not imagine their life abroad, but only in Hungary, were asked questions about their plans to work and study abroad. In the last two surveys, in 2016 and 2020, all respondents were asked these questions.

Future employment plans were addressed in different questions in each survey. In 2000, young people were asked the following question: "If you have had a job for at least three months [at some point] in your life, do you plan to work abroad?" In response to this question, 15% indicated a country in which they would go to work. Ten percent of young people not in education or employment planned to work abroad, and 24% of students planned to do the same. In 2004, researchers used this question: "Do you plan to go abroad to work for a time?" Thirty-six percent of young people said yes. In the first two surveys, another question was included: "Do you have any personal ideas that you would like to make a reality in the next five years?" In 2000, 3.6% of young people answered working abroad and 1.5% studying abroad. For the same question in 2004, 4.5% indicated working abroad and 2.2% studying abroad.

In 2008, the question on working abroad was slightly modified: "Do you ever plan to work abroad?" Twenty-seven percent of young people had such plans, 96% of whom planned to work abroad to the age of 30, two-thirds for up to two years, one-tenth for three years, and a further 10% for five years. In 2012, the same question was used as in 2008, when a third of 15-29-year-olds planned to work abroad (Figure

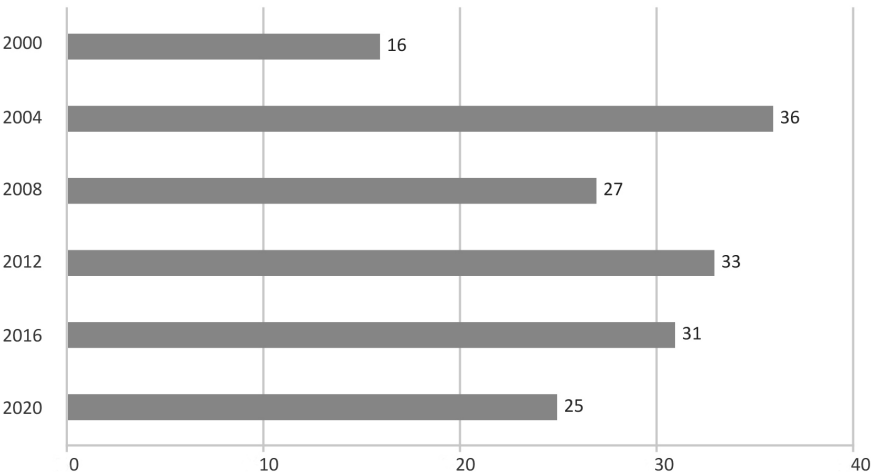
1). In the last two research questionnaires, the question was modified, asking participants separately about short-term and long-term migration plans.⁸

Due to the evolution of the questions over the course of the surveys, we cannot conduct a trend analysis by analyzing the data of the Hungarian large-sample youth survey in its entirety.



Figure 1. *Plans to work abroad*⁹ (in per cent)

($N_{2004}=8000$, $N_{2008}=8076$, $N_{2012}=5290$, $N_{2016}=8000$, $N_{2020}=8000$)

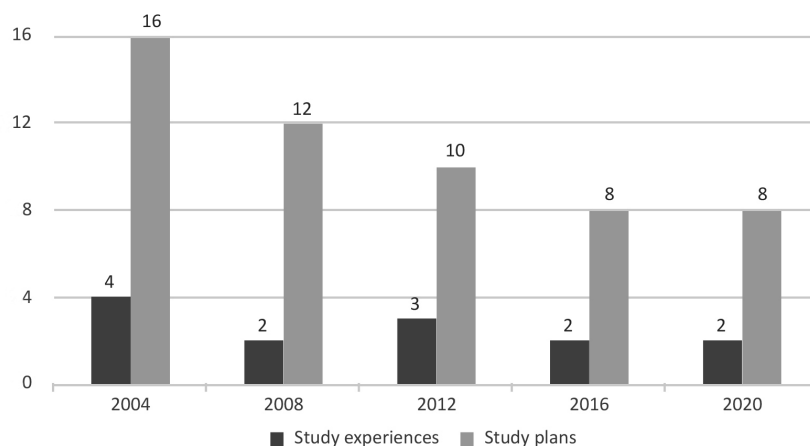


3.1. *Studying abroad*

In the Hungarian large-sample youth survey, researchers have asked young people about their experiences with and plans for studying abroad since 2004. Generally speaking, the proportion of young Hungarians who have studied abroad is very small, ranging between 2 and 4% of 15-29-year-olds. Four percent of young people studied abroad in 2004 and 2% in 2008. Nearly 40% of the latter had attended a language course or a traineeship, and more than a quarter had gone to college or university. In subsequent surveys, the number of young people who had experience studying abroad did not exceed these proportions.

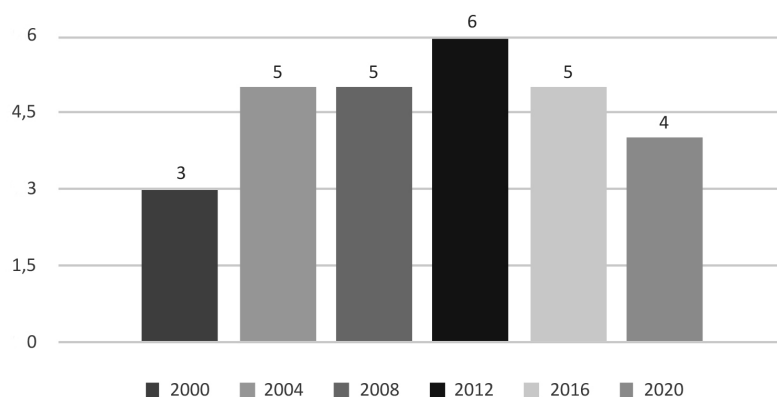
More young people are planning to study abroad in the future, but the proportion of young people who would like to continue their studies in another country for a time decreases from period to period (Figure 2). The same negative trend can be observed regarding young people’s intention to continue their education, as the proportion is steadily decreasing.

8 “Do you plan to go abroad for a few weeks or months to work (including commuting)?”
“Are you planning to go abroad to work for a few years?”
9 In 2016 and 2020, we included those who had short-term or long-term employment plans. Those with both plans were included only once.

Figure 2. *Study experiences and study plans abroad (in per cent)**($N_{2004}=8000$, $N_{2008}=8076$, $N_{2012}=5290$, $N_{2016}=8000$, $N_{2020}=8000$)*

3.2. Working abroad

In general, not many young people aged 15-29 living in Hungary have taken up a job abroad. In the early 2000s, 3% of young people reported work experience abroad, rising to 6% in the first half of the 2010s, being the highest in the 2012 survey. In the last two surveys, the proportion of those who had worked abroad gradually decreased (Figure 3). When interpreting the data, it should be taken into account that the research lacks input from young Hungarian people who had left the country for a shorter or longer time.

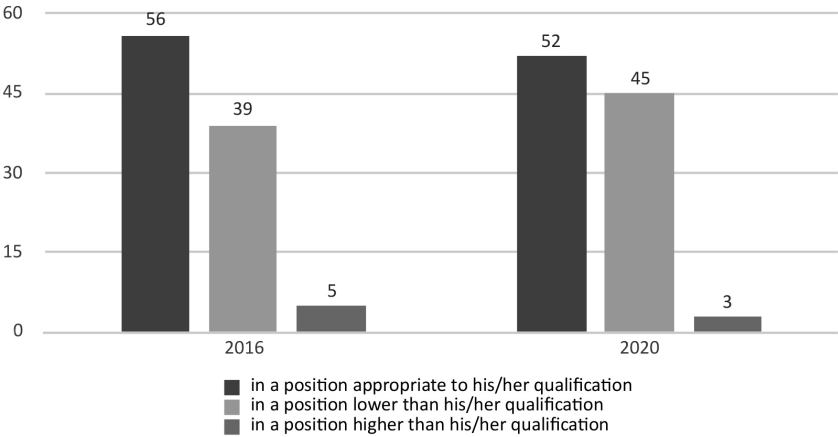
Figure 3. *International work experience (in per cent)**($N_{2000}=4752$, $N_{2004}=8000$, $N_{2008}=8076$, $N_{2012}=8000$, $N_{2016}=8000$, $N_{2020}=8000$)*

In the latest survey, the majority of those with work experience abroad (52%) said they had worked a job in another country that corresponded to their qualification, although 4% more said the same in the previous survey. The proportion of those working in a lower-level job increased by 6% over four years, while the proportion working in a job above their level of education fell slightly to 3% (Figure 4).



Figure 4. International work experience by qualification (in per cent)

($N_{2016}=389$, $N_{2020}=272$)



The proportion of young people who plan to go abroad to work in the long term for a few years decreased from 27% in 2016 to 21% in 2020. The proportion planning to work for a few weeks or months stagnated, with 18% of young people in both years thinking about doing so.

3.3. Intention to permanently settle abroad

The Youth 2008 survey was the first to analyze the intention to settle permanently. It was included as a potential response in questions about study and work plans abroad and in a third question on moving away from the municipality where they currently live. Among those who planned to go abroad to study, the proportion of those who gave as a reason a desire to stay abroad for the long term or move out permanently was 1% of the total population. The same reason was identified by 4% of those planning to work abroad. When asked about moving from their place of residence, 1% said they would only move abroad from the municipality where they lived at the time of the survey. In 2012, 12% of young people said they would leave Hungary even for permanent settlement. In the last two surveys, researchers asked young people whether they planned to live abroad. In 2016, 15% of young people planned to live in another country, and 11% in 2020.

4. The social base of the migration potential of Hungarian youth

Long-term or permanent emigration has many demographic, social, and economic consequences for the country of origin, so it is important to examine which social groups have higher migration potential. It is also important to point out the limitations of this model because migration potential can be used to estimate expected migration flows only in limited terms. Thus, migration potential cannot be considered a direct indicator of actual migration, and it is more accurate to say that it can be used primarily to understand the extent and, even more, the composition of the expected labor market supply. So, the present model is of limited use in predicting the likely trend and composition of migration.

The migration decision is also influenced by individual factors – for example, the result of cost-benefit calculations – which, however, largely depend on the individual's socio-demographic and other characteristics. In the following, we examine the social basis of migration potential.

4.1. *Multivariate analysis of factors affecting migration potential*

In the following, multivariate logistic regression models are used to separately examine each type of migration potential, with the aim of identifying factors that explain the occurrence of migration plans with different time horizons. A value of '1' for the dichotomous dependent variables indicates the presence of a given type of migration intention (i.e., planning to go abroad to study, work for a longer or shorter period, or have plans to settle), while '0' indicates its absence. The impact of the explanatory variables is interpreted in terms of the odds ratios associated with each category, which indicate a higher or lower probability of intention to migrate relative to the chosen reference group. The model includes basic socio-demographic characteristics and labor market position variables. In the tables presenting the models, the significance level is indicated next to the odds ratios. In our first model, the dependent variable was the intention to study abroad; in the second, the intention to work in the short term; in the third, the intention to work in the long term; and in the fourth, the intention to settle. Socio-demographic variables (gender, age group, educational attainment, relationship status, place of residence), socio-economic variables (subjective economic status, social class position), and language skills were included as explanatory or control variables in all four models.

When examining results for 2020, it is important to note that the data was collected during the Covid-19 pandemic. The pandemic had an impact on many aspects of life, some of which were implicit (for example, increased interest in public issues) and others more visible. The latter included the issue of mobility, as one of the first measures introduced was to restrict free movement (lockdowns and travel restrictions).

Findings suggest that men have higher mobility potential for both shorter and longer periods of employment and settlement. Across age groups, 15-19-year-olds are much more likely to go abroad, mainly to study, than 25-29-year-olds. Long-term employment is most likely to be desired by the highly qualified. Regarding the type of settlement, those living in

the capital and in cities with county status are the most likely to have plans to go abroad – in several cases, twice as likely as those living in municipalities. Foreign language proficiency is highly significant, with significantly more people who speak another language planning to go abroad in all four cases. Compared to the Central Hungary region, young people from the Southern Great Plain, Central Transdanubia, and Northern Great Plain stand out. In terms of marital status, it is mainly the unmarried and single people who would like to move to another country. In terms of subjective financial situation, those who get along well financially are the least likely to have plans to go abroad (Table 1).

Table 1. Odds ratios of logistic regression models examining the probability of migrating abroad among young Hungarians aged 15 to 29 in 2020

($N_{study\ abroad}=7561$, $N_{short-term\ employment}=7515$, $N_{long-term\ employment}=7403$, $N_{settling}=7360$)

Category	Odds ratio			
	study abroad in the near future	go abroad to work for a few weeks or months (including commuting)	go abroad to work for a few years	live abroad
Gender (ref: Female)	Gender (ref: Female)	Gender (ref: Female)	Gender (ref: Female)	Gender (ref: Female)
Male	0,904	1,27**	1,395**	1,24*
Age (ref: 25-29 years old)				
15-19 years old	2,484**	1,283*	1,208*	1,386*
20-24 years old	1,332*	1,14	1,189*	1,022
Educational level (ref: college or university degree)				
Primary education	0,95	0,889	0,85	1,115
Trade/High school degree	1,171	0,879	0,773*	1,072
Residence (ref: Rural municipality)				
Budapest	2,238**	1,284	1,46*	2,107**
County seat	1,54**	1,711**	2,107**	1,533**
City	1,115**	1,461**	1,469**	1,213
Knowledge of foreign languages (ref: None)	1,922**	1,387**	1,608**	1,457**
Region (ref: Central Hungary)				
Southern Great Plain	2,489**	3,087**	1,577**	1,909**
Southern Transdanubia	1,754*	2,041**	1,087	1,268
Northern Great Plain	2,217**	2,869**	1,871**	1,523*
Northern Hungary	1,065	0,785	0,795	0,694
Central Transdanubia	2,524**	1,87**	1,802**	2,677**
Western Transdanubia	1,091	0,995	0,931	1,133
Marital status (ref: Lives with significant other)				
Single	1,34	1,655**	1,645**	1,349*
Married	0,719	0,557**	0,45**	0,466**
Social status (ref: material deprivation)				
No financial difficulties	1,025	0,517*	0,567	0,384*
Get along with budgeting	0,61	0,507*	0,589	0,335**
Barely make ends meet	0,572	0,599	0,822	0,403*
Month-to-month financial problems	0,719	0,861	1,108	0,716

* ($p \leq 0,05$) or ** ($p \leq 0,001$). Legend: Ref.: reference category

5. Motivations and barriers to the international migration of young Hungarian people

There are many factors that can drive mobility abroad, and it is important to understand these to get a clear picture of the reasons young people leave the country for longer or shorter periods. The analysis of incentives and disincentives first appeared in the Youth 2008 survey. In 2008, most people would go abroad to work to earn some money to save (18%), to gain experience (4%), to learn a language (3%) or because they could live better abroad (3%).

In the following three waves of data collection, most of the sources of motivation were asked in the same way so we can compare them.¹⁰ As in the previous two surveys, in 2020 the main reason given by young people for migrating was to earn a better living. Compared to the data from the previous two surveys, there is a marked difference in this respect. Previously, two-thirds of young Hungarians said they would leave the country to improve their standard of living, but this proportion had decreased to 44%. The proportion of young people who would go abroad to learn a language or to gain experience had also decreased, with a big change in these two areas compared to the previous survey in 2016. In 2020, career development was the fourth reason for mobility abroad, almost the same as in the research conducted eight years ago (Figure 5).

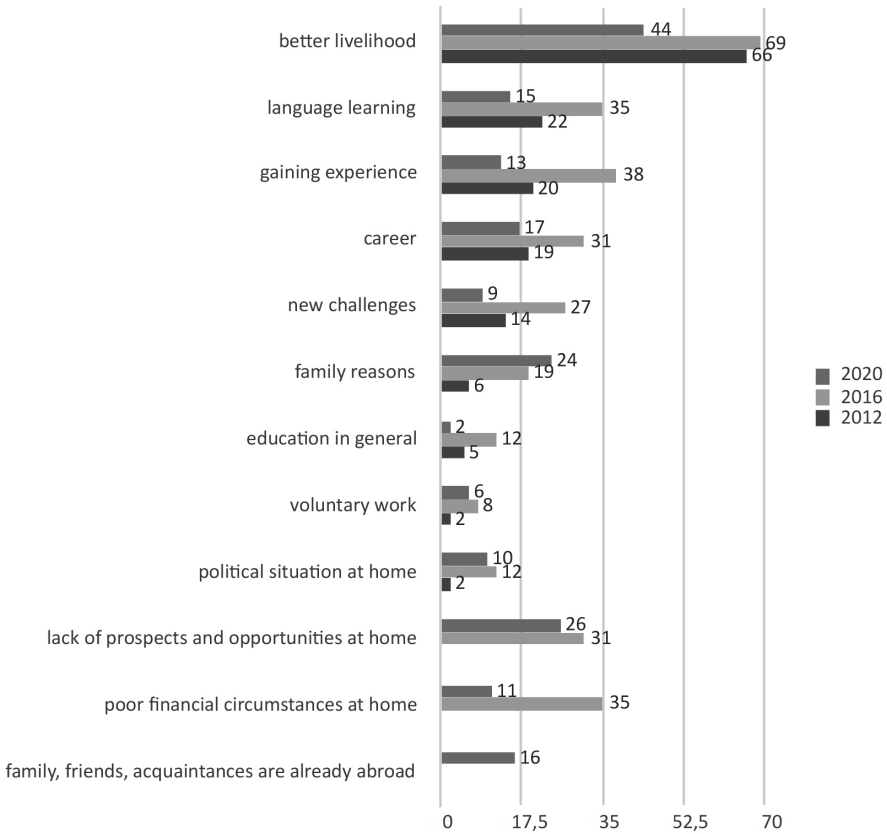
The proportion of emigrants seeking new challenges who face poor financial conditions at home had decreased significantly compared to four years ago, and fewer would leave for another country because of the lack of prospects and opportunities at home. The proportion of those who would leave the country for learning purposes only (for example, because there is no training in Hungary they are interested in, or they think there are more learning opportunities abroad) was the lowest in 2020 of the last three surveys. One-tenth of young people would leave the country because of the political situation, and 6% are interested in volunteering abroad. Compared to the drivers of emigration in previous years, only reasons for moving to another country related to family are better represented, as the proportion of young people who would move for such reasons increased. This change may also be explained by the fact that 16% of young people already have family members, friends, or acquaintances abroad.

Overall, the order of motivations for mobility has changed, with the latest results showing that young people aged 15-29 would leave the country primarily for a better livelihood, second for family reasons, and third for career reasons. Learning a language and gaining experience were ranked lower, although they were ranked second and third in the two previous surveys.

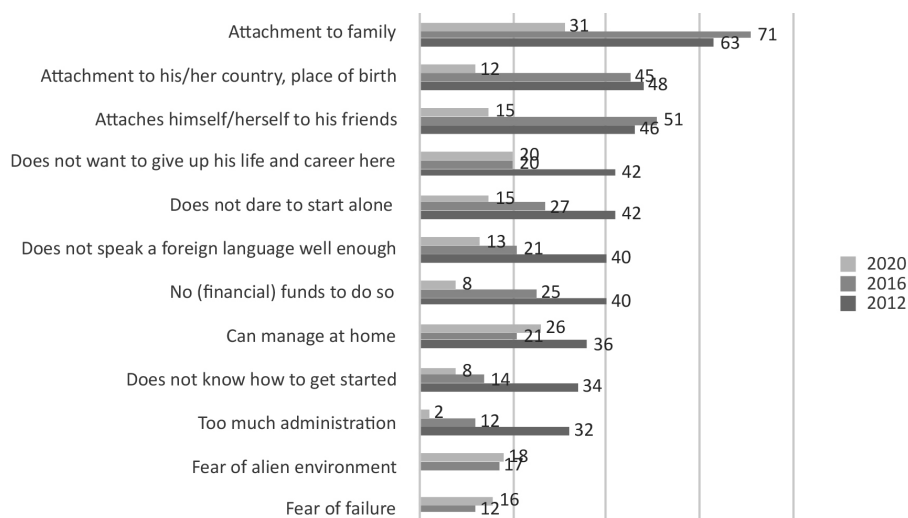
¹⁰ For three answer options, we can only present data from 2016 and/or 2020.

Figure 5. Motivations for mobility abroad (in per cent)

($N_{2012}=8000$, $N_{2016}=1995$, $N_{2020}=2000$)



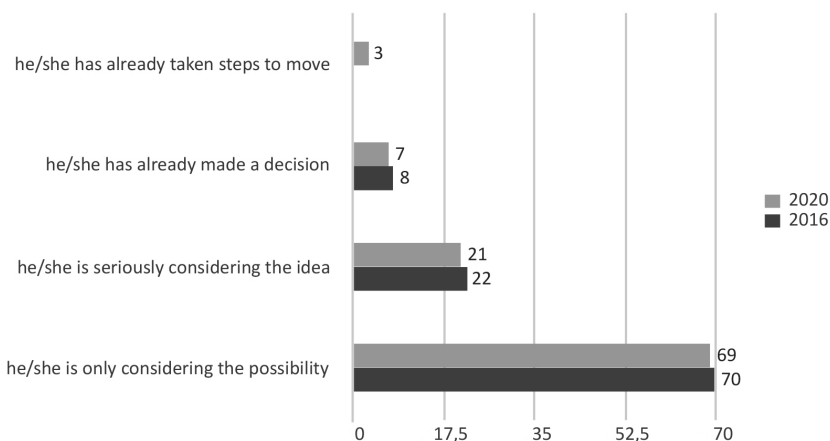
In addition to the factors that encourage mobility, it is also important to look at the reasons why today's young Hungarians choose not to leave the country for longer or shorter periods. In 2008, young people did not plan to go abroad to work mainly because they did not want to be separated from their family members, second, because there were jobs in Hungary, and third, because they did not know the language. Since 2012, the main reason given by young people in each survey has been attachment to family, but the other reasons have changed compared to the previous two surveys. Whereas previously, attachment to their homeland and friends played a very strong role in preventing young people from going abroad, in 2020, these aspects had been pushed to the back of the queue, replaced by factors related to satisfaction with what they have at home (i.e., they can manage at home, they don't want to give up their life and career here) and fear (fear of foreign surroundings, fear of failure, afraid to go it alone). The biggest decline is in attachment to family, home, and friends; however, lack of funds, not knowing how to get started, or excessive administrative procedures have also become less important barriers (Figure 6).

Figure 6. Barriers to outward mobility¹¹ (in per cent)*(N₂₀₁₂ = 8000, N₂₀₁₆ = 1843, N₂₀₂₀ = 1877)*

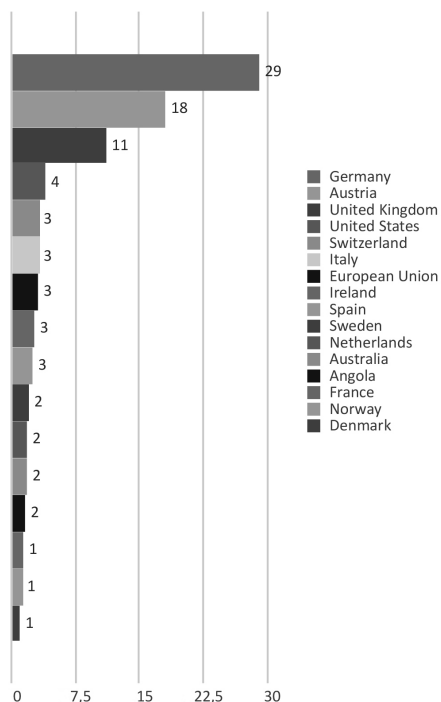
In addition to the above reasons, the Hungarian Youth 2020 survey also gave young people the opportunity to give their reasons for not going abroad in a free-response format. The main reasons given were that they were still at school, wanted to finish their studies in Hungary, wanted to get a profession or a degree, and might consider working abroad afterward.

For young people, going abroad is often seen as an option; many just play around with the idea, and although it is talked about a lot, it may not be followed up by concrete action. It is therefore interesting to examine at what stage in young people's minds their plans to move abroad are. Young people were asked about this in 2016 and 2020, and we can see that there has not been much change in this area. Nearly 70% of young people aged 15-29 in Hungary are only considering the possibility, while around one-fifth are already seriously considering moving abroad. Seven percent of young people have already made the decision to move out of Hungary, and 3% have already taken concrete steps to do so (Figure 7).

11 In 2012, the question was asked on a five-point scale, and for the 2012 data, the aggregate percentage of those responding "4" and "5" are shown ("5" means completely withhold). For the 2016 and 2020 data, the percentage of mentions is shown.

Figure 7. *Strength of intention to move abroad (in per cent)**(N₂₀₁₆ = 533, N₂₀₂₀ = 518)*

The Hungarian Youth 2020 survey asked young people which country they would go to. The main destinations are those confirmed by other mobility surveys, with nearly 30% stating a desire to go to Germany, nearly one-fifth to Austria, and around one-tenth of young Hungarians indicating the United Kingdom as their destination. Four percent would go overseas and to other EU or non-EU countries, 1-3% at most (Figure 8).

Figure 8. *Emigration destination countries (in per cent)**(N₂₀₂₀ = 463)*

Summary

Defining international youth migration can be difficult, since no universally accepted definition of “migrant” exists at the international level. According to Newman and Matzke (1984: 76), migration is not an analytically sharp concept. Definitions are largely situational depending on the investigator’s particular need and objectives.

The results of the Hungarian large-sample youth survey show that young Hungarians are also concerned about the issue of migration. As an important demographic process, it determines many things in the life of countries. There are many uncertainties in young people’s plans in general, and among these, the intention to move abroad is perhaps one of the most unpredictable, as it is always determined by the given conditions and circumstances. If these change rapidly and hectically, this can have a big impact on migration potential. Hungarians’ mobility potential was low before European Union accession, and it was generally expected to remain so after the country joined the EU. However, in the new conditions after accession, this also changed and more people have gone abroad to work or live than previously expected.

The hypotheses discussed in Subchapter 2.2 are confirmed by the multivariate analysis of the factors influencing migration potential discussed in Subchapter 4.1. Our results suggest that those with higher education are more open to emigration. The probability of emigrating decreases with age, as the time needed for emigration to pay off increases steadily, i.e., 15–19-year-olds are much more likely to go abroad, mainly for educational purposes, than 25–29-year-olds. Marital status is the main factor influencing the cost of emigration, as the cost of leaving home is highest in a cohabiting relationship, marriage, or when the whole family emigrates. On the basis of marital status, it is mainly the unmarried and single people who want to move to another country.

Conclusions

The target group of the Hungarian large-sample youth survey was young people living in Hungary. Given this target group, the research lacks input from Hungarian young people who have left the country for a shorter or longer time; that is, we cannot examine the actual reasons for migration abroad using this dataset.¹²

A further limitation of our study is that the researchers did not ask the questions in the same way in the different waves of data collection. The comparability of the data is limited due to the different questions. This was pointed out in regard to the individual questions. We would also like to call attention to the fact that the 2020

¹² International migration is a complex, contextual, and multidimensional process, several aspects of which have already been analyzed in Hungarian migration research, but there are questions that neither micro-level nor macro-level approaches can adequately answer. For example, how can we explain the fact that, despite similar economic, social, cultural, and political circumstances and similar socio-demographic backgrounds, some people decide to emigrate while others prefer to stay at home? These cases of migration can be analyzed based on migrant network theory. Migrant social capital differentially influences migration decisions depending on its level, diversity, and accessibility. But the data available in Hungarian large-sample youth survey are less suitable for this purpose (Kiss-Kozma, 2022).

wave of data collection was conducted during the COVID-19 pandemic, which greatly changed young people's mobility plans and intentions.

The next Hungarian large-sample youth survey will take place in 2024, but we do not yet know whether the questions on migration will be asked in the same way. Furthermore, there is also a selection process between the planning and implementation of migration, which requires a panel study. In order to understand why some migration plans can be realized while others remain dreams, it is also necessary to explore which factors determine the evolution of migration plans and which determine the actual realization of migration.

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An Examination of Young People's Vulnerability in the Context of the Hungarian Youth Survey 2000-2020¹

Ifjúsági sebezhetőség a Magyar Ifjúságkutatás 2000–2020 tükrében

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Abstract: Youth is the age associated with vulnerability. The concept of vulnerability refers to defencelessness, lack of protection, exposure to the risks of structural and societal changes, and limited access to the resources needed to cope. In this paper, I analyse six waves of data collection (2000-2020) from the survey series "Magyar Ifjúság (Hungarian Youth)" that was conducted with eight thousand participants (15-29 years of age) for 20 years and attempt to identify the most vulnerable groups of youth in Hungary in certain priority areas where youth are present: in education and the labour market. When examining youth vulnerability, I pay particular attention to the risk of digital vulnerability: those young people who were excluded from the information society that was emerging during the examined period and who are not connected to the internet. I introduce the concept of a new type of extreme vulnerability. When performing a secondary analysis of longitudinal youth research data, I also test my hypothesis that groups of young people who are otherwise not or less impacted by traditional vulnerabilities may also be affected – youth with higher-level education, and those living in cities under orderly financial circumstances. The analysis of data shows that Roma youth constitute the particularly vulnerable group of youth in Hungary. Non-internet-enabled youth aged 15-29 are an extreme vulnerable group of people. However, youth with a higher education degree living in county capitals were also affected by the new type of vulnerability that is emerging due to global risks.

Keywords: youth, traditional vulnerability, extreme vulnerability, global risks

Összefoglaló: Az ifjúkor a sebezhetőség időszakaként számon tartott életszakasz. A sebezhetőség fogalma a fiatalok által az átmenet során megtapasztalható kiszolgáltatottságot, védtelenséget, a strukturális és társadalmi változások kockázatainak való kitettségét, a megküzdéshez szükséges erőforrásokhoz való korlátozott hozzáférést jelenti. Munkámban arra teszek kísérletet, hogy a nyolcezer fő (15–29 éves) meg-

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kérdésével 20 éve zajló Magyar Ifjúságkutatás-sorozat hat adatfelvételi hullámának (2000–2020) adatait elemezve azonosítom a magyar ifjúsági társadalom legsérülékenyebb csoportjait az ifjúsági szintér kiemelt területein: az oktatás és a munkaerőpiac dimenziójában. Az ifjúsági sebezhetőség vizsgálata során kiemelt figyelmet fordítok a digitális sérülékenység kockázatára: a vizsgált időszakban kiépülő információs társadalomból kizáródó, nem internetképes fiatalok csoportjára. Bevezetem az új típusú, szélsőséges sebezhetőség fogalmát is. A longitudinális ifjúságkutatási adatok másodelemzése során tesztelem a hipotézisemet, mely szerint a sebezhetőség hagyományos típusai által nem, vagy kevésbé érintett ifjúsági csoportok is érintetté válnak: a magasan iskolázott, rendezett anyagi körülmények között, nagyvárosban élő fiatalok. A sebezhetőség hagyományos formái az alacsony státuszú, alacsonyan iskolázott szülői családból származó fiatalokat érintik döntően. Az adatelemzés eredményei azt mutatják, a magyar ifjúsági társadalom kiemelten sebezhető csoportját alkotják a roma fiatalok a vizsgált dimenziókban. A nem internetképes fiatalok az ifjúság szélsőségesen sebezhető csoportját testesítik meg. A globális kockázat révén jelentkező új típusú sebezhetőség által érintetté váltak a diplomás, megyeszékhelyen, megyei jogú városban élő fiatalok is.

Kulcsfogalmak: ifjúság, hagyományos sebezhetőség, szélsőséges sebezhetőség, globális kockázatok

Introduction, theoretical and conceptual framework

In this paper, I analyse six waves of data capture (2000–2020) from the survey series "Magyar Ifjúság" ("Hungarian Youth") that has been conducted with eight thousand participants (15–29 years of age) for the last 20 years. I attempt to look at youth vulnerability (Furlong-Stalder-Azzopardi 2000) and identify the most vulnerable groups of youth in Hungary in certain priority areas where youth are present.

Over the last three decades, the changing patterns of participation in education have had a powerful impact on youth lifestyles and societal chances in Hungary due to the prolonged labour market transitions and the extended reliance on parental families, thus augmenting the risks associated with youth (cf. Gábor 2002; Gazsó-Laki 2004; Gazsó 2006; Furlong-Cartmel 2007). Following the turn of the millennium, the transition of youth from school to work became increasingly complex and protracted; paths that were once linear and predictable became increasingly fragmented. This protracted transition may result in increased vulnerability, marginalisation and exclusion because it is complicated by breaks and changes of direction resulting from its non-linear nature (Furlong et al. 2006).

Fundamentally, youth is considered the age of vulnerability. Vulnerability is interpreted as the susceptibility and defencelessness experienced by young people during the different periods of their transition into adulthood. These risks are mainly experienced in terms of such factors as their choices and forced paths in the education system as well as their efforts to enter and stay in the labour market, but they are also manifested in their pursuit of an adult lifestyle, gaining financial independence, moving to a new household and building friendships or partnerships (Gábor 2003, Xie - Sen - Foster 2012). Besides the benefits and wide range of choices an autonomous age offers (Gábor 2009, Jancsák 2013), youth also encounter increasing uncertainties and risks, especially those distinct groups that are even more vulnerable than the average.

Vulnerability is defined as the restricted capacity of persons and social groups to confront structural and social change (Furlong-Stalder-Azzopardi 2000). In its extreme form, vulnerability means severely restricted opportunities for secure employment, social and economic advancement and personal fulfilment. The structural form of vulnerability should be distinguished from its other forms that arise from discrimination. Structural vulnerability is based on the lack of resources, poverty, and cultural responses to deprivation. Another aspect of vulnerability stems from gender, cultural, ethnic, and political discrimination affecting women of low social origin, members of ethnic minorities, migrants and, in certain cases, young people in general (Furlong-Stalder-Azzopardi 2000). Some of these discriminating factors are linked and thus intensify each other, resulting in an extreme risk of vulnerability. According to Kaplan (2002), vulnerability derives from risky situations. He defines two main components of the latter. The external component is exposure to shock, stress, and catastrophe, while the internal component is the lack of ability to cope and weak resilience. However, Gallopin (2006) points out that vulnerable groups may be more prepared for stressful situations than groups that have never met with any substantial stressors.

However, vulnerability is not equivalent to poverty or being disadvantaged. Poverty refers to a lack of resources that prevents the individual from achieving a certain living standard. As a general category, vulnerability does not mean a lack but defencelessness and exposure to risk (Chambers 1989). A non-poor social status does not automatically guarantee the individual's safety from vulnerabilities caused by a shock-like, rapid-onset radical change (Giddens-Sutton 2017). Such experiences were common during the turmoil that affected healthcare, social, economic, and political systems after the appearance of Covid-19. Therefore, risk and risk-induced vulnerability are not a factual status in the present, but an expected outcome, a probability related to the future, which we anticipate through a likelihood judgement with a temporal aspect extending to the future. The international literature typically looks at the groups of vulnerable youth in the context of high-risk behaviours (Turner 2008, Loeber et al. 2012) or focuses on the problems of youth who suffer from various mental disorders (Chan et al. 2017) or who grew up in public care (Thurman et al. 2008, Bijleveld - van der Geest - Hendriks 2012). It may also make sense to highlight how factors like the free choice of schools, increasingly unequal chances in society and schools, and the strong selectivity and low equitability of the school system produce vulnerable groups of youth.

Due to the accelerated socioeconomic transformation in the 1990s, Hungarian youth, by the turn of the millennium (when the first data capture of the large-sample youth research was implemented), were confronted with the same challenges in terms of education, labour and leisure as the young people of European Union Member States. The change of an era in youth affairs involving the expansion of public and higher education took place among a landscape of societal inequalities based on origin

and geographical location in Hungary, markedly intensifying the disadvantages driven by these factors (Gazsó 1997, Gábor 2002, Gazsó 2006). Additionally, the change led to an intensification in selection mechanisms³, which caused disadvantages for certain social and ethnic groups or even blocked them from accessing certain education system services. The education system was less and less able to handle these accumulated social and geographical disadvantages; its social permeability is low, and parental family socioeconomic status demonstrates a strong correlation with access to educational services. As a result of selection mechanisms, one of the most selective school systems in Europe emerged in Hungary (Csapó et al. 2014, Radó 2018), shifting towards the South-East-European model, where the quality of results is continuously deteriorating, and disadvantaged learners are released from the system without any secondary qualification at an increasing rate. The results of OECD's PISA surveys (PISA 2015, 2018) confirm from one round to the next that familial background has an extremely strong impact on the school performance of Hungarian learners, and there is a massive gap between pupils with the highest and the lowest performance (Kertesi-Kézdi 2013). Considering educational mobility, Hungary is very disadvantaged compared to other OECD countries.

During the 20 years that were examined, individual risks to youth were also found to be higher, alongside the structural dangers that affect competition for further education, for example, where success is increasingly impacted by social and societal dispositions outside the realm of knowledge and individual abilities. Youth defined as vulnerable are left behind very early in this competition, thus potentially reducing their chances in the labour market. Vulnerability also means the young person has few opportunities to shape their educational career (Fekete 2021). From the educational perspective, high-level vulnerability is associated with youngsters who are disadvantaged, come from families with limited educational experience, live in the smaller settlements of underprivileged or economically deteriorating regions, and belong to ethnic minorities.

The labour market vulnerability of youth is determined by the economic development level, economic crises, the structure of the labour market and the characteristics of the state welfare system. Furthermore, youth labour market risks and vulnerabilities are closely linked to educational expansion and an extended period of youth. The school-to-work transition is increasingly long and complicated, and labour uncertainty and volatility are becoming a daily experience for significant youth groups, along with such factors as the increased vulnerability of young workers (the spread of labour seen as precarious, e.g. part-time work and fixed-term labour contracts), more difficult and less secure career start for young

3 Hungary's public education system, as constructed from 1985 to 1993, involves selective solutions in multiple areas. It retains the universal eight-year-long primary education but has created "structure-changing" secondary schools, thus offering two early exit points from the universal system. These institutions select children based on the development level of their skills, learning outcomes and family background (Ercse 2018, Lannert 1998). Free school selection, which granted nearly unlimited selection rights to schools, was adopted as early as 1985.

entry-level employees, and increased gender disparity in terms of opportunities. Highly disadvantaged youth have severely limited chances in the labour market. This group includes unskilled or semi-skilled youngsters; inhabitants of lagging or underprivileged, economically declining regions; youngsters growing up in social care; ex-convicts; the homeless, ethnic minorities and young people who leave the labour market and are struggling to find re-entry points (young single mothers; young people with severe health problems).

Regarding youth affairs, during the change of era, looser patterns of traditional life management, longer schooling, and delayed entry into employment extended the leisure-centric youth period (Gábor 2006). The growing appreciation of leisure and the increased role of the media and a consumer society entail new risks. Several dimensions of leisure can be identified as vulnerability risks. One is the commercialisation of leisure, as a result of which commercialised, experience- and participation-centric leisure (cultural and music festivals, entertainment industry events) drive youngsters to attain an independent consumer status at ever earlier ages, which leads to the manifestation of economic inequalities in leisure. Risky leisure activities and chasing excitement also become part of youngsters' "leisure vocabulary" (Furlong et al. 2003). The young may be prone to engage in high-risk behaviours that lead to committing crimes, accidents, physical injury, emotional trauma, and health problems. In this sense, youth vulnerability also refers to the possibility of bad outcomes, risks, or dangers (Arora et al. 2015).

Relevant chapters of the volume that present data from Magyar Ifjúság (Hungarian Youth) 2000, 2004, and 2008 have looked at and analysed computer and internet use, with a focus on the consumption of media and culture (Bauer-Tibori 2002, Bauer-Szabó 2005, Bauer-Szabó 2009). In this early stage of their penetration, it is common to look at the computer and internet as entertainment devices. However, they have become indispensable entities that permeate all aspects of human life with the progress of technology, iterative innovation, and increasing penetration.

In this context, we can say that, in the two decades under consideration, digital capital has become as important as knowledge capital and has played a key role in defining the societal chances of the young. By "digital capital", I mean capital defined in terms of the dimensions of access and use to the latter, i.e. access to technology, practical knowledge about usage, digital literacy, and the totality of social connections that can be established through online communication tools. In this interpretation, digital capital has the main characteristic of forms of capital, according to Bourdieu, i.e. convertibility (Bourdieu 2004). Digital capital represents knowledge, skills and characteristics that can be deployed in the offline world; it can be converted into cultural, social and economic capital and can be used to reduce the risk of vulnerability.

Throughout the two decades mentioned above, the gap between youth groups has widened due to the inequality regarding their access to technology and their user skills (Galán 2015, Fehérvári 2017). Exclusion from information society reduces the length

of young people's educational trajectories and decreases their labour market chances and opportunities to integrate into the leisure activities so popular with youth. This means that digital deprivation has become a priority risk regarding the life situation and social standing of the young, which claim applies and can be interpreted not only within the domain of leisure time but also in education and work. Non-internet-enabled, digitally vulnerable youngsters constitute a particularly vulnerable group in society. Due to constraints on space, I do not look further at the risks in the leisure dimension in this paper. Instead, I focus on digital capital.

Besides the increased appreciation for digital competencies, the construction of a world risk society (Beck 2008) led to yet another turn of events for youth in the analysed period: in addition to politico-economic decisions and structural aspects, their life careers and life chances are also increasingly shaped by global factors which, in my opinion, lead to new and ever more extreme vulnerabilities for the age group 15-29. They are confronted with new types of risks, which cannot (or not fully) be managed through individual strategies. As a result, young people feel disempowered and exposed; they struggle with increased uncertainty and unpredictability combined with an unplannable future, which are the primary sources of vulnerability. All of a sudden, this new type of extreme vulnerability causes an enormous disruption of young people's lives, generating unprecedented, drastic changes in a very short time. Consequently, with limited risk calculation, they have little to no opportunity to prepare for them. The Y2008 financial crisis and its impact on youth unemployment may be considered the "antecedent" of the new types of vulnerability. The young were impacted by the recession in the economies of the European Union in 2008-2009 harder than average. "The economic crisis and the subsequent difficulties in the labour market had severe consequences for the younger population. The proportion of the poor increased in this population, and the income inequalities between younger and older adults grew." (Medgyesi 2018: 184). In the spring of 2020, the COVID pandemic and the lockdowns also disproportionately impacted youth who experienced the pandemic at their performative and most vulnerable age (Déri-Szabó 2021).

Data sources and hypotheses

For the empirical analysis, I used databases of the youth survey series⁴ conducted with 8,000 respondents polled for 20 years since 2000, which collected data with the same methodology, but different sets of questions adjusted to societal changes and technological innovation. "The 8000-person sample of the youth survey looking at the young in Hungary is nationally representative for the 15-29 age group – i.e. it ascertains that proportions within the population are reflected within the

4 Youth2000, Youth2004, Youth2008, Hungarian Youth 2012, Hungarian Youth Research 2016, Hungarian Youth Research 2020.

sample with regard to gender, age, schooling, settlement type, and region" (Székely 2021b). In line with the international literature, my data analysis investigates youth vulnerabilities in the typical main areas of education and the labour market in terms of the hypotheses below:

H1: Traditional, old-type vulnerabilities affect young people with disadvantaged, low-educated parental families living in economically lagging regions and small settlements, with particular regard to ethnic minorities.

H2: Due to the emergence of global risks, higher-status, educated youth groups that are hardly or not impacted by traditional vulnerabilities and live in larger towns under stable financial circumstances have also become affected by new types of extreme vulnerabilities.

The following statements regarding each analytical aspect increase the granularity of the latter hypotheses.

H2 (a): Youth who are traditionally vulnerable in terms of the educational aspect suffered further disadvantages during online education (in close correlation with their place in the system of digital inequalities), but the adverse effects of online education impacted traditionally non-vulnerable, higher-status youth (students in secondary and higher education) as well.

H2 (b): The new, pandemic-generated type of labour market vulnerability (sudden loss of jobs, unforeseeable downtimes, transition to home-office work) primarily impacted more educated young people living in cities and/or prosperous regions, whereas the labour market status and prospects of traditionally vulnerable youth were not affected significantly.

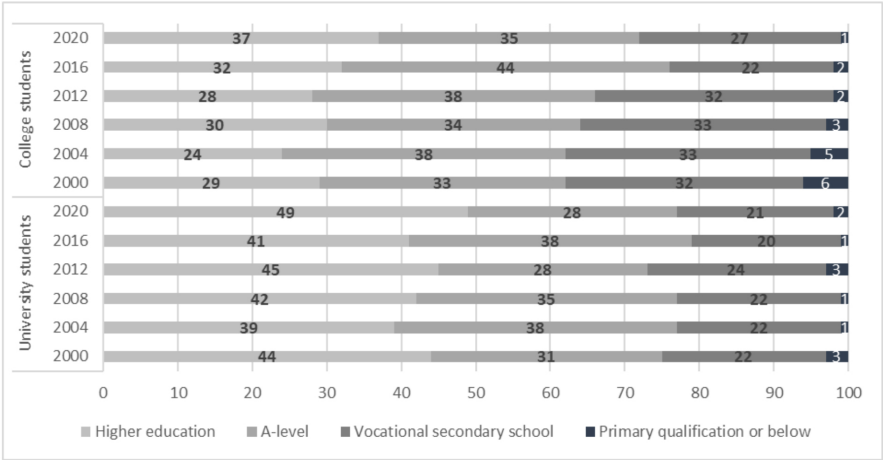
Results

Vulnerability in the dimension of education

Countless factors shape the social chances of the young generation. Schooling plays an essential role in attaining social status, so the education system's quality and social permeability are paramount. Comparative studies related to educational mobility have looked at the correlations between the levels of education of parents and their children. I use the level of schooling of the father as an explanatory variable in my analysis.

In Hungary, the expansion of secondary and higher education did not entail any improvement in the education system's social permeability (Figure 1). During the period analysed here, young people from families at the lower levels of the social hierarchy did not see any improvement in their relative chances of attaining higher education degrees. The data suggest that the education system was unable to provide assistance for vulnerable youth in the period 2000-2020. The educational trajectory of children of fathers with primary qualifications or below hardly ever lands them in the upper echelons of the education system.

Figure 1.: Distribution of higher education students by fathers's highest qualification (%),
 $N_{2020}=1078$



Source: Hungarian Youth, own calculation

According to Németh (2006), the father’s occupation strongly impacts schooling, so it is reasonable to say that a part of social reproduction happens through achievement at school. Consequently, the school plays an important role in social reproduction; it can be seen as an important channel of such reproduction. One’s education (school degree) plays a decisive role in labour market opportunities, attainable income, the risk of impoverishment, the quality of life, social capital, the amount of leisure time, and how leisure time may be spent.

Data from the youth research project confirm that the type of school that is accessible and the qualifications attainable by young people are determined by the father’s qualification (Table 1). Between 2008⁵ and 2020, one-third to four-tenths of children of fathers with primary school qualifications or below landed in vocational secondary education not associated with A-level qualifications, while less than one-tenth were enrolled in higher education.

5 See the relevant data of Youth in 2000 and 2004: Gázsó 2006: 216-220.

Table 1.: Distribution of 15-29-year-old youth enrolled in school education by type of institution according to father's highest educational qualification 2008-2020, $N_{2008}=3642$, $N_{2012}=3461$, $N_{2016}=3164$, $N_{2020}=3244$.

2012 -Father's qualification	Primary school	Vocational secondary school	Vocational grammar school, technical school	Grammar school	College BA	University MA	Higher Vocational training other course	total
Primary qualification or below	13%	39%	28%	9%	3%	3%	5%	100%
Frequency	47	140	102	34	11	12	18	364
Vocational secondary school	2%	15%	33%	17%	12%	6%	15%	100%
Frequency	30	185	396	202	144	76	187	1220
A-level	1%	4%	29%	22%	19%	10%	14%	100%
Frequency	15	34	225	167	146	77	104	768
Higher education qualification	2%	1%	11%	28%	22%	25%	9%	100%
Frequency	11	8	59	147	115	131	47	518
2016 -Father's qualification	Primary school	Vocational secondary school	Vocational grammar school, technical school	Grammar school	College BA	University MA	Higher, Vocational training other course	total
Primary qualification or below	7%	40%	19%	17%	3%	2%	12%	100%
Frequency	21	101	47	44	7	4	3	254
Vocational secondary school	1%	15%	23%	25%	10%	8%	18%	100%
Frequency	18	157	238	259	99	79	192	1042
A-level	1%	4%	18%	27%	18%	14%	18%	100%
Frequency	6	43	197	296	198	148	195	1083
Higher education qualification	2%	1%	6%	28%	24%	27%	12%	100%
Frequency	6	7	37	168	145	162	72	597
2020 - Father's qualification	Primary school	Vocational secondary school	Vocational grammar school, technical school	Grammar school	College BA	University MA	Higher, Vocational training other course	total
Primary qualification or below	1%	31%	25%	17%	5%	4%	17%	100%
Frequency	2	49	40	28	8	6	28	161
Vocational secondary school	0%	10%	21%	28%	19%	7%	15%	100%
Frequency	4	91	191	257	174	64	138	919
A-level	0%	1%	16%	34%	24%	10%	15%	100%
Frequency	2	8	141	299	211	88	132	881
Higher education qualification	0%	1%	7%	31%	31%	23%	7%	100%
Frequency	2	7	50	219	219	162	50	709

College: old education system; BA: new education system according to the Bologna Process since 2006; University: old education system; MA: new education system according to the Bologna Process since 2006. Source: Hungarian Youth, own calculation

The children of parents with higher qualifications have a much greater chance of being admitted to higher education. In contrast, the children of low-educated parents try to find their path in vocational training. The social environment is a decisive factor in further education decisions; the socio-cultural background determines the type of educational institution the child can access and limits the achievable social status. On the other hand, a paper by Ákos Huszár (2022) analysed the incomes of people in different class situations and found that inequalities between different occupational groups had declined by the late 2010s; both the top and the bottom fifths by income had become more heterogeneous. According to Huszár, the explanation lies in the relative deterioration of the income of certain executive and intellectual occupations and the significant improvement of that of certain working-class groups: skilled and semi-skilled labourers appeared in the top 20% of earners. Hungary saw the exact opposite process between 1980 and 2010, but the trend reversed by the end of the decade: the proportion of skilled labourers in the top 20% of earners significantly increased from 2015 to 2019, also with the outstanding growth of semi-skilled and unskilled workers, while intellectuals are represented with increasing weight in the bottom 20% of earners. Reflecting on these data, we may say that on seeing the changes in labour market status and income-earning potential, young people belonging to vulnerable groups make a rational decision by pursuing a vulnerability-reducing strategy when, after completing their primary studies or obtaining a vocational training certificate, they choose to work as semi-skilled labourers instead of continuing contingent or *ab ovo* hopeless further education. The losers associated with the changing earning potential are the young first-generation intellectuals who chose a teaching career, for example.

Within youth society, the Roma form a highly vulnerable group from any of the perspectives under analysis. Looking at their situation in education, we should point out that issues with the elementary education of Roma children first appeared in the 1960s, and the process started slowly and with a number of difficulties. The participation of Roma youth in elementary education often entailed segregated institutions, different curricula, and special needs classes. Roma's elementary education became more general when non-Roma youth entered the stage of massifying secondary education (Bocsi 2016). Following the political changes in 1989, the school segregation of Roma children increased significantly (Kertesi-Kézdi 2013). Kertesi-Kézdi argued that the most important roots of school segregation (segregation at the place of residence and the selectiveness of the school system) are, by themselves, insufficient explanations for the overwhelming presence and persistence of segregation. Complex societal and power dynamics are at play, which is also demonstrated by the fact that the free choice of schools, which sustains selection, and the reform of six- and eight-form secondary grammar schools have never received any real political support (Kende 2018). Segregation within schools serves the interests of the local majority; it sustains physical and social barriers, which align with social hierarchies constructed along ethnic and racial lines (Messing 2017).

Qualification indicators in youth surveys show a slight improvement for Roma youth between 2004⁶ and 2020 (Figure 2), yet significantly different than for non-Roma youth in the 15-29 age group. The vast majority of the former end their educational trajectory in primary school⁷. Despite the expansion of public and higher education, certain levels of education remain closed, and the relative chances of Roma young people obtaining a degree have not changed. The proportion of young Roma people who completed their school career with a school-leaving certificate doubled by 2012 (2004:5%, 2012:10%), after which it dropped close to the 2004 level. The positive development of the period is the decrease in the proportion of those with a maximum of primary school education and the steady increase in the share of people with a vocational education, which can be interpreted as a factor that reduces the vulnerability of Roma youth in terms of the change in earning opportunities.

Table 2.: Highest qualifications of Roma and non-Roma young people who have completed their studies (%) $N_{\text{non roma}2004}=4119$, $N_{\text{non roma}2008}=3955$, $N_{\text{non roma}2012}=3693$, $N_{\text{non roma}2016}=4805$, $N_{\text{non roma}2020}=4703$, $N_{\text{roma}2004}=227$, $N_{\text{roma}2008}=331$, $N_{\text{roma}2012}=420$, $N_{\text{roma}2016}=268$, $N_{\text{roma}2020}=236$

Roma youth					Non-Roma youth			
	Primary qualification or below	Vocational qualification	A-level degree	College university degree	Primary qualification or below	Vocational qualification	A-level degree	College university degree
2004	78	17	5	0	15	35	35	15
2008	67	22	9	2	12	30	38	20
2012	65	23	10	2	14	30	42	14
2016	70	27	3	0	13	29	41	17
2020	65	28	6	1	8	26	47	19

Source: Hungarian Youth, own calculation

Vulnerable youth are more likely to fail at school (dropping out, repeating a year, poor performance), a phenomenon which especially applies to Roma youth. Typical reasons for dropping out of primary school without a qualification include learning problems (“was a bad student, dropped out”), reaching compulsory school-leaving age, and family and financial issues⁸. Very few Roma youth surpass their parents’ education level.

Summing up the above, young people living in low-educated parental homes and most members of ethnic minority groups are considered highly vulnerable youth. They are highly likely to drop out, end their school trajectory without a leaving certificate, and become unemployed long-term.

6 From 2004, large-scale youth surveys had the opportunity to study the life strategies, education and labour market status and leisure habits of young people identifying as Roma/Gypsy.
7 Between 2004 and 2020, one-third of Roma youth went on to study in secondary education (2008:34%, 2012:39%, 2016:33%, 2020:38%), typically in vocational training institutions that did not award A-level qualifications. Around one-fifth of these young people dropped out before obtaining their certificate (2008:14%, 2012:19%, 2016 and 2020:17%)
8 Bad results at school, dropped out: 2008:25%, 2012:28%, 2016:22%, 2020:26%. 4. Was unable to finish by the compulsory school-leaving age: 2008:21%, 2012:10%, 2016:33%, 2020:14%. Dropped out due to family reasons (marriage, childbirth): 2008:16%, 2012:25%, 2016:9%, 2020:9%. Dropped out for financial reasons (went to work instead): 2008:7%, 2012:6%, 2016:13%, 2020:12%.

Vulnerability in the labour market

The labour market vulnerabilities identified at the turn of the millennium did not disappear in the past decade either, but they had a smaller impact on members of the 15-29 age group. Unemployment appears with less and less weight on the problem map of young people in the analysed period. While nearly half (48%) of young people reported unemployment as the most significant problem for youth in 2000, the rate was only 5% in 2020. In parallel, uncertainty and an unpredictable future were identified as the most severe threat by an increased share of respondents (24%) (Tóth-Fekete-Nagy 2022).

In Hungary, compared to other European countries, the background of origin plays a more significant role in school progress and, through this, in labour market careers and adult financial status (Harcza et al. 2022). The family background and the parental family's social, cultural, and economic situation strongly affect young people's educational trajectory and school performance, thus affecting their labour market outcomes. Young people who inherit fewer resources are more likely to enter the labour market with a weaker education and lower-level skills, and their labour market opportunities are reduced by the lack of connections required for success (Medgyesi 2018). Being educated also entails a particular lifestyle and cultural background, and cognitive skills are not necessarily considered the most important assets in some segments of the labour market. Instead, social and societal dispositions inherited within the family and unavailable from school play a role (Németh 2006).

The youth research data also confirm the close correlation between origin, school trajectory and employment chances. The father's qualifications strongly determine young people's chances in the labour market through such factors as the education system, degrees obtained and/or lack of skills. Around half of children whose fathers had a maximum of a complete or incomplete primary school education are unable to break out of the low-education trap; their labour market prospects make them likely to become unemployed (Table 3). Between 2008 and 2020, young people whose fathers had a complete or incomplete primary education were highly overrepresented in the inactive group⁹, especially in the Y2008 and Y2012 polls, where the results reflected the impact of the global financial crisis (39% and 44%). The period from 2008 to 2014 was characterised overall by a growing rate of unemployment among the young in almost all EU Member States (Medgyesi 2018).

9 Young people who receive some form of benefit (maternity benefit, childcare allowance, other benefit, etc.), are dependent, or do not participate in education or training.

Table 3.: Economic activity of 15-29 youth by the fathers' highest educational qualification (%) $N_{2008}^{10} - 2020 = 8000$

	Father's qualification	Primary qualification or below	Vocational qualification	A-level degree	College/ university degree
2008	student	25%	37%	45%	53%
	active	34%	42%	37%	31%
	inactive	39%	16%	9%	5%
2012	student	28%	38%	46%	62%
	active	27%	44%	44%	31%
	inactive	44%	18%	9%	6%
2016	student	19%	32%	46%	56%
	active	48%	57%	48%	40%
	inactive	33%	11%	6%	4%
2020	student	20%	32%	42%	57%
	active	51%	58%	52%	37%
	inactive	29%	6%	6%	5%

Source: Hungarian Youth, own calculation

The labour market data support the use of the term “vulnerability” over such terms as “disadvantaged situation” or “poverty”. From the early 1960s onwards, the vast majority of young people with a complete primary education were directed toward vocational training programmes; professional training was trade-oriented and closely linked to socialist industry. The decade following the change in the political system saw vocational education become weaker, detached from the economy, underfinanced and disoriented. Trained for professions with no labour market relevance and lacking any practical work experience, huge groups of young people became unemployed en masse (Laki 2006). The affected youth were unable to anticipate and prepare for the radical structural changes brought on by the change in the political system, nor were they successful in developing coping strategies. Dropping out of school and having low qualifications was associated with a significant risk of weak labour market integration until the mid-2010s. At the turn of the millennium, one-fifth of people with a complete primary education were inactive (21%). In contrast, nearly one-quarter of people with vocational trade school certificates were inactive (24%). Similarly, the survey conducted four years later showed that primary school dropouts and vocational trade school graduates were the most at-risk groups in terms of unemployment. Looking at the socio-demographic characteristics of unemployed youth polled in the years affected by a global risk factor, the global financial crisis (2008, 2012), we can establish that rural, low-educated young people were the most vulnerable: over one-third of young people with primary qualification or below and/or vocational trade certificates and over four-tenths of young people living in rural villages, respectively, had experienced unemployment (Table 4). Regional and residential disadvantages were relevant throughout the 20 years of analysis; unemployment and inactivity rates were the highest among young people living in small villages in North Hungary, South Transdanubia, and the Northern Great Plains.

10 See the 2000-2004 data in Gazsó 2006 (p. 216).

Table 4.: *Distribution of unemployed youth by socio-demographic characteristics, $N_{2008}=544$, $N_{2012}=771$*

Socio-demographic characteristics	2008	2012
man	59%	56%
woman	41%	44%
Primary qualification or below	35%	39%
Vocational secondary school	29%	33%
A-level	28%	27%
Higher education qualification	9%	6%
15-19 yrs.	14%	11%
20-24 yrs.	44%	48%
25-29 yrs.	43%	41%
Budapest	9%	9%
City with county seat rights	13%	14%
Town/city	35%	27%
Village	43%	41%

Source: Hungarian Youth, own calculation

The mid-2010s brought several important but controversial changes in terms of the labour market for young people. The drop in the unemployment rate and related employment growth meant a favourable turn of events for them. Employment in the public service programme made a higher-than-average contribution to the growing employment rate among young people (Bene-Krémer-Pintye 2018). In 2016 and 2020, the rate of inactives due to unemployment was 3% among jobless young people.

Although the employment indicators of highly vulnerable Roma youth improved significantly from 2012 to 2020, the latter were still overrepresented among the inactive and the unemployed throughout the analysed period compared to non-Roma youth; the worst unemployment figures were registered in 2008 and 2012 (Table 5).

Table 5.: *Table: Distribution of Roma and non-Roma youth by their main activity (%), $N_{roma2000}=324$, $N_{Ifjúság2004}=7676$, $N_{roma2004}=442$, $N_{Ifjúság2008}=7558$, $N_{roma2008}=623$, $N_{Ifjúság2012}=7377$, $N_{roma2012}=328$, $N_{Ifjúság2016}=7672$, $N_{roma2016}=293$, $N_{Ifjúság2020}=7682$, $N_{roma2020}=293$*

	Non-Roma youth				Roma youth			
	Active	Inactive	Student	Unemployed	Active	Inactive	Student	Unemployed
2004	39	10	38	7	24	35	22	18
2008	39	9	45	7	23	17	26	21
2012	38	10	42	9	19	24	29	26
2016	49	9	40	2	37	32	18	12
2020	50	7	40	3	44	27	19	10

Source: Hungarian Youth, own calculation

For individuals belonging to the highly vulnerable youth group, social mobility and progressing out of a hopeless situation pose a severe challenge; a lack of mobilisable resources even makes this an impossible mission. This group comprises young people

whose short school careers did not allow them to attain a knowledge base that can be used in the labour market; as a result, they are unable to enter or stay in the labour market.

Digital vulnerability

Despite the constantly improving ICT usage indicators¹¹ of 15–29-year-old people from 2004 to 2012¹², one particular group of youth was nonetheless unable to break out of digital isolation. Those left out can be characterised based on the classic factors of inequality: digital deprivation is most strongly determined by school qualifications¹³, economic activity¹⁴, the young person's age¹⁵ and type of settlement¹⁶. Unemployed, inactive, low-educated youth in the older age groups who have already left the school system and live in a rural environment are often left out of information society and thus become highly vulnerable (Table 6).

Table 6.: Distribution of 15–29-year-old youth who never use a computer or the internet according to economic activity (%) $N_{2004-2012}=8000$

	2004		2008		2012	
	computer use	internet use	computer use	internet usage Frequency (never)	computer-home	Internet-home
Primary qualification or below	32	15	23	23	15	26
Skilled worker	59	37	33	32	33	32
A-level	17	12	7	7	7	7
Higher ed diploma	6	6	2	2	2	2
Economically active	39	24	16	15	16	15
Inactive	70	36	45	46	45	46
Student	7	8	6	5	6	5
Unemployed	60	26	43	39	43	39
15-19 yrs.	14	11	10	2	12	29
20-24 yrs.	31	14	15	15	14	34
25-29 yrs.	41	22	23	22	18	38
Budapest	19	9	14	14	9	14
County seat	22	11	6	5	11	12
Town/city	30	15	18	17	35	35
Village	39	22	29	24	45	39

Source: Hungarian Youth, own calculation

In 2016 and 2020¹⁷, 5% and 1.4% of members of the 15-29 age group had been left behind, respectively, mainly due to financial deprivation and other disadvantages.

11 See detailed data for Y2016 in: Tóth 2018:293, Y2020 data: Koltói-Varga 2022: 295-303.

12 In 2004, 30% of members of the 15-29 age group did not use a computer, and 15% never used the internet; in 2008 16% had never used a computer or the internet; in 2012 the proportion was 15% of young people.

13 The correlation is significant $p<0,001$.

14 The correlation is significant $p<0,001$.

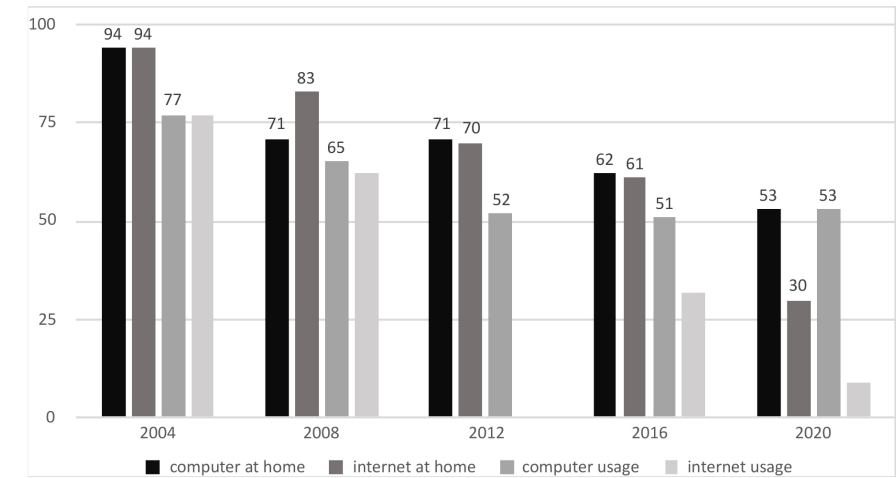
15 The correlation is significant $p<0,001$.

16 The correlation is significant $p<0,001$.

17 See detailed Y2016 data in: Tóth 2018:293, Y2020 data: Koltói-Varga 2022: 295-303.

The digitally isolated group typically consists of inactive people with primary qualifications or below living in small villages in North Hungary and the Northern Great Plains. This group demonstrates a significant overlap with the group of Roma youth, the vast majority of whom are the least characterised by ICT usage and often lived in digital isolation throughout the 20 years under analysis (Figure 5). According to the last survey, over half of all Roma youth did not use a computer, and nearly one out of ten had never used the internet.

Figure 2.: *Share of Roma youth not using a computer or the internet (%)* $N_{2004}=324$, $N_{2008}=442$, $N_{2012}=623$, $N_{2016}=328$, $N_{2020}=293$



Source: Hungarian Youth, own calculation

In relation to this area of study, it is important to note that when the data were collected, i.e., in the fall semester of 2020, when school education was primarily conducted online, nearly four-tenths (37%) of Roma students’ households had no computer/laptop, 17% had no internet subscription, a quarter had no Wi-Fi access, one-tenth of the affected Roma youth had no smartphone and over one-third had no internet subscription on their smartphone. These youngsters were unable to get involved in online education; they amassed a backlog of several months of learning through no fault of their own, their social network weakened even further during this period, and they were increasingly removed from institutional education.

The digitally deprived are a group that is isolated from the mainstream of Hungary’s youth society and stuck on the periphery. The affected youth lack the increasingly important knowledge assets and information they could obtain on their own through internet use and the relationship capital they could convert into the

offline world. Recapitulating what I said in the introduction, non-internet-enabled youth constitute a highly vulnerable group in the 15-29 age bracket.

New types of vulnerability

As I stated in the introduction, the new life situation associated with the framework of radical uncertainty leads to new and increasingly extreme types of vulnerability for youth. However, the old vulnerabilities also continue to exist.

Although the COVID pandemic impacted the labour market for a relatively short time (i.e., 6-12 months), its effects were even stronger than those of the 2008 crisis (Köllő 2022). Groups such as young entrants to the labour market and young people employed abroad or in the service and hospitality industry (the share of youth is large in this category) were impacted by the crisis more intensely and for a longer time; the employment disadvantage of new labour market entrants doubled in 2020. People with primary or vocational qualifications did/could not use the home office as an option for work, along with only a very small minority of those with A-level qualifications: one out of ten affected people worked from home during the first wave of the pandemic. Zoom meetings only became part of life for one-third and one-half of college and university graduates, respectively. More people with higher labour market status registered for public employment services compared to earlier years. The pandemic's unique structural impact was reflected in the unusual regional and occupational distribution of unemployed people: the rate of job seekers increased most in the commercial, hospitality, client management and personal services sectors. In contrast, the growth in unemployment was not significant in regions where the unemployment rate was already high, but it strongly affected people living in the capital and near the Austrian border (Boza-Krekó 2022).

International research on the subject has also found that young people were particularly vulnerable to the economic effects of the pandemic, as they have an inherently higher risk of unemployment and higher unemployment rates than older age groups. The amount of family transfers available to young people played a central role in coping with the pandemic. For those living in relatively stable financial circumstances, the pandemic was more of a relational challenge than a financial one (Cook et al. 2021). The COVID pandemic has hit young people who were already disadvantaged by the system of social inequalities particularly hard. Those working in the hospitality industry were the most vulnerable among the young people who were affected. Based on the former's findings, the authors argue that COVID was not simply a health pandemic affecting those in precarious, vulnerable jobs but a crisis of precarious work itself, in which young people are over-represented (Bengtsson et al. 2021). Finnish researchers (Vehkalahti - Armila - Sivenius 2021) have found that young people's reflexive lifestyles have been weakened as the global crisis has penetrated their mental, material and everyday lives, while many important social

structures have been weakened. Young people could not escape the consequences of a risk society (Beck 2008).

In terms of education, the Covid pandemic affected three academic years (until the end of 2021/2022). Traditionally, vulnerable youth groups were at high risk; they were the ones who were the most likely to drop out of online education, and earliest. "Entire school categories (vocational), entire regions, entire social groups are left out of the online version of public education" (Ugrai 2020: 122). By the time of the last phase of digital education, the rates did improve to a certain extent, but as many as 4%, 8% and 9% of grammar school, upper primary school and vocational school students, respectively, were still completely left out of education and the months spent in online education resulted in significant learning backlog and a lack of achievement of students with disadvantaged, low-educated parental families. The children of higher-status and more educated parents were more successful at coping with the difficulties of online education, but the lockdown of universities, online exams, A-levels and entrance exams strongly affected young people who are not traditionally considered vulnerable.

International research has examined the impact of online education on university students. At the University of Lucerne, many students reported concentration problems during digital instruction (Schwegler 2021). Online education has magnified the importance of the availability of infrastructure, various ICT tools and other factors, such as a properly functioning laptop, a stable internet connection and strong bandwidth. Jordanian researchers came to similar conclusions in their research on university students (Almahasees - Mohsen - Amin 2021), with a significant proportion of the latter reporting that they found it challenging to adapt to online learning (due to technical gaps, IT competencies and lack of fast internet access). In radically changed living conditions, many young people were challenged by the increase in leisure time and lack of peer interaction. The transition to higher education is difficult for young people, as they are not used to the typical higher education environment, with less structured weekly classes, less direct contact with teachers, and the expectation of independent learning. First-year students who have not yet fully adapted to the university environment found the digital transition even more challenging (Millare et al. 2021). Researchers have looked at their online learning strategies, and the results show that a third of them chose to participate less in online classes and did not interact with peers and teachers. This strategy significantly increased the odds of failing exams: every 'passive' week increased the chance of failing the exam by more than one and a half times (1.67).

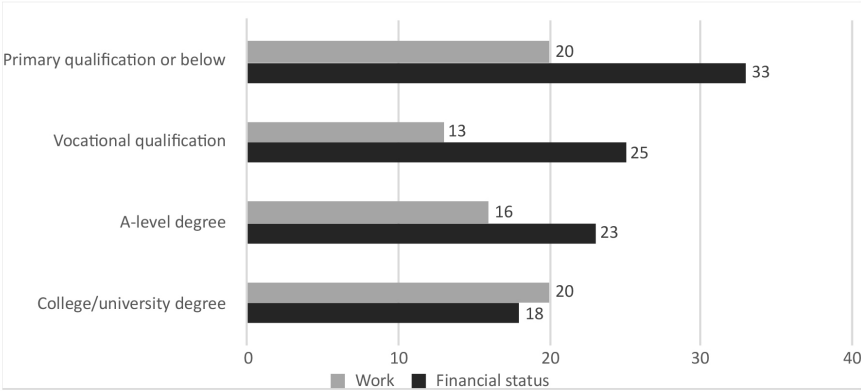
To test the hypothesis about this new type of vulnerability, I use the data collected in the autumn of 2020 during the second wave of the pandemic. The two survey questions¹⁸ present a limited opportunity to learn about young people's attitudes to

18 "And finally, let me ask you, in relation to the coronavirus pandemic, did the following things change in your life? As a result of the coronavirus pandemic, was there a change in...? your work (e.g., you lost your job, got a new job, new work schedule,

the pandemic as well as the direct and indirect impacts of COVID-19 on their lives. According to Levente Székely (2021a), the lives of less than half (44%) of the 15-29 age group were affected by the Covid pandemic. The difference between those who experienced such effects and those who did not can be best analysed in line with the factors of qualification, economic activity and regional characteristics. Those who experienced being impacted mentioned the increase in time spent online (23%) and the deterioration of their financial circumstances (19%).

In terms of youth who experienced the effects of the pandemic, school qualifications account for a significant difference ($p<0.001$) in their evaluations of their financial and labour market status (Figure 3). The strongest economic impact of the pandemic was experienced by the youth group with primary qualifications or below and those with higher education degrees; one out of every five affected young persons reported being affected strongly. Regarding their financial status, youth with primary qualifications or below were affected negatively (one out of every three). Higher level qualifications were negatively correlated with young people’s perceptions of a deterioration in their financial situation and an increase in the experience of changes in work (e.g. new ways of working).

Figure 3.: Young people no longer in education who experienced the impact of the pandemic on their financial status and work work, by school qualifications (%) $N_{work}=939$, $N_{financial\ status}=1477$, data source: Magyar Ifjúságkutatás 2020, figure: by author



Source: Hungarian Youth, own calculation

etc.), your relationship, your residence (permanent or temporary), financial circumstances, relations with your family, plans for (further) education, plans to establish a family, workout or nutrition habits, time spent online, your connection to God, religion, spirituality, your involvement in the community (e.g., volunteering, helping others), the time your family spent discussing public and social issues.”
“In your opinion, did [the latter issues] change for the better or for the worse as a consequence of the Covid pandemic...”?

Unfortunately, the two survey questions are insufficient for investigating the Covid pandemic's impact on education. The sub-question on the changes in time spent online does not directly correspond to the effects of digital education because leisure activity also predominantly shifted to the online space, and one specific group of young people worked online as well (home office). However, they still allow us to draw conclusions. One-third of the polled students reported that the Covid pandemic impacted the time they spent online, which they had a mixed opinion about: half of them said the change was positive, and half considered it harmful. Less than one-fifth (18%) of non-students (workers and inactive people¹⁹) experienced an increase in their online time, and they had a mixed reaction to it as well: half of them reported that the change was positive, and half believed it to be negative.

I used a logistic regression model²⁰ to explain the perceptions of the pandemic's impact on the different areas of life. The model includes the following explanatory variables: the respondent's age group, gender, highest school qualification, type of settlement and region. The model investigates whether these variables determine the pandemic's perceived impact or if other factors may have affected the experience. In terms of the labour market (Table 7), all of the model's explanatory variables had a significant impact: higher education graduates, members of the two older age groups, people living in cities with county seat rights and county seats, and those living in the Northern Great Plains and North Hungary were most likely to have experienced the Covid pandemic's impact on the labour market after March 2020. Compared to the youngest age group, members of the two older age groups were three times more likely to have felt the pandemic's impact on their work, explained simply by the factor of age: one-tenth of 15–19-year-olds were in employment²¹ at the time of the survey. This likelihood was double (2.022) and 1.5 times greater (1.511) among higher education graduates and county seat inhabitants, respectively. The region variable exerted the most substantial effect; young people living in the Northern Great Plains and the Southern Great Plains were four (4.032) and over three (3.233) times more likely to be affected, respectively, while the likelihood was double in Central Hungary and Central Transdanubia. Women experienced significantly less Covid-related impact on their work than men (0.733).

¹⁹ N=4938

²⁰ The explanatory power of this model is not too strong, although is acceptable (Nagelkerke R²=0.289)

²¹ Four tenths had a vocational qualification, a third had a secondary school leaving certificate, and a third had only a primary school certificate. These qualifications did not make a change in the type of work or a move to home office more likely but could make job loss more probable.

Table 7.: Factors explaining the perception of pandemic impacts (Exp(B) values of logistic regression models, N = 7956, $p \leq 0.05$, sig. = 0.000: ***, sig. Between 0.001 and 0.01 = **, sig. Between 0.01 and 0.05 = *, sig.

Latent variable	Categories	Work Exp (B)	Financial situation Exp (B)	Time spent online Exp (B)
Age group	15-19 yrs.	Reference category	Reference category	Reference category
	20-24 yrs.	2.907***	2.222***	0.628***
	25-29 yrs.	2.950***	2.603***	0.440***
Respondent's gender	Man	Reference category	Reference category	Reference category
	Woman	0.733***	0.966	0.998
	Up to 8 years of school ed.	Reference category	Reference category	Reference category
Highest qualification	Skilled worker	1.09	1.006	0.698***
	A-level	1.283	0.746**	1.175
	diploma, PhD	2.022***	0.607***	2.064***
	Village	Reference category	Reference category	Reference category
Type of settlement	Town/city	0.973	0.400***	0.628***
	City with county seat rights, the county seat	1.511***	1.251***	1.909***
	Capital city	0.713*	0.751***	0.883
	Southern Great Plains	3.233***	1.313*	1.454***
	South Transdanubia	1.428	0.415***	0.499***
	Northern Great Plains	4.032***	1.519***	1.096
Region	North Hungary	2.330**	1.205	0.593***
	Central Transdanubia	2.346***	1.067	0.776*
	Central Hungary	2.450***	1.809***	1.369**
	Western Transdanubia	Reference category	Reference category	Reference category

Source: Hungarian Youth, own calculation

A changing financial situation was mostly strongly perceived by those belonging to the oldest age group (2,603). However, the perception of the latter decreases with the level of education: higher education graduates were the least likely to perceive that their financial circumstances had been affected by the pandemic (0.607). Young people living in cities with county seat rights, county seats (1.251) and Central Hungary (1.809) were significantly more likely to have experienced changes in their financial circumstances. Regarding the effect of settlement type and region, young people living in county seats and/or the Southern Great Plains and Central Hungary were more likely to report a change in their financial situation.

As for the pandemic’s impact on time spent online, members of the two older age groups were less likely to experience this effect than those in the youngest (15-19) age group, in strong correlation with their student status and online education²². With regard to the significant impact of academic qualifications, higher education graduates were twice as likely to have experienced a change in the amount of time they

22 Eighty-five percent of the 15-19 age group were students at the time of the survey.

spent online in connection with the COVID-19 pandemic. These data demonstrate the impact of switching to home-office-based work, which was an option primarily for young people with higher qualifications. Looking at the effects of settlement type and region, young people living in county seats (1,909), the Southern Great Plains (1,454) and Central Hungary (1,809) were most likely to report a change in the amount of time they spent online.

Summary

Using the data collected through large-scale youth surveys from 2000 to 2020, this paper identifies the most vulnerable groups of Hungarian youth society in the priority areas associated with youth – education and the labour market. It examines traditional and new forms of youth vulnerability. In the social scientific discourse, vulnerability is often associated with poverty and inequality. In line with Furlong, Stalder and Azzopardi (2018), I have argued that vulnerability means uncertainty and exposure to risk, i.e., the limited capacity of individuals and/or a social group to cope with structural and societal changes. Therefore, it is not identical to the deterministic notion of poverty or disadvantage; it is not a present state but a likelihood pertaining to the future. I interpreted the notion of vulnerability within the framework of the world risk society (Beck 2008). I hypothesised that, with uncertainty and unpredictability having become global factors, their consequences are already affecting existing practices, behavioural patterns and normality in the cultural sense. The unique characteristics of new types of vulnerability are that they are not driven only by structural and societal changes but by global events as well, thus rendering vulnerable certain youth groups that are not or only slightly affected by traditional vulnerabilities. Young people with uneducated or low-educated, low-status parental families are no longer the only ones exposed to risk; members of groups that are better equipped with the different types of capital are also affected. However, the ability to cope makes a significant difference since these young people can develop specific action strategies, unlike those youth groups who have no mobilisable resources.

The hypotheses were partially validated by the empirical research findings. The data analysis revealed that traditional vulnerability, which is driven by macro-economic processes and political decisions, affects, in all the analysed areas, young people who have been unable to break out of the low-education trap for generations, who live in economically declining regions, and mainly belong to the ethnic minority (H1). Disadvantages of origin and region, amplified by educational expansion, have further deepened (Gábor 2002, Gázsó 1997, Gázsó 2006). The lack of digital capital drastically exacerbates their vulnerability. During the Covid pandemic, digital vulnerability resulted in extreme vulnerability, especially for Roma youth in school: in the fall semester of 2020, when school education was primarily conducted online, nearly four-tenths (37%) of Roma students' households had no computer/laptop,

17% had no internet subscription, and a quarter had no Wi-Fi access. The data from the youth surveys also suggest a strong correlation between family background, origin and academic inequality; parents' education level determines children's attainable qualifications. In 2020, higher education, especially university education, was characterised by the involvement of children of fathers with higher education degrees. This group was extraordinarily affected by the new type of vulnerability, i.e., COVID-induced global risk, which changed their daily practices in a rapid and unforeseeable manner. Due to the lack of a question on online education, I was not able to test hypothesis H2a directly. Therefore, I consider it only partially confirmed.

When testing my hypotheses regarding the new type of vulnerability, the findings of the regression model suggested that the COVID-19 pandemic's impact on work was felt most intensely by 20–29-year-old higher education graduates who live in cities with county seat rights or county seats (H2b). The labour market statistics also supported my hypothesis that the COVID-induced labour market crisis had the strongest effect on youth employment, and the population with better labour market status was typically involved in registering for public employment services (Boza-Krekó 2022). Besides 15–19-year-old students, higher education graduates were predominantly affected by the changing amount of time spent online, demonstrating the effect of the transition to home-office-based work, which was an option primarily for young people with higher qualifications.

In the second decade of the second millennium, world risk society trends were radically exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, the aftermath of which ended in yet another global risk caused by the extended Russia-Ukraine war and the resulting energy and economic crisis. In an age of global risks and crises, youth autonomy (Gábor 2009) is being curbed and shaken by unpredictability.

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Appendix

Table 1.: Distribution of 15-29-year-old youth enrolled in school education by type of institution according to father’s highest educational qualification 2008-2020, N2008=3642, N2012=3461, N2016=3164, N2020=3244. 83

Table 2.: Highest qualifications of Roma and non-Roma young people who have completed their studies (%) Nnon roma2004= 4119, Nnon roma2008=3955, Nnon roma2012 =3693, Nnon roma2016 =4805, Nnon roma2020 =4703, Nroma2004=227, N=roma2008=331, Nroma2012=420, Nroma2016=268, Nroma2020=236..... 85

Table 3.: Economic activity of 15-29 youth according to father’s highest educational qualification (%) N2008- 2020=8000..... 87

Table 4.: Distribution of unemployed youth according to socio-demographic characteristics, N2008=544, N2012=771..... 88

Table 5.: Table: Distribution of Roma and non-Roma youth according to main activity (%), Nroma2000=324, NIfjúság2004=7676, Nroma2004=442, NIfjúság2008=7558, Nroma2008=623, NIfjúság2012=7377, Nroma2012=328, NIfjúság2016=7672, Nroma2016=293, NIfjúság 2020=7682, Nroma2020=293 88

Table 6.: Distribution of 15-29-year-old youth who never use a computer or the internet according to economic activity (%) N2004-2012=8000 89

Table 7.: Factors explaining the perception of pandemic impacts (Exp(B) values of logistic regression models, N = 7956, p ≤ 0.05, sig. = 0.000: ***, sig. Between 0.001 and 0.01 = **, sig. Between 0.01 and 0.05 = **, sig..... 95

Figure 1.: Distribution of higher education students according to father’s highest qualification (%), N2020=1078..... 82

Figure 2.: Share of Roma youth not using a computer or the internet (%) N2004=324, N2008=442, N2012=623, N2016=328, N2020=293 90

Figure 3.: Young people no longer in education who experienced the impact of the pandemic on their financial status and work according to school qualifications (%) Nwork=939, Nfinancial status=1477, data source: Magyar Ifjúságkutatás 2020, figure: by author 93

Changes and Factors Associated with the Social Stratification and Material Situation of Hungarian Minority and Majority Youth (2001-2020)

A magyar fiatalok társadalmi rétegződésének változásai és tényezői, kisebbségben és többségben (2001-2020)

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Abstract. The study examines two questions. First, it focuses on the labour market positions and the social and material stratification of minority Hungarian youth between 2001 and 2020, as assessed by Mozaik2001 and the Hungarian Youth Survey (2020), examining both the social determinants and changes over time regarding the attainment of a good material position. It also compares these trends with the general situation of young people in Hungary, without focusing on the latter for reasons of space. In the initial period, those living outside the borders of Hungary were observed to be living in more deprived conditions than those in Hungary, and a specific “East-West” slope in terms of market economy development and material income conditions was also noted. This situation, however, became thoroughly rearranged by 2020, with within-country differences sometimes becoming larger and material inequalities increasing and being redistributed. The other focus of the study, is the multidimensional socio-cultural stratification. In addition, beside material situation, attitudes related to values, value orientation, vision of the future, and social capital (organisational capital, network of friends, offline and online) are included in the model. The analysis, although focusing on minority Hungarian youth, uses similar dimensions for comparison with Gondi-Bokányi et al. (2021) model. One of the aims of this study is to explain the main determinants of the significantly larger proportion of culturally deprived minority persons compared to those in Hungary, as well as the variation among countries.

Keywords: Hungarian minority youth, material deprivation, social stratification

Összefoglaló: A tanulmány tematikusan két kérdéskört vizsgál. Először is a kisebbségi magyar fiatalok munkaerő-piaci pozícióira, valamint foglalkozási és anyagi rétegződésére fókuszál 2001 és 2020 között, a Mozaik2001 és a Magyar Ifjúság Kutatás (2020) felmérések alapján, vizsgálva mind a társadalmi meghatározó tényezőket, mind pedig a jó anyagi helyzet elérésének időbeli változásait. Emellett összehasonlítja a tenden-

ciákat a magyarországi fiatalok helyzetével, területi okokból nem fókuszálva rájuk. A kezdeti időszakban a kisebbségi magyar fiatalok a magyarországinál hátrányosabb helyzetűek voltak összességében, valamint van egy sajátos “kelet-nyugati” lejtő a piacgazdasági fejlettség és az anyagi jóléti viszonyok tekintetében, amely azonban 2020-ra alaposan átrendeződik, az országban belüli különbségek esetenként nagyobbak lesznek, de az anyagi egyenlőtlenségek is növekednek, illetve átrendeződnek. A tanulmány másik fókuszpontja a fiatalok többdimenziós társadalmi-kulturális rétegződésének vizsgálata, ahol az anyagi helyzet mellett az értékekkel, értékorientációval, jövőképpel, társadalmi tőkével (szervezeti tőke, baráti hálózat, offline és online) kapcsolatos attitűdök is szerepelnek a modellben. Az elemzés, bár a kisebbségi magyar fiatalokra fókuszál, hasonló dimenziókat használ, mint a nemrég megjelent Gondi-Bokányi et al. (2021) modell. A tanulmány egyik célja, hogy megmagyarázza a kulturálisan hátrányos helyzetűek főbb meghatározó tényezőit, valamint az országok közötti eltéréseket, mivel Magyarországhoz képest a hátrányos helyzetű klaszterszociális csoportokban a határon túl élő, kisebbségi magyar fiatalok jelentősen magasabb arányban fordultak elő.

Kulcsszavak: magyar kisebbségi fiatalok, anyagi depriváció, társadalmi rétegződés

Introduction

Over the last two decades, Central Europe and, within it, the countries of the Carpathian Basin have experienced a combination of major transformative events. The emergence of the market economy and the acceleration of the globalisation of the labour force, the integration of several countries into the EU (enlargement), the global economic crisis, changes in nation-state policies, the rise of populist politics and the negative consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic have all posed serious challenges for young people. The question arises: To what extent is the expansion of individualisation and improvement in the general economic situation reflected in the internal conditions associated with young people's material situation in the context of social inequalities and regional disparities?

The study of young Hungarians living in the Carpathian Basin countries has involved a unified framework since the Hungarian state defined the goal of “extending” the community of Hungarian citizens to Hungarian-speaking communities living outside its borders and somehow tried to capture this in public policy terms. First, this so-called cultural and ethnic “extension” was intended to cover those who were subject to the Status of Hungarians beyond the Borders Act (see Kántor 2004, Culic 2006, 2014). From 2011 onwards, the State increasingly wanted to replace this with Hungarian citizenship abroad. For the time being, this can be considered an “ongoing” project, as the vast majority of Hungarians living in Slovakia and almost half of the ethnic Hungarians living in Romania did not have Hungarian citizenship in 2020. The effort has been more successful among the smaller communities of Transcarpathian and Vojvodina Hungarians, the majority of whom have acquired Hungarian citizenship. In addition to citizenship, the Hungarian State also exerts influence on Hungarians in neighbouring countries by other means, whether through grants from the Bethlen Gábor Fund, mobility programmes (“Makovecz Mobility”, Borderless), sports subsidies, etc.

In this paper, we examine how the material and stratification situation of Hungarian minority and majority youth changed in the context of the social changes in different countries of the Carpathian Basin in the two decades between 2001 and 2020; how we can interpret these changes according to the globalised world of Castells (1996); and how we can delimit the social factors associated with Standing's concept of precariousness. At the beginning of the period, as already noted (Szabó–Bauer 2002), the material situation of Hungarian youth living in minorities was more deprived than that of their Hungarian counterparts, as reflected in a peculiar “East–West” slope. A major focus of the study is exploring to what extent and in what form these conditions have been rearranged over the past two decades in terms of material income relations and social stratification. Although this Hungarian state policy about the externalized citizenship has only a minor impact on the material situation and social stratification of young people, it is interesting to examine the similarities and achievements in the material situation of Hungarian youth in the wider region, in other countries, and in the changes in this situation or, more generally, in patterns of social stratification. The study of the social positioning of youth – of the young generation (McCrindle 2021) – poses a serious methodological challenge. On the one hand, we can only talk about the labour market and occupational status of young people who have completed their studies, but this is often temporary or, at most, involves the first occupational position, which, as we know, is not permanent and can change rapidly. Therefore, the focus of this study is not on occupational position but on the material status of young people, which may be related to their active employment status but is also influenced by the social position of the parental family. Another focus of the study is the multi-dimensional social stratification of minority Hungarian youth, which is mainly examined using variables focusing on cultural capital and consumption, relational capital, and future optimism, but material status is also taken into account. In this section, although we do use comparisons with young people in Hungary, the separate analysis only applies to minority youth (mainly for reasons of scope), while the stratification of majority Hungarian youth is discussed on the basis of earlier research findings (see Bokányi–Gyorgyovich–Pillók 2018, Gondi–Bokányi–Gyorgyovich–Pillók 2021).

Young people in the social structure

As already pointed out in previous research (see Gábor 1997, Szabó–Bauer 2002, Gábor–Veres 2005, Veres 2011), the social situation of young people in the Carpathian Basin regions has been substantially different, partly due to the development of the market economy and the standard of living, and partly due to educational expansion, whereby the regions of the Carpathian Basin have now moved closer to the ‘centre’ countries (i.e., they have changed from periphery to semi-periphery countries). Since the mid-2000s, EU accession has created a new system of relations in most parts of the Carpathian Basin. By 2020, however, we could see that these changes involved young people in a single global network world society, and, as Castells (1996) pointed

out, the centre-periphery approach has become obsolete. In the emerging global network society, Castells argues, nation-states do not disappear, but they can play very different roles: they can help their citizens become integrated into the flows of the global network society, or they can act as 'vampire states', isolating from the globalised world and causing the impoverishment and isolation of their own taxpayers. But even in states that promote global integration, Castells says, there may be wide regional variation in the opportunities that globalisation offers young people. While the large regional centres and capitals of the Carpathian Basin have become global cities, with all the advantages and disadvantages that this entails, in other sub-regions, young people are disconnected from global network society, living in the 'fourth world' or 'black holes', where young people are low-educated, with high unemployment and poverty – if they have not migrated (see Kapitány–Spéder 2004, Veres–Raţ–Tobias 2017, Horváth 2017). A significant share of low-educated young people in disadvantaged rural areas either emigrate or rely on unemployment and social support systems without prospects for improvement, often in low-income, precarious employment, and are focused on surviving (see Ferge 2002, Csata 2005, Popescu–Ivan–Raţ 2016, Raţ–Popescu–Ivan 2019).

Beck (1983), in the context of the individualisation of opportunities and inequalities, notes that there has been a degree of levelling in some dimensions, with income inequalities falling and social mobility rising in late twentieth-century Germany. Overall, however, his main thesis is that socio-economic development has led to significant changes and improvements in people's living conditions while the distribution of social inequality has remained relatively stable. Beck (1999) explains that the individualisation of young people, with the "collective" challenges, risks and opportunities of social stratification and labour market challenges (on the one hand, well-paid jobs; on the other, unemployment, the devaluation of diplomas, etc.) can take several directions and follow progressive, regressive or even alternative paths. Although his thesis of an individualised risk society has been partly reconsidered (Beck 2002), his ideas are still a good starting point for examining what Beck observed in Western societies has taken place in the Central and Eastern European region over a few decades and what specific features of it are associated with young people from Hungarian minority communities.

For the labour market challenges, we used Standing's (2012) concept of the precariat. Some young people entering the labour market for the first time face the challenge of precarious work and underemployment, not only in disadvantaged areas and settlements but also in prosperous areas. They require a high degree of flexibility in employment, reducing the benefits of job stability and requiring adaptation and socialisation to precarious employment and situations (Standing 2012). According to Csata, we can approach the phenomenon of precarity in the Carpathian Basin through underemployment: in Transylvania, 70% of unskilled Hungarian youth who have only completed general schooling (eight classes) and dropped out of their studies

are disadvantaged and are nine times more likely to become members of the precariat than urban youth aged 25-29 who have completed university (Csata 2017: 376).

The study involved searching for a multidimensional stratification model that could also deal with the specific transitional situation of young people. Given that the social situation of young people can only be described in terms of 'hard' variables to a limited extent – as a significant proportion of them are still studying, studying and working in casual jobs or have not yet achieved a socially relevant 'final' status –, it is appropriate to classify young people using a multidimensional stratification model that takes into account values and cultural consumption. In this study, for reasons of scope, we only create a multidimensional stratification model for Hungarian youth who are part of a Hungarian minority group outside the borders of Hungary, while for the purpose of comparison with young people in Hungary, we tried to adapt the multidimensional scheme developed by Gondi-Bokányi et al. (2021). The dimensions were maintained, and the process of operationalisation was changed at some points. According to this social stratification approach, in addition to the material background and the socially given situation and education of young people, we also take into account variables associated with cultural capital and diversity (see Szabó-Hires-László 2018, 2023) and the frequency of cultural consumption. The model includes attitudes related to values, value orientation, visions of the future, and social capital (organisational capital, network of friends, offline and online). This implies that the social status of young people is not only shaped by factors that are determined by external social circumstances but also influenced by young people's choices, decisions, attitudes and values (see also Gondi-Bokányi et al. 2021: 47, Kollár et al. 2021). We would add, however, that values, "attitudes", and optimistic or pessimistic attitudes towards the future (either directly or through aspirations, models and perspectives) can affect young people's chances of being validated. Similarly, family background and material circumstances, life planning and aspiration level also influence further education decisions (Bourdieu 1984, Breen-Goldthorpe 2001, Gabay et al. 2010). The theoretical conceptualisation of multidimensional social stratification can mainly be traced back to the works of Bourdieu (1984, 1997), Coleman (1988), and more recently to the work of Kovách et al. (2015), which also used 'objective' and 'subjective' indicators to operationalise forms of capital, which were grouped into clusters as described in the methodology (Bokányi et al. 2018, Gondi-Bokányi et al. 2021), with some exceptions. Our model differs in some areas from the concept developed by Hungarian researchers as early as 2016. In our model, we include economic resources and traditional indicators of material well-being within a composite indicator because, for Hungarian minority youth living in different countries, the indicators of subjective material well-being are not comparable due to different reference levels and would distort the final results. A composite index of established material circumstances (situation) has also been shown in the literature to correlate better with subjective well-being than income or deprivation indices (Christoph, 2010) or other

approaches, but composite indicators have been preferred and are also recommended for use in measurement. In fact, we planned to include the “marketability” variables (entrepreneurial status, stable employment, unemployment) in the model, but they were eventually dropped to improve the model fit. While maintaining the volume of cultural consumption patterns, the number of books in the household was included in the model, and the number of acquaintances/friends on social media was also used to measure personal, informal contact capital. In this way, Hungarian minority youth were included in a multidimensional stratification model that encapsulates resource consumption patterns and attitudes relevant to young people.

Research methodology

Population delimitation, data sources

The study population was delimited by language, ethnicity and age criteria. Thus, we studied the Hungarian minority population aged 15-29 years old: the sample of the Hungarian Youth Survey 2020 included about 4,000 Hungarian minority youth in four countries, and in Hungary, the sample included 2,000 cases for our target variables. The sampling was done using the multistage random sampling method (Székely 2021). The previous surveys in 2001 and 2016 were similarly based on samples of 4,000 cases of Hungarian minority youth. For the most important variables, we sought to make comparisons with the Hungarian data, reflecting on previously published results (see Székely 2021).

The two main sources of data for the analysis are IFJUSAG2000, MOZAIK2001, and the Hungarian Youth Survey 2020. In addition, we have referred to the results of the 2016 Youth Survey in some places. Around 4,000 Hungarian minority youth from four countries were included in the sample. Subsamples for the 2016 and 2020 surveys contain 2,000 cases from Romania, 1,000 cases from Slovakia, 500 cases from Vojvodina/Serbia, and 500 cases from Transcarpathia/Ukraine. Similar proportions of subsamples were applied in 2001, but the number of cases in Vojvodina was higher: 1,017 (see Table 2 and Székely 2021).

Research questions

The research questions addressed in this study were the following:

- Starting from Beck's basic assumption, we assume that a process of social equalisation took place among Hungarian-identified minority youth in Central Europe and among the youth of Hungary between 2001 and 2020. The first research question is: Was there during this period an increase in living standards and a civilisational development of opportunities for young people in all regions/countries (involving the expansion of secondary and tertiary education and a reduction in the disparities in material wealth among young people in different regions), while the inequality of social distribution remained basically unchanged?

- The second research question, based on Standing's concept of precarious work, examines the role of labour market activity and what other factors influenced the social and material situation of young minority Hungarians and those from Hungary generally. Taking into account Castells' concept of space of places and the role of nation-states in the integration into a globalised world society, we investigate whether and how the internal relations of the regions/countries of the Carpathian Basin have been reorganised in the last two decades, both within and outside the European Union, in terms of the material situation of young people and their chances of achieving prosperity, and whether these changes tended to converge in the different regions between 2000 and 2020.
- The third research question asks – taking into account cultural, material and organisational resources –, what patterns of social stratification among minority youth emerge from the Gondi-Bokányi model, taking into account multidimensional consumption, literacy, cultural and social resources? What are the main differences and similarities between countries?

The fourth research question is: What factors are responsible for the large proportion of deprived groups in the social stratification of minority Hungarian youth? Is it the effect of Beck's regressive individualization, the phenomenon of Standing's precariat, or is it the result of some other phenomenon associated with the minority situation?

Methods used in the analysis

Statistical analysis of indicators of material situation. In order to answer the research questions, we first describe the material situation and the social background of young people by means of bivariate analyses.

In the MOZAIK2001 youth survey, material situation was measured differently in some respects compared to later surveys, but data were collected on several important variables (e.g., own dwelling, relevant durable consumption, and household assets, including cars ([see Szabó-Bauer et al. 2002])).

Indicators of the material situation of young people were included in both surveys (2001, 2020), including whether they own their own dwellings, own cars, and how many durables and services they own out of a total list of 12 items. This shows how well the household they live in is equipped and what material and comfort-related factors they had in 2001 and 2020, sometimes looking back to 2016 when appropriate.

The question for the subjective assessment of the material situation, asked in all three (2001, 2016, and 2020) waves of data collection, was the following: "Overall, how do you feel materially... living in deprivation / without worries?" A five-point scale was used to measure how respondents rated their situation (1-"Living in deprivation", 5-"Living without problems")

Using a composite measure of material situation, we created a composite index, as follows:

Table 1. Components and formula of wealth position indices 2001, 2020

2001	2020 ²
3 * own dwelling + 2* car + number of durables: summer house, other dwelling, building (empty) plot, freezer/freezer, automatic washing machine, dishwasher, colour TV, satellite dish, mobile phone, personal computer (PC), lorry, commercial vehicle, internet subscription	3 * own home + 2 * car + number of durable goods and services: bank account, credit card, life insurance, savings, major household equipment, electrical goods, smartphone, mobile internet, computer, laptop, tablet, games console, smartwatch

Obs. 1. COMPUTE = 3 * own flat/house + 2 * own car + Count (valuable products and services)
2. In Hungary COMPUTE = 3 * own flat/house + 2 * frequency of savings + Count (valuable products and services)

OLS Regression models. The socio-economic determinants of better material status elasticity and its change over time were examined using bivariate and multivariate OLS linear regression statistical models. Using the multivariate OLS regression model, we examined the role of different demographic and social background variables, as well as the labour market status, educational attainment, and occupational position of young people in relation to achieving good material status. Furthermore, the research question was tested on a sample of five countries and at different points in time (2000/2001, 2020)

The statistical analysis was based on multivariate linear regression models, where the dependent variables were the standardised indices of material wealth as described above (see Table 1).

The independent variables are age, sex (1 - male), type of municipality of residence (metropolitan-county, rural residence), highest education (number of grades completed), father's education (father - number of grades completed), father's physical occupation (dummy), family size (number of siblings), Roma origin (based on auto- or hetero-identification), labour market position (working, unemployed) and occupational status (intellectual, entrepreneur) as dummy variables. The independent variables were measured similarly in the two data sets (2001 and 2020), but there was a small difference in the case of the dependent variables for durables and services owned, so we need to be cautious when comparing the differences in effects over time.

Hierarchical cluster analysis method: This involved clustering the samples of Hungarian young people in the study countries according to different social and cultural resource dimensions using the HCA method. Variables that had a communality above 0.3 and a factor weight above 0.4 in the initial principal component analysis, or were matched with appropriate factor weights, were included in the cluster model. Model fit was acceptable, with a KMO of 0.68. The four factors we generated explained 60 per cent of the total variance. The model variables by dimension are as follows (see Appendix 1).

In the dimension of economic capital, the following appear: The index of material wealth (see Table 1: home ownership, car ownership, life insurance, money saved, major household equipment, electrical goods, number of modern digital goods

owned/used by young people (smartphone, mobile internet, computer, laptop, tablet, game console, smart watch).

The dimension of cultural capital and habitus consisted of two composite indicators: (1) a literacy factor created from two variables: one is the expected level of completed schooling (which, for young people, predicts the level of schooling those who have already started will reach, but since they were still studying, they were awarded one lower scale value than those who had graduated high school [since not everyone graduates successfully – the success rate in Romania, for example, is around 60-70% per year. For the baccalaureate, see INS 2022]). The other component is foreign language proficiency (number of languages spoken at least at the intermediate level and number of books in the home, including e-books). (2) total volume of cultural consumption (visits to theatre, cinema, art cinema, library, classical music concert, popular music concert, bookstore, exhibition/museum, opera at least weekly, monthly, see Appendix 2).

The indicators of socio-relational capital are divided into two parts. The first is informal social capital (number of active friendships, satisfaction with friendships, number of social media contacts. Public-political activity, organisational capital [willingness to participate in (home country) parliamentary elections, level of interest in politics, membership of organisations, knowledge of organisational programs, see Appendix 3]).

The indicator of future vision – optimism is broadly considered part of social capital and is composed of three variables (satisfaction with the chances of fulfilling personal life plans, future prospects, and employment opportunities).

The variables of the above dimensions are “objective” and “subjective” indicators, which were subjected to principal component analysis. Thus, we were able to classify them into four dimensions, creating four composite variables (see Appendix 1-3).

On the basis of the variables of the dimensions thus constructed, we created eight homogeneous clusters using cluster analysis on a pooled sample of Hungarian minority youth. The clustering procedure was performed using hierarchical cluster analysis (HCA) using Ward’s method. The dendrogram analysis revealed a well-defined optimal model of eight clusters according to which the respondents were classified.

Variables excluded from cluster analysis in this study but included in the model of Gondi-Bokányi et al. were the marketability variables (entrepreneurial status, the experience of joblessness, and stable job). These were eventually dropped for validity-related reasons and to improve model fit.

The results of the cluster analysis are also evaluated and analysed separately by country based on the distribution of respondents.

In the last part of the study, binary logistic regression was performed using the social determinants of belonging to the deprived strata. The independent variable was a dummy variable that took a value of ‘1’ if the young people belonged to the

deprived social stratum and '0' if they did not. The list of independent variables included the socio-demographic (age, gender, country, residence-type dummy) and social background variables (father's education, father's high [intellectual or manager] occupational status dummy, number of siblings, Roma origin), unemployment experienced, completion of studies, and cultural attitude variables: Religiousness (with the following values: Religious, church (1) Religious in their own way (2) Don't know (3), Reference value: Not religious) and a scale about national pride with being Hungarian (1-5 values). Logistic regression was found to have weak explanatory power for the unified 15-29-year-old minority sample pooled across four countries, so the analysis was undertaken in two ways. First, we split the population into two groups by age and ran the regression on the pooled minority sample (the cut-off was age 22 when most young people who had completed further education could have completed their BA degree and started working). We then ran the logistic models separately for the Hungarian minority youth in each country to reveal any different characteristics.

Results of empirical analysis

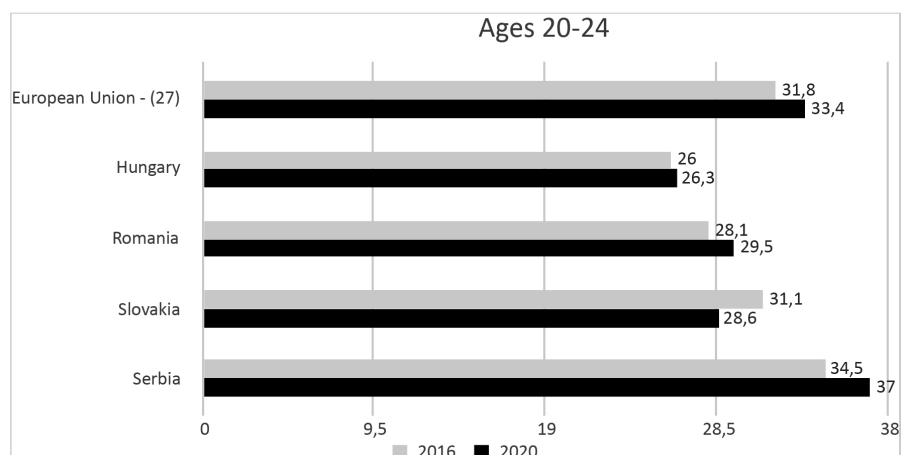
Educational and labour market situation and occupational status of young people

The research analysed Hungarian young people aged 15-29 years old based on the 2001 and 2020 Hungarian Youth Surveys. Members of this population, both in Hungary and in neighbouring countries, have either studied or completed their studies, and a large proportion of them have started working. The proportion of young people in this age group who are in education reflects the extent of educational expansion in the country concerned, but the implications of the schooling of the Hungarian minority are not always in line with those for the national average. Results from a previous LFS (Labour Force Survey) show that in Romania, the share of young Romanian nationals aged 15-29 with a learning status was about five percentage points greater than the share of young Romanian nationals of Hungarian ethnonationality of the same age in the period 2002-2012. However, no significant differences were observed in the unemployment rate (Csata 2017: 379). Another structural specificity is that a larger share of Hungarian youth lived in rural areas than the majority youth in the country (see Gyurgyik 2014, Veres 2020, 2023). As a general tendency, the youth in minority Hungarian communities in Romania have slightly lower educational attainment than the total population of youth, at least in Romania and in Slovakia, according to the last two censuses (Veres 2015, 2023, Scitanie 2023).

To get a sense of the social position of young people, we first look at educational attainment and employment rates. Looking at changes between 2001 and 2020, we see that the share of young people aged 15-29 in education increased substantially, from 26-30 per cent to 40-50 per cent. The main reason for this is the so-called

educational expansion phenomenon, whereby the share of young people aged 15-24 participating in both secondary and tertiary education increased substantially (Papp 2008). This was already the case by 2016 and has not changed substantially since then (Székely 2018). In some countries, the share of young people in education has even stagnated or decreased due to the impact of the coronavirus epidemic or other policy factors, such as in the case of Hungary and Slovakia (see Fig. 1). According to EUROSTAT data, the share of young people aged 20-24 in education among the total population is similar to our research results. Thirty-seven per cent of 20-24-year-olds in Vojvodina, Serbia, were in education in 2020 compared to 29.5% in Romania, 28.6% in Slovakia, and 26.3% in Hungary (see Fig. 1, Eurostat 2022).

Fig. 1. Students in tertiary education in selected CEE countries, 2016, 2020 (%)



Source: Eurostat (2022), <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/data/database> (Authors' construction).

According to our survey, nearly half (48.5 per cent) of Hungarian youth aged 15-29 in Romania were enrolled in education in 2020, an increase of nearly 20 percentage points from 2001, with a similar but slightly smaller increase in Slovakia from 26 to 40 per cent, and in Transcarpathia from 31 to 43 per cent of Hungarian youth in education, according to the survey. In Vojvodina, Serbia, the proportion of young Hungarians in education was already relatively large at 41% in 2001, but here, too, it increased to 49.5% in 2020. In Hungary, the share of young people in education increased less in the 20 years under review, from 34 to 40 per cent, which is close to the figures for Slovakia and Transcarpathia in 2020, but between 2016 and 2020, as we have seen (Figure 1), EUROSTAT data also show a stagnating trend in Hungary and a decrease in Slovakia, while in Romania, Serbia and according to the EU average, the share of young people in education has continued to increase. Thus, an increase in the labour market

participation rate of 15-29-year-olds was observed in Hungary (Székely 2021: 12), but at the same time the share of young people excluded from the labour market, neither studying nor working decreased from 18% in 2001 to 10% (see Table 2).

Table 2 *Social and educational situation of young Hungarians by country, 2001, 2020 (%)*

Country/region	Years	Studying*	Working	None	Total	N
Romania/ Transylvania	2001	30.2	52.8	17.0	100.0	1943
	2020	48.5	42.7	8.8	100.0	2000
Slovakia/ Highlands	2001	26.2	45.4	28.4	100.0	995
	2020	40.3	51.4	8.3	100.0	1000
Serbia/ Vojvodina	2001	40.7	48.1	11.2	100.1	1017
	2020	49.5	44.7	5.8	100.0	500
Ukraine/ Transcarpathia	2001	31.6	45.1	23.3	100.0	496
	2020	43.0	49.5	7.4	100.0	500
Hungary	2001	34.9	47.1	18.0	100.0	8000
	2020	40.0	50.0	10.0	100.0	8000

Obs. *All the differences between the years 2001 and 2020 are significant ($p<0.01$)
Source: MOZAIK2001, Youth 2000, Hungarian Youth Research 2020

Another characteristic of young people’s entry into the labour market is that, as previous research has shown (Csata 2017, Veres–Papp 2016, Székely 2018, Veres 2020), there is no sharp line between the world of learning and the world of work, and a new kind of fluid transition can be observed: some people study and work at the same time, others alternate between the world of learning and the world of work, working after secondary school, then going to university, studying at the bachelor’s level, and then after a few years continuing at the master’s level. In line with the previous analysis of this research, some young people dropped out of both fields, i.e., both school and work, between 2001 and 2020, but fortunately, the number of young people in Hungary doing this decreased (see the proportion of young people who chose ‘neither’, Table 1 (see also Veres– Vita 2023). Young people who are neither in education nor in employment are the ‘quasi-unemployed’ – a category defined by Eurostat as those who are not in work and who, for some reason, are not looking for work (who, for example, are temporarily supported by their parents or partner, and would have to move or commute long distances to work) (Eurostat 2022, Veres–Vita 2023)

By analysing the educational and employment situation of the targeted young people, according to different social background variables, we can observe certain trends over a twenty-year horizon, partly independent of countries but also across countries. In 2001, the gender gap in further education was only observed in Slovakia, where girls were nearly 5 per cent more likely to be in education than boys of the same age. By 2020, however, girls will have a smaller advantage in further education

among the 15-29 age group everywhere except in Transcarpathia. In Transylvania and Vojvodina girls will be 4 per cent more likely to be in education than boys, while in Slovakia, they will be 8 per cent more likely to be in education than boys. This was already confirmed by census data in 2011 when we observed a female majority among those with tertiary education in most countries (see Gyurgyik–Kiss 2010, Veres–Vita 2015). In terms of age group, the share of teenagers under 20 still in education rose from 60-65% in 2001 to over 80% in 2020, while for 20-24-year-olds, the share of those aged around 20% rose to over 40% between 2001 and 2020. The educational attainment of young people living in rural areas was ten percentage points lower than that of their urban counterparts in 2001 in Transylvania, Romania, and Transcarpathia, Ukraine (see Veres 2005, 2020), and this disadvantage did not disappear by 2020 but only decreased. If we compare young people in rural areas with those in large cities, the inequalities are greater than 10 per cent, even in Vojvodina in Serbia. Thus, educational expansion has not yet been able to catch up with the Hungarian minority youth in rural areas, and the gap between the higher education attainment of urban and rural youth has widened (for more details, see Veres–Vita 2023).

The educational attainment of young people who have completed their studies has also increased spectacularly over the past twenty years. In 2001, about half of those who graduated from primary school (1-8 classes) did not continue their education (except in Transcarpathia, where the school system is different), and only 20-25 per cent of those who graduated from secondary school did. By 2020, less than 8-20 per cent of those who graduated from primary school discontinued their studies, especially in Vojvodina, Serbia, and Slovakia, where the share is below 12 per cent (see Table 1). Around half of the young people with upper secondary education have entered the labour market, but some of these will have continued their studies within a few years (observations and university enrolment experience suggest that many young people postponed their studies due to the coronavirus epidemic). Similar trends were observed in the case of young people in Hungary in 2020. The factors influencing the further education of young people in Hungary (type of residence, level of education, differences according to father's education) are very similar to those in Romania (see Ruff 2021).

In terms of their main occupation, we looked at what kind of job, if any, young people who had already completed their studies had found. It should be borne in mind that this population is made up of young career starters, and in a good number of cases, they are in their first position in line with their education, but some of them have only taken up temporary jobs and are not in the position most representative of their likely careers. When examining occupational stratification, the categories were constructed taking into account the classification criteria of the EGP scheme (Erikson–Goldthorpe 1992, Goldthorpe 2000, Breen–Goldthorpe 2001) or at least what the questionnaire data allowed us to draw from it (see also Bukodi–Záhonyi 2004, Bukodi 2006, Monostori–Veres 2014, Veres–Vita 2023, for more details)

The results show that in 2020, the number of economically active young people in the sample who had completed their studies and could be involved in the research was 948 in Romania, 540 in Slovakia, 227 in Vojvodina, and 249 in Ukraine/the Carpathian region. Due to the small number of cases, a detailed comparative analysis according to occupational group has been omitted, as it is not known to what extent the differences can be attributed to sampling errors or to actual differences within the population.

In any case, in terms of the distribution of the main occupational strata, it can be concluded that in 2020, according to occupational stratification, a much larger share (14-18%) of young people were working as university graduates in the countries under analysis than two decades earlier, in 2000-2001, when the share of university graduates was around 10% (see Szabó-Bauer 2002, Veres 2005, Papp 2008). Moreover, the share of entrepreneurs and young people working in managerial positions was around 4 and 5 per cent in surveys of young Hungarians, while the share of the self-employed was around 6 and 9.6 per cent, respectively (Veres 2020, 2023).

Comparing the occupational stratification of young people in Hungary and the minority who have completed their studies, the share of white-collar workers does not differ significantly between the majority and minority, but the share of skilled workers is higher in Hungary, around 30%, which is similar only among young Hungarians in Slovakia. This can be attributed to the relatively greater weight of industry in the two countries, unlike in the other countries. A larger proportion of young people are employed as skilled workers. Overall, the distribution of young Hungarians in Slovakia is the most similar to Hungary, regarding the proportion of intellectuals and skilled workers, the proportion of routine intellectuals and self-employed young Hungarians in Slovakia, reflecting the (relatively) developed service sector and indicating the very similar structure of the former to the proportion of other non-manual service employees in Hungary in 2020 (see Gondi-Bokányi et al. 2021: 41).

The material and welfare situation of young people

In general, the material living standards and material situation of young Hungarian communities have risen in all countries over the past two decades according to the various material and housing indicators described in the methodological section, but to different degrees across countries. In the two decades between 2001 and 2020, although proportionally more young people owned their own dwelling, the increase was significant only among young Hungarians in Slovakia (from 12% in 2001 to 20% in 2020). Thus, while in 2001, young Hungarians led the list (18.8%) in terms of home ownership, two decades later, it is now led by young Hungarians in Slovakia. Young Hungarians in Transcarpathia were the least likely to live in their own home (9.6%), and this did not change significantly by 2020 (11%). In Transylvania and Vojvodina, young people's home ownership increased significantly but to a small extent over twenty years, from 10-12% to 14%, lagging behind the situation in Slovakia and Hungary (see Table 2).

Table 2 Indicators of material situation (number of dwellings, cars, durables) and average values of the material index by country² 2001, 2020 (%)

Country (N)	Own home* (%)	Own car* ^a	Laptop, computer* (%)	Mobile/smartphone ^{**} (%) ^b	Number of consumer goods*	Material index*
2001						
Romania/Transylvania (1940)	12.5	11.7	22.4	38.2	3.2	3.8
Slovakia/Felvidék (994)	12.0	13.4	28.0	67.9	4.2	4.8
Yugosl./Vojvodina (1017)	10.2	17.0	35.8	55.3	4.6	5.2
Ukraine/Transcarpathia (495)	9.6	12.0	11.4	30.5	2.8	3.4
Hungary (2014)	18.8	19.2	29.0	50.8	4.3	5.2
2020						
Romania/Transylvania (1976)	14.1	21.9	78.2	96.8	7.3	8.1
Slovakia/Felvidék (998)	20.5	33.1	79.3	93.5	7.9	9.2
Serbia/Vojvodina (499)	14.6	20.6	77.0	98.4	7.6	8.5
Ukraine/Transcarpathia (489)	11.1	23.1	78.0	98.9	7.6	8.4
Hungary (2000)	18.8	–	–	–	7.0	8.3a

*p < 0.05, **p < 0.01 significant correlations (T-test)

Source: MOZAIK 2001, Hungarian Youth Research 2020

a. The Hungarian survey did not ask about car ownership, so it was not possible to calculate the material index with the same composition. Instead of cars, the variable "regular savings" was used.

b. In 2001 survey: mobil phone. In 2016. and, 2020. surveys: smartphone.

We have briefly reviewed the differences in the material situation of Hungarian young people in the five countries. While in 2001, Hungary and then Vojvodina had the largest proportion of young Hungarians with a car (17%, Szabó-Bauer 2002), by 2020, the proportion of young people with a car had risen to over 20% in all countries, but Slovakia was in the lead, while Vojvodina/Serbia, albeit to a small extent, came last (no data available for Hungary). The level of ownership of laptops, computers, or mobile/smartphones changed significantly from 2001 to 2020, with 78-80% of boys owning a computer or laptop and 96-99% a smartphone by 2020 (see Figure 2, Table 2, EU2020).

Although the absolute values are not directly comparable over time, we nevertheless see that the components of the indicator also indicate substantial increases in material well-being in each country, although the situation of the different countries changed substantially over the period. Most of all, the material situation of young people in the EU Member States has improved, but in Transcarpathia, for example, a significant improvement and convergence can also be observed by 2020 (Table 2).

Subjective assessments of material situations can also be used to examine change over time, and the literature suggests that this is more appropriate than using objective indicators (see Hajdu–Hajdu, 2011). In response to the question "Overall, materially...", we see that, compared to 2001, there were already significantly more people in each region in 2020 who answered that they were "living without problems"

2 Note. For the number of consumer goods and the composition of the material index, see Table 1.

or “getting by” and fewer who answered “going without” or “living month to month.” The most significant increases in the proportion of those “living without problems” occurred in Ukraine and Romania, rising from a few per cent to 40 per cent and 32.3 per cent, respectively (see Table 3), while the proportion of those who are destitute and struggling month-to-month fell from 14 per cent to less than 3 per cent in Romania over 20 years, and the proportion who are “just getting by” on their income fell from 37 per cent to 12 per cent (Hajdu-Hajdu 2011). Subjective material welfare in Hungary was measured mainly against the Austrian situation from the late 1980s (Hajdu–Hajdu, 2011), while the majority of minority Hungarians, including those from Slovakia, measured their welfare against that of Hungarian citizens in 2001. Later on, this also became significantly differentiated, for example, due to the increase in migration and the transnational lifestyle in Romania (see Horváth 2008, Horváth–Anghel 2009, Anghel 2016).

Table 3 *Subjective assessment of material situation according to national sample (%), 2001, 2016, 2020*

Country	Year	What is your overall material situation...?					
		living in deprivation month by month	month by month, having financial problems	just getting by on income	getting by well on income from job	living without problems	Total
Romania/Transylvania	2001	3.9	10.7	36.7	42.6	6.1	100.0
	2016	0.5	2.6	15.2	55.7	20.6	94.6
	2020	0.6	1.7	11.9	53.5	32.3	100.0
Slovakia/Felvidék	2001	1.4	10.7	29.3	47.3	11.3	100.0
	2016	3.0	6.9	32.2	40.8	8.7	91.6
	2020	1.6	3.1	8.3	57.4	29.6	100.0
Serbia/Vojvodina	2001	2.5	7.9	28.1	53.9	7.6	100.0
	2016	0.8	4.5	21.3	55.4	13.2	95.3
	2020	0.1	1.7	13.5	60.9	23.9	100.1
Ukraine/Transcarpathia	2001	.4	8.1	28.8	54.2	8.5	100.0
	2016	.5	2.1	19.5	58.2	16.8	97.1
	2020	0.5	0.4	11.7	47.4	40.0	100.0
Hungary	2001	3.3	12.5	38.8	40.1	5.2	99.9
	2016	1.9	10.2	33.9	46.5	7.5	100.0
	2020	1.0	3.7	28.0	57.1	10.3	100.1

Sources: MOZAIK 2001 Youth Survey, Hungarian Youth Survey 2016, 2020 (author’s calculations)

Regression model of the factors shaping the material situation of young people

Based on the bivariate correlations, some trends can already be observed regarding the determinants of young people’s material situation. However, in order to get a more comprehensive picture, an OLS multivariate linear regression analysis

was carried out. We used the composite material situation index described in the methodology section as the dependent variable (see Table 1) and presented there a list of independent variables to examine the role of different demographic and social background variables, as well as the labour market status, education and occupational position of young people in the achievement of a good material situation. The regression models were run at two points in time (2001, 2020) and on samples of Hungarian youth in five countries. Regression models for the 2020 samples showed the highest adjusted R^2 explanatory power based on the independent variables.

According to these results, the independent variables explain the value (increase) of the material situation index, which is around 35 per cent for Hungarian youth in Slovakia and Ukraine, 31 per cent in Hungary, and 15 per cent for the Hungarian sample in Romania and Serbia. The regression models for 2001 are weaker, with a similar dependent variable structure, with explanatory power of only between 10 and 19 per cent based on adjusted R^2 (see Table 4 A, B). The difference in the explanatory power of the models can only partly be attributed to the fact that different social and contextual determinants would have been more significant in the material well-being indicator in 2020 than two decades earlier, as the higher R^2 value can be partly attributed to specific differences in the composition of the dependent variables in 2020 and 2001, but the extent of this is not known to us. In fact, the composition of the dependent variable in 2020 differs for some consumption items from those used in the 2001 indicator. Here, we considered it more important to provide relevant measures of the material situation in 2020 than to provide a completely identical equivalent to the research of two decades earlier. Similarly to the methodological approach of Angelusz-Tardos (2007) – as they pointed out in relation to the measurement of material resources over two decades – modifications had to be made in the measurement of material situation, especially for the indicators of consumer durables and services measuring well-being, as formal invariance would have actually weakened discriminatory capacity, i.e., the ability to detect differences, especially for consumer durables (Angelusz-Tardos 1998). That said, we believe that, since the independent variables are essentially the same, the adjusted Beta coefficients of the models are comparable over time and the differences over time can be made sense of. However, when comparing the explanatory power of the models, we should be cautious and consider the time-varying content of the dependent variable (See Table 4. A, B).

We have examined the regression results by country over a period of two decades:

Romania/Transylvania

For young Hungarians from Romania, the most important factor in achieving a good material situation in 2001 was the level of education of the parent (father) (adj Beta=. 200), while other family background variables (number of siblings, Roma

origin: more siblings or Roma origin reduce the chances of achieving a good material situation) and the labour market situation (experiencing unemployment or having a job had a negative effect on the dependent variable; only high-level positions had a positive effect). Young people's personal resources, level of education, gender (male) and age are significant but overall weaker explanators of the achievement of a good material situation. Rural origin has a weak but negative effect. R² increases in the 2020 model, but not by much (.16 to .21). In the 2020 regression model, the effect of family background (father's education: .044, number of siblings, Roma origin) is weaker: type of residence, and gender no longer have a significant effect, but the effects of some individual resources, especially age (.33) and employment have a positive effect, regardless of the position held (the effect of managerial/professional position is not significant separately). Education continues to have a weaker positive significant effect (.087).

Slovakia

In the 2001 regression model of the Hungarian minority youth living in this country, the strongest effect of the educational level of the parent (father) in achieving a good material situation is found in the regression model (adj Beta=.175), with a slightly weaker significant effect of the labour market situation (experience of unemployment [-.179]; here again, employment had a negative effect on the dependent variable, only high-status employment had a significant effect: .118). Then comes the individual's level of education and other family background variables (number of siblings, Roma origin), which have negative effects on the dependent variable. This is followed by the weaker but significant effects of personal resources of the youth, age, and gender. In the 2020 model, the adjusted R² (.348) has doubled from .164 in 2001 to 1, which is more than a method effect. In the 2020 regression model, the effects of age (.429) and employment (.136) stand out, while the effect of family background is differentiated: the father's education no longer has a significant effect, but the negative effect of following remains: number of siblings, experience of unemployment (-.118). Again, type of residence and gender have no significant effect, while the effect of respondents' education and managerial/professional positions are not significant separately.

Serbia/ Vojvodina

In the linear regression model for Hungarian minority youth in Serbia in 2001, the largest effect on having a good material situation was due to having a managerial/professional position (.211), followed by the educational level of the parent (father) (.100). Age had a slightly stronger effect on the personal resources of the young person (.138), but a much weaker effect on the educational level of the individual (.052), and there was a negative effect of the type of residence, i.e. living in a rural area, on having a good material situation. In the 2020 regression model for Serbia,

the adjusted R^2 (.151) is not significantly different from the .143 in 2001. In the 2020 regression model for Serbia, the regression-adjusted beta coefficients do not increase as much as in the previous countries. The effect of age (.151) and the effects of employment (.131) and intellectual/managerial position (.121) are significant. There is a similar negative effect of the family/parental background variables, both the number of siblings (-.158) and the experience of unemployment (-.082).

Ukraine/Transcarpathia

In the 2001 linear regression model of Hungarian minority youth in Transcarpathia, age (.271) and working in an intellectual/managerial position (.134) had the largest effect on achieving a good material status, followed by the educational level of the parent (father) (.089). The adj. R^2 value of the 2020 regression model (.348) is much stronger, more than three times the value of .105 in 2001. In the 2020 regression model, the effects of age (.373) and employment (.213) are also prominent, while rural residence has an exceptionally positive and significant effect (.235).

As we were only able to run the regression models on a small sample (less than 500 cases) in Ukraine at both time points and in Serbia in 2020, relatively few beta coefficients were found to have a significant effect.

Hungary

In the 2001 linear regression model for young people in Hungary, the strongest effects of individual educational attainment (.219) and intellectual/managerial occupation (.260) and the least effects of age (.100) were found in relation to the attainment of good material position. This was followed by family and social background factors, with weaker effects such as parent's (father's) educational attainment (.070), number of siblings (-.088) and type of residence, the negative effect of living in a rural area (-.086) and experiencing unemployment (-.080) on good material well-being. In the 2020 Hungarian youth regression model, the adj. R^2 value (.313) is significantly higher than the value of .192 in 2001, suggesting that in addition to the methodological difference, it also reflects a real change in the social determinants of young people's material well-being. In the 2020 regression model, only one regression-adjusted Beta coefficient increased, followed by the effect of individual educational attainment (.192) and then age (.149). In addition to the positive effect of being employed (.119), the effects of working in a managerial/managerial position (.086) and experiencing unemployment (-.082) are also significant. Weaker negative effects are also found for family-origin background variables such as number of siblings (-.0587), Roma origin, and gender (to the disadvantage of women).

The regression analyses on the 2001 samples show that the most positive effect of a father's education on good material status was due to family background, and a weaker negative effect of having a large family (more siblings) was due to Roma origin and the experience of unemployment scenarios.

In contrast, the education level of young people had a significant effect, but mattered less in minority communities and more in Hungary. In general, concerning a good material situation, it was not important whether a young person had worked, but having an entrepreneurial/managerial position clearly determined and positively impacted the material situation.

In the 2020 models, with the exception of the Hungarian sample from Ukraine, the age variable had the greatest effect on determining good material position. This could be interpreted as part of the individualised life paths that helped young people achieve their potential. This cannot be attributed to education or work alone, but it obviously also had a positive effect separately (see Table 4. A, B).

Table 4. Social determinants of (good) material well-being, linear regression models, beta coefficients by country, 2001, 2020

A. 2001³

	Romania/ Transylv.	Slovakia/ Highlands	Serbia/ Vojvodina	Ukraine/ Transcarpathia	Hungary
2001					
Age	.167***	.096***	.138**	.271***	.100***
Gender (1 - male)	.079**	.071***	.042	.061	.024*
Place of residence: rural	-.045*	-.016	-.067**	-.069*	-.086***
Education level (number of classes)	.091***	.111***	.052*	-.047	.219***
Father's education level	.200***	.175***	.100***	.089**	.070*
Number of siblings	-.136***	-.084***	-.037	-.015	-.088***
Roma (dummy)	-.075***	-.083**	-	-	-
Unemployed (dummy)	-.112***	-.179***	-.047	-.058	-.080***
Working (dummy)	-.113***	-.041	.006	-.071	-.071
Occupation: entrepreneur/ manager	.066***	.118***	.211***	.134***	.260***
Adj R ²	.162	.164	.143	.105	.192
N	1792	918	980	470	7842

3 Ibid. In the 2001 samples, it was not possible to separate the status of the respondent and the father as intellectual/manual worker employees.

B. 2020

	Romania/ Transylv.	Slovakia/ Highlands	Serbia/ Vojvodina	Ukraine/ Transcarpathia	Hungary
Age	.338***	.429***	.151*	.373***	.149***
Gender (dummy. 1 - male)	.004	.008	.001	.067	.062*
Place of residence: rural (dummy)	.035	.049	.004	.235***	-.021
Education level (number of classes)	.087**	-.028	-.032	-.044	.192***
Father's education level	.044*	.021	-.008	.038	.218***
Number of siblings	-.079**	-.159***	-.158***	-.046	-.057*
Roma (dummy)	-.049*	-.010	-.072	-.035	-.054*
Unemployed (dummy)	-.013	-.118**	-.082*	.021	-.087**
Working (dummy)	.104***	.136**	.131**	.213***	.119***
Occupation: intellectual, manager	.001	-.015	.121**	.055	.086**
Adj. R ²	.212	.348	.151	.348	.313
N	1804	927	475	422	1915

Obs. Dependent variable: wealth index (see Table 1)

*p < 0.1, **p < 0.05, ***p < 0.01 significant values (linear regression, standardised beta coefficients)

Source: MOZAIK 2001, Hungarian Youth Research 2020

We now analyse the main differences and analogies by country between 2001 and 2020 by comparing the regression models. In the samples of Hungarian young people in Romania and Slovakia, the role of parental background on material well-being was still highly significant in 2001 but only weakly significant in 2020 (with an adj. Beta below 0.1), and the effect of type of residence on material well-being weakened in 2020, while the effect of age on the well-being indicator became significantly stronger.

This can be understood in the sense that in the two countries that joined the EU (Ro, SK), the majority of Hungarian minority youths improved their material situation primarily due to employment (not only regarding managerial and intellectual positions but also lower-paid workers), and by the improvement in the individualisation of life paths, as seen in the Beck model. However, significant negative effects for the most disadvantaged bottom segment of young people remained. These are young people with several siblings, from families with many children and/or of Roma origin, or who could not escape the unemployment scenario. We can say that the latter exist in Standing's "precarious" conditions or are the "black holes" in Castell's network society. It is the latter segment of young people, especially in Romania, Slovakia, and Hungary, for whom the system of distribution of economic resources in society has not changed significantly.

In Hungary, there are similarities with the two other EU Member States regarding the change in the material situation of young people in 2020. But there are also significant differences. Looking at the period between 2001 and 2020, it is striking that the effect of the father's educational attainment within parental background became even stronger compared to the other two EU Member States (.245 in Hungary vs .120 or less; see Table 4 A-B). This was somewhat counterbalanced by the fact that young people's education also has a fairly significant effect on their material position (.19), but this is coupled with the fact that the effect of intellectual and managerial positions remains significant in 2020, so overall, the social reproduction phenomenon

among young people is significant. It can be concluded, therefore, that the better material well-being of young people in Hungary, to an increasing extent between 2000 and 2020, was achieved by the higher-educated children of highly educated parents, especially if young people obtain appropriate intellectual and managerial positions as age increases. Meanwhile, the opportunities for disadvantaged young people (from large families of Roma origin and those facing unemployment) have not improved, and the impact of these disadvantages, with some redistribution, has persisted. This means that the otherwise positive impact of schooling is only moderately exaggerated. This is in line with the finding of a previously published analysis that among young people aged 15-29 who have completed their education in Hungary, according to the 2020 Large Sample Survey of Youth, a small proportion engage in significant upward mobility in school, i.e., “3-5 per cent have been able to move up the educational ladder in a more serious way” (Gondi-Bokányi et al., 2021:39).

The regression model results for Hungarian youth in Serbian Vojvodina in the 2001 sample had slightly different characteristics from other regions. Age, parental background, and entrepreneurial status had a significantly positive effect on material well-being, while young people’s own education did not. Here, we see the specific conditions of the better-off youth of the former Yugoslav world who are working in the West, which in turn changed significantly with the war and emigration. Therefore, in 2020, the higher education and intellectual and managerial status of young people contributed significantly to their material well-being, but the role of parental background remained important. However, the negative effect of having a large family size and more siblings increased, although this was not significant before.

In the regression model for young Hungarians in Ukraine in 2001, parental background (education), age, and entrepreneurial status increased the probability of having a good material situation. However, neither education, number of siblings, nor employment had a significant effect on the material situation because starting wages were very low, and students from better backgrounds were more likely to have completed further education. This changed in 2020, and employment and education had a positive effect on good material position.

Multidimensional analysis of the social stratification of young people

The starting point is that neither educational attainment and material situation nor the occupational status of young people can be considered “definitive” components of the life stage. Thus, the application of ‘classical’ multidimensional stratification models is limited, and they have minimal relevance even for young people who have completed their education (see also Bokányi et al. 2018: 174, Kovách et al. 2017). Therefore, starting with the Hungarian youth analysis of Gondi-Bokányi et al. (2021) and using relevant consumption and lifestyle variables, we included Hungarian minority

youth in a multidimensional social stratification model and conducted an analysis by country. We then compared the results with the socio-cultural stratification fault lines delineated among Hungarian youth (see Gondi-Bokányi et al. 2021: 47).

The dimensions of the stratification model⁴ are the following:

Economic capital (shown in Table 1) was measured using an index of material situation, which differs from the Hungarian model where subjective well-being was used, and an indicator of digital tools and services used by young people, cultural capital and habitus (two indicators, one for literacy and the other for aggregate cultural consumption), and socio-relational capital (two components: one for informal relational capital, the other for public-political activity, organisational capital⁵ and an indicator of vision – optimism, see Appendix 1). In the methodological section, we have also described the variables associated with the dimensions, on the basis of which the respondents of the samples of Hungarian youth living in the minority were classified into eight homogeneous clusters using cluster analysis. The resulting clusters, or socio-cultural strata, reflect different configurations of the volume of characteristic resources. For the sake of comparability, the naming of the clusters was somewhat aligned with the Gondi-Bokányi et al. (2021) model, although the following designations are not exactly identical with it: ‘digital “native” optimists’, ‘deprived’, ‘average socialites’, ‘lonely pessimists’, ‘educated socially active’, ‘wealthy optimists’, ‘social media-consuming pessimists’, and ‘active cultural consumers’. In the cluster model used to group young people in Hungary, also based on the Hungarian Youth Survey 2020, seven clusters were created (Gondi-Bokányi et al. 2021:48). The labels and characteristics differ slightly between Hungarian youth living in Hungary and Hungarian youth living abroad in the minority, but the labels ‘investing in education’, ‘digitalisation winners’, ‘deprived’, and ‘lonely fighters’ indicate that there are many similarities in the social stratification of the two populations, while the differences in the proportions of the two populations by country suggest a number of social correlations. As a result of the cluster analysis, we stratified the samples of minority Hungarian youth according to groupings, but in reality, these stratifications are not sharply demarcated. In other words, these strata are not separated from each other in society; in a socio-psychological sense, the members do not have distinct, separate identities, even though the characteristics of these cluster groups may play an important role in the identity of many young people. It can, therefore, be interpreted as meaning that those belonging to a particular cluster, if they possess resources that are more pronounced than the average cluster, seek each other’s company socially, while those with weaker ties to the cluster are not as clearly separated from other clusters (see Table 5).

4 The dimensions in the model were developed through principal component analysis, see Methodology section.

5 We had planned to include the generalised trust variable (How much do you trust people in general?), but we left it out for reasons of model fit.

Table 5. Multidimensional social strata of minority Hungarian youth (Romania, Slovakia, Serbia, and Ukraine) based on cluster analysis (standardised cluster averages)

Social strata/ Cluster	Native digital optimists	Deprived	Average sociables	Solitary pessimists	Educated social activists	Prosperous optimists	Pessimist social media- consumers	Active cultural consumers
Cluster number	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Material situation	-- 2.0728	-- 2.1049	3.0094	3.4668	-- 2.7271	++ 5.9475	2.9291	-- 2.7989
Number of digital- modernisation assets	++ 5.60	3.22	+ 4.76	4.34	4.34	++ 4.65	4.02	4.11
Literacy factor (school. foreign languages. books)	.0311	-- -.41401	-- -.25875	+ .15215	++ 0.50772	-.00698	.00024	++ .4066
Frequency of cultural consumption	-- .2946	-- .1414	.4508	-- .2599	.4702	-- .2504	.4781	++ 3.3879
Public-political activity	-.0896	-.4788	-.37380	-.18121	++ .96232	-.1461	.2147	++ .3089
Friendly relations	4.10	3.93	++ 17.19	3.40	5.22	4.69	4.59	4.26
Number of contacts on social media	946	-- 766	1013	-- 739	1044	1109	++ 2973	-- 872
Future plan - optimism	++ .7617	-- -.3507	+ .3304	-- -.3480	.0936	++ .6340	-- -.4085	.1421

Legend: ++ highly above average, + slightly above average, average, -- very below average, - slightly below average
Source: Hungarian Youth Research 2020 (authors' calculation)

The different strata of the population, along with the dimensions of available resources, are characterised as follows, taking into account how they are distributed by country and by the main sociodemographic and labour market categories (see Figure 2 and Table 5).

Digital 'native' optimists. The penetration of digital communication tools and services is particularly high in this group, as is optimism about the future. This group is characterised by average literacy, an average number of informal friendships and average levels of public-political activity. They are also below average in terms of their material situation (housing, cars, household equipment) and their level of consumption of non-digital cultural products. Their share is largest in Romania, at 9.5%, and smallest in Serbia, at 6.5% in 2020; this habitus is also favoured by the online activities and curfew restrictions associated with the Covid virus, especially in Romania in 2020, when the data were collected.

Deprived. The consumption and provisioning of young people in this group is below average in all dimensions. They also tend to be pessimistic about the future. The proportion of young people in this stratum is large in all countries, with young people in this stratum making up at least a quarter of each country (see Figure 2). Compared with young people in Hungary, the two deprived categories (deprived and socially deprived) combined did not exceed 12 per cent. However, the specific percentages are not comparable because the model used in the Hungarian sample included a subjective assessment of the material

situation, which refers to the proportion of materially deprived relative to the hard variables (see Gondi-Bokányi et al. 2021: 48). This group included mainly young people who were already working but with lower education, performing manual work.

The large proportion of minority Hungarian youth who are considered deprived has become a separate research issue that we have examined separately in the context of this study and will return to in a later section.

Average sociables. This group included those who had a high number of friendships and an exceptionally high average score on the measure of satisfaction with them. They have an average level of material situation and digital access. However, they are below average in terms of literacy, frequency of cultural consumption, education, and public activity. In terms of proportion, they are a smaller group, with only 8.5 per cent in the sample from Vojvodina in Serbia, while the least are from Slovakia (4.3 per cent).

Solitary pessimists. These young people are average in terms of all situations and digital literacy but below average in terms of their network of contacts and informal contacts, frequency of cultural consumption, and optimism about the future. Around a tenth of young people can be classified into this category, with slightly larger proportions in Slovakia (14.8%) and a smaller share in Vojvodina and Carpathian Vojvodina in Serbia (8.2%). Sociodemographically, it can be said that they are “older,” with the many young people aged 22-29 who have completed their studies being over-represented. In terms of type of residence, the picture varies by country: in Romania, they are slightly over-represented among young people living in large cities, while in Slovakia and in the Ukrainian Transcarpathia, they tend to be more prevalent among young people living in rural areas.

Educated social activists. This group is characterised by high above-average scores in terms of culture, education, and public-political activity. They are average in the other dimensions. They represent a larger stratum, although they are found in different proportions in different countries. The sample of Hungarian youth in the Ukrainian Transcarpathian region accounts for 25% of the total and 15% in Slovakia. They represent the traditional intellectual habitus. In terms of social background and education, they tend to be more urban, university students or university graduates.

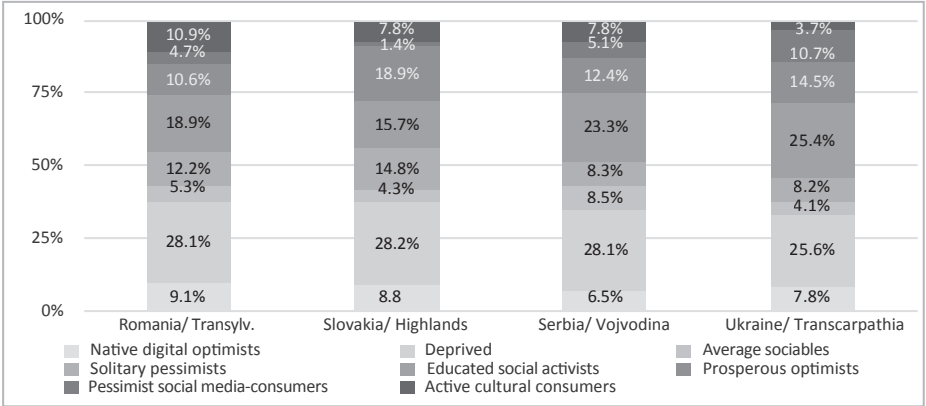
Prosperous optimists. This group includes young people with above-average material and income levels and average scores on all other dimensions, while they have lower-than-average levels of classical cultural consumption and public-political activity. They can be considered a typical group of entrepreneurs and business leaders, some of whom are still planning their careers. The size of the stratum is significant, averaging around 15%, with the greatest number of people in the Slovakian sample (18.9%) and the smallest in the Romanian (10%). In socio-demographic terms, the vast majority are active in the labour market, over-represented in entrepreneurship or management, the majority are aged 25-29, have at least a high school diploma, and they tend to live in large cities or municipalities, less often in small towns.

Pessimistic social media consumers. Young people in this group have an above-average social media network, which also characterises the way they spend their leisure time, and their outlook on life and the future tends to be pessimistic. Their share in the sample varies radically from country to country, with more than ten per cent of the young people in the Carpathian region of Ukraine falling into this category, while in the Hungarian sample in Slovakia, there are barely 1.4% of them, and in Romania and Vojvodina in Serbia the share is around five per cent. In terms of age, they are more likely to be aged 20-24; in terms of educational attainment, they are more likely to have completed secondary school; in terms of place of residence, they are more likely to live in villages, and they are slightly over-represented among women.

Active cultural consumers. Members of this group can even be described as omnivores (Chan-Goldthorpe 2005), according to international literature. The members are all well above average in terms of cultural consumption, above average in terms of literacy, but below average for educated public activists and above average in terms of public-political activity (see Table 5). Their share in the sample varies widely from country to country, with Romania having the largest share of 10.9 per cent and Transcarpathia the smallest at 3.7 per cent (see Figure 2). In terms of sociodemographic variables, they are overrepresented among young people aged 20-24 years old, university graduates or students, and urban youth by place of residence.

The results, therefore, suggest that although there are clear patterns among young people living in different countries, their prevalence varies widely. This can be explained by the different settlement structures, cultural and institutional backgrounds, socio-economic development, and the level of development of the labour market and market economy of the Hungarian minorities.

Fig 2. Distribution of Hungarian minority youth by social strata by country based on the socio-consumer clusters that were formed, 2020 (%)



Source: Hungarian Youth Research 2020 (authors' calculation)

We observed that perhaps the largest group of minority youth are the deprived, who were below average in all dimensions of consumption. The question arises as to why minority Hungarian youths were represented so significantly in this group compared to their counterparts from Hungary. Looking at the “objective” material situation in the previous section, we see that at least in Slovakia, Serbian Vojvodina, and most of the Romanian sample, Hungarian minority youth are not significantly more deprived than their Hungarian (majority) counterparts. However, minority status may create a context in which they may be more deprived than their majority counterparts in terms of consumption and literacy. Therefore, in our explanation, besides the methodological difference, we also raised the working hypothesis of “cultural bleakness” – that minority Hungarian youths’ access to cultural products and services may be in proportion and extent less than in Hungary. To answer this question, we conducted a binary logistic regression analysis, where the independent variable is a dummy variable that measures the membership of the deprived social stratum, as described in the methodology section. Based on the independent variables, we measured whether it is possible to determine the sociological factors that make this material and cultural-literacy deprivation likely, and to what extent this is a consequence of family background and to what extent it is the consequence of other factors such as the structure/size of the municipality as well as the related institutional network, the development of the NGO background, etc.

As described in the methodology section, logistic regression was performed in two ways. First, we split the population into two groups by age and ran the regression on the unified minority sample for the 15-21 age group and then for the 22-29 age group. Although there was a significant presence of deprived people in each age group, age specificities resulted in much less explanatory power for the 15-21-year-old sample but similar results to those for the 22-29-year-old sample, which are detailed below. We then ran binary logistic models by country: in Romania, the larger sample allowed us to include a variable that tested whether young people were numerically in the majority or minority at the local and sub-regional level (in the other countries, the sample caseload did not allow for the introduction of this variable) so that the differences seen by country could be explored.

The results of the unified logistic model for 22-29-year-olds clearly demonstrated that belonging to the deprived stratum is most strongly determined by social background: the low education of the father, as well as (early) leaving school status and, most importantly, the experience of unemployment, increase the latter by a factor of 2.5. In all countries, Roma affiliation, number of siblings, and age do not significantly contribute to belonging to the deprived stratum. Of the cultural attachment variables included in the model, religiosity (religious according to church teaching) was significant only for Hungarians in Transylvania, and this reduced the odds of belonging to the deprived group (probably through organisational attachment, as the effect was no longer significant for the “religious in their own way” group). The

low value for the variable indicating the strength of the sense of pride in minority Hungarian identity (ethno-national pride) and the weaker emotional attachment to Hungarianness had a significant effect on belonging to the deprived group only for Hungarians in Serbia, while in the logistic model for Carpathian region the value of the same order of magnitude (.761) was not significant due to the low number of cases.

Table 6 Logistic regression model of multidimensional deprived youth stratum membership (Exp B values)

Independent variables	Exp(B)				B	Exp(B)	Sig
	Romania	Slovakia	Serbia	Ukraine	22-29 year old	unified	
Country (ref: Ukraine)							.327
Romania(1)					.396	1.513	.064
Slovakia(2)					.358	1.419	.110
Serbia(3)					.341	1.354	.185
Age	.935**	.859**	.960	.899	-.085	.925**	.002
Gender (dummy)	1.203	.815	.857	1.279	.181	1.078	.149
Big city residence	.985	.873	.832	1.949	-.017	.964	.927
Rural residence	1.122	.797	1.205	1.498	.095	1.057	.532
Diaspora or in local minority (Tr.)	.541**						
Father's education	.660**	1.118	.835	.759	-.403	.662**	.000
Father_intellectual/leader	.711*	.526**	.623	.937	-.463	.641*	.050
Siblings	.887	.959	1.216	1.138	-.086	.918	.203
Roma (dummy)	1.456	1.300	.2943	.000	.398	1.495	.128
Unemployed	1.294	2.102**	5.890**	3.399	.847	2.367**	.000
Finished studies	1.796**	2.319**	1.446*	1.378	.540	1.745**	.008
frequency of drunkenness	.997	.994	.980	1.006	.167	1.081**	.002
frequency of smoking	1.000	1.001	1.000	1.000	-.060	.942*	.011
Drug use is a big problem (youth)	.583*	1.202	.883	2.778		.902	.705
Religious (Ref: Not religious)							.003
Religious, church(1)	.582*	.659	1.062	1.403	-.404	.627	.034
Religious itself(2)	.926	.672	1.179	.946	-.113	.893	.253
Don't know(3)	1.238	1.144	2.252	.751	.519	1.488	.092
National pride	1.084	.949	.793*	.761	.150	1.041	.706
Constant	3.310	10.551	2.851	7.710	.040		.534
					.290	1.337	
Cox & Snell R ²	.085	.084	.080	.071		0.080	
Nagelkerke R ²	.126	.121	.120	.109		0.120	

Obs. Dependent variable: Belong to deprived cluster (1, dummy)
*p < 0.05, **p < 0.01 significant values (Exp (B) coefficients)

The type of residence (urban/rural, big cities) did not have a significant effect, but for Romania, we find that Hungarians living in a dispersed way within the local administrative minority (outside Szeklerland) are less likely to be in the deprived stratum than Hungarian young people living compactly within the local/county level administrative majority. On this basis, we can reject the hypothesis that the local or small administrative minority situation of Hungarian youth contributes to the deprived situation. Furthermore, we can also rule out that addiction, excessive alcohol consumption (drunkenness), and smoking increase the risk of falling into the

deprived stratum. Agreement with the response that “drug use [is] one of the biggest problems of youth” in the Transylvanian sample of Hungarian youth significantly reduces the likelihood of belonging to the deprived stratum; this could mean that young people in the deprived stratum are less aware of the specific risk of drug use, but it does not tell us anything about the specific exposure (see Table 6). In summary, the main predictors of belonging to the deprived stratum are a weak educational background, which may be exacerbated by low education levels and the experience of early school leaving and unemployment. So, this phenomenon is more liable to be the product of a disconnected, precarious stratum that society is recreating than a product of Beck’s regressive individualisation.

Conclusions

In the course of the analysis, we have attempted to draw some conclusions by answering the research questions.

Over the last two decades, the disparities and disproportions between minority Hungarian youth communities and young Hungarians in Hungary generally in terms of educational and labour market activity and employment have decreased, partly disappeared, and partly become rearranged. The material and social situation of Hungarian youth in the Carpathian Basin improved significantly in all countries between 2001 and 2020, but the differences between regions also changed: the indicators of education and material situation of Hungarian youth in Romania became more similar to those of Slovakia and in some points exceeded those of young Hungarians in Hungary. This was also due to changes related to EU accession: a significant example being that the material and social situation of Hungarian youth in Transylvania/Romania and Slovakia improved between 2001 and 2020. Further changes are mainly due to the expansion of education in all regions, which has led to a significant change in the disparities in educational attainment between countries, which is also linked to the lengthening of the school life cycle. Nevertheless, minor differences can be observed between Hungarian minority communities, depending on the proportion of young people that each country’s education policy aimed to integrate into higher education. The expansion of education in Vojvodina in Serbia has been significant since 2001, and by 2020 it had expanded only slightly, but the proportion of university graduates in the region was high in 2020. The expansion of education between 2001 and 2020 is most spectacular in Romania, but there are still significant differences in young people’s chances of continuing their education by type of settlement and parents’ educational attainment that are perhaps even more pronounced than in other countries. Hungary, as we have seen, had the highest youth employment rate, but this is also a consequence of the fact that educational expansion has stagnated since 2016. In 2020, the chance of going to university

continued to be significantly reduced by the type of settlement (rural) and the low educational attainment of parents.

In the distributional relations of these societies, following Beck's ideas, we can say that there has been no significant change in the main distributional relations of resources since in all the countries studied, the negative effects of having many children and being of Roma origin and experiencing unemployment have not changed after two decades of change, and the positive effect of schooling is partly neutralised by the effect of the educational background of the parents (this is the case in Hungary and partly in Romania). These factors show the persistent effect of inequality of opportunity on access to material well-being, just as Beck observed for Germany in the 1980s. Furthermore, we can also conclude that the role of individualised life courses has increased in relation to material well-being since then, and the increase in the variable value of age was one of the strongest influences on access to material well-being until 2020.

In answering the second research question, we find that unemployment, which is associated with Standing's precarious labour market status, a background involving multiple children, and Roma ethnicity, was associated with likely material deprivation in both 2001 and 2020 in the regression models, which was also associated with a rural residential environment at the beginning of the period, but became differentiated by 2020. It can be seen that the disadvantaged group thus delineated, despite the opportunities of EU accession, has not been able to significantly improve its material well-being, just as Castells described the life chances of those living in 'spaces of place' who are excluded from the opportunities and resources of global network flows. To this, we might add that it has also been shown, using Hungary as an example, that when nation-state politics is pitted against those of the European Union, which represents global politics, the development of the material well-being of young people in Hungary can also be seen as a manifestation of the increase in disadvantages of opportunity, and while there are also signs of social reproduction in terms of material well-being in comparison with Romania and Slovakia, the chances of the disadvantaged have not improved significantly. In Hungary, both school and occupational mobility have permitted only a relatively low intensity of upward social mobility, as confirmed by other studies (Gondi-Bokányi et al. 2021). Hence, we observe a relative reallocation of young people in different countries in terms of the attainment of material well-being. While Hungary was in the lead in 2000/2001 in terms of both material living standards and equal opportunities for material well-being, by 2020, the pathways to equal opportunities for achieving a good material situation among Hungarian minority youth in Slovakia and Romania had become more open.

Multidimensional social stratification was used to classify young people into eight clusters: digital "native" optimists, deprived, average socialites, lonely pessimists, educated socially active, wealthy optimists, social media-consuming pessimists, and

active cultural consumers. It was observed that more than a quarter of minority Hungarian youth belong to the deprived stratum, and their share in this stratum is significantly greater than that of minority Hungarian youth, where the two different deprived categories together do not even account for 20%. We should take into account the methodological effect of using a measure of the subjective material situation in the multidimensional cluster analysis associated with the Hungarian sample (Gondi-Bokány et al. 2021), while the standardised indicator of the objective material situation was used for the sample of minority Hungarians. In the latter case, we were not able to use the subjective indicators because the Hungarian youth communities living in different countries are not consistent in their assessment of their material situation in terms of reference points.

Regarding the fourth research question, it can be concluded that belonging to the deprived stratum is most likely to be due to a weak educational background in the family, which also drags a significant proportion of young people out of the school system early in the social reproduction process and leads to unemployment, low educational attainment, and precarious employment. We find two contextual explanations for the large share of the deprived stratum, close to 30 per cent: On the one hand, the cluster strata created by the subjective well-being indicators in the Hungarian sample led to a different configuration. On the other hand, in Hungary's neighbouring areas inhabited by Hungarian minorities, especially in the more populous Transylvania, it has already been shown that the education level of the adult population, the parents of the current young people, was higher than that of the population of the same age in a 2008 survey. The results of a large sample survey (GGP) in 2008 showed that a significantly smaller proportion of young Hungarians aged 18-75 in Transylvania had completed university than their counterparts in Hungary (Veres 2014). Thus, the large proportion of deprived youth among the Hungarian minority living outside Hungary can be explained by historically inherited structural disadvantage rather than by some kind of essentialist "minority spleen." This disadvantage can be remedied by the greater school integration of the Hungarian minorities, but this is a phenomenon that will take time to overcome, as the level of schooling among the Hungarian Roma (who are connected to Hungarian identity) is still extremely low.

Appendix

1. Descriptive values for the component variables of the hierarchical cluster model, 2020 data, by country

Indicators used:													
Country		index of material wealth	digital goods	Literacy factor (schooling, foreign lg, no. of books)	cultural consumption (1-9)	public activity, organisational capital factor	Social capital (friendship size)	Satisfaction with friendships	Number of social contacts	future vision - optimism			
Romania Transylvania	N	2002	2002	1985	2002	1960	2002	1963	2002	1785			
	Mean	2.6836	4.1706	-.0029238	.6842	-.0769060	4.85	4.28	1030.0397	-.0432934			
	Std. Deviation	1.99923	1.49529	.99898724	1.50550	.98571979	4.089	.856	688.68691	1.01146328			
	Minimum	.00	.00	-2.03591	.00	-2.09988	0	1	1.00	-3.20809			
	Maximum	8.00	7.00	8.15441	9.00	2.08660	50	5	5000.00	1.79855			
Slovakia/ Highlands	N	1000	1000	998	1000	995	1000	999	1000	954			
	Mean	3.4456	4.1942	-.0153950	.5093	-.0261354	4.74	4.27	757.7759	.0464429			
	Std. Deviation	2.32383	1.41057	1.03113174	1.07043	1.02583945	4.140	.835	539.62752	.97192485			
	Minimum	.00	.00	-2.03591	.00	-2.09988	0	1	.00	-3.20809			
	Maximum	8.00	7.00	7.44439	9.00	2.08660	55	5	5000.00	1.79855			
Serbia /Voivodina	N	500	500	500	500	488	500	499	500	450			
	Mean	3.0314	3.9747	.0128702	.5441	.2914285	6.24	4.48	1045.1398	.1565450			
	Std. Deviation	1.83637	1.13467	.99603620	1.02950	.98285701	5.676	.740	778.37911	.99542338			
	Minimum	.00	1.00	-2.03591	.00	-2.09988	0	1	1.00	-2.86056			
	Maximum	8.00	7.00	7.79940	7.00	2.08660	55	5	5000.00	1.79855			
Ukraine/ Transcarpathia	N	500	500	499	500	492	500	495	500	426			
	Mean	2.8907	4.2661	.0295174	.2762	.0701159	4.71	4.35	1253.8991	-.0880552			
	Std. Deviation	1.85150	1.23276	.94547783	.63004	.96574186	4.230	.744	946.20010	.99885816			
	Minimum	.00	.00	-2.02173	.00	-2.09988	0	1	1.00	-3.20809			
	Maximum	8.00	7.00	3.18851	3.00	2.08660	40	5	5000.00	1.79855			

2. Component factor matrix and statistics for the literacy factor (schooling, foreign languages, no. of books)

Component Matrix ^a	
Variables	Component
	1
Educational status and level	,680
How many foreign languages can respondent speak	,690
Number of books at home	,579
Total variance explained	42,5%
KMO	.65
Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.	

a. 1 components extracted.

3. Component factor matrix and statistics for public activity, organisational capital factor

Component Matrix ^a	
Variables	Component
	1
Participation in elections?	-,641
How interested in politics	,666
NGO member	,652
Availability of civil/community programs	,612
Total variance explained	41.3%
KMO	.62
Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.	

a. 1 components extracted.

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Crisis perceptions and experiences of resilience among young people in the early and late stages of the coronavirus epidemic

Válságpercepció és rezilienciaélmény a koronavírus-járvány kezdeti és lecsengő szakaszában

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Abstract: Based on data from the large-scale youth survey conducted in the autumn of 2020, a volume of studies entitled *Hungarian Youth during the Coronavirus Epidemic* was published in 2021. In his opening paper, Levente Székely also raises the possibility of interpreting the epidemic as a generational experience – while indicating that the period between the beginning of the epidemic and the recording of the data has not yet been clearly defined, at least not yet in terms of the significance of the impact of the events on younger generations. In this paper, we follow in the footsteps of the findings of the Youth Survey 2020 and other national and international research to examine how young people experienced the epidemic (how much it affected them) and to what extent they can be considered a ‘crisis-resilient’ group compared to older age groups in the light of their experiences and lived experiences; and which groups of young people are at highest risk. The results of a questionnaire survey carried out by Századvég in the summer of 2021 showed that 18–29-year-olds were the most vulnerable of the adult population. They typically experienced the greatest degree of change, had the most difficulty finding their way back to ‘normal’, and had the least ‘resilience’. The analysis showed that the subgroups that were particularly vulnerable and “inflexible” were those in higher education, those living in the capital, those suffering from reduced social contact and even from direct exposure to the coronavirus, and young women.

Keywords: youth, generation, coronavirus epidemic, COVID-19, resilience, coping

Összefoglaló: A 2020-as esztendő őszén felvett nagymintás ifjúságkutatás adataira támaszkodva 2021-ben jelent meg a *Magyar fiatalok a koronavírus-járvány idején* című tanulmánykötet. Ennek nyi-

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tó tanulmányában Székely Levente a járvány mint nemzedéki élmény értelmezési lehetőségét is felveti – ugyanakkor jelzi, hogy a járványhelyzet kezdetétől az adatok felvételéig tartó időszakban még legalábbis nem dőlt el egyértelműen, hogy az események hatása mekkora jelentőséggel bír a fiatalabb generációkra nézve. Jelen tanulmányban az ifjúságkutatás 2020-as eredményeinek, valamint további hazai és nemzetközi kutatási eredmények nyomvonalán haladva megvizsgáljuk: miként élték meg a fiatalok a járványhelyzetet (az mennyire viselte meg őket); ebbéli tapasztalataik és megéléseik fényében mennyiben tekinthetők – az idősebb korcsoportokhoz képest – „válságálló” csoportnak; valamint hogy melyek az ifjúság legmagasabb kockázati szinttel jellemezhető csoportjai. A Századvég által 2021 nyarán végzett kérdőíves kutatás eredményei azt mutatták, hogy a 18–29 évesek voltak azok, akik a felnőttkori népességen belül a legnehezebben élték meg a változásokat. Jellemzően ők érzékelték a legnagyobb mértékű átalakulásokat, ők találtak vissza legnehezebben a „normál” kerékvágásba, és az ő „rezilienciaélményük” volt a legcsekélyebb mérvű. Az elemzés tanúsága szerint különösképpen sérülékenynek, „rugalmatlannak” mutatkoztak a felsőfokú tanulmányokat folytató, a fővárosban élő, a társas kapcsolatok beszűkülésétől vagy éppen a koronavírussal való közvetlen megbetegedéstől szenvedő alcsoportok, illetve a fiatal nők.

Kulcsszavak: ifjúság, generáció, koronavírus-járvány, COVID-19, reziliencia, megküzdés

1. Introduction: generation and epidemic

It is both rewarding and difficult to use generations as the usual categories of classification in sociology.⁴ It is easy to capture the members of each generation as groups who, because of their age and the way in which institutions operate, have a good chance of benefiting from similar ‘packages’ of experiences. Such seemingly stable cohorts are particularly tempting subjects of study for social researchers at a time when life choices and paths seem less and less determined. Ancestry, gender roles, family formats,⁵ beliefs,⁶ class and social status⁷ have historically become less and less determinative of the content of individual choices and their chosen identity. In this context, ‘generations’ seem to be a concept which, due to the nature of individual human development, have a biological basis and, through the disciplining, standardising procedures and institutions of modernisation, a socialising-schematising force – that is, are reflections of the multi-level system of circumstances which can be conceived as human constants in a rapidly changing world. However, the generational approach has its limitations. While strong arguments for its relevance promise that we can create usable categories with realistic grounding, the need for exact delimitations runs up against the limits of social reality and observation. The recurring, seemingly insoluble questions are those of genealogy: what makes a generation (what are the characteristics that constitute its specific essence, who decides on the definition of the significant features, and where are the boundaries)?

4 The authors of the volume also point out the unsteadiness of the foundations of stratification studies and the necessarily constructed nature of the respective concepts (Gondi-Bokányi–Gyorgyovich–Pillók 2021: 46).

5 For more on the pluralisation of family forms, see Somlai (1999).

6 For more on the diversity of beliefs and religious plasticity, see Gyorgyovich–Kollár (2020) and László (2020).

7 For a comprehensive, roughly chronological overview of the most important relevant writings, see Angelusz–Éber–Gecser (2010).

Answering these questions is beyond the scope of this paper, but their formulation seems to be a good starting point for the next theoretically oriented introduction to our next topic: to what extent are long-lasting and mostly generation-specific life experiences necessary for the development of generational consciousness (Mannheim 1969; Somlai 2014: 12) on the one hand, and historically significant events, dynamic social changes, and short but all the more intense periods of crisis on the other? The popularity of the generational approach in recent decades has been based largely on the former assumptions.⁸ According to this view, knowledge and creativity are valorised in the capitalist societies of late modernity (Florida 2002 – cited in Kiss-Kozma 2021: 137), which is closely linked to the fast-paced technological developments of internet-based new media, their changing culture of use – and the associated labour market demands. The new watchword is no longer efficiency but flexibility (Boltanski–Chiapello 1999) – the main human driver of which is young people with quick perceptions and a constant readiness to change and adapt. The members of the new generation, the ‘digital natives’ (Prensky 2001), are not only associated with negative stereotypes but also with newly formulated expectations and expectations. They are often expected to help older people socialise, to initiate them into the online (or ‘onlife’ [Floridi 2015]) world, while they are left without guidance and models regarding the complexities of life management and lifestyle and their (media) literacy is questioned.⁹ The other side of the coin can be seen as the generational side of crises.¹⁰

The Great War embedded the first elaborate theoretical approaches to generations,¹¹ and the post-World-War-II-related intergenerational value conflicts and their globalising expansion the related empirical research¹² – and it is perhaps in the thematic trajectory of the coronavirus epidemic that the sociological imagination of generation formation and global social reality first truly meet.¹³ However, its significance should not be overestimated. While it is true that a good part of 2020 and 2021 was dominated by the COVID-19 epidemic, 2022 – at least in Hungary and the region – was much more dominated by the Russian–Ukrainian conflict, the related energy crisis and inflation, and at the time of writing, in the summer of 2023, it can be said that the coronavirus epidemic no longer has any impact on the everyday life of the majority of society (or, more precisely, its direct effects are hardly perceptible).

8 See, for example, perhaps the most common generational divide (McCrindle 2014), in which the characteristics of younger generations are, to a large extent, determined by the (media) technological changes of the past decades.

9 For more on this issue, see Aczél 2015.

10 *“The basic idea of Strauss and Howe (1991; 1997) is that the character of a generation is shaped by the changing mood of society and that the socialisation of generations with their silent traits takes place in times of crisis”* – quotes Székely (2021a: 19), own translation.

11 In this field, the pioneering work of Károly Mannheim (1969) is inescapable.

12 The most widely used division is that of McCrindle (2014) – based on birth years: anonymous generation (–1924), veterans (1925–1945), baby boomers (1946–1964), generation X (1965–1979), generation Y (1980–1994), generation Z (1995–2009), alpha-generation (2010–).

13 *“The self-focused perspective of the developed world used to talk about generations in an expansive sense, but this was difficult to accept because of the different economic, social and cultural conditions. However, the coronavirus epidemic is indeed a planet-wide phenomenon and can act as a defining point, a stage in the lives of young people in particular, for whom it can be a generational experience”* (Székely 2021a: 9 – own translation).

2. Findings from the Hungarian Youth Survey 2020

In 2020 and 2021, however, domestic sociology was still all about the coronavirus epidemic, with little exaggeration.¹⁴ This was the mood in which the volume of studies on the results of the sixth wave of large-scale youth surveys in Hungary, entitled *Hungarian Youth during the Coronavirus Epidemic*, was published. A total of 8,000 young people aged between 15 and 29 were interviewed in Hungary (Székely 2021c: 7). The fieldwork, originally planned to start in spring, was postponed to autumn due to the epidemic, and between September and December 2020, during the second wave of the coronavirus epidemic (Székely 2021a: 10), the data collection was carried out following suggestions made during the professional consultation (Székely 2021b: 263), making it possible to investigate not only the usual thematic issues, which are more or less invented for time-series comparisons but also the most topical issue, the perceived impact of the epidemic (Székely 2021b: 266). Despite the fact that the search for respondents was more successful than in previous waves (Székely 2021b: 270), the data collection process took considerably longer than usual (Székely 2021b: 269).

Among the documents published in 2021 on the results of the *Hungarian Youth Research 2020*, the volume of studies edited by Levente Székely (Székely 2021c), one review, one methodological and nine thematic papers formed the main literature basis of our analysis. In the following, we will review how the authors of the analyses think that young people were affected by the epidemic situation, how their habits and opinions had changed (if they changed at all) by the time of the measurement compared to previous trends – and, in order to properly contextualise the most important related results, we will occasionally look at further attempts to explain the situation in the literature and empirical research. We feel it is important to state upfront that we focus on those parts of the systematically processed studies where changes that are in some way related to the coronavirus epidemic in Hungary starting in 2020 are discussed or where such effects are assumed to be behind them – i.e., we do not discuss findings or texts that are less relevant to our analysis.¹⁵

Most of the analyses presenting the results of the 2020 Large-Sample Survey of Youth are only tangentially related to the coronavirus epidemic.¹⁶ Trends presented by the authors of the studies reveal, among other things, the following. In terms of health behaviour, it is noteworthy that for 15–29-year-old respondents who reported their habits during the epidemic and the severe restrictions that accompanied

14 The Hungarian Sociological Association's 2021 annual meeting was entitled *The Impact of the Pandemic on the Socialization Processes in Hungary* (Magyar Szociológiai Társaság 2021), but the joint work of researchers from several social science disciplines is also the result of the *White Paper on the Socio-economic Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic* (Horn–Bartal 2022).

15 Specifically, (social) resilience during the coronavirus epidemic was the subject of the large-scale questionnaire survey conducted by Századvég Konzorcium in 2021. Drawing mainly (but not exclusively) on the results of this survey for the 18–29 age group, the next chapter of this study, following the thread of the latest volume of studies on the results of youth research, will look at how young people (young adults) experienced the epidemic; to what extent they can be considered a crisis-resistant, resilient group in the light of their experiences and perceptions; and which groups of youth are at highest risk.

16 For example, the study on social mobility in the context of the coronavirus epidemic is of little relevance (the results of the trend analysis show that there was no significant change compared to the measurement four years earlier [Gondi–Bokányi–Gyorgyovich–Pillók 2021: 36]).

it (which had been going on for months by autumn 2020), the recent decline in smoking (except in groups with poorer financial circumstances) seemed to continue, but alcohol consumption did not decrease significantly (Susánszky–Székely 2021: 168; 174; 175). Although not explicitly tested, the authors indicate that it cannot be ignored that the measurements in 2020 were taken during the coronavirus epidemic. *“The changes in lifestyle and consumption habits that we have observed in risk behaviours cannot be dissociated from the health crisis situation, its social, economic or even psychological and mental consequences, or the reduction in objective opportunities, e.g., in terms of sport.”* (Susánszky–Székely 2021: 186 – own translation)

In terms of religiosity, we see a slight increase in the proportion attending mass more frequently (Gyorgyovich and Pillók [2021: 243–244] also mention the International Eucharistic Conference, postponed during the period of data collection, possibly as part of the preparation for which the number of mass attendees may have increased, including among young people), and a renewed increase in the proportion of young people who define themselves as uniquely religious (Gyorgyovich–Pillók 2021: 239). The fact that the proportion of smokers was highest among those who could not define themselves in terms of religiosity (Susánszky–Székely 2021: 168) also fits into a broader pattern, which can be described as a general sense of insecurity. This formless contingency is also reflected in the change in the problems perceived by young people in recent decades: “clearly identifiable, concrete problems – apart from material difficulties – have been relegated to the background at the expense of more elusive, more volatile problems” (Székely 2021a: 13 – own translation).¹⁷

In the world of education and work, the pluralisation of life paths is increasingly striking, making life stages less rigidly separated. Perhaps the weak threat of the final status gap has also contributed to the fact that more and more young people seem to be taking up jobs – in 2020, there was no sign of a decline in the respective statistics due to the crisis situation (Kiss-Kozma 2021: 119). In terms of the proportion of so-called NEETs,¹⁸ which are considered socially problematic, Hungary was positioned in the middle of the European average in 2020, showing only a marginal increase compared to four years earlier (Eurostat – cited in Kiss-Kozma 2021: 126).¹⁹ However, the literature suggests that in the future, there will be an increase in demand for highly skilled, flexible and talented workers, which may make groups that are not in education, training, or obtaining work experience even more vulnerable (Kiss-Kozma 2021: 137).

A related issue is the difficulty of the potential parallelism between long-term labour market entry and family life. That this is a real and significant challenge for young adults is borne out by the results of the youth survey: *“[T]he difficulty of reconciling career and private life can also lead to relationship breakdown”*, according to a significant proportion

¹⁷ A similar threat is reflected in the visual discourse of resilience (László 2021: 156).

¹⁸ Young people not in employment, education or training.

¹⁹ Hungary will remain in the “middle” in 2022, with the share of NEETs remaining essentially unchanged (Eurostat 2023).

of respondents²⁰ (Engler–Pári 2021: 101). In the 2010s, the rates and indicators of marriage and divorce among young people improved in demographic and population policy terms, but it is questionable whether the difficult period that began with the outbreak of the coronavirus pandemic will break the trend towards more childbearing that has been boosted by the expansion of the family support system (Domokos 2021: 71). This is difficult to answer on the basis of the 2020 data, but it may be a cause for concern that for a significant proportion of young people, owning their own home is a particularly important precondition for having children (Engler–Pári 2021: 95) – the drastic increase in the cost of borrowing seen in recent years is a serious challenge to the ability to secure this conditionality, especially for members of the 25–29 age group, which has stronger expectations in this regard (Engler–Pári 2021: 96).²¹

In the context of social resilience in the demographic sense, which is also similar to the conceptual apparatus employed in this paper (Bourbeau 2013; Longstaff et al. 2010 – cited in Domokos 2021: 60), the demographic situation of young people, their family formation strategies and their role in social reproduction deserve special attention (Domokos 2021: 60). In this respect, the trends that can be identified in relation to the number of young people, their share in the population and the increase in the values of the ageing index are ominous (Domokos 2021: 60–61). *“It is obvious that in ageing societies, the ability to adapt and renew [respond] to external and internal changes is much weaker, and the local, territorial effects of this can now be seen within Hungary”* (Sebestyén Szép et al. 2020 – cited in Domokos 2021: 60).²²

At several points in the volume, the (sociological) essence of the coronavirus epidemic is addressed, such as the lack of social contact. In 2016, 40 per cent of the surveyed age group did not have any relationships, which was true for almost half (47 per cent) of the respondents by 2020 (Domokos 2021: 70). Moreover, according to some research, the delay in childbearing was more specifically due to the lack of relationships than the evolution of value preferences. (Kopp–Hofmeister–Tóth–Neumann–Bódi 2008; Kapitány–Spéder 2012 – cited in Engler–Pári 2021: 94). Related to the same phenomenon is the increase in time spent at home (in front of screens) among young people (Székely 2021a: 18) and the fact that fewer and fewer

20 It is worth noting here that the difficulties of adapting to transitional periods and life stages do not seem to be taken into account by the long-established system of ‘additional leave’ (for the current system, see, for example, Dr Babati, undated). The extra days that automatically accrue with age are mainly supplemented by additional days for those with children. However, neither are the years of entry into the labour market (when, in addition to finding a partner to start married life or have children, studies that could still potentially run in parallel would justify more time off and flexible time units) nor preparation for the less productive period of retirement (the number of days of extra leave under the system reaches its maximum well before retirement) particularly well supported by traditional labour law (the above elements of which have been in place since 1992). Here, thanks are due to Zita Gondi-Bokányi for jointly drafting the original comment on this issue.

21 The fact that almost two-thirds of the respondents think that the (desired) norm is cohabitation before marriage (associated with the idea of owning or at least renting a home) (Engler–Pári 2021: 100) draws the outlines of a value system that is not conducive to the positive goal of what Tamás Domokos calls demographic resilience.

22 In our view, the concept of “demographically resilient communities” (Domokos 2021: 83) offers a well-thought-out theoretical framework for policy-making and community development, but the phenomenon is difficult to measure in social research, and its axiomatic assumptions are not necessarily reflected in statistics. Older age groups are presumably more experienced with social change; their needs (and prospects) are more (limited); their lifestyles are more predictable and stable; and they are therefore better able to adapt to changes that are most likely to be felt in the wider social environment (or even to the lack of need to adapt, which may be even more likely to result in the absence or mitigation of adverse consequences). The issues of resilience, the experience of resilience, and age groups will be discussed in more detail later.

of them are planning to move out of their parents' home (Székely 2021a: 17). One of the main features of the epidemic situation was precisely that it reinforced these trends: many of those who had not previously been 'at home' were forced into this lifestyle. The curfew-related restrictions were accompanied by a scarcity of meeting opportunities that may be reflected in the research findings: a large number of young people mentioned the provision of the necessary social venues as one of the forms of help needed to find a suitable partner (Engler-Pári 2021: 100). The data on leisure time also shows that young people are looking for offline opportunities to connect with friends – which may have manifested in the circumvention of lockdowns during the coronavirus outbreak (Székely-Veszelszki 2021: 197). Overall, however, the importance of internet use and online content consumption continued to grow during the COVID-19 epidemic, not least due to the importance of working and studying at home (McClain et al. 2021 – cited in Székely-Veszelszki 2021: 205).²³

A particularly noteworthy result was presented by Andrea Szabó and Dániel Oross, who investigated the reasons for the increase in interest in politics among young people at the time of the 2020 survey (Szabó–Oross 2021: 219). The researchers concluded that the coronavirus epidemic may have played a role, if not a direct one, in the turn towards public issues. Thus, in the sense that those who had previously remained aloof were also affected, government decisions (quarantine rules, curfew restrictions, etc.) affected almost everyone (Székely 2021a: 14). Even otherwise apolitical groups of young people were not able to exempt themselves from the consequences of the epidemic (Szabó–Oross 2021: 229). Although the epidemic itself did not directly influence the change of interest in politics (Szabó–Oross 2021: 221; 223), youth "relegated" to the family environment and forced to change their day-to-day lives²⁴ were inevitably confronted with public affairs and became participants in the relevant discussions²⁵ (Szabó–Oross 2021: 228–229).

The studies published in the volume *Young Hungarians in the Age of the Coronavirus* have the merit of thematising the significant changes that affected the life of society and thus of youth in the year 2020. The authors have raised questions such as how much the epidemic will affect the lives of the generations entering adulthood (Székely 2021a: 26) and how much their thinking will be influenced by the related experiences (Székely 2021a: 28) – but there is no or only a limited possibility to answer these questions at the moment.²⁶ In 2020, the lack of friends and communities climbed

23 In addition to the hardships associated with the coronavirus epidemic, activities such as watching film series proved to be part of forward-looking coping strategies (Kollár–László 2023).

24 The inability to change one's external circumstances and the lack of a sense of control may also be reflected in the result that fewer 15–29-year-olds in 2020 than in the past thought that young people had a say in national and/or local public affairs (Szabó–Oross 2021: 217).

25 It is important to note that the research examined public and political interest with the same question (Szabó–Oross 2021: 228), so these two items – presumably – were not separated in the results, reflected in the answers, or limited to the range of meanings that can be exclusively linked to the political sphere, but not to the wider social public sphere.

26 The 2020 generation survey by Századvég, whose data collection also coincided with the emergence of the coronavirus, can provide further insights into generational experiences. The results of the survey indicated that the coronavirus epidemic appeared to be an event that could potentially shape the experiences and "we-consciousness" of the generation in question in a meaningful way, primarily among members of the so-called "limbo generation" born between 1985 and 1994 and the "beanbag generation" born between 1995 and 2002 (Bauer et al. 2022: 380–381).

up to fourth place on young people's problem map (Székely 2021a: 13), which also suggests that the need for personal encounters has strengthened – researchers also raise the possibility of the “return of the analogue”; of its becoming fashionable (Székely–Veszelszki 2021: 208). Even if only intermittently, the weight and direction of the changes – already visible in 2020 – have been accompanied by an increase in political (or perhaps more accurately, public) interest among young people, which may be attributed primarily to the curfews (Szabó–Oross 2021: 229). Multi-level interpretations of the impact of the coronavirus and the epidemic situation were already outlined in 2020 (Székely 2021a: 24): in addition to the immediate health and mental health impacts,²⁷ in the longer term, individuals' financial situations and social relations, as well as future visions, are among the areas that may become problematic in the absence of appropriate responses.²⁸ Despite this, and although some international studies suggest that the effects of the coronavirus epidemic are felt most by young people (OECD 2021b – cited in Székely 2021: 20), in the report of the 2020 Youth Survey, researchers reported with surprise that the majority of young respondents in Hungary at the time of the survey did not really perceive (for themselves) the effects of the epidemic (Székely 2021a: 10; 20).²⁹

3. Hungarian youth in the waning phase of the epidemic

Reviewing the studies presenting the results of the sixth wave of youth research in Hungary, we could see that certain changes were already noticeable and measurable during the initial phase of the epidemic, a few months after the appearance of the coronavirus in Hungary. However, based on the above, we have little evidence to conclude how and to what extent the direct and indirect effects of the COVID-19 epidemic, including its perception, have transformed the lifestyle, outlook – and generation-specific experiences – of Hungarian youth. The detection of trends is not only affected by the changes in the content of the youth research questionnaire, the methodological limitations of comparability (Székely 2021a: 16) or the time constraints of data collection in the initial period of the epidemic but also by the simple fact that the effects of the coronavirus epidemic were not originally the focus of youth research.

27 According to the 2020 Youth Survey data, satisfaction with health status is weakly but significantly associated with exposure to the epidemic: “those who have experienced the impact of the epidemic tend to be less positive about their mental health” (Székely 2021a: 24–25 – own translation). An interesting addendum to this may be that a survey conducted by Századvég in 2021 among the adult population showed that those who had been infected themselves demonstrated greater resilience than respondents who had not (yet) been infected with coronavirus (and/or did not know they had been infected) (Kollár–László 2023).

28 “The immediate effects of the pandemic were not only on our health and healthcare, but also on our daily habits, and the economic, political and even linguistic (Veszelszki 2020) consequences were almost immediate.” (Székely 2021a: 19 – own translation). In line with the above, László (2022) suggested the use of the term “epidemic situation”, which is more expressive of the specific circumstances and sociological aspects.

29 At the same time, Szabó and Oross have already pointed out on the basis of 2020 data that “less than half of young people were affected by the coronavirus epidemic, but at the same time, with a few exceptions, these changes were experienced in a fundamentally negative way by 15–29-year-olds” (Szabó–Oross 2021: 230–231).

In the Youth Survey 2020 questionnaire, the researchers asked directly about the (perceived) impact of the coronavirus epidemic and its direction (positive or negative).³⁰ In contrast, the 2021 survey by Századvég investigated the experiences and perceptions of the (adult) population according to a different underlying concept: the survey was based on whether the occurrence of various stressors, traumas and/or the period of time for processing them roughly coincided with the epidemic situation – i.e., we did not ask respondents to establish a causal link and assess the consequences (and focused unilaterally on negative events). In addition, also given that we had relatively more experience with the epidemic situation in 2021, we had much greater scope to explore the actual correlations from multiple directions and with multiple questions when designing the survey. Above all, we tried to do this according to the concept of resilience, which is the guiding principle of the research.

The epidemic situation, resilience, and resilience experience

Among the authors of the studies that have reported on the 2020 Youth Survey, Tamás Domokos explicitly built on the concept of resilience in his analysis. Domokos tried to conceptualise both its individual³¹ and communal ‘sides’ and its level. According to his ideas on the latter, *“there can be resilient communities that have few resources but high adaptive capacity, and there can be resilient communities that have low adaptive capacity but an abundance of resources that compensate for the lack of adaptive capacity”* (Domokos 2021: 60 – own translation) – in other words, groups that are able to survive crises, events, and periods in one way or another can be considered resilient according to Domokos.

The concept of resilience is a popular one in the social sciences (Xu–Marinova–Guo 2015), especially in the context of crises that test resources and community solidarity.³² The use of the term has many critics³³ – and it is true that the measurability of the phenomenon to be expressed and the usability of the term for scientific purposes is at least questionable (but in our study, we only seek to refer to the existence of these criticisms and debates). In the research of Századvég, which is of central importance for our further analysis, we have captured resilience by means

30 “»And finally, in relation to the coronavirus outbreak, I would like to ask if the following has changed in your life? As a consequence of the Coronavirus outbreak, have you changed...?» The 13 areas listed are: work (e.g. lost, new job, new work schedule, etc.); relationship; place of residence (where you live); financial circumstances; relationship with your family; (further) education plans; plans to start a family; exercise habits; eating habits; amount of time spent online; your attachment to God, religion, spirituality; community involvement (e.g. volunteering, helping others); time spent discussing public and social issues” (Szabó–Oross 2021: 219 – own translation); “In your assessment, did the coronavirus epidemic change in a more positive or more negative direction as a result of...?” – this question was asked about the areas that respondents defined as changed in the previous question (Magyar Ifjúság Kutatás 2020).

31 “In terms of life strategy, resilient individuals strive for intimate and lasting partnerships, and at the cognitive level, they are also characterized by foresight, conscious and consistent planning skills and population awareness (Kállai et al. 2019).” (Domokos 2021: 83 – own translation)

32 For more detailed theoretical overviews, see, for example, Békés (2002); Székely (2015).

33 Among others, Chandler–Reid (2016; 2019); Neocleous (2013).

of two dimensions – namely, the sense of agency³⁴ (the sense of being able to act) and the ability to cope with difficulties (or coping,³⁵ to use the technical term).³⁶

Among the main early lessons of the research results – relevant to our topic – we should mention the methodological and conceptual insight that the cross-sectional survey-based study does not actually measure resilience but the so-called “resilience experience” (László 2021). This is also important because it highlights that in analyses based on a single data collection event, it is worthwhile examining the existence/lack of resilience to crises in the context of several variables. The analysis presented in the following pages has been conducted in this spirit.

Perception of crisis and experience of resilience among young people

One of the stereotypes about young people is that they are flexible and can adapt easily to change. This argumentation is supported by the results of generational research, which show, for example, that members of Generation Z are characterised by multitasking, networking and interactivity (Farkas 2018: 19).³⁷ The ‘myth’ of elasticity seems to be justified in that the determinants (and statistical explanatory power) of socioeconomic status are increasingly giving way to the role of values (Domokos 2021: 80–81). At the same time, the age-group trends for supportive relationships and vulnerability during the coronavirus epidemic showed that those younger than 30 years of age were characterised by a loss of relationships after the initial increase in support³⁸ (Bartal–Lukács J.–László 2022a; 2022b).

Between 5 July and 17 August 2021, the Századvég Consortium conducted a representative questionnaire survey of the Hungarian adult population in relation to the most important sociodemographic criteria (gender, age groups, highest completed level of education, type of settlement, region). A total of 20,000 people were interviewed by telephone (“CATI”³⁹). In analysing the survey database, we aim to increase our understanding of how members of the 18–29 age group differ from

34 According to research by Welzel and Inglehart (2010), as life opportunities increase, ageing becomes increasingly important in terms of its impact on people's life satisfaction.

35 Coping is closely related to the context of stressors and having insufficient resources to deal with them, in which the choice of alternative coping strategies is of great importance for the well-being of the individual (cf. Lazarus–Folkman 1984; Scheier et al. 1986).

36 The relevant statements were: “*I am in control of my life, it's up to me how it goes*”, “*Despite the hardships, I am steadfastly moving towards my goals*.” – Respondents were asked (in addition to the don't know and don't answer options) to answer the question “To what extent do you feel the following statements are true or not true about yourself?”; the response options were: not at all (1), rather not (2), rather yes (3), completely (4). (Századvég Consortium 2021 – own translations) In the present analysis, we have combined the two variables to form a simple index, which we interpret as an indicator of the experience of resilience (the “resilience experience”). The experience of resilience expressed by this variable thus captures both the successful coping with (and recovery from) difficulties and the stresses they entail, and the experience; the feeling of being able to control, or at least influence, one's own immediate life circumstances, of being an active shaper of one's life path (not merely enduring events and circumstances).

37 In Domokos' words, “*the search for solutions is facilitated by the fact that the age group can easily connect to distant cultures, information, news, social innovations and new answers reach them faster than ever in real time. As a result, members of Generation Z tend to be more open and actively involved in advocating for fair and equal treatment of others, which increases the resilience of the local community*” (Domokos 2021: 80 – own translation).

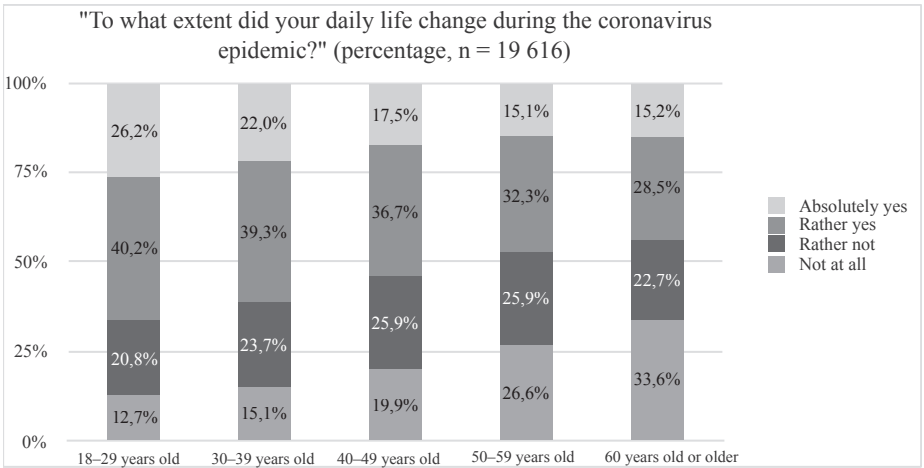
38 “*Although the 18–29 age group received the most help both before and during the epidemic, this support, mainly emotional support from parents, friends and relatives, was exhausted by December 2021. By that time, 51% had no support links at all.*” (Bartal–Lukács J.–László 2022b – own translation)

39 Computer-assisted telephone interviewing.

other age groups in their experience of the epidemic and whether we can draw some conclusions about their relative resilience.

If we look at the more simple descriptive statistics, we see that the 18–29-year-olds experienced the greatest degree of transformation⁴⁰ (Figure 1); they were the most affected by the epidemic⁴¹ (Figure 2); they were the group that had the most difficulty in finding their way back to “normal”⁴² (Figure 3); and they had the least “resilience”⁴³ (Figure 4).

Figure 1: Extent of change in everyday life by age group (own translation)



Source: Századvég 2021 – own ed.

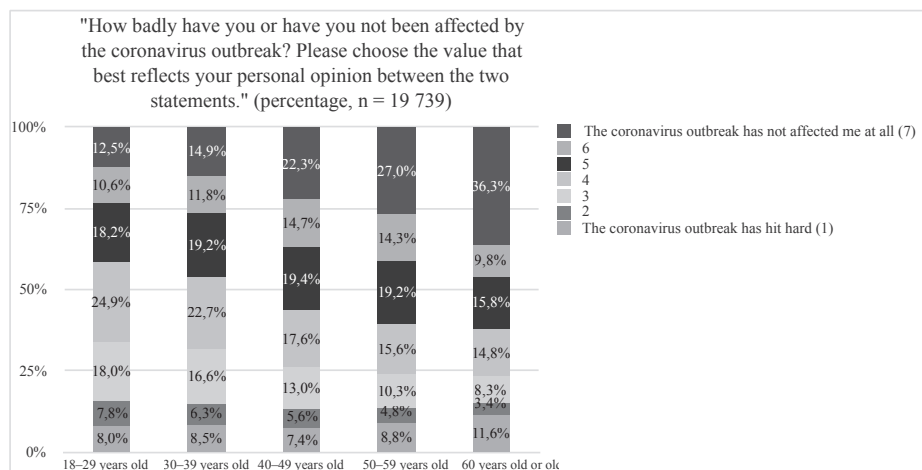
40 Between 1 and 4, the group average is 2.8 (2.68 for 30–39-year-olds, 2.52 for 40–49-year-olds, 2.36 for 50–59-year-olds and 2.25 for 60+-year-olds).

41 In the five age groups studied, from the youngest to the oldest, the group averages were 4.19, 4.33, 4.69, 4.82, and 4.95.

42 The group averages are 2.74 for 18–29 year-olds, 2.85 for 30–39-year-olds, 3.09 for 40–49-year-olds, 3.27 for 50–59 year-olds and 3.34 for those aged 60 and over.

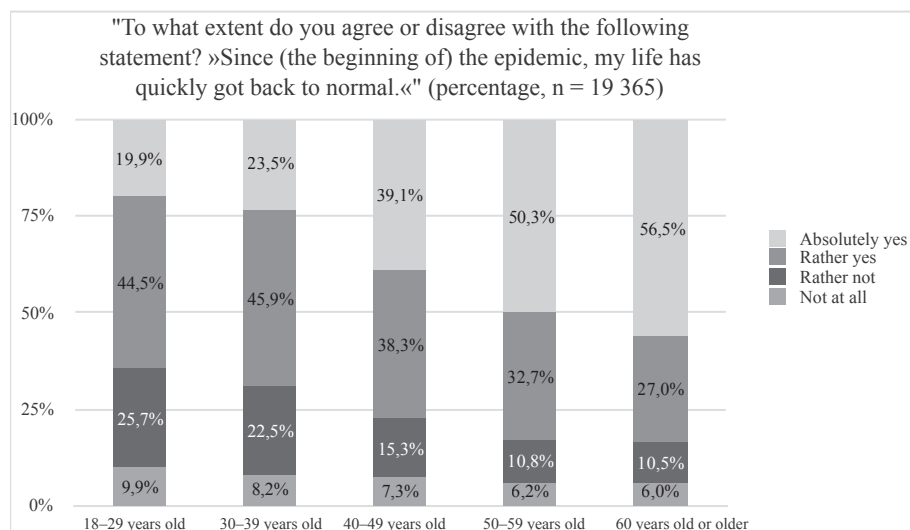
43 The average value of the seven-degree index (2 to 8) is 6.21 for 18–29-year-olds, compared to 6.27 for 30–39-year-olds, 6.6 for those in their 40s, 6.72 for those in their 50s and 6.68 for those aged 60 or over.

Figure 2: Negative effects of the epidemic situation by age group (own translation)



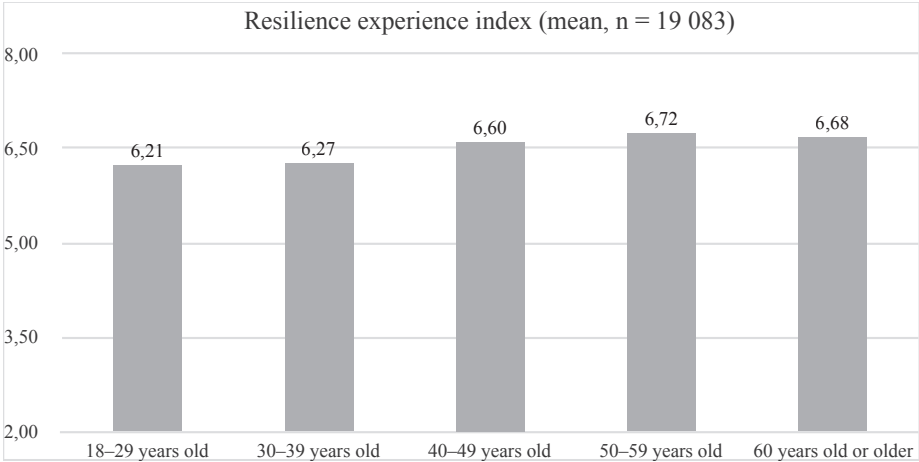
Source: Századvég 2021 – own ed.

Figure 3: Return to (or a new) state of equilibrium by age group (own translation)



Source: Századvég 2021 – own ed.

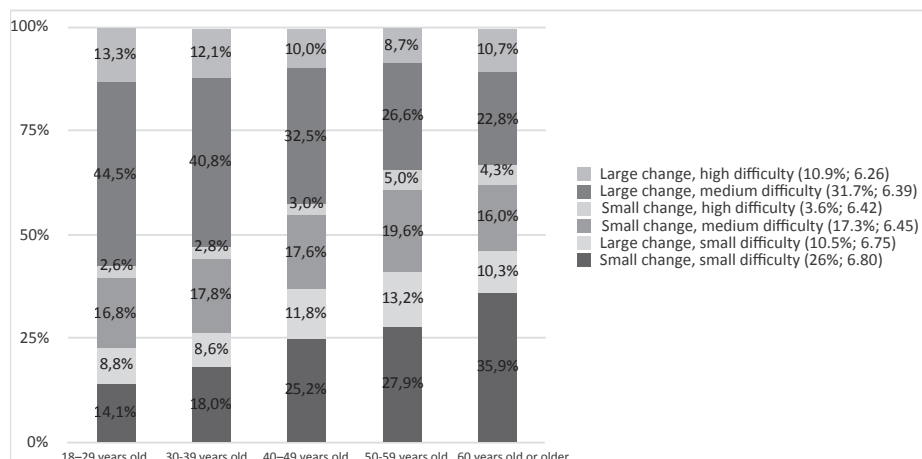
Figure 4: Resilience experience by age group (own translation)



Source: Századvég 2021 – own ed.

From the available set of variables, we combined several questions to create groups based on theoretical insights, which provide a basis for further analysis. The original four-item variable indicating the percipient degree of change was recoded into a two-item variable (no or little; or more or very much changed during the coronavirus epidemic), and the seven-item variable indicating the percipient experience of the coronavirus epidemic as difficult was recoded into a three-item variable (very hard; moderately hard; not very hard). The resulting categories can be used to group, using a single variable, different combinations of experiences of people with different subjective experiences of the changes and difficulties experienced in daily life during the epidemic. The six groups described with combinations of small/large change and small/medium/high difficulty were ranked according to the average extent to which each category was associated with the experience of resilience, also measured by two variables (~agency and ~coping dimensions) (Figure 5) (see more details in the relevant chart). By the summer of 2021, only a good third of the Hungarian population had managed to survive the coronavirus epidemic with minor difficulties. One in five people had experienced only minor changes but still considered the period of the epidemic a moderate or major ordeal. However, a relatively large number of young adults under 30 years of age were represented in the categories that had experienced major changes and moderate or major difficulties in their own lives. This suggests that, at least during a crisis such as the COVID-19 epidemic, the young generation can primarily be associated with vulnerability rather than resilience.

Figure 5: Groups according to variables and difficulties, by age category (percentage, $n=19,467$ – proportions in the total sample in parentheses after the group names; and the average of the Resilience Experience Index) (own translation)



Source: Századvég 2021 – own ed.

Both surveys, the youth survey and the Századvég Resilience Survey, used different questioning methods, but both covered – more or less in a similar way – changes in the world of work, relationships and the place of residence, and potential stressors. Of these areas, the least change of residence was experienced by 15–29-year-olds until autumn 2020 (4 per cent were affected) – for 18–29-year-olds, 24.1 per cent of respondents had changed their place of residence by summer 2021 (in relation to the previous two years) (a significant difference, even taking into account the small differences between age groups). In terms of relationship changes, 6 per cent of the age group surveyed in 2020 reported a change (51 per cent in the negative) – and in the two years prior to the data collection, 13.2 per cent of 18–29-year-olds surveyed in 2021 had experienced a relationship breakup. Negative changes at work (loss of job, new job, new work schedule, etc.) affected 12 per cent of young people in 2020 (and the direction of change was negative for 83 per cent of those affected), while in 2021, 9.3 per cent of young adults under 30 said they had lost their job in the previous two years (Századvég 2021; Székely 2021a: 22–23). Of course, these differences in the figures do not represent actual shifts, as they are derived from the observation of slightly different populations using different questioning techniques, but they provide important additional information on the events experienced by young people in successive phases of the epidemic.

Flexible and rigid youth groups

In 2020, the sociodemographic characteristics of the youth groups that perceived the effects of the coronavirus epidemic and those that did not (still) hardly differed from

each other (Székely 2021a: 20–21). No statistically significant correlation was found between gender and age groups, but only a few statistically significant correlations were found for educational attainment (a larger proportion of those with a high school diploma experienced a change). Larger differences were found by region, with young people living in the provinces and the lowlands experiencing the effects of the epidemic most strongly. The conclusion based on the analysis of the early data is that *“the analysis by sociodemographic characteristics shows an overall limited impact of the epidemic rather than highlighting groups where an increased impact could be expected”* (Székely 2021a: 21 – own translation).

Based on our data for 2021 and using the categories of changes and difficulties presented earlier, we have attempted to reproduce the previous analyses in terms of content to illustrate the sociodemographic characteristics (and experience factors) of the youth groups that were more and less change-sensitive, more resilient and more rigid, and their composition, in the “waning” phase of the epidemic, among 18–29-year-olds.⁴⁴ The category of young adults was split into three age groups for a more differentiated analysis, making it possible to compare subgroups of 18–21, 22–25 and 26–29-year-olds with potentially different experiences. The adjusted standardised residuals provide a simple yet plastic way of expressing which groups/cells in a cross-tabulation analysis are statistically significant (and to what extent).⁴⁵ We will consider groups identified by values between 2 and 3 of the adjusted standardised residuals as significantly over-represented, groups identified by values between 3 and 5 as moderately over-represented and groups identified by values above 5 as highly over-represented (Table 1).

44 However, it is important to stress again that the data from the two studies are not strictly speaking statistically comparable but can only be compared in a limited way at the level of interpretation of the results.

45 For more, see Everitt–Skrondal (2010) – cited in Glen (n.d.).

Table 1: *Sociodemographic-sociological profile of youth subgroups of categories based on changes and difficulties (groups over-represented by adjusted standardised residuals, with the value of the indicator in parentheses; n=3,260–3,262 – their proportion in the filtered sample in parentheses after the group names; and the average of the Index of Resilience Experience)*

	Significantly over-represented	Moderately over-represented	Highly over-represented
Small change, small difficulty (14.1%; 6.49)	Persons with upper secondary education, no school-leaving certificate (2.6) Men (2.3) Living in a village or farm (2.2)	Primary education or less (3.6) Central Transdanubians (3.1)	–
Large change, small difficulty (8.8%; 6.46)	People living in a village or on a farm (2.2)	18–21 years old (4.6) Men (3.8)	–
Small change, medium difficulty (16.8%; 6.21)	Central Transdanubians (2.5)	–	–
Small change, high difficulty (2.6%; 5.19)	Men (2.2) Persons with secondary education, no school-leaving certificate (2.1)	–	–
Large change, medium difficulty (44.5%; 6.21)	Central Hungary (2.6) Western Transdanubians (2.3)	At least tertiary education (4.6) Living in the capital (3.2)	Students (6.9)
Large change, high difficulty (13.3%; 6.06)	Central Hungary (2.2)	Reduction in social contacts (4.0) Infection with coronavirus (3.2)	Women (5.8)

Source: Századvég 2021 – own ed.

Within the young adult age group, relatively low-educated people without a school-leaving qualification, men, and those living in smaller settlements and the Central Transdanubian region also showed more resilient or “crisis-resilient” characteristics in the summer of 2021. A rather narrower group of young people can be identified at the intersection of those who experienced strong change and those who experienced moderate difficulties – they are considered the most vulnerable group of youth in terms of resilience experience and are over-represented in terms of their socio-demographic profile, as are men and those with no secondary education. The two groups of young people who appear to be the most inelastic and vulnerable (those experiencing strong change and moderate difficulties and those experiencing strong change and a high level of difficulties) can be identified according to relatively different characteristics. While in the former category, the relative majority of young people are students, those with a tertiary education and those living in the capital, the over-representation of those who reported increased vulnerability to major changes (13.3% of the filtered sample) is mainly found among women, those who had experienced a reduction in social relations in the two years preceding the survey and those who had been infected with the coronavirus.

4. Young people during a coronavirus epidemic – an international perspective

International research plays an important role in the analysis of the situation and resilience of youth, as it permits contextualisation of the results of the Hungarian Youth Survey 2020 and allows for comparisons between countries, if not in terms of data, then in terms of interpretation. In this chapter, we briefly present some international resilience studies that may complement our knowledge of Hungarian conditions as background material.

The OECD (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development), with 38 member countries (including Hungary), uses a huge statistical database to conduct comprehensive comparative analyses. Since 2007, it has increasingly placed well-being at the heart of social progress, so it is not surprising that since 2019, it has made it one of its main missions to analyse the impact of the epidemic, draw policy conclusions and make recommendations. In its 2021 publication *COVID-19 and Well-being: Life in the Pandemic*, the OECD paints a holistic picture of how the coronavirus epidemic has affected people's lives (OECD 2021a). According to this, the epidemic has affected all aspects of human well-being. Although the elderly suffered more from the consequences of infection, young people were most affected by mental illness, reduced social contact, fear of job loss and general insecurity (OECD 2021b). The quality of life and resilience of young people are therefore closely linked to the economic and social environment. The strain of the epidemic has left a long-term mark on natural, economic, human and social capital, which suggests that government decisions should strongly emphasise recovery from the epidemic and improving people's well-being.

In 2021, a survey of 6,000 people between the ages of 15 and 29 was carried out based on a representative sample of the main sociodemographic aspects of the populations studied, supported by qualitative methods (Harring et al. 2022). The *Youth Study Growing up in Central Eastern Europe 2022* research focused on young people in Central Eastern European countries, including the Visegrad Group, with Poland, Slovakia, the Czech Republic and Hungary. The main objective of the research and the study that was carried out was to assess the life situation and attitudes of young adults in five areas (education, work and migration, family, general values, attitudes and aspirations, and political attitudes and participation), all in the context of regional comparative analysis. The authors of the research report seek to interpret the growing-up process in Central and Eastern Europe in the theoretical framework of postmodern society, where pluralisation and individualisation processes characterise life paths that are increasingly less linear. They point to the low level of intergenerational transmission of cultural capital in the region, the high incidence of poverty among young people, which is also a feature of the social history of the region, and the prevalence of individualisation, which they hope will give young people a real sense of agency. The researchers point out that the expansion of opportunities within the generation has become a reality only for a narrower stratum and that inequalities between young people appear to be growing, with many of them

finding themselves in a situation of constraint in terms of their ability to prosper and fulfil their aspirations for social mobility. Although the European Union is seen as an important point of reference for young people, the contradictions they feel about socially legitimate goals and means are reflected in their distance from public issues. As Haring and co-authors point out, the coronavirus epidemic and subsequent crises are expected to increase further the sense of uncertainty that pervades life situations and life prospects, including for young people, although the longer-term consequences are not yet clearly visible in the research findings.

The *Survey on National Education Responses to COVID-19 School Closures*, a collaboration between UNESCO, UNICEF, the World Bank and the OECD, examined the educational situation during the epidemic and collected good practices and strategies for long-term resilient education (UNESCO no year; UNESCO et al. 2022). The research was designed to help education officials prepare for school reopening in different countries. The report highlighted that transforming the education system and developing learning strategies may be key to increasing resilience among young people. The research report also stresses the need for education institutions and professionals to be able to develop flexible responses and support students. Maintaining and improving the quality of education contributes to young people's mental and emotional well-being and resilience.

It is important to mention the WHO (World Health Organization) report *Mental health and psychosocial considerations during the COVID-19 outbreak* (2020), which highlighted the importance of mental health promotion during the outbreak for young people. The stress, uncertainty and isolation caused by the outbreak may negatively impact young people's mental wellbeing, so providing them with appropriate mental health care is key. The report stresses that managing stress, maintaining emotional stability and addressing mental health challenges are necessary in the long term to enable young people to adapt to changing circumstances.

Both Hungarian and international research confirms that young people in general are more susceptible to the effects of the coronavirus epidemic than members of other age groups. For young people, maintaining their standard of living and well-being has been more challenging during the crisis. Research has clearly recognised that educational and working conditions changed significantly during the epidemic, with a major breakthrough being the 'migration' to the online space.

In the present study, it is important to emphasise that although international research also examines the situation of young people, it reveals much more general trends than when we focus on the situation of Hungarian youth. One of the main merits of Hungarian youth research is that it is possible to identify region-specific differences. Finally, the time factor is a very important factor in resilience research: the international research briefly presented here describes the early phase of the epidemic period, while the Hungarian research includes later data – and a next wave of youth research data collection, due in 2024, may allow the detection of significant trends if the data collection is implemented.

5. Summary and conclusions

We started our study by discussing how the epidemic situation can potentially become a significant experience and bonding material for the generational consciousness and sense of community of young generations. Although the results of the youth survey in autumn 2020 suggested that the impact of the coronavirus epidemic on young people was not significant, the data from the Századvég survey conducted in the summer of 2021, less than a year later, revealed a more complex picture.

It shows that young adults aged 18–29 had a particularly bad experience with the coronavirus epidemic compared to other age groups. In terms of the extent of lifestyle changes, the severity of the adverse experience, the ability to find a new equilibrium and the experience of resilience, the crisis was most severe for those in the younger age group. More than half of young people experienced significant changes and typically found them difficult to cope with. Particularly vulnerable and “inflexible” in this respect were the sub-groups of young people in higher education, those living in the capital, those suffering from a reduction in social contacts or even from direct illness with the coronavirus, and young women.

A more distant task, pointing to the need for further research, is to identify what actual changes are occurring and which are being recorded in the areas identified by the European Youth Forum (EYF 2021 – cited in Székely 2021a: 24) as potential long-term effects of the coronavirus epidemic on young people (labour market, education, financial situation, mental health). And, related to this, whether this will have a meaningful spill-over effect on their status differentiation, well-being, and the social stratification processes of the generation.

Based on national and international research in the early period of the coronavirus epidemic, the picture emerges that youth were one of the social groups that, although not directly affected by the health consequences, were challenged to adapt to the changed circumstances. This was associated with strikingly negative perceptions at the experiential level (i.e., young people’s experience of resilience has been found to be weak), but further, more research seems necessary for identifying how successful they have been in striking a new balance (i.e., in terms of resilience). Moreover, now that the acute epidemic situation has passed, it is possible to suggest that the generational consciousness of today’s young people is being shaped not just by a ‘virus generation’⁴⁶ but by a crisis generation – if the successive crises (epidemics, inflation, war, the energy crisis), which are increasingly indivisible in terms of their effects, have long-lasting, specific consequences for young people.

46 In the spring of 2020, during the coronavirus epidemic, Andrea Szabó (2020) put forward the idea of the birth of the ‘V (for Virus) generation’.

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