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ABSTRACT

In our rapidly changing world, it is becoming more and more complex and complicated for young people to plan their future, which is perceived as a problem by all who are involved. Issues such as one's relation to democracy, their desire to have children, their intentions to pursue further studies, whether they plan their future in their place of residence or abroad or the risk of deviant behavior are not only important from the point of view of the individual but also for society, as the future of a given region is also influenced by the above indicators of future vision. Research methods traditionally applied in youth research, which focus on socio-demographic characteristic features (i.e. objective life situation indicators), are less and less capable of providing adequate answers to these questions. In my hypothesis, to identify the underlying connections, the research tools of psychology and sociopsychology are also necessary to be applied apart from traditional sociological methods.

Therefore, in my study, by the secondary analysis of the most recent, 2014 data of the European Social Survey, I intend to demonstrate the significance of the underlying motivations as future vision creating factors behind the decisions Hungarian young people make.

KEYWORDS

youth, future vision, decisions

DOI 10.14232/belv.2017.4.8 <https://doi.org/10.14232/belv.2017.4.8>

Cikkre való hivatkozás / How to cite this article: Hamvas, László (2017): Future Laboratory. *Belvedere Meridionale* vol. 29. no. 4. 122–133. pp.

ISSN 1419-0222 (print) ISSN 2064-5929 (online, pdf)

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INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, one of the most significant problems of Hungarian society is the high migration potential of young people. Apart from the classical domestic migration from east to west and from rural areas to cities (BÁLINT 2012), by today, outward migration has reached such a degree that certain areas of the country and certain industries may face an acute labor force shortage in the near future. Therefore, it is essential to explore how young people view their current situation and what they think about their future.

The European Union regards the youth as a resource, as active, independent, responsible, discrimination-free, tolerant, innovative citizens, the holders of European values, real citizens (White Paper 2001; *An EU Strategy for Youth* 2009; JANCÁSÁK 2011). As in case of all resources, their distribution is uneven both territorially and in terms of quality. Thus, it is of no insignificance what tendencies can be observed within a given administrative unit concerning the following indicators (which influence the future of the region):

- their relation towards democracy (what political public life is like);
- their desire to have children (demographic indicators, the sustainability of social security);
- their intentions to pursue further studies (the economic performance of the country, productivity, unemployment, the structure of economy);
- whether they plan their future at home or abroad (demographic and economic consequences again);
- their tolerance levels (the situation of minorities);
- the risk of deviant behavior (public safety and public health) (among others: *Magyar Ifjúság 2012* [The Hungarian Youth 2012]).

Therefore, in my research, I intend to investigate which factors determine the future vision of young people the most and what relationship can be found between young people's perceived life situations and how they create their vision for the future. Youth research in Hungary in the past decade has shown that socio-demographic factors, especially the type of settlement young people live in and their parents' educational attainment, have a significant influence (among others CZIBERE 2014; DOMOKOS 2013; FEKETE – PRAZSÁK 2014; MAKAY 2013; JANCÁSÁK – KRÉMER 2016). György Csepeli's recent work paints a gloomy picture in connection with the Hungarian youth's vision for the future. Regarding the possible careers of generation Z, he warns against the dangers of a forming caste system among the youth, where the above mentioned hard variables also play an important role (CSEPELI 2016).

Is it possible that in our rapidly changing, globalized world it is still these objective life situation indicators that determine the future prospects of our young people? A notable group of contemporary sociologists have been arguing that it is not social structures that should be in the focus of investigations but rather the person, the individual. The reason for this paradigm shift is that it is not social classes and institutions any more that determine the behavior of a person but individual experiences (MARTUCVELLI 2012). In my study, based on this assumption, I intend to establish a starting point for this.

GLOBALIZATION, SOCIAL CHANGES AND THE CHANGE OF AN ERA FOR THE YOUTH

In the study mentioned in the introduction, György Csepeli created the vision of the introduced social structure based on the challenges of globalization and the digital revolution. I also find it indispensable to briefly introduce these when discussing the topic.

Globalization is a phenomenon that does not only form economic, but also political, cultural and social processes (INOTAI 2001; BECK 2005; GÁBOR 2012). In the economic dimension, regarded as the primary dimension for a long time, there were three factors that played a special role in the organization of the worldwide, cross-continental activities of transnational societies: the liberalization of capital movements and the deregulation of financial services, opening markets further towards commerce and investment, thus promoting international competition, and an advancement of information and communication technologies in economy (OECD 2005). As a result of that, however, a homogenizing process can be witnessed: the same products are available in the stores of multinational commercial chains, the same economic and cultural patterns are spread due to the advancement of multinational media concerns, and thus consumption habits become similar, the lifestyle of consumer society becomes dominant everywhere to the disadvantage of local traditions and other methods of production; furthermore, the political systems of states also show convergence (GIDDENS 2008; BECK 2005).

In the modern era of labor force market, it is income obtained from work that has become the basis of satisfying needs in a consumer society (EHRENBERG – SMITH 2003). The employment structure has undergone significant changes in the past few decades: while at the beginning of the 20th century industrial workplaces dominated the labor market, from the 1950s on, the service sector has become the largest employer. A major reason behind this is the automatization of work processes – which spans from technological development through Taylorism to the appearance of informational technology – in the course of which the work of humans is taken over by machines, especially in case of physical work (GIDDENS 2008; BECK 2009). In case of corporations that live under the spell of growth and efficiency, this is a rational decision, as taxes and other contributions that are added to labor expenses with the spread of welfare systems have been on the increase. In the more developed regions of the world, this process is further strengthened by the opportunities that globalization has created, as it has become simpler to relocate production to other (less developed) regions where labor costs are lower. As a result of the info-communicational revolution, automatization has reached the tertiary sector as well: self-service checkouts, automated food, online ticketing systems or web shops are all on the rise.

The increase in supply, according to market rules, will result in a stronger competition in the labor market as well. This process leads to the erosion of workplace security at the same time. Instead of indefinite work contracts, employers offer employment opportunities for definite (shorter and shorter) periods (CASTEL 1998). This tendency is further strengthened by the fact that, due to the rapidly changing environment, a major part of investments is realized in the form of projects (CZIBERE – KOVÁCH 2013). The repercussion of projects – namely, their nature of being realized in a definite time span – will be experienced in the labor market as well.

Further consequences of project-based work are the strengthening of networking between organizations and institutes, the dominance of management know-how over academic knowledge, the appearance of the so-called culture economy, and the restructuring of previous power relations. Project-based functioning changes the work of the government as well; in the redistribution processes the role of the local level becomes stronger, which in turn restructures the model of the welfare state and public services (CZIBERE – KOVÁCH 2013).

Another important change is the effect of the ICT revolution, the advances of creative industries. The new tools open up the opportunity for new, more complex application areas; in response to this, there are more and more entertainment electronics, content provider and communication technology companies and start-ups appearing in the market. The latter demonstrate an exponential growth potential with the help of a wide range of marketing tools, however, due to their rapid obsolescence, they are exposed to high risks as well.

As a result of the changes briefly demonstrated so far, long-term strategies and career models have been taken over by activities aiming at reaching goals and results that have been broken down to shorter cycles and are more tangible. Consequently, the uncertainty of the plannability of the future is increasing. Owing to this, a significant transformation can be observed in young people's life stage, as these uncertainties have their impact on the processes of becoming independent as well. The most conspicuous characteristic of this phenomenon is the extension of this phase: when young people leave the educational subsystem, they do not leave their families and do not establish their own households, but rather continue their earlier way of living and lifestyle. As a consequence, the prolonged life stage of youth is transformed from being a limited and transitory youth age of the industrial society – the main function of which was to obtain some qualification – to being a professional youth status, which is legitimized by the increasingly vivid interest of society and economy. This appreciation leads to a situation where young people transform into model providers from model followers (ZINNECKER 2006; GÁBOR 2012; JANCSÁK 2013). This process is called youth paradigm shift.

One of the most typical manifestations of this process is the transformation of the former linear career model. One of its characteristic features was that basic life stages built upon each other. These used to have well-defined functions: the school years were about preparation, adulthood was about independence, self-support, responsibility, work and reproduction, and old age was about handing down knowledge to the next generation. These life stages and functions fitted together closely, and there was no movement between them. This has largely changed due to the fact the life-long learning and the possibility to work in student jobs have been created: periods of preparation and work change each other periodically (SOMLAI 2004). The linear walk of life has been exchanged for a walk of life of options (GÁBOR 2004). As a consequence of a series of decision situations, walks of life become individualized, with determinisms disappearing.

The youth paradigm shift holds both advantages and disadvantages in itself for young people. Pursuing studies in higher education requires more and more financial investment, competition for obtaining social positions is increasing, psychological pressure caused by risks and constant decision situations is growing, and young people are more and more endangered. The extension of education does not automatically mean that they can find a job that matches their degree, what is more, sometimes even unemployment cannot be avoided (SOMLAI 2007). Another factor increasing young people's endangered status is that they have become one of the most important target group of telemarketing. As studies examining consumer behavior have revealed, young generations are generally brand dependent, which leads to international brands trying more and more to tie them to themselves. Due to lack of experience and uncontrollability resulting from quantity dumping, negative consumer behavior is formed easily (GÁBOR 2004).

All in all, as a consequence of the youth paradigm shift, the youth life stage is no longer determined by finding employment, marriage and starting a family with establishing one's own household, but by competent participation in the cultural, political and consumption sphere (ZINNECKER 2006).

THREE IMPORTANT NOTES

The ever more profound changes that appear progressively more often and in more and more areas generate such unpredictable effects that will lead to a paradigm shift in future research as well: future is interpreted in a new way, not as the mechanical consequence of past and present but as a set of possible versions for the future. The degrees of likelihood are determined by the stability of processes going on in the present and by the values and the degree of future orientedness of individuals and institutions (NOVÁKY 2001). The situation is similar at the micro level as well. There are several alternative scripts available for the individual to form their own future vision, and when making a choice, it becomes important whether their orientation is individualistic or they are community-oriented and how positive their prospects for the future are (NOVÁKY 2008).

The rejection of the formation of future as a mechanic consequence is reinforced by Bourdieu's theory on the reconversion of the forms of capital. As a critique of Marx's theory, which placed economic capital at the center of social stratification and inequalities, many dealt with the possibility of identifying new forms of capital in the second half of the 20th century (among others BOURDIEU 1999; COLEMAN 1994; FUKUYAMA 2007; PUTNAM 2004). There are some differences in the theories as for the names of the forms of capital and the descriptions of their characteristics, but they all have the common feature that knowledge and social networks appear as capital generating factors. Bourdieu calls the three forms of capital economic, cultural and social capital, and he demonstrates that these forms of capital are mutually convertible to each other (BOURDIEU 1999). That is, disadvantages at birth can be compensated or changed, thus providing an opportunity to mitigate social inequalities. Although he proved the correlation of the various forms of capital in his empirical studies (BOURDIEU 1978), in recent decades the expansion of education and the appearance of community networks have probably weakened this.

Finally, I would like to draw upon the main findings of the recently published book by Ágnes Kapitány and Gábor Kapitány. In their study, they interviewed 200 subjects who were born into different life situations but were all considered to be successful by others, and their common characteristic was that they did not follow mainstream values and life strategies in their lives. Their main finding was that the alternatives and rebels do not form a unified subculture: they claim different values, and their common denominator is that they are all inner controlled (KAPITÁNY – KAPITÁNY 2014). In their analysis, they emphasize that what we regard as mainstream is also constantly changing, so it is conceivable that a life strategy that is considered alternative today will become general in the future.

RESEARCH DESIGN

In connection with the youth paradigm shift, the individualization of walks of life and, in relation to that, the responsibility of making decisions have been mentioned. When discussing the risk of the abundance of choices, Beck emphasizes the fact that individuals, when choosing a strategy corresponding to an actual situation, become members of "*situation and topic specific coalitions*" (BECK 1997) Reformulating the original research question, I placed the focus of the investigation on what the guiding principle can be that can provide some rule in our world that is based on the uniqueness of micro situations.

A special case of action theory, namely rational choice theory may provide help here: when there are several options to choose from in our actions, out of all the possibilities, we tend to choose the one that promises the most optimal results for us. That is, the explanation of social phenomena lies in the rationality of individuals acting without being coerced. Jon Elster, however, points out that actors of society usually cannot act totally at their discretion. Decisions are essentially influenced by the size of the set of optional possibilities. The number of available alternatives is determined by external and internal factors alike:

- *Preliminary commitment*: the individual reduces the number of optional alternatives as a consequence of culture, norms and rule systems. (The opposite process is when an alternative becomes attractive due to its being prohibited, a phenomenon Elster calls adaptive preference formation.)
- *Manipulation*: certain actors, media or even social institutes may have some interest in making us choose from the alternatives that they prefer, and in order to realize that, they are keen on affecting the individual either directly or less conspicuously.
- *Change in preferences due to conducting studies*: the set of rejected alternatives is modified as a result of new information or knowledge.
- *Change in preferences depending on a state*: the possibility of certain alternatives is eliminated as a result of a previous choice.
- *Rationalizing*: the number of alternatives is reduced in order to make decision-making more effective.
- *Changing the quality weight in an anticipatory or retrospective way*: changes are realized in order to avoid the psychological disadvantages that would accompany the decision.
- *Dependency*: an individual may be in a situation where they cannot fully control their decisions.

Finally, an individual may decide on their own to reject certain alternatives. A special case of this is adaptive preference change, when an alternative that is believed to be unreachable is excluded. Another case is personality planning, when an individual (self-)consciously decides about the preference weight of certain alternatives.

In summary, the formation and change of preferences can be attributed to two factors: first, taking into account the physical, economic, social, legal and psychological restricting conditions, the set of possible alternatives is narrowed down to the available alternatives, then a decision is made about which of these to choose. Upon further examining the restricting conditions, we arrive at motivations seen as forces in the background of human behavior that urge the individual to act. According to their source, they can be inner (intrinsic) or outer (extrinsic) compulsions; in case of the former, the activity is perceived as attractive, and in case of the latter, the individual acts upon the influence of some coercion or incentive. Motivated behavior can spring from needs (e.g. hunger, recreation), but also from some habit. Thus, motivation is the driving force of a behavior formed as a result of needs (OLÁH 2006).

These driving forces are classified as primary (related to self-preservation and reproduction) and secondary (learned, conditioned) drives. Primary drives appear intermittently and may manifest as very strong inner compulsions. Secondary drives are accompanied by positive emotions, and they contribute to personality development (KEMÉNYÉ 1989).

- Out of the various motivations, I underline those that may play a role in forming future visions:
- *curiosity motive*: human need for information, which can be regarded as constant; the behavior it triggers is usually playful;
 - *competence motive*: human endeavor to attain mastery or realize effectiveness in handling our material and social environment;
 - *autonomy motive*: human endeavor to always have alternatives in initiating and regulating our activity, and that these are not determined by external factors;
 - *performance motive*: overcoming obstacles, realizing tasks faster and more efficiently, exercising power over others (OLÁH 2006).

An important indicator of performance is the goal, which is influenced by two factors: hoping for success and fearing failure. Those with the first motive being stronger (success orientation) usually set moderately difficult tasks to realize, which are still reachable, while those with the second motive (failure avoidance) tend to choose either very easy tasks (there is a very small likelihood that they cannot solve them) or unrealistically difficult (it does not constitute failure if they cannot accomplish them) (KEMÉNYNÉ 1989). Success orientation and failure avoidance become characteristic features of the personality in the long run.

In my analysis of Hungarian young people's motivations, I used the database of the European Social Survey Round 7 conducted in 2014. Upon the initiative of the European Commission, every two years there is an empirical data collection using random selection as a statistical method; the selected sample includes 1,500–2,000 people per country. The survey was coordinated by TÁRKI [Institute for Research in Social Sciences] and MTA TK [Hungarian Academy of Sciences, Centre for Social Sciences]. (The database is available on <http://ess.tk.mta.hu/>.) Out of the 1,698 people in the sample, 309 were young (under 30).

In one of the modules, subjects were asked how similar they think they were to a person described with certain given characteristics. In the course of the secondary analysis, I found four variables that refer to humanistic motives. In relation to curiosity, getting to know new things and new people, exciting life and creativity; in relation to autonomy, freedom of decisions; in relation to competence, demonstrating abilities and being recognized; while in relation to performance motive, success, material goods and exercising power over others as preferred variables¹.

¹ The original variables were the following:

- Thinking up new ideas and being creative is important to him/her. He/She likes to do things in his/her own original way.
- It is important to him/her to be rich. He/She wants to have a lot of money and expensive things.
- It's important to him/her to show his/her abilities. He/She wants people to admire what he/she does.
- He/She likes surprises and is always looking for new things to do. He/She thinks it is important to do lots of different things in life.
- It is important to him/her to listen to people who are different from him/her. Even when he/she disagrees with them, he/she still wants to understand them.
- It is important to him/her to make his/her own decisions about what he/she does. He/She likes to be free and not depend on others.
- Being very successful is important to him/her. He/She hopes people will recognise his/her achievements.
- He/She looks for adventures and likes to take risks. He/She wants to have an exciting life.
- It is important to him/her to get respect from others. He/She wants people to do what he/she says.

RESULTS

First, I was interested in the order of motivations. The respondents had to mark their answers on a scale of 1 to 6, where 1 was the strongest value. *Table 1* presents that a kind of pecking order was established with autonomy being the strongest and performance motivation being the weakest.

Motivation	Variable	Mean
Autonomy	Free decisions	2.08
Curiosity	Inventing new things	2.13
	Experiencing new things	2.39
	Getting to know others	2.50
	Seeking adventure	2.94
Competence	Showing abilities	2.30
Competence	Being successful	2.45
	Power	2.86
	Material goods	2.95

TABLE 1 *Values of each motivation* (Source: Compiled by the author, 2017)

According to the obtained results, the preference order of motivations shows a certain dissonance, as autonomy can be reached through consistently satisfying the performance and competence motives. On the other hand, Hungarian young people are typically characterized by failure avoidance, rather than success orientation. This is in line with the results of a survey conducted among young people in Hajdú-Bihar County, in Hungary, where the order of respondents' value preferences was friendship, security, freedom, love, trust, peace and experiences, while material goods, admiration and power were less preferred. This reflects a defensive future strategy that prioritizes the psychological security of the individual, which leads to lower risk-taking and mobilizing only a lower level of resources for goal-oriented future-building (HAMVAS – SZŐCS 2016).

In the next step, I am investigating the links with socio-demographic characteristics, which is summarized in *Table 2*. With reference to gender and parents' educational attainment, I found no significant connections; however, in case of type of settlement, educational attainment and activity in the labor market, there was a strong correlation. This result is especially interesting as youth research in the past decades found that parents' educational attainment has a significant impact on young people's lives. In the 2012 large sample survey, 46 percent of young respondents declared that they fully, while 36 percent said they partly accept their parents' value system (SZÉKELY 2014). The parents' – especially the father's – educational attainment influences the child's educational attainment: in case of people with completed primary education, the highest qualification of 68 percent of the fathers is skilled worker, while in the case of people with a degree, 69 percent of the fathers have a secondary school leaving final exam; and the other way round: the children of 73 percent of fathers with a degree have a secondary school leaving final exam, while 85 percent of fathers with completed primary education have children whose highest qualification is skilled worker (*Magyar Ifjúság 2012* [Hungarian Youth 2012]), intention to marry: 13 percent of the 15–19 year-old children of fathers with completed primary education, while only 3 percent of the adolescent

children of fathers with a secondary school leaving final exam live in a partnership relationship; in the age group 20–24, 34 percent of children in unqualified families live in a partnership relationship, while in families with a secondary school leaving final exam, only 12 percent (DOMOKOS 2013), ideas about the timing of childbearing: 79 percent of the fathers of those who already have children do not have a secondary school leaving final exam, while this figure among those without children is only 57 percent (MAKAY 2013), political socialization: young people with at least one parent having a secondary school leaving final exam are less likely to cherish nostalgic feelings towards the political system before 1990 (*Magyar Ifjúság 2012* [Hungarian Youth 2012]).

Motivation	Variable	Socio-demographic characteristics
Autonomy	Free decisions	Settlement type ² , educational attainment ³
Curiosity	Inventing new things	Settlement type ⁴ , educational attainment ⁵ , activity ⁶
	Experiencing new things	Settlement type ⁷ , educational attainment ⁸ , activity ⁹
	Getting to know others	Activity ¹⁰
	Seeking adventure	Settlement type ¹¹ , activity ¹²
Competence	Showing abilities	–
Competence	Being successful	Settlement type ¹³ , activity ¹⁴
	Power	–
	Material goods	–

TABLE 2 Significant connections between each motivation and socio-demographic characteristics (Source: Compiled by the author, 2017)

It demonstrates the significance of knowledge capital that motivations are the strongest in case of students and are weakest in case of the unemployed. Among those with low educational attainment (with completed primary education or less) it has been found that the curiosity motive (experiencing new things, getting to know other people) is significantly higher, while competence and performance motives (being successful, showing abilities) and creativity and seeking adventures are significantly weaker.

² (sig < 0.028)

³ (sig < 0.002)

⁴ (sig < 0.001)

⁵ (sig < 0.001)

⁶ (sig < 0.007)

⁷ (sig < 0.004)

⁸ (sig < 0.004)

⁹ (sig < 0.017)

¹⁰ (sig < 0.028)

¹¹ (sig < 0.001)

¹² (sig < 0.019)

¹³ (sig < 0.001)

¹⁴ (sig < 0.021)

CONCLUSIONS

Due to the expanding arena of possibilities for alternatives which is the consequence of accelerating social changes, young people's socio-demographic characteristic features demonstrate a weakening correlation with optional future alternatives. Their explanatory power is also reduced by this. When answering the research question put forward in the introduction (What factors determine young people's future vision?), it is worth paying more attention to the investigation of such soft variables as motivations, values and future orientedness. One way of doing this may be through the analysis of socializing agents, as they transmit those behavior patterns that are expected in certain social roles and the norms and values that serve as their basis, and they assist young people in acquiring knowledge, skills and competences that will enable them to successfully participate in the life of society (GOSLIN 1976).

In my hypothesis, there will only be a deterministic relationship between young people's life situation and future vision (they will only get stuck in the caste system described by György Csepeli) if in a given situation each of the socializing agents (family, school, local communities, peer groups and the media) is weak. The relative strength of any of the agents (i.e. a moderate or high level of accessibility to the necessary knowledge and information) will provide an opportunity for the young to change their situation, i.e. to rebel against the circumstances. This is why it is essential that social institutes should lay more emphasis on transmitting the value of competence and performance in the process of socialization.

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