FLASH REPORT

This research is dedicated to the memory of István Nemeskéri!

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Youth2008©

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Edited by:

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INTRODUCTION

When we pose the question as to what characterises the situation of young Hungarians and the Hungarian society, we are basically examining what circumstances and conditions are provided to the youth under the new system that has evolved over the past two decades following the change of regime. What opportunities are offered and what barriers are raised to the coming generations in terms of social preparations, gaining independence, taking social roles and actions as well as career and job opportunities? To put it in another manner: how are the actions of the youth and their forms of interest influenced by the circumstances of generational reproduction created by the social, economic, political, legal, etc. relations evolving as a result of the political and economic restructuring?

In modern societies, also including the Hungarian society, the social preparation, the activities and the integration of young generations are to be guaranteed at all times through the simultaneous operation of numerous and diverse social institutions and organisations. In this respect, one of the most important elements is the family, but a basic role is also taken in the socialisation of the youth by the educational and training system, the state, the local governments, the youth and civil organisations, the church as well as by contemporary groups or even by the media.

The quality of life and the background provided to young residents in an unemployment-ridden settlement with a poor population, by a local government with a low budget and by a inadequately supplied school is basically different from a settlement that is mainly populated by a well-off middle class, where the local government has sufficient funds for rendering high-level services and provisions.

Since the start of the restructuring process, the Youth2008 research has been the third experiment that makes an attempt to describe – through the instruments of social science and sociology – the changes and characteristics deriving from the social and economic transformation that takes place in the processes of generational reproduction. One of the objectives of the youth data collection – conducted every four years in a large sample covering the 15-29 age-group – is to record the changes (compared to the previous collection(s)) in the social factors that influence the education, the employment, the career, the independence and the welfare of young age groups. A further aim is to register how these impacts are reflected in young people's lifestyle, leisure activities and cultural consumption.

The youth sociology surveys conducted over the past two decades go to show that the period of youth has become longer[1]. Young people spend more and more time at educational institutes. The data collected in the 1980s – and even in the early 1990s – showed that finishing school, finding jobs, getting married and having children were closely related to each other in terms of time in the case of skilled workers and people doing routine intellectual work (mainly with a GCSE exam). Young people usually got married after starting work (irrespective of their educational level), and they had their first child within two years. Today however, those with vocational training start work that lasts for more than three months for the first time typically at the age of about 19. The trend is similar with those who do intellectual work that does not require a university/college degree. Previously, starting work depended on the date of the GCSE, but in the year 2000, more than two-fifths of the people concerned joined the labour market for the first time at the

[1] The period of independent decisions comes later, at the same time, young people have independent autonomy over actions in certain walks of life. For details see: Kálmán Gábor (editor): *Ifjúságszociológia* Belvedere Szeged, 2006, p. 445

age of 20 or older. The trend was still very similar in 2004, but by 2008 this rate went up to cover two-thirds of young people.

The question arises: to what processes is the later start of work related? The consequences of the extended period of youthful years are shown by the fact that, although most young people would like to have children, it has been a trend in the past 10 years that they want to have their first child several years later. This is partly due to the fact that now men and women want lasting relationships in the second half of their twenties, parallel with the longer time spent in education. In 1990, 20.3% of the population aged 15 and above was single; this rate was 27.1% in 2001 and 28% in 2002. The figures of the Youth2000 research already highlighted that the willingness of young people to get married is extremely low as 69% were single, and the marriage rate was 22%. With regard to the 15-29 age group, the Youth2008 data showed that the marriage rate has gone down to 13%, and singles scored above 70%. Looking back on eight years, the 9% decrease in marriages can even be regarded as dramatic.

Although it is evident that the period after the change of regime finally endorsed "life partner" as a new form of living together, the Youth 2000 research also pointed out that having children was connected to marriage even in 2000. However, the rate of childbirth outside marriage dynamically increased through the years following the millennium. Eighty-five percent of teenage mothers, 58% of mothers aged 20-24 and 30% of those aged between 25 and 29 had children outside marriage in 2007. This means that the rate of extramarital childbirth is increasing in all groups of young people.[2]

The figures go to show that young people get married when they want to have their first child. The extended youthful period is producing new roles – e.g. the single or pre-single status – or spreads the phenomenon of post-adolescence, thus creating a specific cultural and consumption situation for certain groups.

The new form of the surveyed age group's dependence on, or independence from the parents' home can be evidenced in the way young people are planning their lives. As a consequence, the time young people spend together with their parents is increasing parallel with becoming independent. They mainly leave the parents' house when they get married or start living with someone instead of the planned date of finishing studies or starting work.

The youth sociological studies in the 1990s had high expectations of raising the educational level, cherishing the illusion that higher education will also become available for people who are at the lower levels of the social hierarchy (e.g. children in families with low educational levels and living in villages). A survey[3] conducted in 2002 among students who were accepted to higher education shows that these hopes proved to be too extreme. Children whose parents have secondary or higher education have a chance to get into higher education. For much wider social groups, higher education continues to offer only the *theoretical possibility* of making advancements.

In the year 2000, it seemed that the clear beneficiaries of expanded higher education were those young people who mainly come from educated families and from higher social levels.

The figures collected in 2004 highlighted improvement in the higher educational chances of children of fathers with secondary education. This trend continued in 2008. It seems, therefore, that from the viewpoint of higher education, the availability or the absence of the father's secondary education can now

[2] Based on data communicated by the Central Statistical Office.
[3] Kálmán Gábor – Imre Kabai: Survey among first-year students, 2002 (Manuscript)

be regarded as a dominant factor. However, the further expansion did not prove to be favourable for young people who live in families with less education or who live in a worse social environment (i.e. children of fathers with vocational training or at most with primary education). What is more, the higher educational chances of those living in the worst social and family environment seem to be even smaller than before. Clearly, the unequal educational chances deriving from the different social background are influencing – at an unchanged intensity – the possibilities of the young generation to take part in education.

The choice of cultural activities, as well as their depth and intensity do not even come close to the rate that was registered by the culture sociological surveys made over the past few years. The few leisure activities that the young people mentioned – which seem to be based on less conscious and more random decisions – mainly reflect individual activities and intentions. It is the company and the community that is missing; to put it in another way the desire for common actions has almost disappeared from the cultural activities of the youth. This may be the consequence of the process that is becoming common through the wide spread of the Internet. For young people, the space for socialization is already attached to Internet-related facilities today. The reason is that the traditional scenes of interaction (cafés, tea houses, pubs) are visited by young people two-three times a month on average. This trend may also affect interpersonal communications, but the quantitative method is less suitable for describing this process.

It is our belief that what was previously stated, which attempts to map the changes and processes that are taking place in the lives of the youth, justifies the continuation of the research in itself.

The Youth2008 research programme was ordered by the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labour, and it was financed by the Training Fund of the Labour Market Fund and by the Employment Fund of the Labour Market Fund.

Compared to the previous large-sample surveys, the large-sample survey conducted in 2008 was extended with a qualitative (focus group) phase in order to more accurately explore the decisions that affect the lives of young people.

At last, it can be declared that – following the example of numerous EU countries – government-backed, comprehensive youth research activities have also become regular in Hungary by 2008. It is one of the basic objectives of this research that the collected data should – according to the traditions - be available for use by all interested parties. Thus, the results and the findings will be published after processing the work.

Due to its specific features, the Flash Report serves the purpose of giving an insight into the basic research data prior to preparing the studies; however, we do not undertake here and now to interpret the figures in depth or to highlight and explain the relationships. Therefore, the Flash Report is nothing else but a surface approach to the basic research data.

The purpose of the research

The purpose of the research is:

- to get both a vertical and a horizontal picture of the material and cultural power sources, lifestyles and values of young Hungarians;
- to obtain comparative data about Hungary's statistical and economic regions – along the surveyed dimensions – with regard to the earlier Hungarian research activities;
- to obtain comparative data for the Hungarian citizens, decision makers, organisations and research workshops;

- to provide a facility – from the viewpoint of both methodology (empirical sociology) and contents (surveyed dimensions) – for later comparability, for local, county-level and regional research work as well as for applications in practical use (e.g. working out youth concepts).

Topics

The topics consist of the following parts:

1. *Social mobility*
   the family's cultural capital, the parents' educational level and occupation
2. *Education*
   educational level, current schooling position, plans for further education
3. *Financial position*
   durable consumer assets, income, economy
4. *Family position*
   types of living together, partner contacts, moving from home
5. *Features of the labour market*
   starting the first job, current and former workplaces, employment plans
6. *Social mood, public life attitudes*
   opinions about social problems and institutions, attitudes and relationship to politics, organisational activities, attitude to the parents' values
7. *Local public life and local politics*
   interest in local public life, participation in local politics
8. *Youth services*
   youth contact person, youth offices, youth organisations
9. *Religion*
   religion, membership in a denomination
10. *Cultural consumption*
    leisure time, media consumption, cultural habits
11. *Health, lifestyle, sexuality*
    health status, lifestyle characteristics, sexual habits, contraception, smoking, alcohol and drug consumption
12. *Sports*
    sporting habits, awareness and viewer rate of various branches of sport
13. *IT skills*
    IT skills, habits of computer use

Sponsors of the research:

Ministry of Social Affairs and Labour
Labour Market Fund, Training Fund
Labour Market Fund, Employment Fund

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METHODOLOGY OF THE YOUTH2008 RESEARCH

The methodology of quantitative research

For the survey that was the first stage of the Youth2008 research, we drew up a nationally representative sample covering 8,076 people (*four, 2,000-person samples*) covering the 15-29 age group. The research is appropriately comparable with the Youth2000 research (conducted eight years ago) and the Youth2004 research (conducted four years ago), which also covered 8,000 young people aged 15-29 in a nationally representative sample.

The sample was to represent the surveyed population according to regions, size (type) of settlements, age groups and gender.

The research group decided to use the sample of the Youth2008 research in a breakdown into 4x2,000-person and 2x4,000-person samples by using questionnaires that were partly different from each other in the four as well as two subsamples. The main reason for this decision was that the 2,000-person and 4,000-person national samples are sufficient for analysing some subtopics that are deemed to be important, thus there was an opportunity to cover many more topics without significantly exceeding the originally planned interview time.

The 2000-2008 samples covered the following question groups:

- attitudes towards having and bringing up children;
- consciousness of a citizen, trust in the democratic institutional system;
- attitudes towards learning and usable knowledge;
- supply of info-communication devices;
- media consumption;
- questions regarding the information society.

The question group of the 4,000 subsamples covered

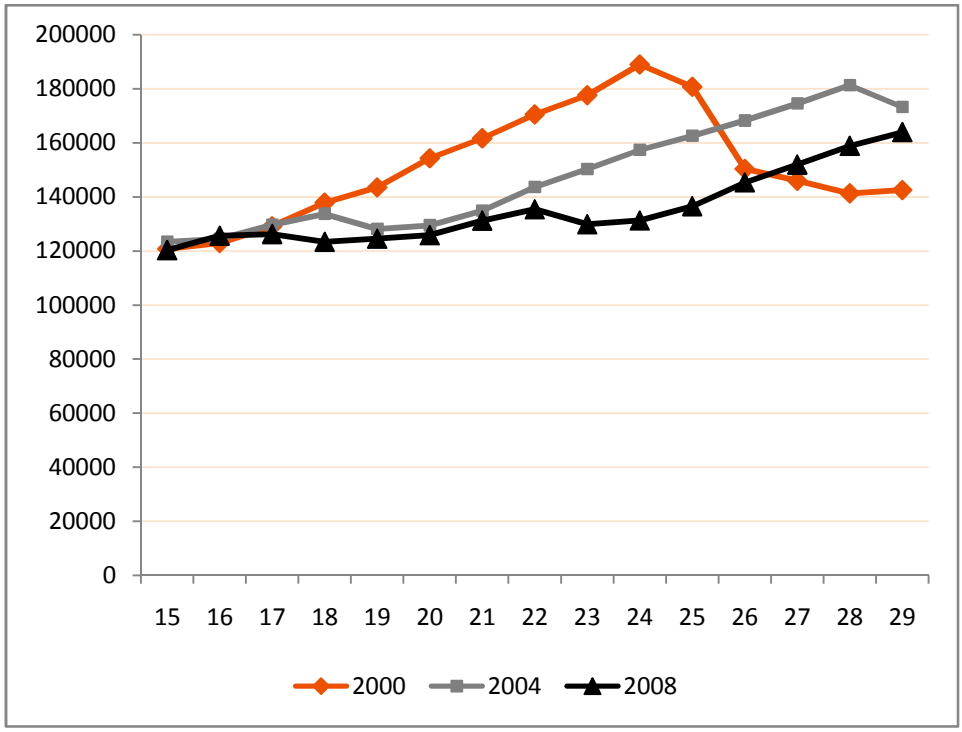
- questions about cultural consumption and leisure activities.

Questions included in the **independently filled out** questionnaires that were handed over to 8,000 persons:

- use of drugs;
- sexual habits;
- alcohol and smoking;
- political party preference;
- participation in demonstrations.

Small deviations from the theoretically expectable sample distribution emerged due to the manner of making sub-samples and in the course of the data collection. These minor disproportions were corrected through weighting under various aspects. The aspects of weighting are as follows: gender, age groups, settlement size. The sample drawn up in this manner represents a total of 2,031,735 persons in Hungary aged 15-29, which is by 182,969 persons less than four years ago.

Figure No. 1. The surveyed age group according to years of age, in 2000, in 2004 and in 2008
(in persons)



The methodology of qualitative research

Quantitative data collection was followed by a focus group-based research stage, whereby our main objective was to explore the opportunities that are implied by the situations we learned of in the questionnaire-based research as well as to seek explanations for the situations encountered. For the sake of this, we, on the one hand, pinpointed the needs, opinions and views of experts dealing with the 15-29 age group about the solutions regarding the posed questions. On the other hand, we pinpointed the situations, the needs, the attitudes and opinions of the young people questioned as well as the opinions and views of the parents of children who were just about to start school and/or a career.

Eighteen focus group discussions were conducted with the young respondents. When selecting the participants, our purpose was to learn the opinions of young Hungarians in their teens and twenties who are living in various life situations. In the course of the discussions, we ensured that each group should be heterogeneous in terms of gender, but homogeneous with regard to age. We tried to cover all regions, choosing the eastern, western and central part of Hungary as venues for the group discussions in more or less equal proportions.

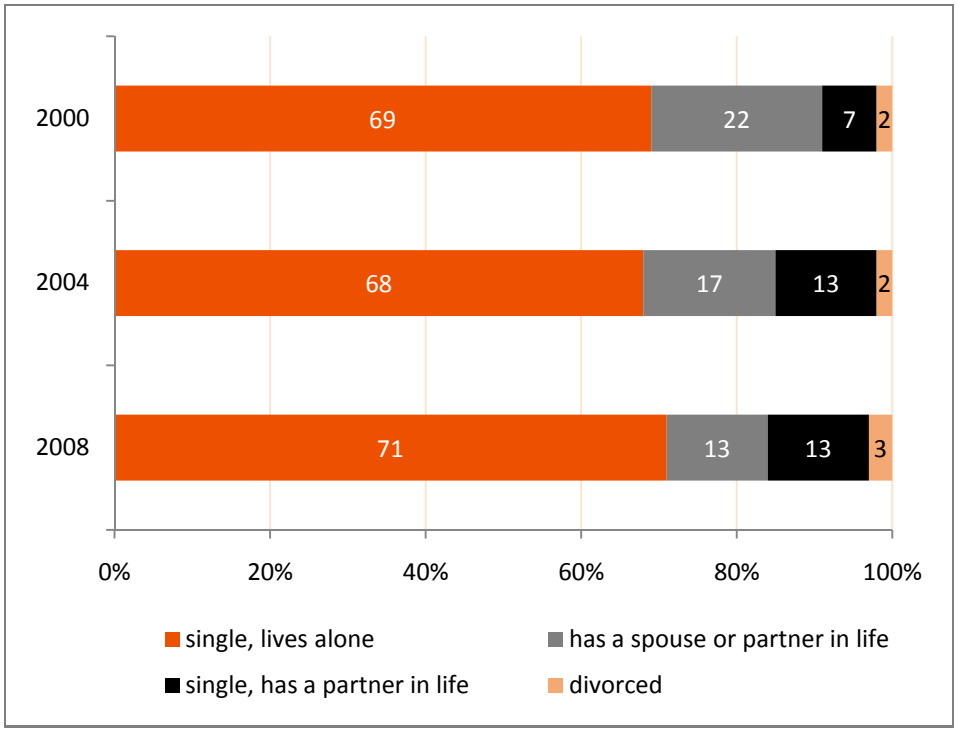
DEMOGRAPHICS, FAMILY RELATIONS AND CHILD BIRTH

Marital status

In our survey conducted in 2000, we, for the first time, indicated the process (documented in Western Europe in the 1980s) whereby the period of youthful years is becoming extended. More and more young people spend more time pursuing education than before; thus, the timeline of starting a first job is extended, and in turn, the establishment of a lasting partner relationship and the creation of a family are also delayed. In addition to this, the traditional family forms are being dismantled, and "life partners" (living together outside official marriage) are becoming more and more fashionable and socially accepted.

The characteristics explored at the beginning of the millennium emerged in 2008 in an even more palpable manner. More than seventh-tenths of the members of the 15-29 age group are single, 13% are married and 13% have a life partner. As can be seen, the main trend change that took place during these eight years affects lasting relationships: the marriage rate decreased by 9 percentage points, and parallel with this, the rate of life partners increased by about 6 percentage points. The divorce rate was 3% in 2008. We believe that our former statement (namely that the rate of marriages has decreased) is true. Still, this does not mean there is a lack of lasting relationships, but it indicates that fewer and fewer young people find marriage to be the only acceptable way of living together. However, we need to point out that the growth in the forms of living together outside marriage cannot counterbalance the lasting decline in the number and the rate of marriages and married people.

Figure No. 2. Distribution of young people according to marital status
(in percentage)



Ninety-five percent of the youngest surveyed age group (15-19) is single; within this group, 3% have a life partner and only 1% are married. However, there are changes in the marital status as the age increases.

Eight percent of those aged 20-24 and 27% of the oldest group are married. About one-fourth of the latter group and 14% of those aged 20-24 have a life partner. It needs to be indicated that rearrangements have also taken place in these two age groups compared to 2000 and 2004. Thus, the process that was first registered in 2000 spiralled through all of the age groups.

The decades-long differences between the marital statuses of men and women can be clearly shown in 2008. Seventy-eight percent of men and 64% of women aged 15-29 are single. The rate of single women increased by 4 percentage points compared to 2004, and the rate of single men increased by 2 percentage points. Sixteen percent of women have a life partner and 17% are married. There is no such difference between these two types of relations among men: 9% are married and 10% have life partners.

Compared to the data of Youth2004, a significant change can be highlighted in the oldest male segment. Four years ago, 53% of men aged 25-29 were not married, 28% were married and 19% had a life partner. The rate of marriages decreased by 8 percentage points in four years, and some atypical forms can now be registered in the whole of this age group (e.g. those who are divorced; people who are married but do not live with their spouse). The changing trend is even more characteristic with women. Compared to 2004, in 2008, the rate of change and rearrangement is, on average, 3 percentage points in the 20-24 age group. At the same time, a significant change took place in the marital status of women aged 25-29. Four years ago, 43% of women aged 25-29 were married, but now this rate is 35%. Another change worth mentioning is the 8% rate of women who are divorced, widowed or living in another form (e.g. those who are married but do not live with their spouse) in the 25-29 age group. Clearly, the marital status has become strongly differentiated and more diverse. The Flash Report – as a genre – is not suitable for a deep analysis, but still, it is worth considering whether the obtained results also indicate a crisis of the family as an institution.

A major difference can be further shown in the marital statuses of young people along social status. The extended period of youthful years is especially typical of children of parents with secondary or higher educational levels, because the higher the completed level of education by the mother or the father, the more likely the young person is to be single. Also, the opposite is true. The lower the parents' educational level, the more likely it is that their child will soon leave the family circle, and s/he will have a spouse or a partner in life. This is almost a direct relationship. Fifty-nine percent of the children aged 15-29 of fathers with no more than a primary education are single, while this rate is 80% in the cases of fathers with a university/college degree.

Within the surveyed age group, the first "life partner" relationship comes, on average, at the age of 20.5, while the first marriage comes at the age of about 22.8. (Among the sampled persons, the youngest person to establish a life partner relationship was 12, and the youngest married person was 14.) Among women, the average age is lower in both cases: 20.07 years for life partners and 22.37 years for marriages. On average, men aged 15-29 start their first life partnership at the age of 21.19 , while they get married at the age of 23.85. Seven percent of those getting married are 18 years old or younger, 39% are aged between 19 and 22 years, three-tenths of them are aged 23-25 and one-fifth of them are older. More than one-third of those who are married previously lived together with their partners, while 7% claimed to be single at the date of the data collection, but had tried out life partnership earlier.

Table No. 1. Marital status according to gender and age groups, 2004-2008
(average score of answers)

		Has a spouse or a partner in life	Has a life partner	Single	Other	Total (%)
15–19 men	2004	0	2	98	–	100
	2008	0	1	97	2	100
20–24 men	2004	4	10	86	–	100
	2008	5	11	83	1	100
25–29 men	2004	28	19	53	–	100
	2008	20	18	57	5	100
Men on average	**2004**	**12**	**11**	**77**	–	100
	2008	**9**	**10**	**78**	**3**	100
15–19 women	2004	1	5	94	–	100
	2008	1	4	93	2	100
20–24 women	2004	14	21	65	–	100
	2008	11	18	68	3	100
25–29 women	2004	43	22	35	–	100
	2008	35	23	35	7	100
Women on average	**2004**	**22**	**17**	**61**	–	100
	2008	**17**	**16**	**64**	**3**	100

Table No. 2. Average age of getting married and finding a life partner according to gender and age groups, 2004-2008
(average score of answers)

	Men		Women	
	2004	**2008**	**2004**	**2008**
	Life partnership			
Sample	**21.1**	**21.2**	**20.0**	**20.1**
15–19[1]	16.9	16.6	16.3	16.9
20–24	19.8	19.8	19.2	19.1
25–29	21.7	21.9	20.8	20.8
	Marriage			
Sample	**23.4**	**23.8**	**21.6**	**22.4**
15–19[2]	17.5	–	16.9	18.0
20–24	21.1	21.0	20.5	20.4
25–29	23.7	24.3	22.0	23.0

[1] In the 15-19 age group, the element numbers are low, below 100 persons, in both surveyed years. Therefore, the figures are informative only. In the other age groups, minimum 150 persons belong to each category.
[2] In the 15-19 age group, the element numbers are very low, a few (2-10) persons, in both years. Thus, the figures are indicative only. In the other age groups, minimum 150 persons belong to each category. The data are somewhat higher, still informative in the 20-24 age group. Here, the element number covers 50-200 persons.

Among the three large-sample youth surveys, this was the first time we tried to learn whether single people establish at least a partner contact even if they are not married or do not have a life partner (i.e. whether "single" actually means being alone). Currently, 40% of unmarried single youngsters have partners, or to put it in another manner, 60% of them are really alone. We presumed that – as the age increases – there are more people who have partners, although they do not want lasting relationships. This hypothesis cannot be verified. Thirty percent of those aged 15-19 and 50% of the respondents aged 20-24 have partners, but in the case of the 25-29 age group, the rate of establishing partner contacts once again decreases to 47%. This phenomenon needs more detailed analysis in the large-scale study of Youth2008.

There is an interesting trend in the educational level of the partners of people aged 15-29 who have spouses or life partners. The **rate of partners with identical education is the highest (65%) among those with at most a primary education**. This is a significant growth compared to 2004, while the equivalence is lower among those with skilled worker education (49%), above 50% among those with secondary education and the lowest (46%) among those with a university/college degree. The latter case means that some of those with a degree still choose a university/college student as a partner, and their educational level is still secondary. It can also be presumed that those with a degree who are already married (mainly women) live in a social space that is not suitable for mobilisation, and their life path is partly closed down by the relationship to a partner with lower education. As for the spouses or partners of those with high-level education, 2% have at most a (eight-year) primary education, 11% received vocational training and 41% received secondary education.

Childbirth

Sixteen percent of the sampled young people already have their own child/ren. In this regard, the data collection registered a 4% decrease compared to 2004. Fewer people have one or two children, while the rate of those with more children is basically unchanged.

Two percent of those aged 15-19, 11% of those aged 20-24 and 33% of the older respondents have child/ren. The first child is born at the parent's average age of 22.1 years. As can be expected, the age is younger with women (21.71 years) than with men (23.02 years). Within the sample of people aged 15-29 who have children, 16% have child/ren by the age of 18, 37% between 19 and 22 years, 29% between 23 and 25 years and 18% between 26 and 29 years.

Young people presumably get married in order to raise a family. About three-fourths of young married couples have child/ren, while this rate is only about one-third among those who have a life partner. The number of children is related to social status and to income. Fifteen percent of those with three or more children belong to the group of respondents who are in need, and this rate is 2% among those who have no children. Four percent of those with one child and 6% of those with two children are living under very difficult financial circumstances. Similarly, it is mainly those with several children who have difficulty with keeping body and soul together. Parallel with this, among those who claim to be in the lower social group, we found significantly more people with three or more children than people with no children.

Figure No. 3. Number of children those aged 15-29, 2000-2008
(average of answers)

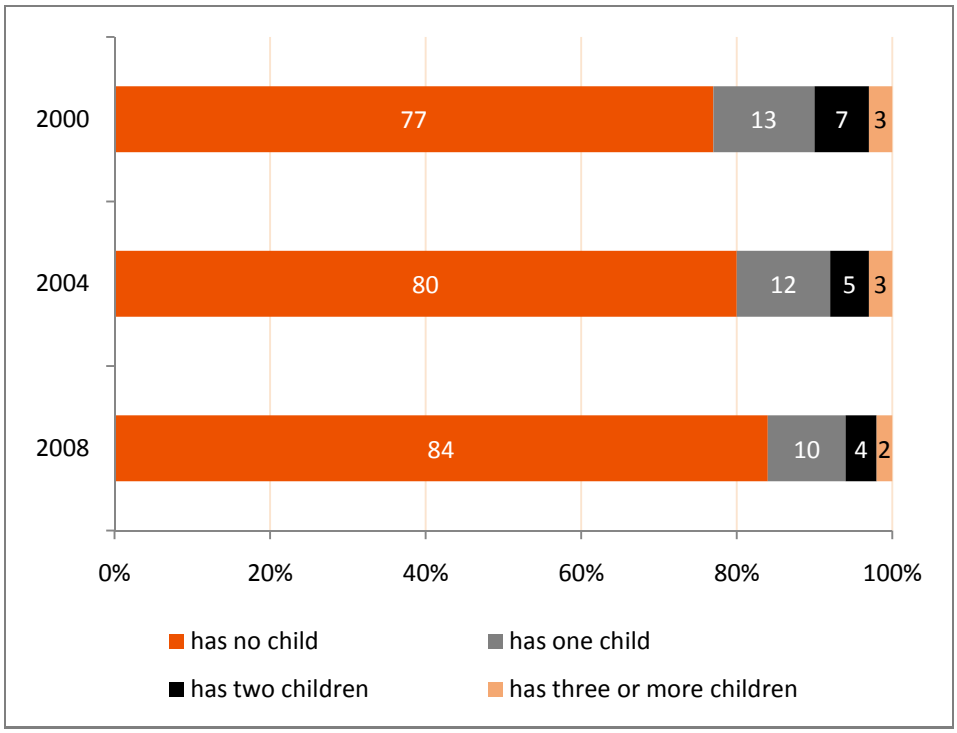


Table No. 3. Average age of having child/ren according to gender and age groups
(average of answers, number of respondents)

	Men		Women	
	average	persons*	average	persons*
Sample	**23.02**	**408**	**21.7**	**821**
15–19	18.6	9	17.4	43
20–24	20.2	81	19.7	174
25–29	23.9	318	22.6	604

*The element numbers pertaining to the average are published due to the element numbers that are extremely low at places.

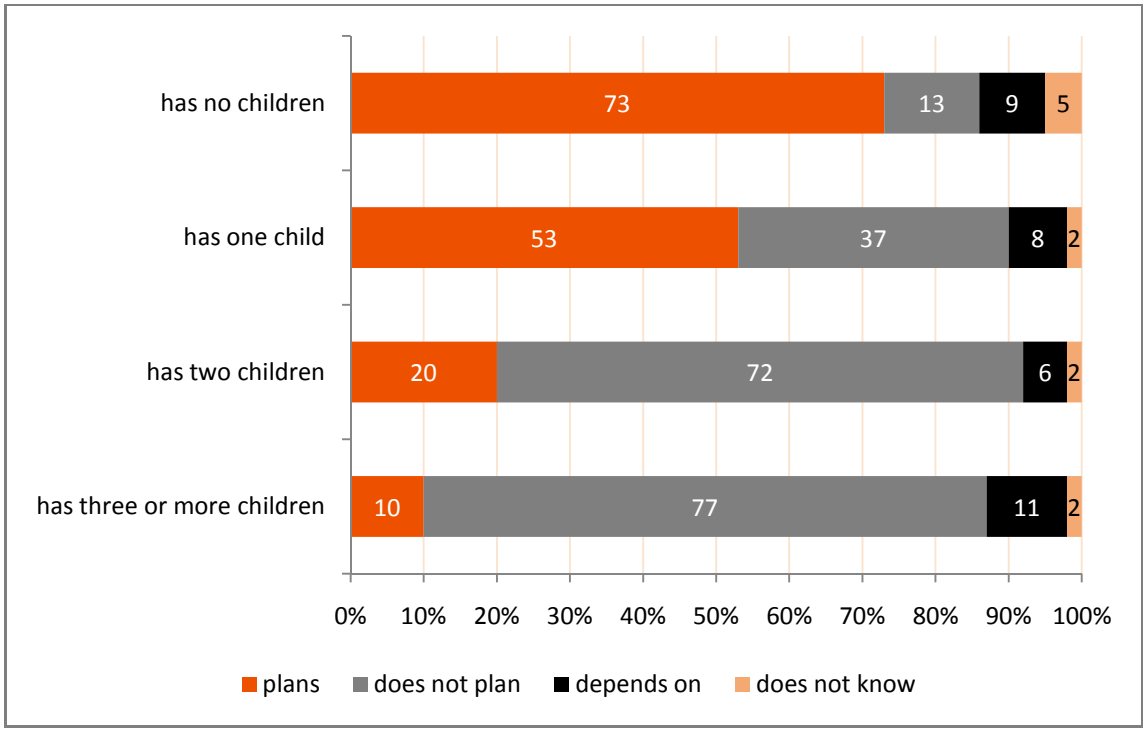
The registered low-child rate can theoretically be counterbalanced if young people decide to have more children later in life. About 9% of the 15–29 age group definitely claims not to want any (more) children, 8% makes it subject to circumstance and 5% cannot answer this question. Thus, all in all, 68% said that they want to have (more) children. Among those who are currently raising kids, more than half of those with one child and about one-fifth of those with two kids want to have another child. Seventy-three percent of those who have no children yet plan to have a child, but 9% say that the later decision will depend on the circumstances. Most of the members of this group plan to have their first child at the age of 25 and 30. In the detailed analysis it is worth calculating the "total planned child number" index, which adds up the number of children planned and already born. On the basis of the changes in the index over time, one can survey the fertility preferences, the expected completed fertility, the future family types as well as the eventual spread of intentional decisions not to have children.

Those who are not planning (additional) children primarily refer to financial reasons. This reason is followed by housing problems and work career. It is to be noted that some of the young people are also scared away by the extra tasks that are related to raising children.

In harmony with the data registered so far, those with a university/college degree score the highest rate (76%) with respect to the intention to have children. It is true though that they score the lowest rate among those who are already raising children. Seventy-two percent of those with secondary education and six-tenths of the respondents with lower education would like to have (additional) children. We would like to note that skilled workers and those with at most an eight-year primary school education show a lower willingness to have children than better educated young people, because they are who are already raising kids at a higher rate (15% of those with at most an eight-year primary school education and 26% of skilled workers have child/ren).

Medical publications have recently highlighted that more and more young people are coping with infertility problems. **The sampled 15–29 year olds are open to various treatments against infertility and ultimately towards adopting a child.** One-fourth of them would surely and another 31% would probably use infertility treatment. Forty-nine percent would surely or probably take part in a test-tube baby programme and 39% would consider adoption.

Figure No. 4. Plans to have children according to the number of the existing children
(in percentage)



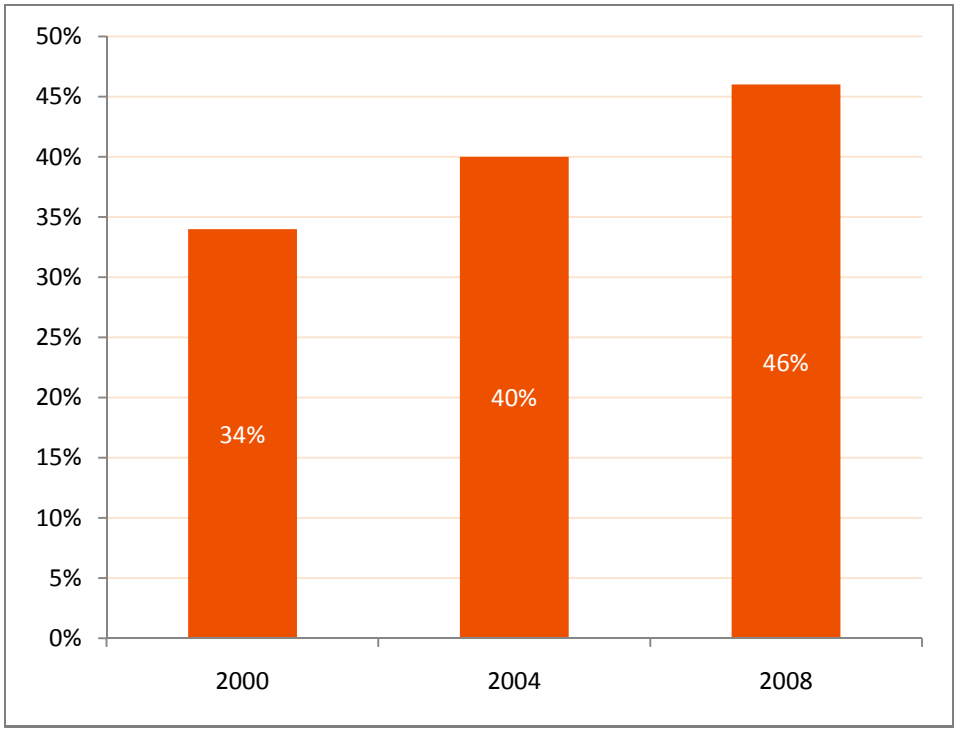
EDUCATION

Four years ago we stated that the life situation of the 15–29 age group is basically influenced by the phenomenon of expansion. The term of educational expansion can cover two aspects simultaneously, and our data show that both aspects are valid for young Hungarians. On the one hand, the average time that young people spend in the regular school system is increasing; on the other hand, more and more people go to school at any given point in time. The lifelong learning principle and the related efforts are given more and more emphasis in the educational policy of the world's developed countries. In this regard, it should definitely be pinpointed by way of introduction that – as our surveys shows – young Hungarians who are currently learning, want to pursue studies until they are 22, on average; within this, the youngest ones (15-19) want to study until the age of 21.5 years.

The 2008 data show that the expansion process is underway: at the time of data collection, 34% of the total sample was at school in 2000, while this rate was 40% in 2004 and 46% in 2008.

Participation in education

Figure No. 5. Rate of young people participating in education, 2000-2008.
(in percentage)



The rate of those participating in education has spectacularly increased over the past eight years, which is, on the one hand, attributed to the fact that the age limit of compulsory education is now 18 years, and on the other hand, due to the rise of socially expected educational levels. The biggest increase over the past eight years has been registered in the 20–24 age group.

Table No. 4. Rate of participants in school education according to age groups, 2000-2008.
(in percentage)

Age groups	Youth 2000	Youth 2004	Youth 2008
15–19 years	81	81	88
20–24 years	24	38	40
25–29 years	4	12	13

There seems to be no major change between 2004 and 2008 in the breakdown by various school types. At the date of data collection, more than one-fourth of the schoolchildren went to specialised secondary schools, slightly fewer students went to general secondary schools, and about every fifth of the respondents went to college. The question is: what might be the reason for the 3% decrease in the rate of university students, which was registered by the survey in 2008. However, for the most part, this reduction is also due to the impact of the Bologna process because – in order to provide for comparability with the earlier years – those people who are currently attending BA training were considered among college students[3], although some of them will obviously also take part in MA training later.

At the same time, we need to mention that there are some respondents – in fact, slightly more than 1% (102 respondents) of the total population – who did not finish primary school and do not go to school anymore. About one-third of them said that they did not complete school due to their bad results; another 25% passed the compulsory schooling age, and this is why they did not continue their studies, and a similar rate of the respondents mentioned family reasons for dropping out of school.

It is worth mentioning that about 1% of those who were covered by our sample were private students through their primary or secondary studies. It is remarkable that about one-fourth of those with primary education (more than 8% of the total population) are currently not pursuing any studies. This rate is 12% among those who live in villages. This factor is mainly influenced by the educational level of the parents: about one-third of children whose fathers have the lowest educational attainment are also not pursuing studies.

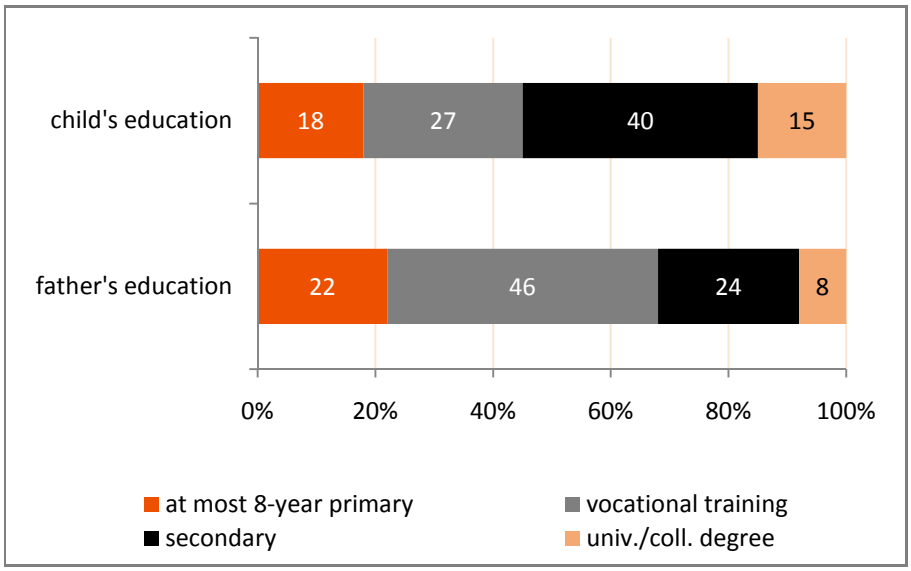
Table No. 5. Percentage breakdown of those studying in the school system, according to school types, 2000-2008.

School types	Youth 2000	Youth 2004	Youth 2008
Vocational school, skilled worker training	11	13	12
Specialised secondary school	27	27	26
General secondary school	25	22	23
College	19	23	21
University	15	15	12
Other	3	-	5

[3] We would like to point out that the traditional terms of „college" and „university" do not cover the school structure accurately in the wake of the expansion of the Bologna process. For the sake of clarity, college students are those who take part in first-level training in tertiary education as well as those receiving traditional college training, while university students are those attending high-level master training, traditional university as well as undivided training.

Similar to numerous other education-related analyses, our research highlighted the problem that, educational expansion does not mean that achieving a higher educational level than the former age groups would guarantee life security, a better financial position and a more favourable labour market status – this is implied, for example, by the theory of "inflating educational levels".[4] Furthermore, there is a high chance that the low educational level will send individuals into a hopeless situation. Figure No. 6 highlights the differences between two generations (participants in the survey with some educational level as well as their fathers' levels). It can be clearly seen that there has been a major shift in the interim educational levels between the two generations – i.e. in the fathers' generation skilled worker qualification was not only more frequent, but almost every second father had skilled worker qualifications (46%). Conversely, the GCSE exam is the most frequent educational level among their children (40%).

Figure No. 6. The educational levels of fathers and their children
(percentage breakdown of the answers given in the merits)



The average educational levels increased over the past two decades. Later, the actual difference between the two generations will probably be larger than what we have measured, because many of the young people who are aged 15–29 and who are not pursuing studies currently (especially in the lower age groups) may later decide to attend further training schemes.

Of course, totally different individual reasons can be presumed behind the increased average educational levels between generations, and the educational level can be influenced by several factors.

The inequality between settlements is implied by the fact that those with the highest educational levels were registered in towns of county rank, primarily at county seats, but the respondents with a degree and secondary education are strongly overrepresented in Budapest. Maybe it is not surprising that young people's educational level is the least favourable among villagers – one-fourth of the youth only have primary education, and as little as one-tenth of them have a university or college degree.

[4] Collins: *The credential society. A historical sociology of education and stratification.* New York, 1979, Academic Press.

Table No. 6. The highest level of completed education according to settlement types
(percentage breakdown)

Settlement type	The highest level of completed education				Total
	At most 8-year primary	Vocational training	Secondary	Univ./college degree	
Budapest	12	18	45	25	100
Town of county rank	9	25	39	28	100
Town	19	29	35	17	100
Village	24	32	33	11	100

Additional factors that influence the educational levels are related to the education of the parents. After a continued survey of economically active people, we need to draw the conclusion that the impact of the social background − measured through the father's educational level − proves to be very significant. More than one-third of the fathers have at most a primary education, and this educational level is almost sure to carry the risk of labour market failures.

Among the children of fathers with primary educational and vocational training, more than 40% are characterised by one-tier upward mobility: they receive vocational training or have secondary education. Of course, all this merely comes from the attributes of structural mobility between the two generations, and – due to the educational expansion - this does not necessarily coincide with higher chances for the young people who belong to this group. Because we know that, as a matter of fact, even vocational training is likely to foreshadow low-level subsistence and long-time unemployment. Instead, we should rather say that all the people in these two groups (i.e. children of fathers with the lowest education) who are not upwardly mobile can, in fact, be regarded as disadvantaged in the labour market by at least one, but rather likely by two stages. In the other two education groups, the majority is composed by those respondents who have a similar educational level to their father. For example, more than half of the sons of fathers with secondary education also have a GCSE exam as the highest level of education.

Table No. 7. Completed education of young people according to their fathers' educational level
(in percentage)

Father's highest education	Highest completed educational level (among economically active people)					Total
	Primary school	Vocational training	Secondary	College	University	
primary school	35	41	20	4	0	100
vocational training	7	37	43	11	2	100
secondary	2	14	54	24	6	100
univ./college/ high-level specialised training	2	9	31	42	16	100

The settlement type and the parents' educational level are not independent from each other (i.e. among villagers, a high rate is represented by those whose fathers had a low educational level), and in fact, the reasons behind most of the registered settlement-type inequalities are attributed to the fathers'

educational level. If we look at these two impacts together, the differences are even larger compared to the survey of the impacts one by one: 62% of the children (who already completed their education) of fathers living in country-rank towns and holding a degree also have a degree themselves. At the other end, only 2% of children whose fathers live in villages and have only a primary school education achieve a high-level education.

Economic activity and learning

In the preceding, we surveyed those who are not pursuing studies anymore in order to create a general picture about the highest completed education of young people.

Various groups can be sharply distinguished according to economic activity including young people who are not in school, and these groups are characterised by life situations that are totally different from each other. Thus, it is worth observing the relations between the educational level and the economic activity.

While the rate of those with at most a primary school education decreased to 8%, and the rate of those with at most vocational training decreased to 27% among economically active people. The majority of unemployed people are dominated by these two, low categories. In 2008, people with a primary school education are overrepresented in this category at a doubled rate, while people with high levels of education score exactly half their rate among unemployed people.

Table No. 8. The rate of young people with various educational levels in the economic activity groups, 2000-2008
(in percentage)

	Economically active			Inactive			Unemployed		
	2000	2004	2008	2000	2004	2008	2000	2004	2008
primary school	10	11	8	25	36	39	26	30	35
vocational training	39	36	27	30	30	22	38	34	29
secondary	34	36	42	26	27	27	23	27	28
univ./college	11	17	23	6	7	12	3	9	8
other	6	–	–	13	–	–	10	–	–
total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

It is worth observing the relationship between the respondents' economic activity and their fathers' educational level. The majority of the young people pursue studies and work at almost identical rates (40% and 38%, respectively). Higher-than-average deviations between groups with different backgrounds can be the least discernable in the rate of those who work (although the children of fathers with high education are underrepresented in this category). At the same time, while one-fourth of the children of fathers with primary school education pursue studies and about two-fifths of them neither work nor study (i.e. they are inactive), the majority (53%) of the children from those with high education exclusively study, and the rate of inactive people is only 5%.

Table No. 9. The economic activity of young people according to their fathers' educational level
(in percentage)

The fathers' highest educational level	Child				
	Studies	Works	Studies and works	None of them	Total
primary school	25	34	3	39	100
vocational training	37	42	5	16	100
secondary	45	37	8	9	100
univ./college/ high-level specialised training	53	31	11	5	100
total	40	38	7	16	100

The impact of the Hungarian educational system intensifying social inequalities has been highlighted by numerous Hungarian and international research projects. The findings of the Youth2008 survey also reflect a similar picture. While only 1% of the children of parents with high education went to vocational training school at the time of our survey, this form of training (regarded as a dead-end street from many aspects) was attended by 9% of the children from fathers with at a most primary school education.

It is also worth pointing out with regard to the rate of education-related inequalities that – at the date of the data collection – out of 100 fathers with a primary school education, only one of their children went to university, while this figure is one in 15 in the case of children from fathers with high-level education. Clearly, despite the wider expansion in higher education, it seems that the children of highly qualified parents are much more overrepresented than other groups, even if this training scheme is no longer a privilege for them.

Table No. 10. The rate of young people studying at various educational institutions according to their fathers' educational level
(in percentage)

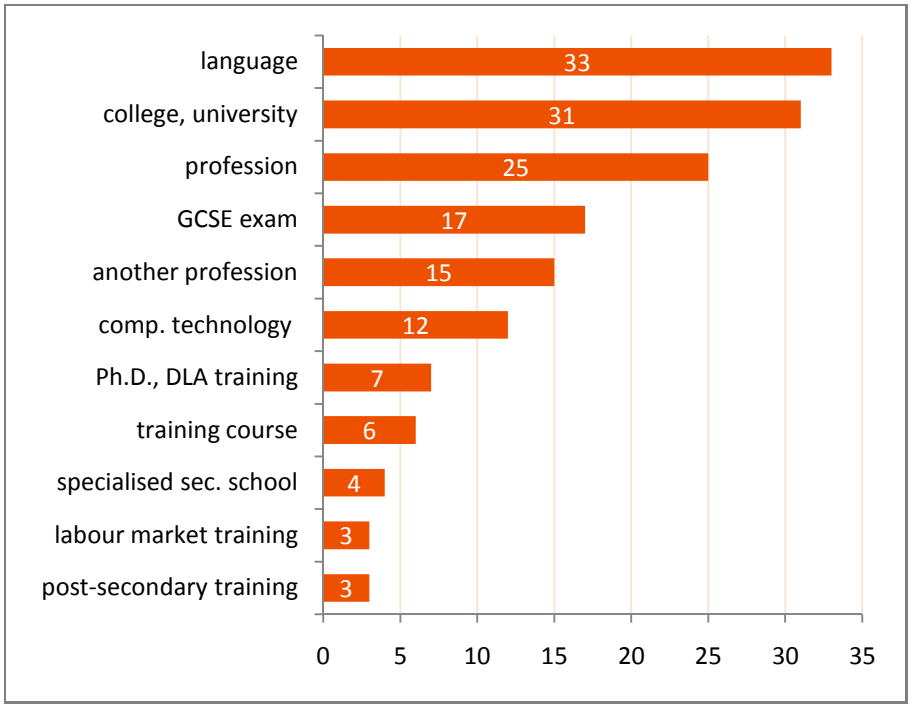
	The fathers' highest educational level			
	Primary school	Vocational training	GCSE exam	Higher
Vocational school	9	7	3	1
Specialised secondary school	7	13	14	9
General secondary school	3	8	13	18
College	2	8	13	18
University	1	3	7	15
School-goers in total	22	39	50	61

Extended education, language skills, special classes

Exactly half of the total population would like to pursue extended studies or to attend some training scheme.

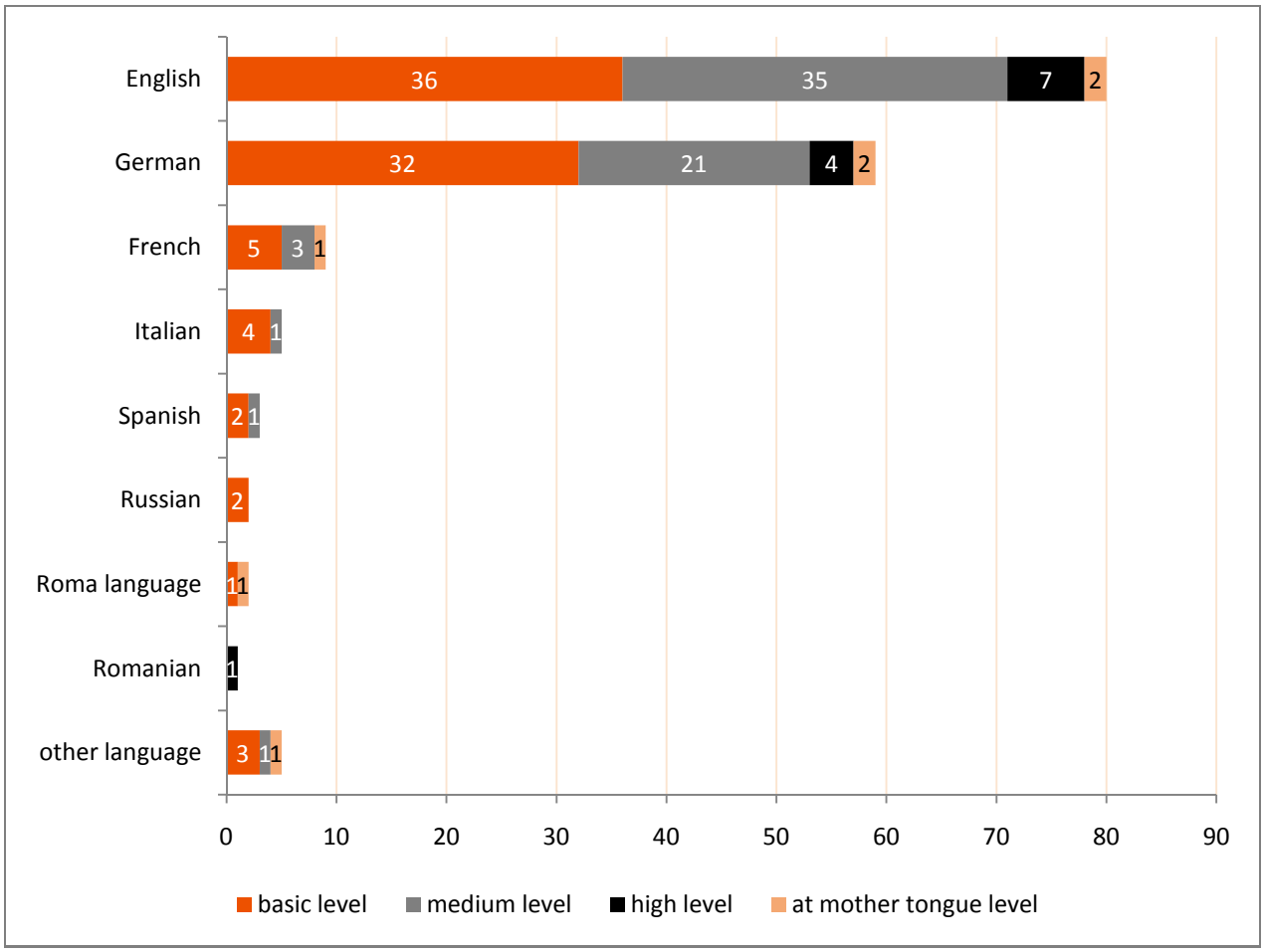
Thirty-five percent (i.e. more than one-third) of those who are in the most disadvantaged position from the viewpoint of education (i.e. those who only have primary school education and are currently not studying) are not even planning to pursue any studies in the future. It is to be emphasised that every second respondent (52%) who already has a degree said that they would like to learn more, and a similar answer was given only by 35% of those who received vocational training. Figure No. 7 illustrates what is specifically preferred by those who want to pursue some more studies.

Figure No. 7. Plans of young people about further studies
(in percentage of mentions)



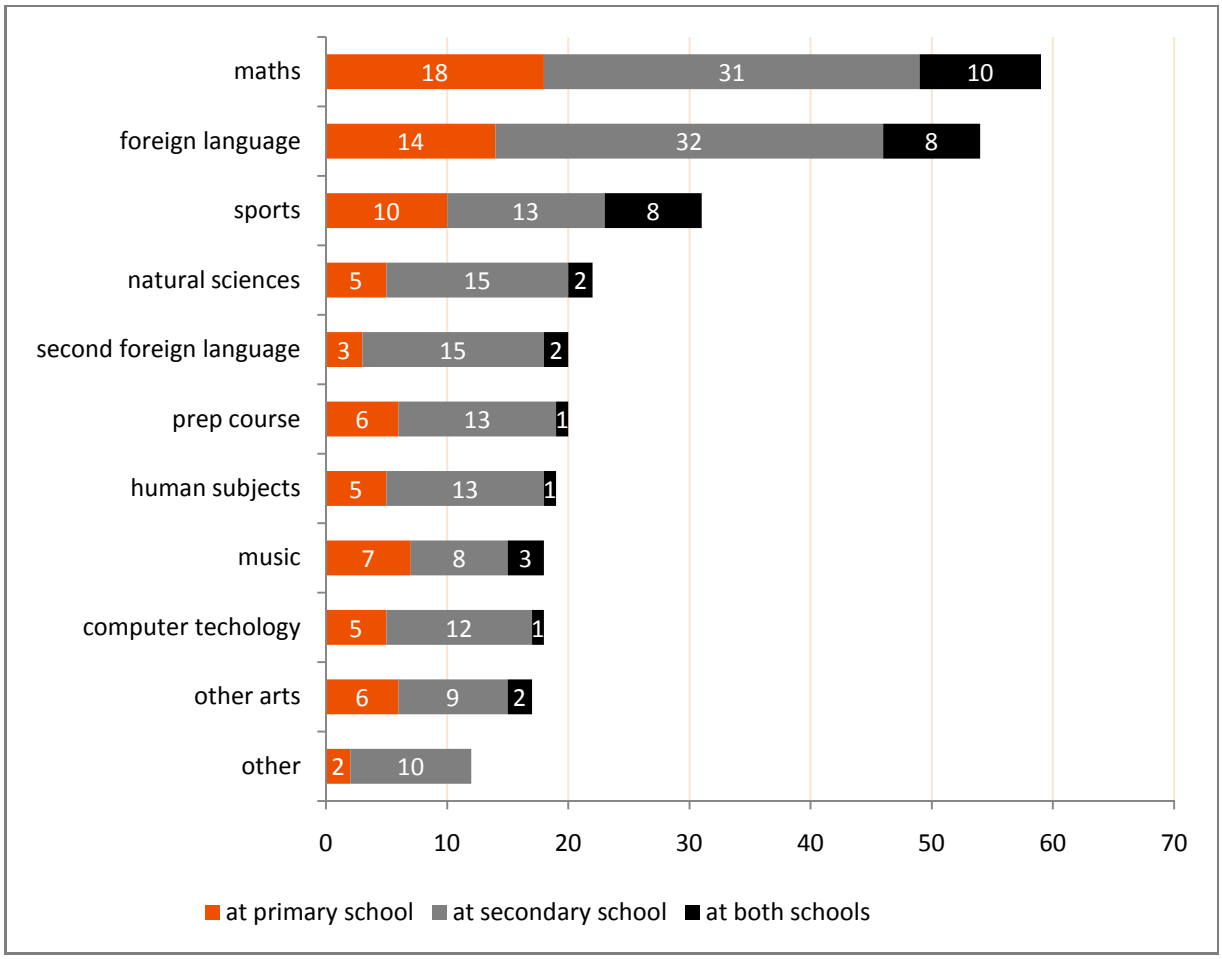
Learning languages is the most popular learning target. About two-thirds of the respondents (60%) claimed to speak some foreign language, but of course, this does not indicate the level at which they speak the given language. If we look a little bit closer at the language skills of young people, we can see that young Hungarians primarily speak English and German (if at all). At the same time, not even English and German score a high rate among those who speak the language very well (at a high level).

Figure No. 8. Foreign language skills and the level of knowledge
(in percentage)



A major criticism about the Hungarian public educational system is that the schools are not able to satisfy the learning needs of children (and their families), and for this reason, those who go to special classes score a very high rate. This, in turn, further increases the social inequalities, because not all families can make the necessary financial sacrifices to pay for additional language education. Figure No. 9 illustrates the participation rate in various special classes.

Figure No. 9. Special classes attended in primary and secondary school
(in percentage)



University and college students

Looking at the composition of those who go to college or university, it can be clearly seen that the institutions of higher education continue to be closed to the children of parents with a low educational level. The children of fathers with at most an eight-year primary education are in a more disadvantageous position than anybody else, and over the past eight years there have been no signs of any processes leading to more equal opportunities. If we compare the composition of college and university students, we can see that among college students, the kids of fathers with primary school educations are in a more disadvantageous position than anyone else. Also, among university students, the children of parents with a high-level of education are in an advantageous position, because they are overrepresented more than twofold among the other students.

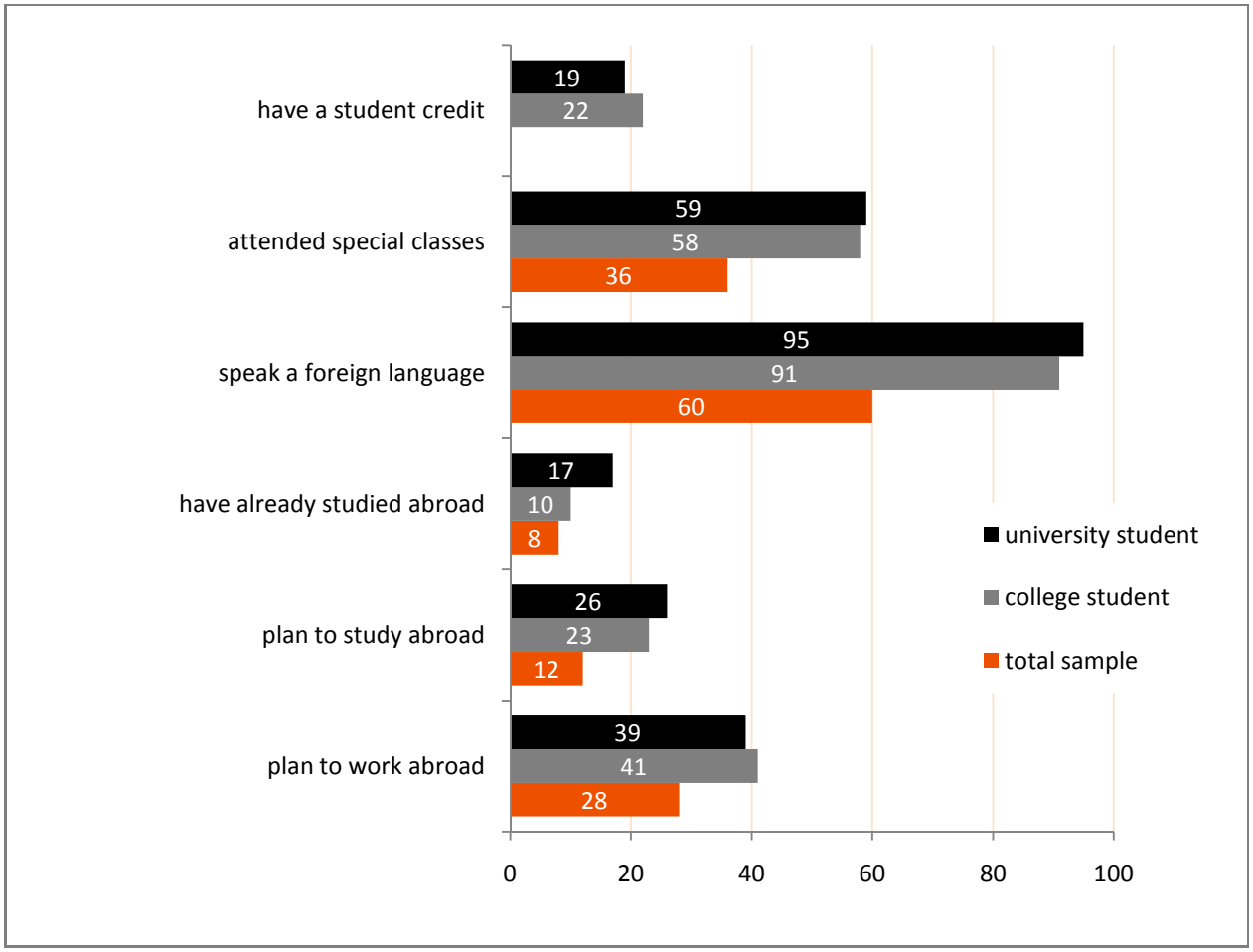
Table No. 11. The educational level of fathers among university and college students, 2000-2008
(in percentage)

The father's educational level	University students			College students		
	2000	2004	2008	2000	2004	2008
High-level	44	39	42	29	24	30
Secondary	31	38	35	33	38	34
Vocational training	22	22	22	32	33	33
At most 8-year primary	3	1	1	6	5	3
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100

It is worth comparing – along certain dimensions – university and college students and those attending high-level training with the total population. It is worth pointing out with regard to figure No. 10, that the rate of those who speak foreign languages at some level is much higher (91% and 95%, respectively) among those attending high-level training than within the total population (60%). It seems to be another important impact that the majority of the university and college students (58% and 59%) attended special classes at primary or secondary school, while this rate is only 36% within the total population. Those who are planning to study abroad score the highest rate in speaking a foreign language among university students, and the rate of those who have already studied abroad is by far the highest among them (17%, compared to 10% among college students).

Closing the introduction of the educational section, we can draw similar conclusions as four years ago: the unequal opportunities in education that are due to social reasons (primarily financial and cultural capital brought within homes) continue to influence the education and the schooling opportunities of young generations at an unchanged intensity.

Figure No. 10. University and college students, comparison of the total sample under various aspects
(in percentage)



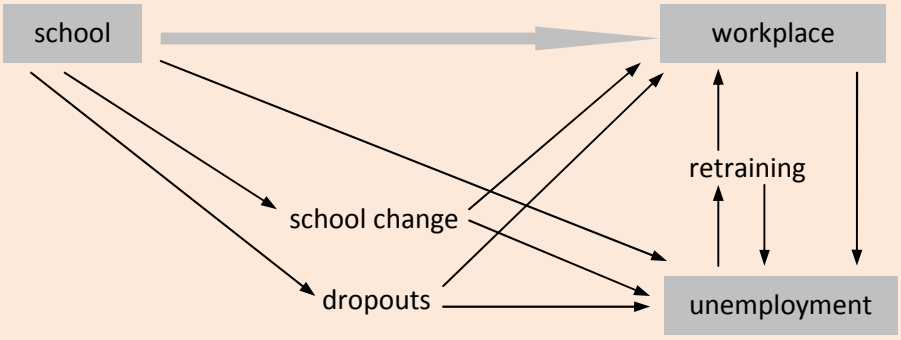
Several of the problems incurred during the course of the quantitative research were covered in the focus group surveys. The following issues can be highlighted with regard to the topic of education:

Today, working is very frequent also among daytime students. The school and the workplace are not always in a continuous relationship with each other in terms of time.

The following figure illustrates some additional ways outside the direct relations that are available between school and workplace. The preferred school-workplace direction is symbolised by the thick, gray arrow. Exploring the preferences in the choice of school was one of the purposes of the research. As can be seen later, the selection proved to be unsuccessful in numerous cases, and the young persons concerned already abandoned their career path while still in the academic stage.

Some dropped out of the school system, and some others changed their major subject at school. Furthermore, the completed or interrupted studies were not always continued at workplaces, and some people became unemployed.

Possible ways of transition between school and workplace



The learned professions and the acquired qualifications do not always meet the expectations of the labour market. The purpose of the survey is to explore the nature of these negative anomalies as well as to pinpoint proposals for solutions in each case.

School

The school was mentioned by the focus groups both as a positive and a negative element. Positive features are the good marks and praise by the teachers.

> *For example, when the teacher praises you for getting a good mark.*
>
> *I am very happy when I get a good mark (mark five).*

There are also some outstanding schools where it is natural that students get good marks.

> *That does not work with us, because the teachers take it for granted that we get good marks, since we go there to learn.*

There are some situations where the students regard it as positive if they just manage to pass a test.

> *We take a test and I fail, but if I get mark 2, I am happy.*

Of course, they find the school unpleasant for several reasons. Many students do not like getting up early, and they do not like the "zero" class, either. The role of the teachers did not prove to be positive in all cases either. Students have unfavourable opinions about them when they give bad marks, or when they show more favour towards specific students.

The school-related attitudes can be arranged into three thematic groups. It is the physical environment, the teachers and the curriculum that raise various feelings in young people about school and going to school. The respondents voiced both critical statements and recommendations.

The physical environment

The need for autonomy was mentioned in connection with the physical environment. A certain degree of freedom may help to solve problems that can make students' life more pleasant. The students claim that the atmosphere and the interior arrangement of schools are many times boring and depressing. This problem can be solved by the cooperation and the involvement of young people. Many ideas were mentioned about music and colourful walls. Of course, in many cases, it is only the need that comes up to the surface, but sometimes the intention to take an active role can also be spotted.

The need for repainting was mentioned the most often.

> *I would like to see a school with a better atmosphere. With pictures on the wall, music in the background and things like that. It should be a bit more human-friendly.*
>
> *Yes, it's mainly the looks. Since I go there for X years and I see that regularly, it should have a good atmosphere. Well, ok, I know, I should be just happy to be in.*

Students feel that schools that can be made more personal in this manner would be closer to them. The place would suggest a mood that is not strange to them, but it is their own, and it carries their "signature". This would create serious motivation for them.

However, they regard universities to be a bit too loose compared to secondary schools. The teaching methods are largely different at universities and secondary schools. Not all students perceive this switchover as an opportunity, but they more regard it as disinterest reflected from the educational side.

> *Maybe there is too much independence; the university gave us too much freedom. When we got there, we realised in the first year that we did not have to attend lectures, and we did not have to get a medical paper for our absences, etc. At secondary school we were forced to learn. Here, they do not care whether we learn or not.*

Teachers

Teachers are criticised on numerous instances, and some of this grudge is caused by the generational gap. The students mentioned the large distance between them and the teachers several times. This is based on the lack of mutual understanding.

> *Well, because they do not understand us. Really, if I do not know it, they are twenty years or more older, and they grew up totally differently, so they will never understand us, and we do not understand them.*

This feeling of distance may be the source of several conflicts. The lack of confidence in many cases, drives

young people away from the potential help that could assist them in various, stressful life situations.

In the course of the discussions, the respondents considered teachers not only remote but many times also unmotivated. The lack of motivation makes the classes boring.

> *The teachers are also bored, and it shows. The way it should be done is that they should also be interested, and they should also try to raise our interest somehow.*
>
> *Most of the teachers are "riding such a forced track". They just do not know what to do, so they start teaching. And then they give a hard time both to themselves and to us.*

The lack of teacher motivation is presumably also due to the lack of feedback from the students. The lack of motivation and the disinterest of the students influence the teachers' work. Thus, the defective relationship – which is based on mutual impacts – could be improved by changing the motivation of both parties. From this viewpoint, it is hard to tell which is the cause of the other. The following quote is intended to illustrate this circle:

> *I started studying 15 years ago, and at that time learning languages was not compulsory. We learned German, or rather they tried to teach us German, but when the teacher said we were stupid, and it was no use teaching us, we just attended the classes to pass the time away. So, at that time, we were not encouraged to learn at all. But now it is probably different.*

The frequent replacement of teachers and the usage of alternative methods also make the students feel uncertain, which leads to misunderstandings.

> *It is my experience that English was my second language at secondary school, and I had five English teachers in two years, and we could not speak when we had lessons with one of them. So it was rather "interesting" language teaching. The teacher said s/he was going to talk and explain, and we were to listen to him/her.*

The teacher-related problems are quite different at the institutes of higher education; there, it is not the issue of motivation that causes trouble, but mainly the presence of the teachers.

> *I wanted to learn English at college. We did get the books but they said, "Sorry, it won't work, because there is no teacher to teach English at a basic level". This came so suddenly, so we went to learn Italian at basic level. And thinking about this now, I feel that the school can do a lot about it. It should not be our business to provide teachers for language learning. On the contrary, it should be a minimum requirement that the educational institution should provide proper teachers.*

Curriculum

Many times, the students feel that the curriculum is far from the real objective, and they cannot see connection points between the curriculum and the profession that they wish to learn. Those who already graduated criticised the school curriculum in many cases, because it failed to prepare them properly for the actual professional challenges.

> *…there should be more practical items in class. Because what they generally do is they give a lot of theory, which is rather dry and boring. You just cannot see any relationship between the*

two, and you have to gain relevant experience on your own.

Students would like to have much more mobility in this regard, and they want to gain practical knowledge in a less formal way, in a much freer and penetrable manner than now.

For example, we should not be at school all the time. We could go here and there, we could gain more professional experience and things like that. It happens at all schools that you need to learn things that you are not interested in at all and learn things you are just slightly interested in. So, what is not interesting should be neglected.

As for gaining practical experience, studying abroad was mentioned as a positive feature. Secondary school students typically prefer studying in Germany, and they look forward to it.

Good practice was also missed at institutes of higher education, but some other expectations were also voiced: for example, a high level of language teaching as well as learning communication and presentation skills.

More communication skills should be developed. They should teach me to sell myself in a way that I can really get a job.

They could even organise a class on how to write a proper CV.

The school does not undertake the role to lead the students into the world of work, which would in fact be their expectation, and they regard the lack of this to be a serious defect.

I got my professional qualification, but they simultaneously told me "Ok, here is you paper. You have learned a job, but now you need to go and find a job with it".

This is exacerbated by the fact that many places of work demand one or two years of experience, which young career starters do not have.

And another problem is that many companies want one to two years experience. But how should I gain practice if they do not employ me? A nice phrase is, "We would like to employ a young career starter with one-year experience". How is it possible to start a career with one-year experience?

Aspects of choosing schools

General uncertainty can be perceived in the field of choosing schools and career paths. Many times, young people are not prepared for the decision that they need to take make at the age of 14.

Well, I think, many youngsters do not know what they want to do when they grow up.

Many respondents did not decide by the choice date what career they would like to pursue, the forced decision many times proves to be erroneous, and it is not easy to correct it later due to the difficulty in switching school types.

Looking at the aspects of choosing schools, two basic attitudes can be distinguished. We are once again using the already applied push-and-pull concept.

With regard to the attitudes that carry a push impact, it is the information and the opportunities from the

environment that are dominating:

- Members of the family, friends and acquaintances share their experience with the young people and help them with orientation.
- Local opportunities: in many cases, the choice is reduced to the available opportunities, which is definitely true of secondary schools.

The individual interests are dominating in the attitudes that carry a “pull” effect:

- Easy access: the easy side of individual interests. Numerous students are shifting towards the weakest point of resistance due to the lack of orientation and interest.
- The most evident aspect of choosing a school is the concrete interest shown towards the given profession.
- The financial opportunities represent a great attraction force for young people. Even if a specific profession seems less interesting, the accessible good financial position may carry a motivational force that encourages them to choose the given school and profession.

Today, the family and the relatives - mentioned in the field of the push effects - no longer prove to always be competent when it comes to choosing a school. Many students hold the view that the parents have lost their competence.

> *They grew up in a different society, and so will I. Now I start looking at things from a different angle than they do. Of course, we always get back to the point that I should learn and things like that, so they want to make it easier and better for me. So, perhaps they are not at fault in this regard.*

We are presenting the aspects of choosing a school in two groups. The group of preferences covers the factors that make the choice more attractive and the dislikes move them away from certain opportunities of choice.

Preferences

The research highlighted the following preferences:

- Interest
- Financial considerations
- Switching due to failure
- Individuality

Interest is the most important aspect when it comes to choosing a school; this positively influences the learning process itself. The following quotes go to show that interest also leads to a positive attitude.

> *I decided to learn the cosmetician job, because I was interested, and I thought that you should pick only one thing, and you've got to do it really well.*

Choices based on financial considerations were also voiced in many cases. The material side has always been connected to the likelihood that the professional service will be needed. The young respondents were in favour of those professions for which they presumed a constant need.

> *Well, I think hairdressing is a job that will always be in demand, and I would like to work*

abroad and hairdressers are also needed there. They are very much in demand, so I think this is why I opted for that. I'd like to go abroad.

It cannot really be foreseen which profession will guarantee jobs and proper living. Even people holding a university/college degree are uncertain about this question. They do not know either how much money can be actually earned with a profession because the same profession may be in a shortage in a certain area, but it may be saturated in another.

The thing is that, in my opinion, there are some "buffet" (useless) faculties both at colleges and at universities. I hope there are no event organisers among us, because I regard it as superfluous. It is true though that I know someone in Pest who is a 21-year-old event organiser and earns HUF 300-400,000 a month.

Switching schools or majors due to failure was typical of those who integrated escape alternatives into their career in advance. They considered the possibility of failure, so they are open towards learning other professions.

It all depends on whether we can get a job in this profession. Because if we cannot, we need to find something else, as we need to make a living somehow. So, you keep searching until you find something.

Individuality directs the attention to skilled worker professions that may surpass university/college degree-based professions with respect to financial and other opportunities. An example for this is the cooking profession.

It sounds true. My younger brother is a cook, and he is so good that he usually works as a chef in Budapest, and many times he makes much more money with it although he only received vocational training; plus he passed a master exam, but that's that. This means that if you are good at your profession, you can get the better of a person who holds a useless degree.

Dislikes

The research highlighted the following dislikes:

- Moving towards the concrete if the alternatives are uncertain
- Ranking
- Lack of targets – lack of interest
- Forced track
- Postponing the time of further education
- Mockery
- Predestined fates

Moving towards the concrete if the alternatives are uncertain makes it superfluous to get a degree. The uncertainty about making an investment into learning many times shifts young people towards the weakest path of resistance.

You do not have to continue the studies, because so many people have a degree, and they cannot do anything with it. They can just get a job at McDonalds. So, you should do one

profession really well; I think it is worth more.

Some respondents ranked the eligible schools under various aspects and simply deleted the ones at the bottom of the list.

Well, I could not decide what I wanted to do, so I wrote down five options, then I deleted one and another one, etc. And in the end, this is what I got.

The lack of targets can only be detected as a cause once a school was completed without any interest, and the students do not start work in the given field.

I am a hairdresser by profession, but I do not really work as a hairdresser. I completed the school, but I did hair only for my family at home.

I learned to be a leather-maker in Sárvár, but I have never worked in this profession.

Some young people are actually on a forced track when it comes to choosing a school. They were generally bad students at primary school, so they have fewer opportunities in selecting a secondary school. And these forced options probably do not meet their field of interest, so these students lack motivation.

If the school marks are bad, you still need a profession. And then you, of course, go to school where you will be accepted.

I told my English teacher, "Please, let me pass so I can learn what I want, it's hairdressing", and he said, "Well, honey, there is also a chance to go and work as a bricklayer…"

The eventual postponement of starting further education belongs to the dislike category in that the student continues to be uncertain. S/he does not move towards the final target but, for certain reasons, stops before starting high-level or extended education. There is both opportunity and intention, but s/he just would not make a move.

I am not going to college now. Maybe in 10 years' time I will decide that it is worth going, but not now.

Mockery/teasing is one of the most awkward manifestations of dislike. In this case, the student may be discouraged from continuing studies and from the subject of interest by the ironic and derogative remarks by other students, relatives or even teachers.

I told my form-master at that time that I wanted to learn to be a veterinary health officer or something like this and s/he should give me advice. There were these career consultants and they told me, "What do you want? How could you help when the cow is calving, come on!" So this is how it gets started. They imprinted it on us at the age of 14 that no … we cannot do it. Then I told my dad (he worked in health for quite a long time), "Dad, I will be a nurse." "You? How do you want to lift a patient weighing 60kg? How would you give the patient a bath? Come on, my daughter! Forget it!" So … this also happens.

Predestined fates also put people onto a forced track. In most cases, the chances of further education are negatively influenced by the young people's living conditions and by the place of residence. When talking about the aspect of choosing a school, it was frequently mentioned that the school in question was the closest, so this was the only option; they had to go there.

The place of residence is another important aspect, because it already places a label on young people.

Other decision-making factors

In addition to the above preference-dislike approach, we also registered some other factors that influenced the choice of school. These are as follows:

- Gender as a partition line
- Positive discrimination
- Wrong option
- Late change
- Lack of a chance to switch over
- Interim spin-off

It is already a trivial statement that the gender of the career starters strongly determines their choice of school, but mainly it determines the choice of profession, and it narrows down the circle of the available opportunities. Although a switch-over is not excluded in many cases, it is a rather unique phenomenon.

I am not kidding, there are two girls in the 12th grade - they will soon graduate as bricklayers. Well, it is pretty tough! If it is engineering, I'd say it's okay, but not a bricklayer. I think they will not be able to get a job. No one will employ them because they are women.

There is also a building industrial school in Kaposvár where two girls are learning bricklaying and indoor covering.

At our school, three girls are learning to be butchers.

Positive discrimination is a frequently mentioned phenomenon, where students complain that the eventual slim resources are available only for one or two students, and for this reason the others are disadvantaged upon the preparation stage.

Well, and s/he is not the doctor's child after all …

A wrong option is a specific form of dislike, whereby the student does not pick the profession that s/he is interested in but chooses the one in which a teacher deemed s/he talented. Later, however, the working person drifted over to the side that s/he was more interested in at the beginning.

I never wanted to go into this agricultural line of work. Then I finally went there, because I was very good at biology, and my teacher said I should choose a path like this. I was not good at drawing at all, and now I am working with these technical drawings. And I never learned about these.

Late change is a sharper type of the wrong options mentioned above. In this case, the former student is sorry about not choosing a school in line with his/her current field of interest.

I could have chosen some gardening job or something about flowers instead of leather-making. Flowers are closer to me than all this. But at that time, I was not so crazy about flowers as now.

A switch is more often possible at institutes of higher education, and in fact, university/college students

are more willing to make use of this opportunity.

> *When I went to school, I had a broader vision of many things. I selected adult training instead. It was for money and basically because I can see more opportunities in it.*

Dropping out

The stages of choosing a school, learning and then starting work do not always follow each other consecutively. Numerous students do not continue their studies in the selected school due to their own decision or as a result of external circumstances. They either switch training schemes or interrupt their studies and spin off. The dropout rate from classes is in many cases near 50%.

> *We were 36, now we are 18. There is one more year to go.*

Dropping out does not exclusively happen due to bad study results. The reasons are, in many cases, not even revealed to the classmates.

Dropping out and/or the previous absence rate often seem to be pointless also in the students' opinion.

> *Many of the cook trainees do not go to classes, so some of them will be given the axe. I just do not see it; they want a profession, but they do not go to school.*

Later opinions about the choice of school

Young people can later seek confirmation or self-justification about the choice of school, or they may find their decision erroneous. Those with a university/college degree feel that they made the decision themselves, and it was the right decision.

> *It was in harmony with my field of interest. I will also be an economist, and I was much better at science subjects. I felt this is what fits me.*

However, as the above-mentioned opinions also go to show, many people already left the profession upon completing school, and for this reason the subsequent opinions about the choice of school is typically bad. The reason for this can be the disappointment about the training, and – in many cases – that unrealistic expectations were not fulfilled. Typically, young people are disappointed about the lower demand for the given qualification and profession, and – as a result – about unemployment.

> *I also cherished high hopes until I got my degree. Then I suddenly found myself without any jobs. The other day I talked to a plumber guy in the pub. He said he is doing fine, works all day, and has just gotten engaged to his girlfriend. Well, I said maybe I really took the wrong direction. So today, I also believe that a good profession really helps you to achieve more than a degree from the Kaposvár university.*
>
> *If I look back on the past few years, young people were always motivated by being told "Go and learn", and "Get a degree, go to college and you will have a job. Degree, degree, degree!" And the students graduated from school, and they were told, "No thank you, you are over-educated." If I really think about it in the long run, this is cheating, and I wonder what the point is.*

A REVIEW OF THE LABOUR MARKET

Forty-four percent of the 8,076 young people interviewed within the framework of the research were working at the time of the data collection, and 39% of them said that work was their main activity.

Those who do not do work as a main activity are primarily students (mainly at institutions of higher education). The majority of those who do not do work as a main activity are still employed. Twenty-one percent are unskilled workers, and 27% are skilled workers. One might think that this primarily covers people who receive vocational training or who go to specialised secondary school, but this is not the case. There are quite a lot of college and university students who work as skilled or unskilled workers in addition to pursuing studies. Another large group of those who do not do work as a main activity are employed in offices and do intellectual work which does not require a degree. Most of them are college or university students, but we also found secondary school students or people attending other training courses.

Table No. 12. Current main activities in details
(in percentage)

Activity	Percentage
Pursues studies, goes to school or attends a training course	**44.5**
Works, either officially registered or not, either as an employee or a contractor	**38.9**
Unemployed in total	**6.9**
Receives unemployment benefit or job seeker allowance	2.7
Receives job seeker allowance, employed in public work	0.4
Unemployed, receiving no benefit	3.8
Other inactive in total	**9.3**
Pregnancy – child-bed allowance	0.3
Receives child care allowance	1.8
Receives child care benefit	3.5
Receives child raising support	0.2
Homemaker, stays home with child (without child care allowance, benefit or child raising support)	0.6
Dependent, stays at home	0.9
Handicapped pensioners, receives handicap allowance	0.5
(Other) pensioner	0.0
Receives social benefit	1.0
Other inactive	0.4
Other	**0.5**

N=7,919

There are some people who regard work as their main activity, but they also deal with other things on the side. Ten percent of those who do work as a main activity also pursue studies. One percent work though, but they also regard themselves as unemployed (they receive no benefits) and another 1% are dependents.

Most of those who pursue studies while doing work as a main activity (47%) go to university or college (the two school types represent similar proportions by and large) and 22% attend training courses.

First jobs

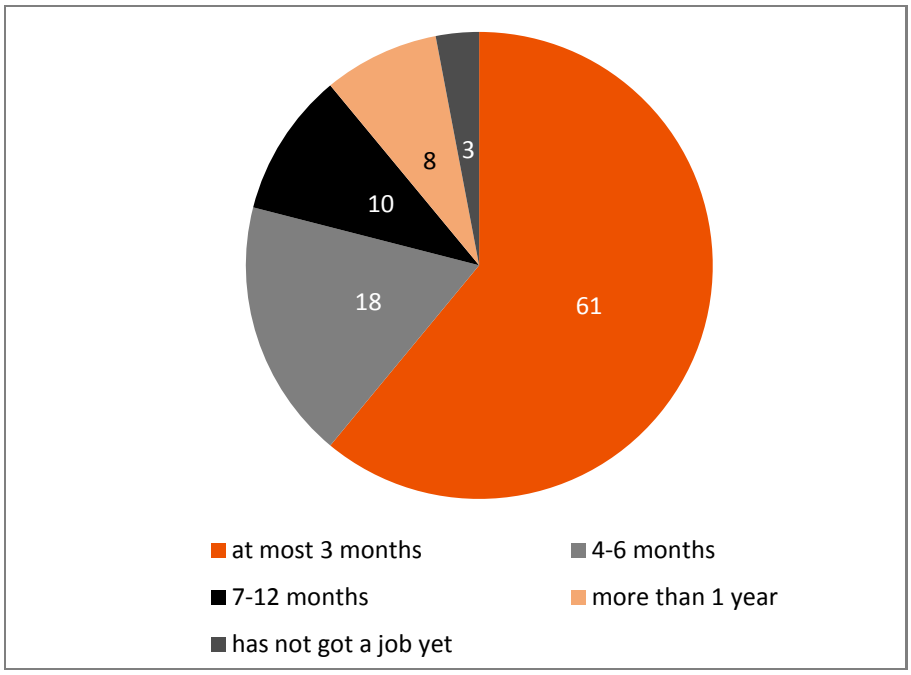
Sixty-nine percent of the young people have already worked for money and 51% have already done work for more than three months, outside school holidays. On average, the respondents took their first paying job at the age of 18, and the first work that lasted for more than three months was taken at the age of 19. (It is important to note that these average figures are only true of those who already did such work. Thus, these numbers do not mean that on average all the young respondents took their first jobs at this age, because this was not valid for some of them at the time of the interview.)

Eleven percent of the respondents works/worked regularly and 21% work occasionally in addition to going to school.

Employment in the first job

Fifty-seven percent of the sampled young people already completed – at least for the time being – their studies in the regular school system, i.e. they currently do not go to school, except for training courses that provide qualifications that are not normally granted by the regular school system. With the exception of those who were unable to find employment (also including those who had completed their studies about half a year before the interview), the young people who were questioned (and who were able to give an answer) found work within 5.3 months on average after finishing school.[5]

Figure No. 11. Average time between the completion of studies and getting a job
(in percentage)



N=3,714

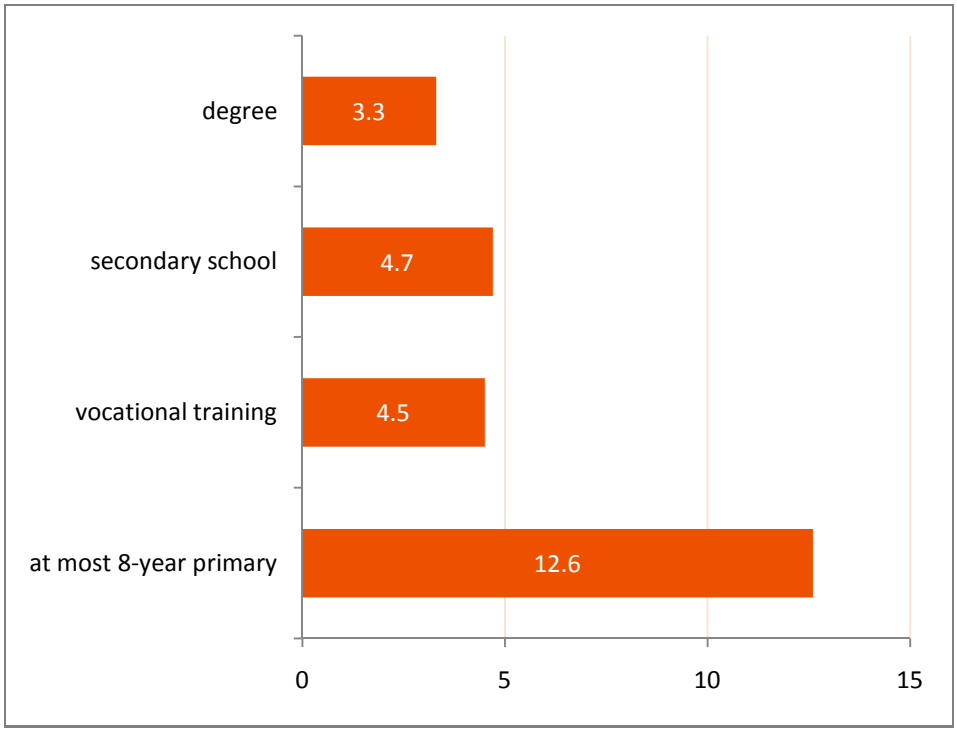
The level of education strongly influences the period of time required for getting a job after finishing the studies. The situation is the most difficult for those with only an eight-year primary education

[5] Those who managed to be employed within less than one month are considered as “zero” month.

or even less; on average, they needed more than a year to find a job. In this regard, the chances were much better for people with vocational training and with a GCSE exam (the average time required for getting work is not really different in these two categories). Those with a university/college degree have the best chances – although the difference between the periods of time needed for finding a job is not so extensive between people with a degree and those with secondary education than the difference between the latter group and people with an eight-year primary education.

Figure No. 12. Average time between the completion of studies and getting a job according to the highest level of education

(average values in months among those who already completed their studies and found work)

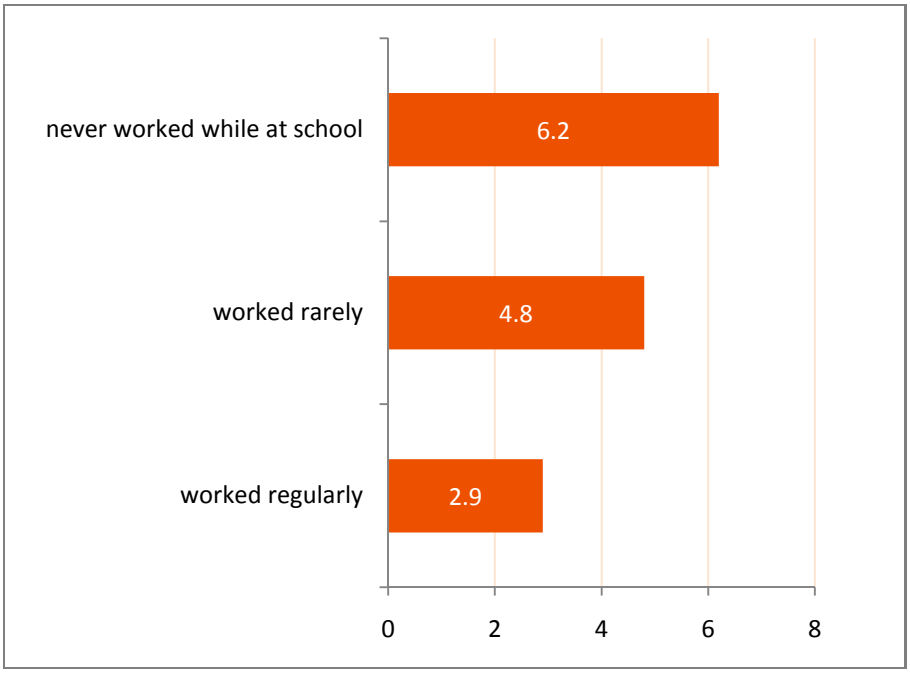


N=3,606

Whether someone has ever gained work experience while pursuing studies exerts a significant impact on the time required for getting a job, although this influence is weaker than the level of education. The collected data goes to show that the more work done that is done besides studying – especially regular work – makes it easier to get a job later (at least in terms of time).

Figure No. 13. Average time between the completion of studies and getting a job, subject to the former work experience gained besides studies

(average values in months among those who already completed their studies and found work)



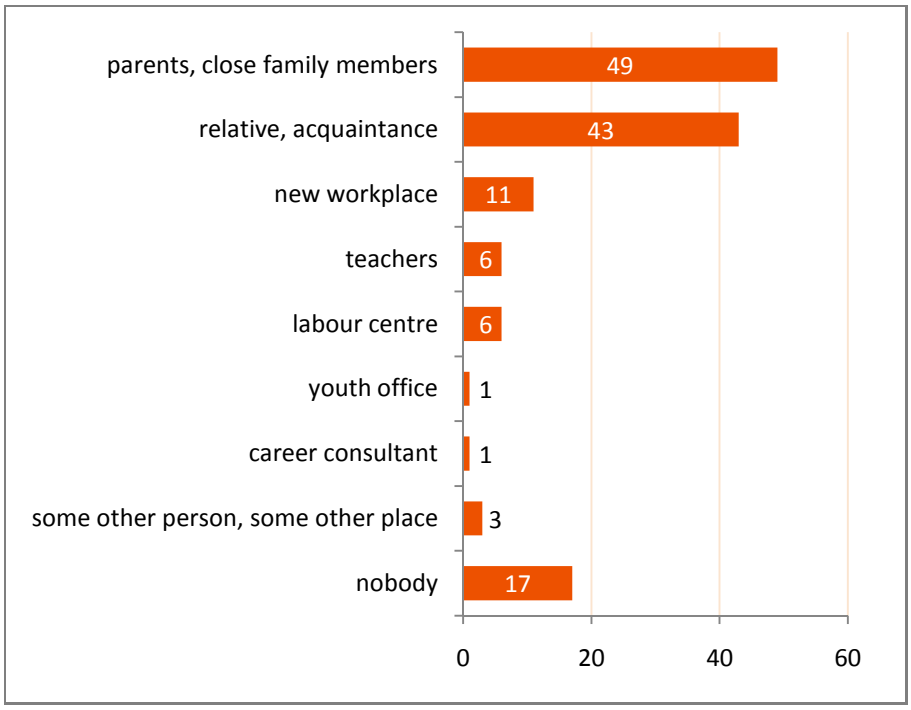
N=3,581

It is certain that the workplaces where 14% of the respondents are working is their first job. Seventy-two percent of them were helped by personal relations – parents, family or acquaintances – in seeking employment[6]. Six percent of the respondents were helped by their teachers, while the institutions dealing with career consulting and employment (labour centres, career and youth offices, consultants) proved to be useful only for 8%. Seventeen percent received no help from anybody.

Those who are currently at school have a very bad opinion about their future chances in the labour market: 51% of them have an unfavourable or very unfavourable opinion about the employment chances in their neighbourhood given their future qualifications. Twenty-eight percent gave a medium mark for their opportunities, and only 10% had favourable opinions (6% were unable to answer). (It is important to note that all other groups – even those who are working currently – have a worse opinion about the situation).

[6] The question about what help was needed for the respondents to seek employment in their current (or latest) job was only posed to one-fourth of the sample. This one-fourth is just as representative as the total 8,000-person sample, but – of course – we need to calculate with wider confidence ranges.

Figure No. 14. Who gave you the biggest help with your current – and simultaneously first – job?
(in percentage of answers among those who are currently working in their first job)



N=285

Current workplace, employment

Forty-five percent of the surveyed respondents were working at the time of the research. Eighty-six percent of them regard this as their main activity. The majority of them have one workplace and 6% have more than one job. The overwhelming majority of those who are currently working (88%) are employees, and the others are mainly contractors and casual workers.

Table No. 13. Form of employment in the main job
(in percentage of those who also work currently)

Form of employment	Percentage	Form of enterprise or employment	
Sole contractor, owner or partial owner	5%	FORM OF ENTERPRISE	
		Member, owner of a partnership	37%
		Member of a cooperative	1%
		Sole /private/ contractor	59%
		Helping family member	4%
		All contractors	*100%*
		NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES IN ENTERPRISE	
		No employees	58%
		1–5 employees	37%
		6–12 employees	5%
		85 employees	1%
		All contractors	*100%*
Licensed traditional small-scale producer	1%		
(former) employee	88%	FORM OF EMPLOYMENT	
		For indefinite time, registered	81%
		For definite time, registered	14%
		Case-by-case orders	1%
		Gives invoices as an employee in the name of a company	0%
		Is employed without registration	2%
		All employees	*100%*
Has casual jobs	5%		
Does public work	1%		
Other	0%[7]		
Total	*100%*		

N=3,333

Black work

Two percent of the employees and 28% of the casual workers "confessed" that they were doing black work. This rate increased significantly when we phrased the question differently: 17% of the employees got their whole salary in their pocket, 8% received part of their salary in this manner, while among the casual workers, this rate was 36% and 12%, respectively. Six percent of the employees and 15% of the casual workers did not wish to answer this question, and only 69% (employees) and 37% (casual workers) claimed to receive their total salary in a legal manner. Most of the black or gray work is done by people with an

[7] The 0% figures in the tables mean that such answers were given, but their rate within the total sample does not reach 1% even in a rounded-off form. If there is no such answer, it is indicated by a horizontal line (–).

eight-year primary education (which is out of necessity or their decision), and this rate is the lowest among those holding a degree.

Occupations

The majority of the young workers (52%) are skilled or unskilled workers, but a significant rate also does office or intellectual work (37%). The shift towards physical work is due to the low average age of the young respondents – those who perform office or intellectual work are still college students for the most part.

Table No. 14. The occupation of those who also work currently

Occupation	Percentage
Physical worker in agriculture	2
Unskilled worker (not in agriculture)	3
Semi-skilled worker (not in agriculture)	14
Skilled worker (not in agriculture)	35
Direct production manager (e.g. shop steward)	2
Other intellectual worker (not requiring a degree)	22
Subordinate with a degree	13
Low-level manager (under head of department)	1
Medium-level manager (head of department)	2
Upper-level manager (above head of department)	1
did not give an answer in the merit	*6*
Total	**100**

N=3,596

Giving up and losing jobs, unemployment

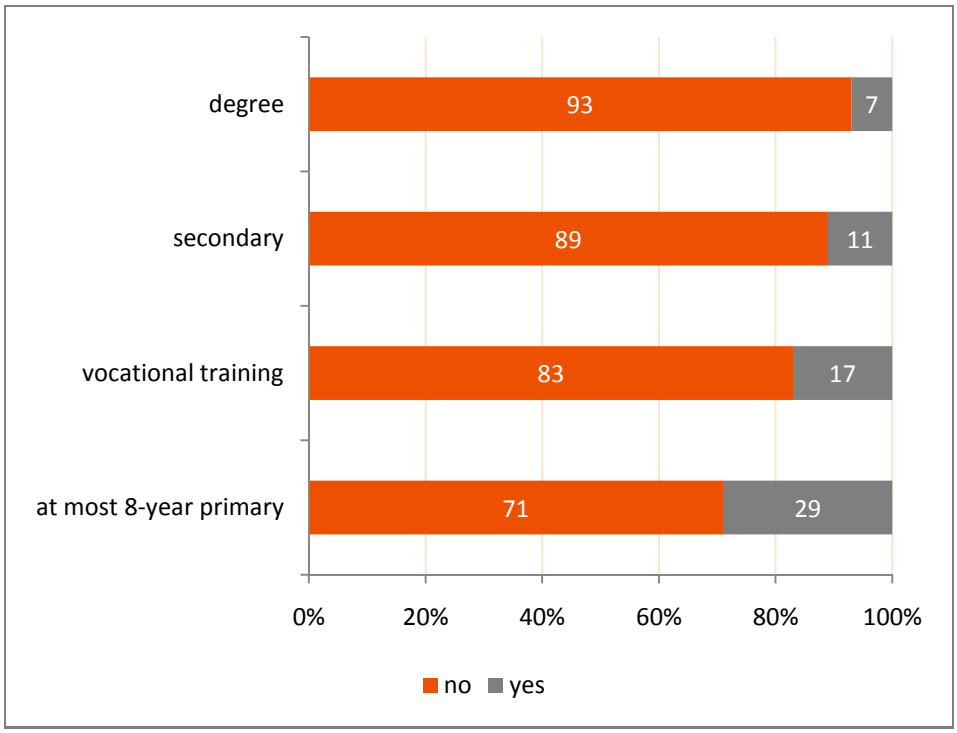
Losing jobs

Thirty-three percent of the young people who are also working currently fear that they might lose their job in the near future and 13% could not answer this question. In this regard, it is important to note that most of the data were collected after the outbreak of the international financial crisis in the autumn of 2008. Ten percent of the working young people are still looking for a job.

Young unemployed people

Nine percent of the young respondents covered by the Youth2008 research sample were unemployed at the date of the interviews. However, 22% did not regard this as their “main activity” (some pursue studies and work on the side, or they are in another inactive status, but they practically regard themselves to be unemployed). Becoming unemployed is strongly influenced by the level of education.

Figure No. 15. The unemployment rate according to the level of education
(in percentage of those who no longer pursue studies)



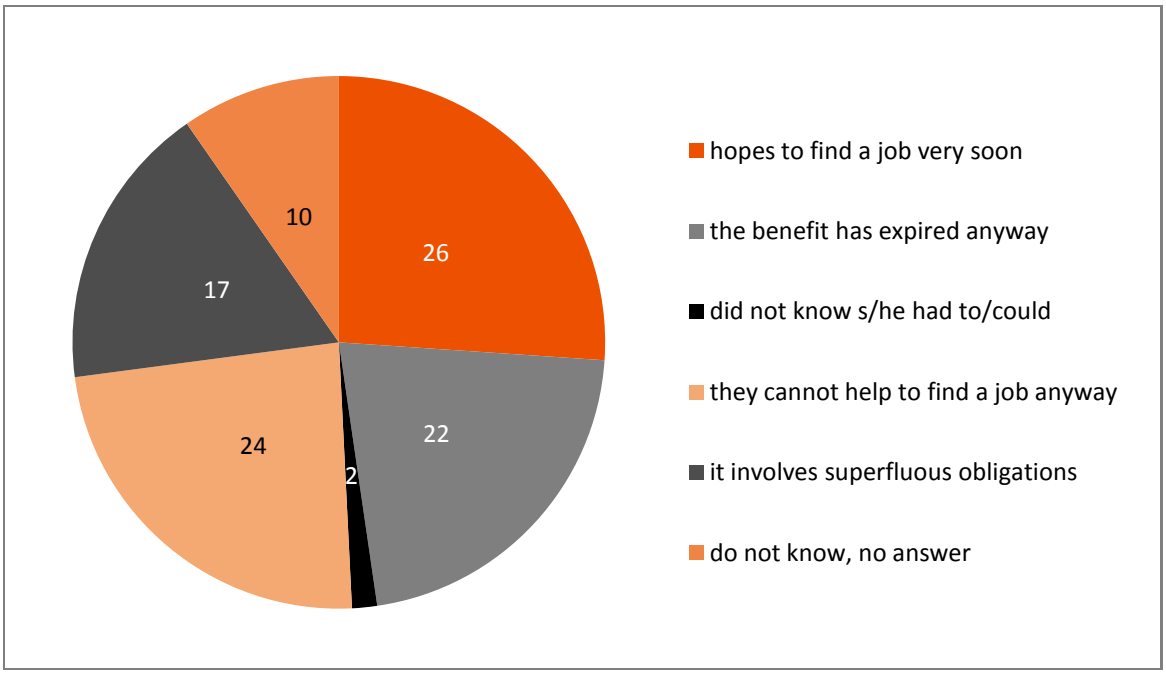
N=4,584

Sixty-three percent of those who are currently unemployed have already had an "ordinary job", 17% have already worked (but never longer than three months, and/or not outside the summer holidays), but 20% have never worked for money in their life. Seventy-five percent of the unemployed people are registered as unemployed. The reasons for the lack of registration of the residual 25% are illustrated in Figure No. 16 Forty-one percent simply find registration unnecessary; it involves too much obligations and/or they cannot help anyway.

Most people lost their jobs because notice was given, their contract expired or the company that they worked for closed. However, relatively many people were dissatisfied with their work, and this is why they quit their job.

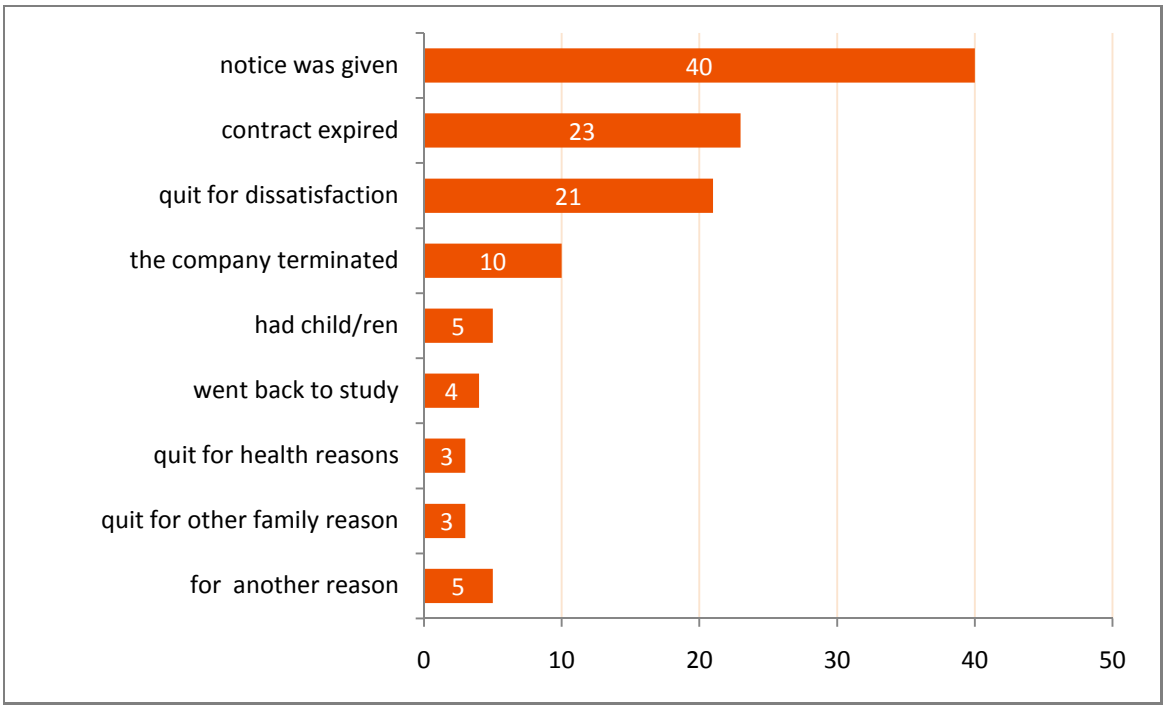
Sixty-five percent of the unemployed people think that the chances of finding a job in their occupation and in their neighbourhood are very bad, while 25% regard them as simply bad and only 2% find it favourable. Eight percent think that the situation is totally hopeless, holding the view that they would not get a job at all. The higher the level of education, the more optimistic people are: 32% of those holding a degree believe that they would find a job within one or two months – compared to the date of the interviews – while this rate is 25% among those with eight-year primary school education. Sixteen percent of the young unemployed people are not looking for a job. For most of them the reason is that, in their opinion, they would not find work that is appropriate from a financial or other aspect.

Figure No. 16. "Why are you not registered as unemployed?"
(in percentage of those not registered as unemployed)



N=135

Figure No. 17. Reason(s) for the termination of the last job
(in percentage of mentions of the reasons among the unemployed)



N=472

Geographical mobility

Hungarians are famous for being rather immobile. Seventeen percent of the young respondents would not move to another settlement for work and 16% do not know whether they would move. Most unemployed

people (80%) would be willing to move to seek employment. Sixty-five percent of those who are currently working would move or already moved in order to get a job. Students seem to be somewhat more mobile than that – at least theoretically. It is inactive people who are less willing to move. However, they form the group that did not claim to be unemployed in any manner (not even unofficially). Therefore, at this moment, they are less motivated to find a job than the members of the other groups.

Only 5% of the respondents have already worked abroad and another 27% are planning to work abroad. Those who want to work abroad are mainly motivated by the chance to save some money. The second aspect is language learning, the third aspect is a better life and the fourth motivation is to gain experience.

Those who would not like to work abroad mainly refer to their family and friends. Thirty-one percent think that there is also work in Hungary and 27% mentioned the lack of foreign language skills as a barrier.

A 2,000-person subsample within the total sample was also asked how important they regard it that more and more people should go to work abroad for some time in order to gain experience. Exactly half of the respondents found it important or very important – which is a much higher rate than the 30% that was registered among those who had already worked abroad or who were planning to go abroad. Forty-three percent dismissed the idea of working abroad on a principled basis ("learning at the expense of the Hungarian state and taking advantage of the acquired knowledge abroad").

The questions regarding jobs and employment were also covered by the focus group discussions. Below, we give a brief summary of the main findings.

Most of the participants in the focus group discussions were either students or young people just starting their career. Thus – in the case of the latter group – the experiences related to job seeking and employment are rather fresh.

In many cases, towards the end of school, the respondents already realise that they should not have chosen this profession and school. Why did they still go to that specific school? One of the most evident reasons is the previous lack of knowledge: they were not aware of the opportunities, or they did not have enough information about the trend in supply and demand in the labour market or about what the selected school exactly offers. In many cases, the school was "selected" because of the bad results at primary or secondary school. Another significant rate of the respondents, primarily those who went to or completed vocational training school, claimed that learning a more marketable or more interesting profession was prevented by "small faith". It provides food for thought that this poor spirit was attached in all cases to the parents or teachers and not to the children who were just about to select a school.

> *And we can also consider here the family, as was mentioned earlier. It can also be an external factor, as in they try to dissuade or convince someone that s/he cannot make it. What do you want to do here? So this is how it gets started … that at the age of 14 we were told that we just cannot do it.*

In opposition to what was mentioned earlier, there were numerous examples of people who were "forced" by someone to select a specific school, but they later realised that the profession in question was suitable for them, and if they were to decide again, they would still choose it.

It was only registered among those who are currently unemployed that some of them went to secondary school and then to college or university but realised that a trade should have been learned instead.

However, we did not meet any skilled workers who felt sorry about not getting any degree. Most of the participants in the group discussions did not even think of this idea, while some others – mainly the younger ones – hold the view that they can take a GCSE exam or learn a job at any time.

Those who felt sorry about their decision primarily blamed their teachers and parents for it – however, without reproaching them because they also regarded them as under informed.

The group of unemployed people more or less reached a consensus in claiming that the financial interests of various lobbyist groups can be detected both in higher education as well as behind the multitude of various high-level training schemes and courses.

The participants find the learning of a trade attractive, because one can become independent sooner, one can start earning money sooner, and one has a better chance to get a job abroad than without a profession or as a university/college graduate. In many cases, taking a GCSE exam and later a degree was out of question due to the study results and the family background. (Each of the respondents believed that one cannot get a job without a profession and only with a GCSE exam, so this is not a viable alternative at all.) However, the disadvantage of being employed as a skilled worker is that very few skilled workers can earn as much money as a degree holder who takes an average job. The participants in the group discussion were uncertain as to whether it is easier to get a job as a skilled worker or as a degree holder.

Getting a degree is attractive because of the lighter work as well as the more flexible and favourable working time and due to the fact that the final decision can be made later, and until that time, the person can live under the protection of family and parents. However, some others definitely dislike the latter aspect, and they tend to learn a profession instead. On the other hand, the disadvantage of pursuing a degree is that if you cannot find a job in your profession, you can seek employment only as a semi-skilled worker, for very low wages. As an example, the respondents mentioned people with a degree working at McDonalds for a very low hourly rate compared to the skilled worker who works either as an employee or on a casual basis but makes more money.

Most of the respondents claim that finding employment as a young career starter is a problem. Very few people said that this did not cause a problem for them, but they either learned a profession that was in demand (e.g. health), or they searched for work during the academic year, and they continued to work there after finishing school, and many times they soon managed to move up the corporate ladder. This proved to be an approved way both among skilled workers and degree holders. (It is interesting to see that they did not always get employed in their learned profession either.) All this already refers to one of the most serious problems: the majority of workplaces look for career starters who already have work experience. This condition is very difficult to meet, because few schools provide really useful practical training, at least among the participants in the group discussions. Only one participant mentioned that his/her school provided very good practical training, and another two persons found themselves a good place for gaining practice.

> *You can go to various companies to learn. Yes, and they should really teach you. It does not matter which profession or school it is, the person should be sent to do what s/he is interested in and have the chance to see how a big company is run, and s/he should write an essay about it, etc. And this could also be regarded as professional practice. But in that case, this person should not be used for photocopying and making coffee, but colleagues should explain the*

system to him/her.

Upon job hunting or at their first workplace, many people encounter that they are lacking some of the knowledge and the skills that are necessary in the labour market.

> *When you get your first job, you will realise that what you learned at school is far from what has to be done.*

Only an insignificant number of the group participants mentioned it as a grave problem that many employers are not willing to employ parents who have small children (this answer rate is due to the young age of the respondents). We had a participant who had been working for a company for a long time in a manner that nobody knew about her four children.

The overwhelming majority claimed that seeking employment and getting a relatively good job primarily requires contacts and "string-pulling".

When asked in the course of the discussions: "Who does your employment depend on?", the young respondents were primarily inclined to say "it depends on me", but they did not deny that contacts are important.

They also believe that employment requires learning, primarily languages, and graduating from a good school. Last but not least, luck is also an important factor to promote employment.

Choosing the workplace, satisfaction with the workplace, the ideal workplace

Of course, most of the group participants would like to be employed in their learned profession, although some respondents voiced a contrary statement. However, many people – mainly those who received a high-level education - thought that this can only be a long-term target:

> *Now I think a fresh graduate has to take many jobs that may not be taken later, because they will be higher in the hierarchy. Now I am still in this phase.*

Acceptable salaries and time schedules are at the top of the explicit expectations from the (future) workplace. These aspects are followed by the appropriate working conditions and by "liking the job to some extent". Many respondents dislike taking too much responsibility.

No specific amounts were mentioned about a good salary, only the need that the quantity of work to be done, the working time and the responsibility should be proportionate with the salary. The lack of this is especially disturbing if someone experiences unjustified inequalities and injustice at his/her own workplace.

Evidently, those who mainly complained about the working hours are also those who never have two days off consecutively as well as those who have such extremely long work hours – many times increased with unpaid overtime – that they can spend practically no time with their friends and loved ones. The latter is especially painful for those whose busy social life at school has just come to an end. Many respondents also mentioned the phenomenon of becoming lonely and about losing the social base after taking a job. The long travelling time significantly extends the "gross working time" for many people, which is related to commuting and to the bad traffic conditions. This is especially difficult for those who use mass transport

and for whom the – not refunded – petrol costs are too expensive.

The criterion of "appropriate working conditions" covers many aspects. Perhaps the "good bunch of people" and the "proper boss" were mentioned the most frequently. The group members held the view that good colleagues can greatly improve on even the most boring and underpaid job. For many people, especially for those who have little children and who spend all their time at home when they are not working, adult company is definitely a pleasant aspect at work, combined with some – even if not too much – talk.

Of course, the most difficult task was to describe what makes someone like his/her job. It is naturally important to have a field of interest, and that you can do work that gives you a sense of success. But success in itself is not enough, it is also essential to receive appropriate feedback.

> *It feels good if they tell me, "Well done, Robi."*
>
> *They praised me at work, and I started to shed tears about it I was so moved.*

In regards to the question of responsibility, although this mainly belongs to the topic of choosing a career, several respondents mentioned they could not even imagine becoming doctors and to watch over other people's lives. It was also mentioned by several respondents that they would like to be bosses, but not at this young age, because it involves too much responsibility. Some participants refused to be responsible for money at work:

> *… and a place where there is no – ok, there is responsibility everywhere, but, for example, if there is inventory shortage in a shop, you have to pay for it.*

However, this is not about rejecting all kinds of responsibility. What is more, many of them are stimulated by having to learn something new and having to meet formerly unknown expectations:

> *The feeling of success, I have never done in my life what I am going to do now in my profession, and when I get started I will do it better and better every day. They will always say that it is very good, and it is a sense of success to be praised; it is a good feeling.*
>
> *They trust you, they say now that you can also do it. In fact, I am already preparing the menus on my own, and they have a taste of it, and they tell me if I am to make any changes.*

However, if the opposite happens, it can definitely make people hate the job, even those who otherwise like their profession. If they start shouting with you at work often without any sensible reason, you will go to work every morning with butterflies in your stomach and *"you will get nervous already on Friday that that you only have two days left at home"*.

It is also hard to tolerate, especially in the long run, if there are not even minimal changes and diversity at work.

As a matter of fact, the first aspect among the work-related expectations is that there *should be* a job just to start with, which simultaneously explains why the respondents are also ready to tolerate certain unsuitable working conditions.

This means that people cannot raise extreme demands these days, and one should just be happy about having a job at all. Many respondents held the view that they are ready to put up with the worst working

conditions and the hourly salary rate (which is now nearing the level of exploitation) for a few years, only until they decide to have a family and save some money for the “start”.

We often registered, both in the groups of higher as well as lower education, that young people consider work as a field where they not only make money, but they can also “realise themselves”. Few respondents had the feeling that they have found the desired workplace. They mainly explained this through their young age, and they hope that the situation will later improve.

Unemployment

Students who do not work yet cannot really think about how it feels to work and to become unemployed. They are aware of its natural danger but – what else can they do – they just hope to get a job soon. Among those who are already working, only those who are employed in the most wanted - what is called “shortage” - jobs (e.g. health) can feel totally safe.

> *In the current situation, I think, everybody wonders how long they can keep their job (the others also agree). Because, I believe, none of us can surely claim that we will have our jobs in three months’ time.*

It must be added that the impacts of the economic crisis could be strongly perceived at the time of our group discussions.

> *At least now, for some time. It was not the case earlier. It did not go like this two or three months before. I think if you start working properly, it does not matter if it is monotonous work or a job that is a bit more different. But at that time, you did not have to be afraid of this because this is what I am also saying, I have been working at the company for 10 years and there has been no such problem until now. This is due to the worldwide crisis.*

As the above quote also goes to show, those who have a job or have no experience regarding unemployment can hardly conceive how someone can stay without work for months (or, at least, before the crisis). The contrary is also true: the unemployed respondents (most of them were career starters among the group participants) cannot even imagine how some other people manage to get a job.

For the young people who became unemployed (or more exactly, who start their post-graduate life in this way) it is generally not the lack of salary is that most painful aspect since most of them are still supported by their family, but the most agonizing thing is the long series of failures that they are continuously suffering. As has already been explained, becoming unemployed is perhaps not inconceivable, but definitely unexpected. To be without a job (moreover, starting a career as an unemployed person) is not the “normal course of events”, as neither the family nor the school teach (due to the lack of experience) any life strategy that can be followed in such a situation.

> *But what I feel is that failing to get a job will somehow pull me back. The continuous searching, and if I constantly failures - and I do fail because I would need this and that - and still you are not eligible, this will put you down at times.*

Now that the economic crisis has set in, young people have an even more pessimistic view of their lives than before.

When talking about the reasons for this situation they mentioned – beside the general situation of the

country (bad decisions by the politicians, bad system of entrepreneurial support, etc.) – the badly selected school, the insufficient foreign language skills and the fact that they do not receive relevant practical knowledge at school.

It is important to highlight that almost all of the unemployed group participants claimed to have registered themselves on numerous job-seeking web pages and have sent out lots of CVs, and several of them attended training courses, so they feel that they have done everything in order to get a job.

The way out of unemployment

Getting work abroad

It was evident for almost all of the participants who are still in school that in the future, they would try to get a job abroad, even if only for a short period. Those who are already working, especially the respondents who have a family, seemed to be less enthusiastic in this regard. However, young unemployed people scored the lowest rate in claiming that they would embark upon working abroad. The reason for this is – apart from the emotional ties to home, family and friends as well as the poor foreign language skills – that they have already experienced how important is to receive emotional support from relatives and friends as well as to get financial support from their family in a crisis situation. They cannot even imagine how to get over a similar unemployed or job-seeking period without their family, and it is true that the danger of being unemployed would also threaten them abroad.

The discussions go to show that working abroad is mainly not a solution to the crisis situation for young people, but it is a chance to save some money. Many of them believe that they would work abroad for a few years after school, then they would return home with the saved-up money and they would perhaps start some business. (It is interesting that some others hold the view: it is no use saving up a lot of money abroad because returning home they would not find work, and they would just deplete the reserves that they collected abroad.)

Moving within Hungary

When asked whether they would move to another place in the country in order to avoid unemployment, almost all of the group participants gave a negative answer. In addition to the emotional attachment to their home, they primarily explain this by saying that the situation is not better anywhere else in the country, so one should not move further away from home and family. The exception is Budapest, because more people think that it is easier to get a job there. However, several respondents believe that Budapest is a dangerous place, to say nothing of the polluted environment. The housing-related difficulties were also mentioned. The young respondents either live with their parents, or they have just purchased their own flat recently. The former is a relatively cheap solution for them as the overhead costs are covered by the family together – they would not give it up in return for an expensive rented flat. And in the latter case, they would not like to give up a freshly acquired property in exchange for a job that is far from being certain.

Those respondents who would like to go to college or university, as well as some of those who are currently unemployed, regarded moving to be a realistic solution.

Starting a business

The chance of becoming a contractor was rejected by most young people – at least, for the time being. This was due to several reasons: the old stereotype saying that contractors/entrepreneurs are all criminals *ab ovo* is more or less still alive in their heads. A more modest version is generally explained with the high rates and taxes: you need to use illegal means if you want to make a living as an entrepreneur.

Most of our group participants held the view that they would consider starting a business only at an older age. They felt that they were lacking the required experience – they do not have the knowledge and the skills in work and in their profession to assume the responsibility of an independent business. Last but not least, starting a business is prevented by the missing capital.

There was only one group where entrepreneurship was mentioned in a positive context: being a private contractor means independence and freedom. This group mainly covered older skilled workers, many of whom felt that they were exposed to their bosses, to the inflexible working time and the monotonous work – therefore, it is those who would especially like to be their own bosses.

Training courses, retraining

The group participants who had never been unemployed before believed that they would – as soon as possible – join a training course to learn a job that is in demand if they became unemployed and could not get a job in their profession. The formula is slightly more complicated among those who have already been unemployed. They did not know either upon choosing a career or upon becoming unemployed what the marketable professions were and especially which ones would be in demand by the time they complete the new school or training course. On the other hand, several respondents have already tried out superfluous, useless and expensive training courses.

Labour centres

Basically, all of our discussion partners who had had some experience about job centres regarded them as unnecessary. These institutions have never provided any solutions either to their problems or to the problems of their acquaintances. Irrespective of whether this “uselessness” is general, it is certain that they do not expect any assistance from the labour centres, and consequently, they do not get in touch with these centres.

One of the most important lessons learned from the focus group discussions is that there are no previous strategies given either about choosing a school or a career, or if there are, they are based on information that later proves to be erroneous for the most part. This is also true in the case where somebody gets into a tough situation unexpectedly – s/he is unable to find employment or loses a job after several years spent at school or is at home with child/ren.

Becoming unemployed is not a part of the realistic vision of the future. For this reason, no strategies to avoid unemployment or to provide a solution against it were mentioned by the groups in a significant number, and young people’s parents cannot “teach” such strategies to their children due to their different experiences. It seemed, on the basis of the discussions, that neither the family nor the state-run youth institutions (school, labour centre, etc.) prepare the youngsters for the unexpected situations and risks that emerge in life.

FINANCE, PROPERTY, INCOME AND HOUSING

Youth – a uniform group?

The group that is relevant to the youth research covers young adults aged between 15 and 29. The postmodern societies already provide much more liquid lifestyle patterns than what was customary in the industrial societies. Specific behaviour patterns that are characteristic of the adult age already appear at a young age, and they demand more and more independence. This transformation can be regarded either as the termination of the young period – in a classical sense – or the extension of the period of youth. Members of the young generation beyond their twenties can already be considered young adults. They are strongly different from adults in terms of behaviour, values and everyday life, but they can be regarded as adults along their social, political and economic status. This restructuring process is called post-adolescence. In his post-adolescence theory, László Vaskovics interprets the youth period through five spin-off dimensions[8]:

- Spin-off in a legal sense,
- Spin-off from the common household,
- Spin-off in material and financial sense,
- Spin-off resulting in an independent decision, and
- Gaining "awareness".

Highlighting the material, financial and housing situations of young people in conjunction with this theory is no longer a clear task.

Thirty-nine percent of the age group defined in our survey covers students who do not have any independent income; they are in a dependent status despite the fact that they might have come of age (past the age of 18), and in legal terms, they are already independent from their parents. This exerts a major impact upon presenting the material, financial and housing situation. Therefore, we introduce a breakdown by groups – based on the typology of living together – before we start dealing with the material, financial and housing situation:

- Groups that live together with their family, i.e. not spun off yet, as well as
- Groups living on their own – already spun off.

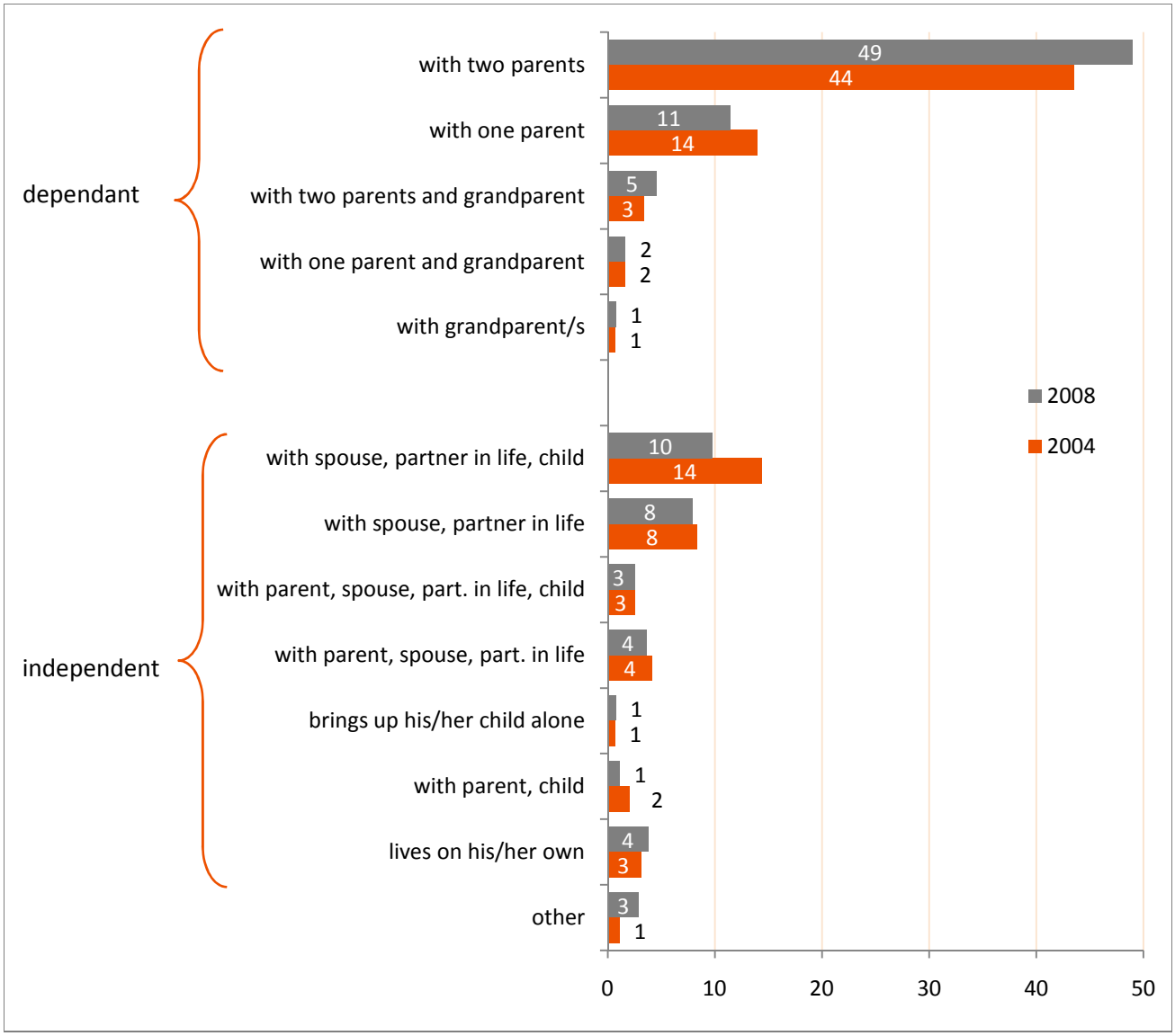
Family status, self-dependents and dependents

In 2008, 30% of the young people aged 15–29 already lived independently, while this rate was 36% four years ago. They live on their own or with their new, nuclear family. Dependents score 68%, and most of them live together with their parents or with one of their parents.

Compared to the proportions that were registered four years ago, the rate of two-parent families has increased among dependents, but the rate of those living with their spouses and child/ren has decreased among those who live independently.

[8] László Vaskovics: A posztadoleszcencia szociológia elmélete. Szociológiai Szemle, 2000/4.

Figure No. 18. Breakdown of young people according to family composition ("Who do you live with?"), 2004-2008
(in percentage)



The spin-off described by Vaskovics is continuously becoming more and more typical as age increases, which means that the older young people get, the more likely they are to spin off from parental care in more and more areas. The average age of young independent people is 25.6 years and that of dependents is 20.7 years. These average figures have not changed since 2004. Outside the Vaskovics-type spin-off dimensions, significant differences can be registered with regard to gender: 38% of girls and 23% of boys belong to the group of independents.

Thirty-three percent of the dependents work, while the worker rate is 81% in the independent category.

In many cases, the spin-off dimensions emerge together; Table No. 15 illustrates that independent people who already live with their child/ren score more than 90% in the worker category. Those who (still) live with their parents but already have a child score a worker rate between 40-70%, while those living with parents but have no children score a worker rate between 30–40%.

Table No. 15. The rate of young working people among young people living in families of various compositions
(in among various family categories)

Who does the respondent live with?	Worker rate (%)
Brings up child alone	97
With spouse, life partner, child	90
With parent, spouse, life partner, child	88
With spouse, life partner	83
Lives alone	76
With parent, spouse, life partner	74
With grandparent	53
With parent, child	44
With one parent	39
With two parents	32
With two parents and grandparent	30
With one parent and grandparent	29

Income

Thirty-seven percent of the young people have their own budget that is independent of their parents. Eighty-five percent of those who live independently also have their own budget. Among the dependents, only 14% have spun off from their parents in financial terms.

Table No. 16. Average income of households and active wage earners according to independence
(average in HUF 1000)

	Total net income of the household last month	Respondent's own total monthly net revenue*
Independent	176	83
Dependent	203	40
Average	**191**	**53**

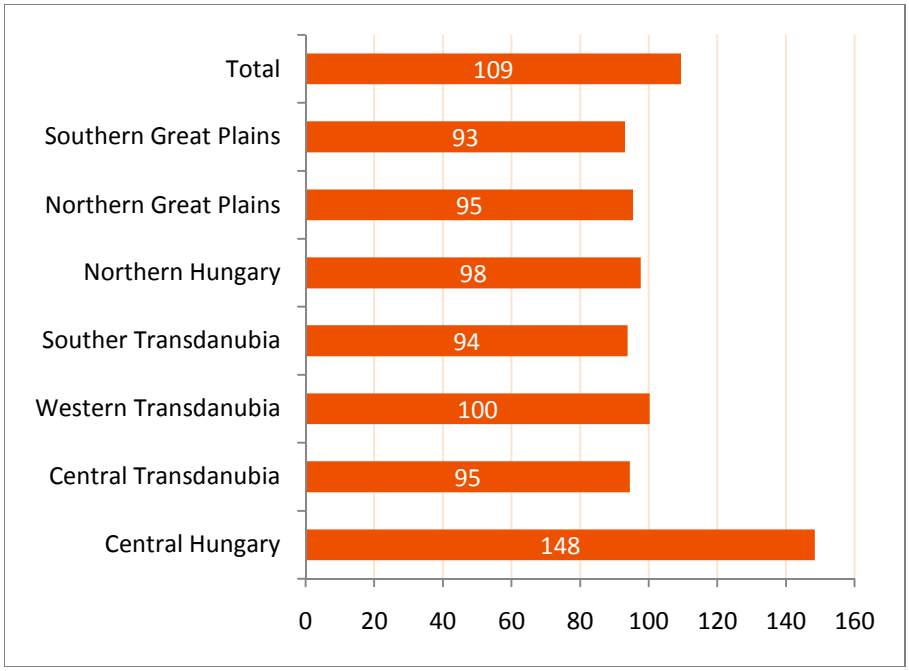
*also including pocket money, salary and scholarship.

The average monthly net income per household is HUF 191,000. There is a significant difference between dependent and independent households.

Sixty-five percent of the interviewed young people gave an answer with respect to their independent salary. The average of this monthly amount is HUF 53,000: HUF 83,000 among the independents and HUF 40,000 among the dependents. The average salary of independent and already working youngsters was HUF 109,000 in 2008.

HUF 109,000 is the average income of those young people who left the parents' house and who have completed their studies. This shows very large differences in regional terms. The residents in the Central Hungarian region – also including Budapest – make 1.5 times more money than young people living in the other regions. No considerable difference can be highlighted among the other regions.

Figure No. 19. Average income of young people living in independent households and who already have a job, according to regions



Incomes of households

In the following, when calculating the per capita income of households, we use the equivalence income calculation method.[9]

Table No. 17. Average monthly net income of households per consumption unit, according to regions, 2004-2008

Public administrative regions	2004 (HUF)	2008 (HUF)
Central Hungary	79,119	103,041
Central Transdanubia	68,328	75,612
Western Transdanubia	69,268	74,799
South Transdanubia	57,438	67,140
North Hungary	51,465	62,940
Northern Great Plains	54,078	57,078
Southern Great Plains	59,193	64,328
Average	**63,753**	**74,728**

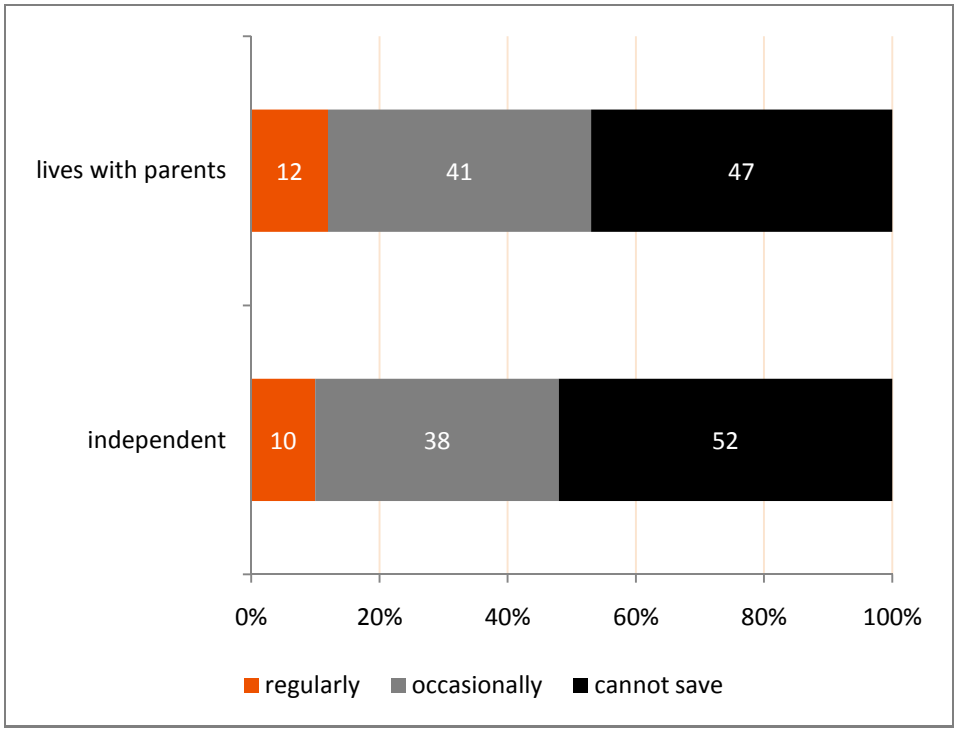
Since 2004, the monthly net income per one consumption unit has increased on average by 17%, and the consumer price index has gone up by 23%. The pace of net income growth was much higher in the Central Hungarian region than the average; the equivalent income went up by 30%.

[9] The point is that the members of the household are not considered with the same weight when calculating the per capita income of the household, but it is proportioned with the number of those living in the household with the help of a weighting procedure. E=0.73.

Among the independent respondents, the equivalent average is HUF 81,000, and this amount is HUF 72,000 among the dependents. The difference is significant.

The survey into the saving potential of households shows that in 2004, the evaluation of the financial situation was more positive than in 2008. The data collected four years ago highlighted that 55% of the youth were able to save more or less, but in 2008, only half of those aged 15–29 could do that.

Figure No. 20. Ability to save money – according to independence
(in percentage)



During the period between the two data collection dates, the shift in the end-of-the-month financial situation of households was similar to the change in savings. In 2008, there was a slight increase in the rate of those young people who get in a difficult position by the end of the month.

One-fifth of the households of young people (22%) claimed that money runs out by the end of the month on a monthly basis. With another one-fifth of the respondents (21%), this problem emerges relatively often (more often than every half year), 14% of the young respondents said that they face this problem more rarely than that, while less than half of those aged 15–29 (43%) reported no such financial troubles in their households.

The economic position of the households is well characterised by whether the members of the households have drawn any credit. Forty-six percent of the households carry the burden of credit, but the independent households of young people are much more indebted, which is primarily due to the housing credits borrowed.

Figure No. 21. "How often during the past 12 months did you run out of money by the end of the month?", 2004-2008
(in percentage)

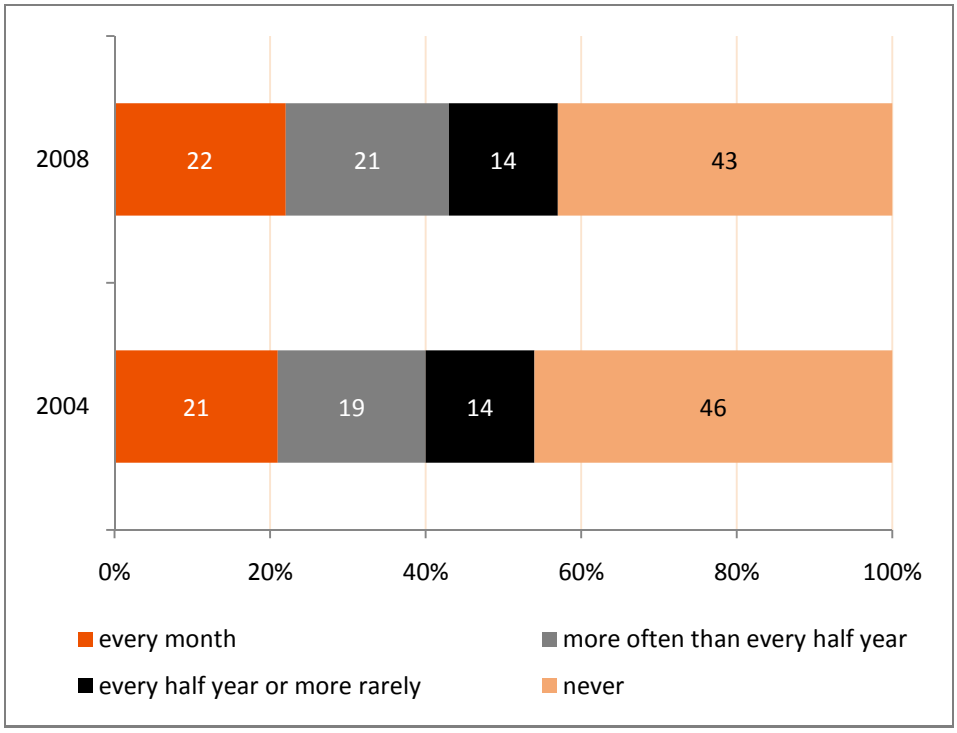


Figure No. 22. How often in the past 12 months did your household run out of money by the end of the month? – according to independence
(in percentage)

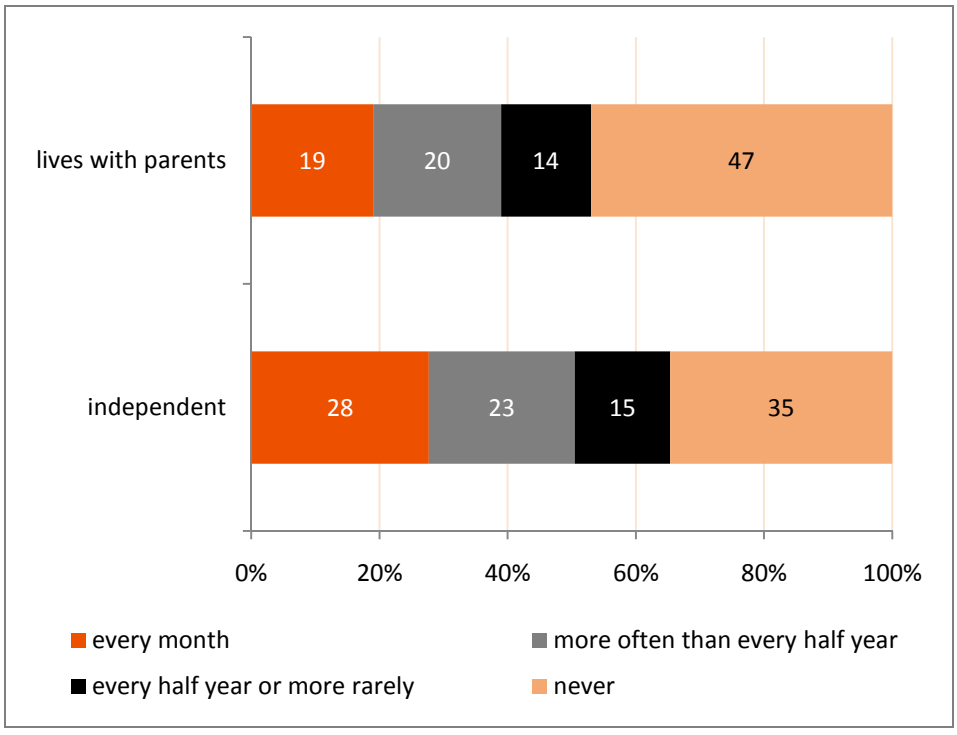


Figure No. 23. Credits and debts in the households, according to independence
(in percentage)

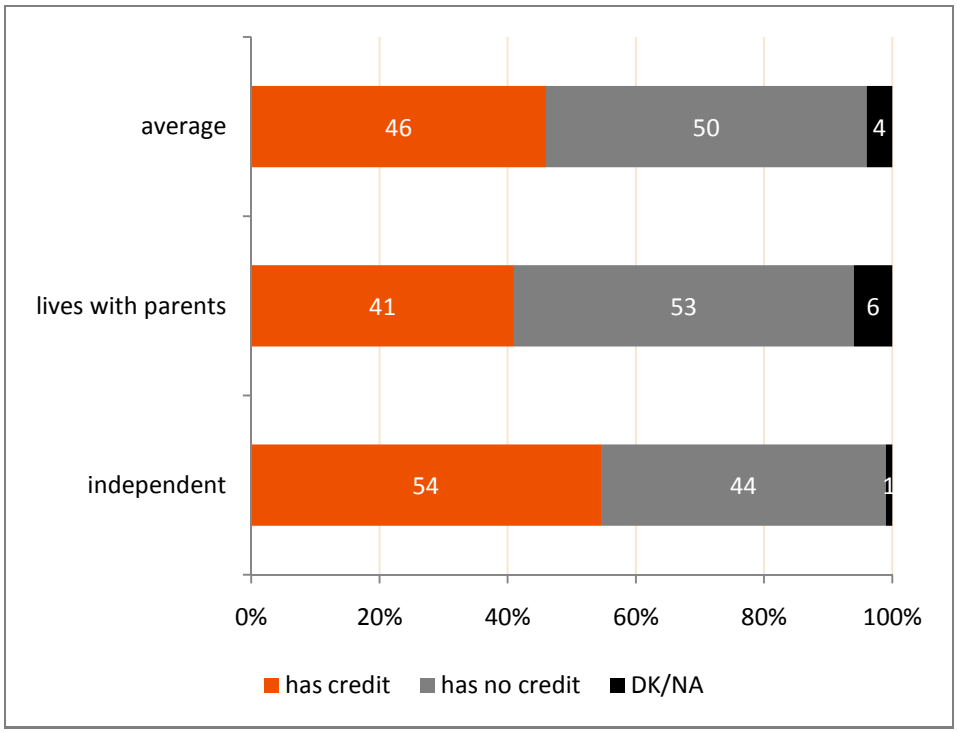
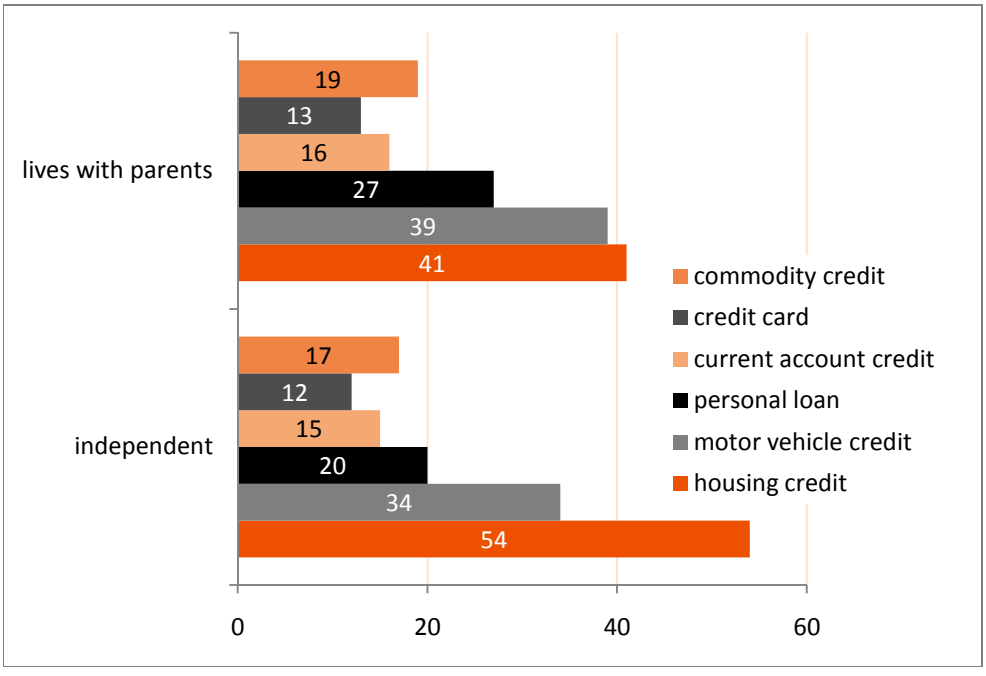
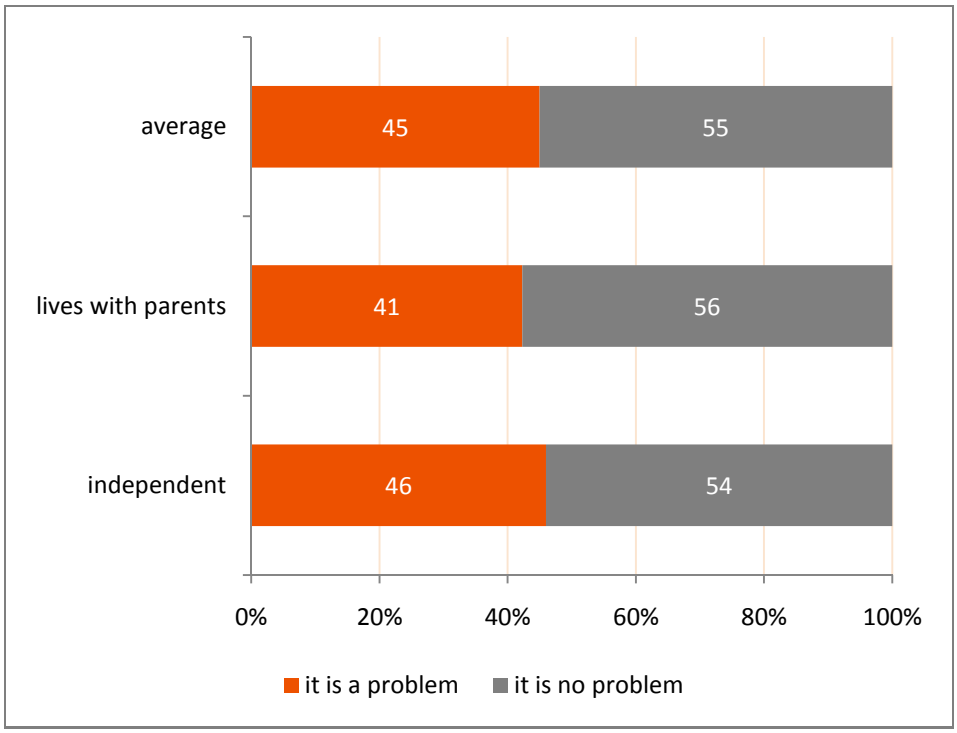


Figure No. 24. What type of credit or credits does the household have?
(in percentage among those who have a credit)



The households of young people living with parents show a high indebtedness in any credit type; they draw many more personal loans and motor vehicle credits than those who have their own households.

Figure No. 25. Is it a problem to pay off the credit instalments? – according to independence
(in percentage among those who have credits)



Almost half of the households concerned (45%) claimed that paying off the credit is a problem for them, and credit repayment problems were especially mentioned by young people who are living in independent households.

Property

The objective financial position was measured in both groups by exploring the supply of durable consumer articles.

Table No. 18. The rate of those possessing durable consumer goods according to independence, 2004-2008
(in percentage)

	2004		2008	
	independent	**dependent**	**independent**	**dependent**
Hi-fi system	49	64	51	62
CD player	51	66	68	76
DVD player	35	35	80	78
Home movie set	14	13	29	24
Video recorder	66	80	-	-
Plasma TV, LCD TV	-	-	16	14
Digital camera	-	-	52	54
Portable MP3 player	-	-	37	63
Game console, e.g. Xbox, PS2	-	-	9	13

A large difference can be registered in the penetration of the enlisted electronic articles. The penetration of hi-fi equipment has been stagnating for four years; the rate of items owned by independent respondents is 10% lower. A hi-fi-substitute product is the home movie set. Its rate has doubled, but in this case, the adopter group typically covers independent young households that are more open to innovations. The opposite of this can be observed in the case of MP3 players. The penetration is 63% in the group of young dependents and only 37% among the independent respondents.

Housing

The housing situation has not changed since 2004; two-thirds of the interviewed youth still live with their parents. One-fifth of them continue to live in their own flat or house or in the flat/house of their spouse or life partner, and the residual 14% live in rented flats, at student hostels or with acquaintances through most of the year.

As for a permanent residence10, 6% more respondents are registered with their parents compared to the rate of those who actually live with their parents (74%).

Table No. 19. „Where do you live most of the year?", 2004-2008
(in percentage)

	2004	2008
With parents	65	68
In own, or spouse's or life partner's flat/house	20	19
At student hostel	3	2
With spouse's or life partner's parents	3	2
In a rented flat, with other people	3	2
Rents a flat from a private person	2	3
With relatives, acquaintances	2	2
Rents a flat from the local municipality	1	1
Other	1	1

Ninety-one percent of the dependents live with their parents and 3% live at a student hostel. Nineteen percent of the independent respondents live in the flat or house of their parents despite keeping their own household. The rate of those renting a flat is 12% in this group.

The trends registered in 2004 about the housing conditions did not change by 2008. It is also true in the year of 2008 (according to the interviewer's subjective opinion) that those who already live independently live in a worse neighbourhood and in a lower-valued housing zone than those who still live with their parents. The difference is significant.

[10] Places where the respondents were registered only on paper were not regarded as permanent residence.

Table No. 20. "Where do you live most of the year?" – according to independence
(in percentage)

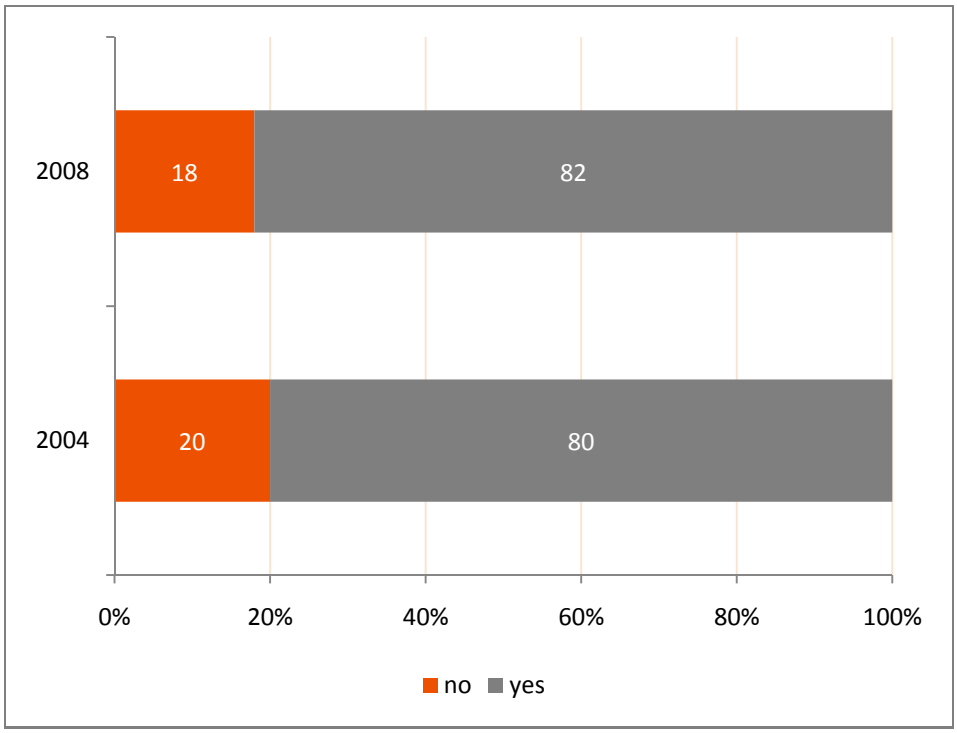
	independent	dependent
Lives with parents	19	91
Lives in own flat	31	1
Lives in own house	20	0
Lives at spouse's or life partner's place	8	0
Lives at the place of spouse's or life partner's parents	5	0
Lives with relatives	2	1
Lives with acquaintances	1	0
Rents a full flat from a private person	7	1
Rents a flat from the local municipality	2	0
In a rented flat, with other people	3	2
Lives at a student hostel	0	3
Lives at an institute	1	0
Other	1	0

Table No. 21. Location of the flat/house inside the settlement, based on the opinion of the interviewer, according to the independence of the respondent, 2004-2008
(in percentage)

	2004		2008	
	independent	dependent	independent	dependent
Cheap housing zone	22	15	23	15
Medium-level, average housing zone	59	60	55	61
Housing zone highly evaluated in the area	15	20	17	18
Housing zone evaluated the highest in the area	1	3	2	2
The interviewer could not judge the zone	3	2	3	4

The housing conditions of independent and dependent respondents cannot only be characterised by the location of the flat or house. The flat size is another important parameter. The independent respondents live in flats or houses with an average basic area of 75 m2, while the interviewed dependents live in flats or houses with an average basic area of 90 m2. Looking at this difference, we found the deviation between financial resources as well as the resulting housing typological features, 12% of the independent respondents typically live in rented places with a basic area under 60 m^2.

Figure No. 26. "Do you find your current housing conditions appropriate?", 2004-2008
(in percentage)



As was the case in the research conducted four years ago, the Youth2008 survey intended to explore the subjective opinions in addition to mapping the housing conditions. To that end, it was important to see whether *the young respondents regarded their housing conditions as appropriate.* It turned out that the overwhelming majority of the respondents (about 82%) find their own housing conditions appropriate, which practically does not represent any change compared to the results that were obtained four years ago.

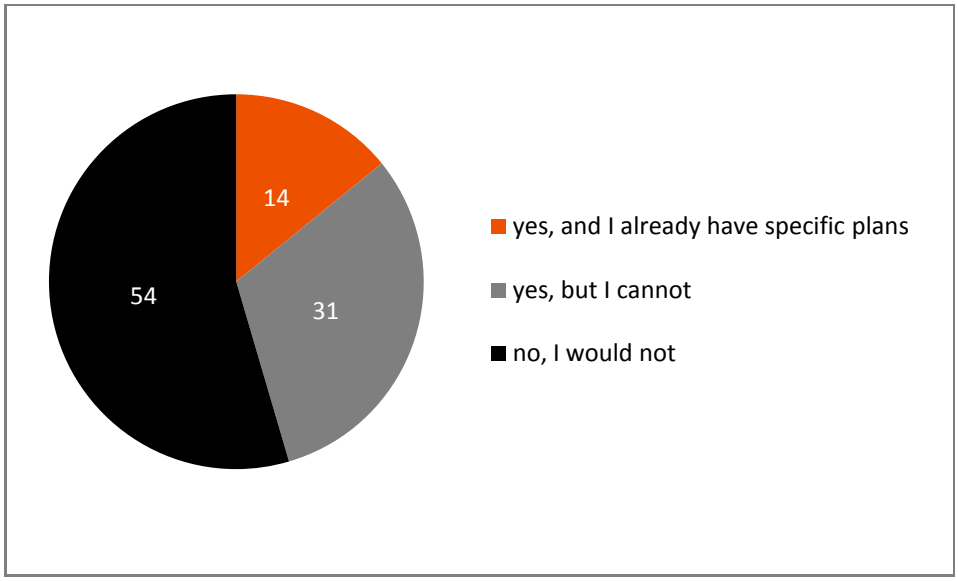
Twenty-three percent of those living independently from their parents are dissatisfied, and a total of 15% of those living with their parents claimed to be unhappy with their housing conditions.

Based on the foregoing, now we expressly asked those living with their parents about their plans to become independent. The category of those who live with their parents covers many groups in different situations and with varied motivations. This is clearly supported by the fact that more than 55% of those living with their parents do not want to move from home, and this is not yet a question to consider for most of the youngest respondents. Thirty-one percent of the young people would like to become independent from their parents but they cannot, while 14% have concrete plans to become independent.

Based on the findings of the Youth 2004 research, most young people are dissatisfied with the size of their flat or house. Although this question was not asked specifically in 2008, it is presumable that the biggest driving force towards becoming independent is the flat size. The results of the Youth2008 research show that the average per capita m2 number is 25 in young households; this figure is 27 m2 among those who are satisfied with their housing conditions and 20 m2 among those who are dissatisfied.

Figure No. 27. "If you live with your parents, would you like to move from them in the near future?"

(in percentage among those who live with their parents)



N=5,366

Subjective opinions about the financial position

The already outlined parameters – that partly determine the financial situation and that partly determine the reasons for the financial situation itself – are summarised in form of a subjective situation analysis. The subjective situation analysis, although related to the realistic financial situation, is primarily meant to highlight what young people think about their financial situation that can be described along objective parameters, and what is their related opinion compared to their adequate basis for comparison

Similar to the subjective financial situation that was measured in 2004, almost half of the respondents aged 15–29 (44%) believe that the financial status of their household is best described by the definition "live well, but have to economise". At the same time, the rate of those who "live without problems" in their households has decreased (6%).

The rate of those who regard themselves to be living under well-balanced and good conditions increased in 2004 compared to the research conducted in 2000, but somewhat decreased by 2008, when half of the young respondents (50%) held this opinion. However, the other half of the interviewed people feel that the household they are living in cannot afford everything they would like to have, or they definitely claim to be coping with financial troubles.

If we look at the subjective opinions about the financial situation according to whether the respondents live with their parents or in an independent household, it can be easily seen that those who keep independent households (away from their parents) score a lower rate in claiming that they have no financial problems than those who live with their parents. They also score a higher rate in claiming that their money runs out by the end of the month.

Figure No. 28. Opinions about the financial situation of the household, 2004-2008
(in percentage)

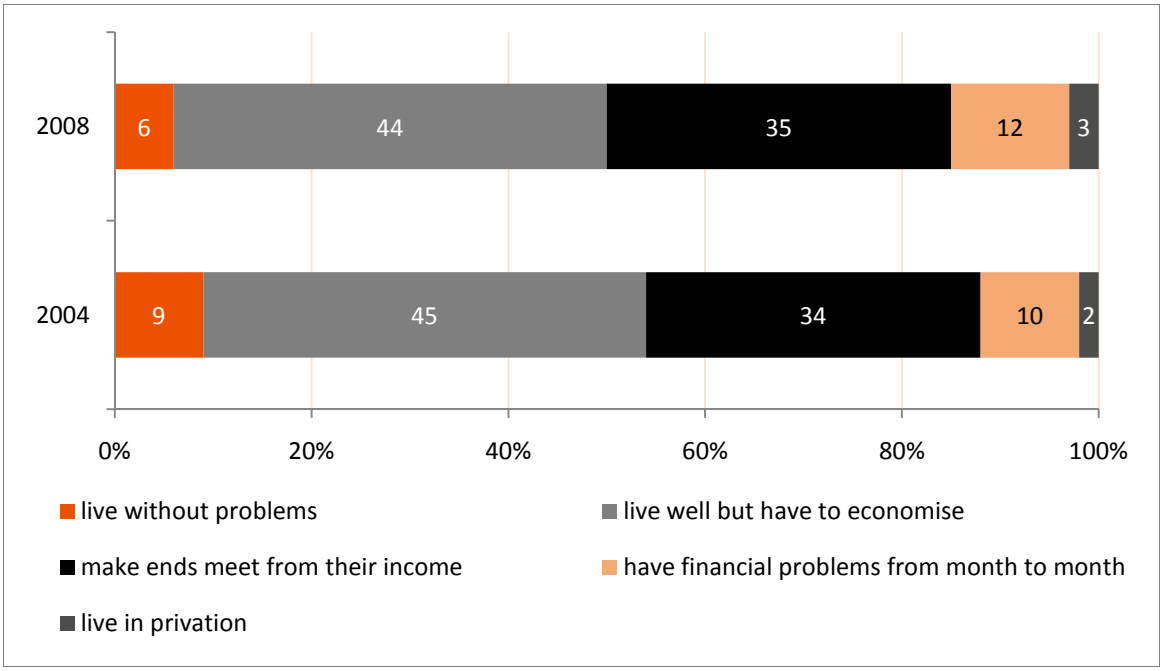


Figure No. 29. Opinions about the financial situation of the household among those who live independently and among those who live with their parents
(in percentage)

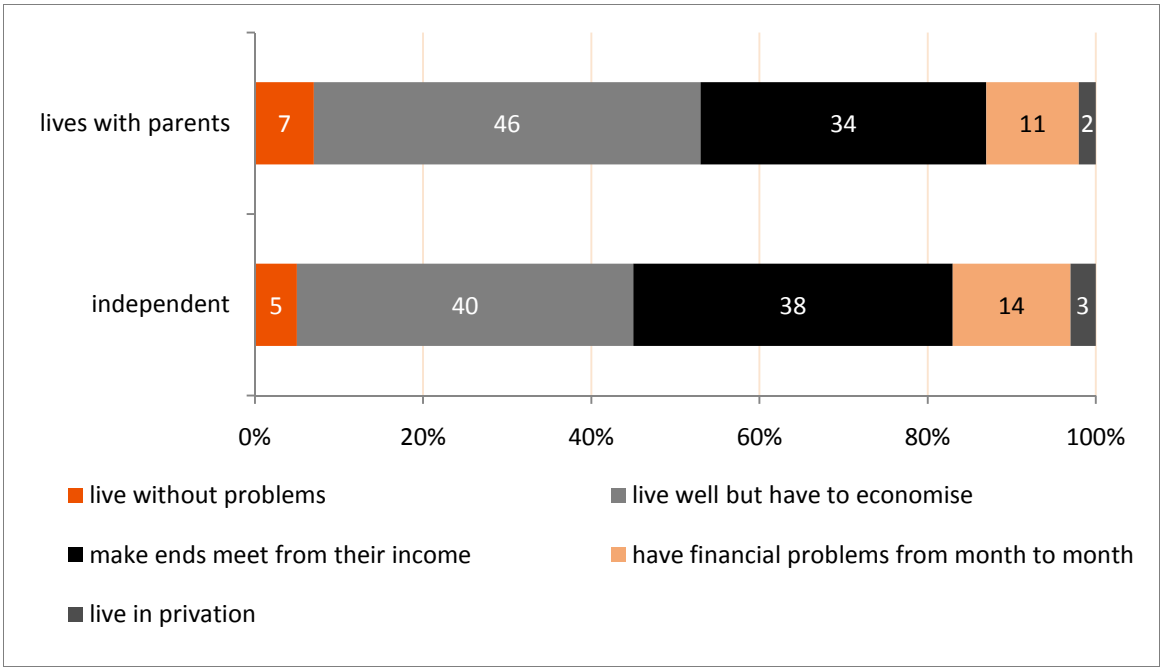
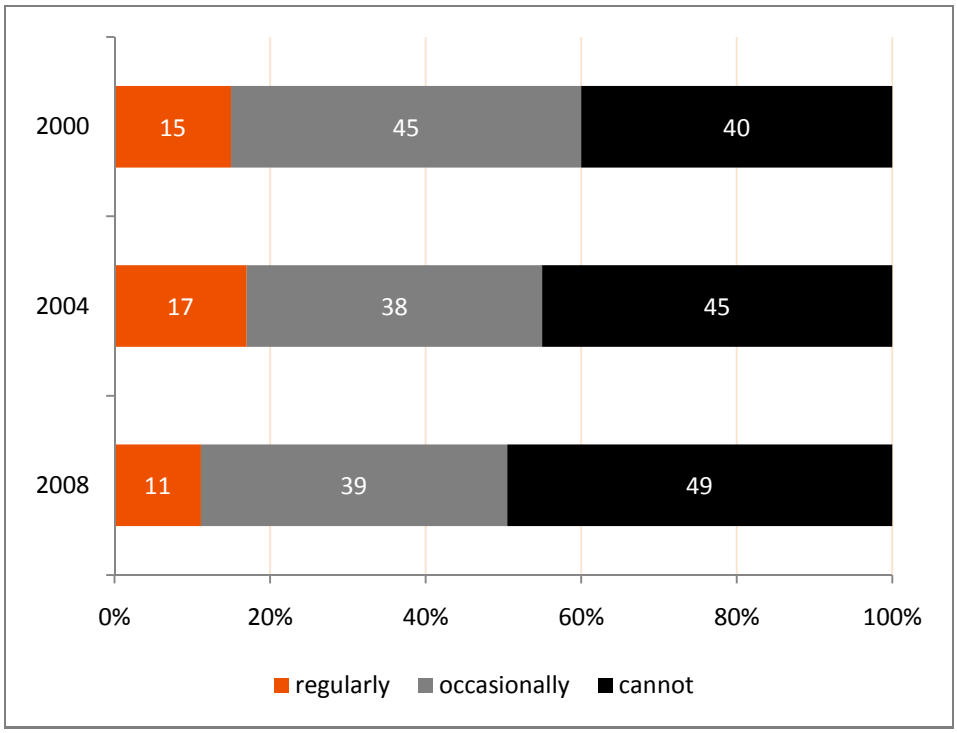


Figure No. 30. Can you save money? – 2000-2008
(in percentage)

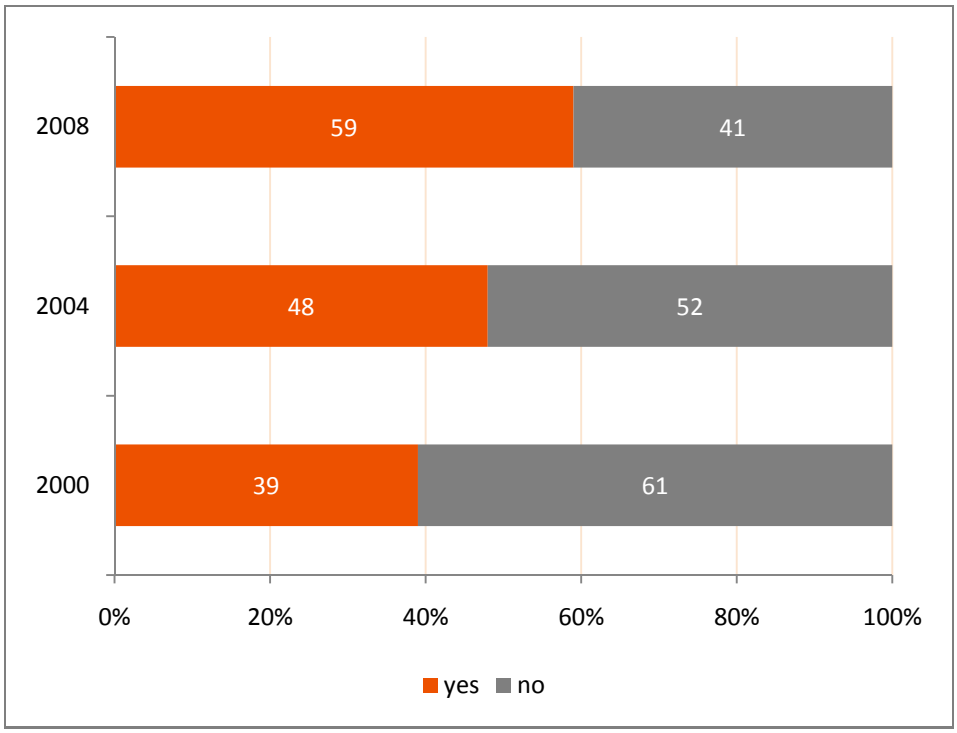


Holidays

Holidays can be considered as one of the characteristic indicators of life quality and financial situation. In 2007, more than half of the young people (59%) went on holiday in Hungary or abroad. Over the past eight years, the rate of youngsters who could afford themselves the “luxury” of vacations increased also in a statistically relevant manner.

Those who went on holiday in 2007 mainly travelled within Hungary, 51% of the young respondents travelled in Hungary and 25% went abroad. Fifty-two percent of the young people living in their independent household went on holidays in 2007, but this rate was 63% among dependents. Similar differences were also registered with regard to the direction of the travels; young people living in their own household could afford less travelling both in and outside Hungary.

Figure No. 31. Did you go on holiday over the past year? – 2000-2008
(in percentage)

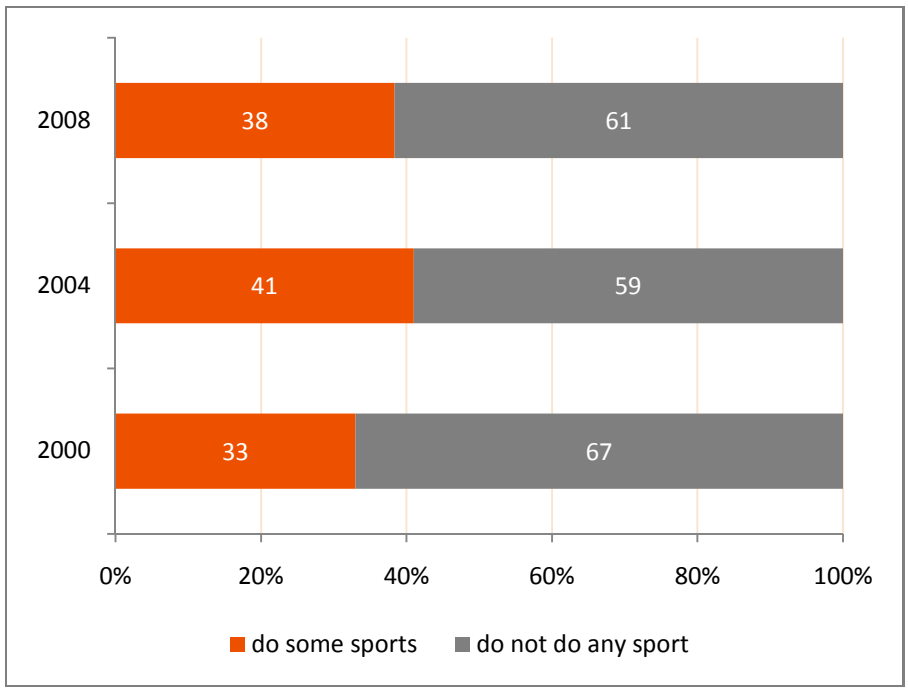


A FEW CHARACTERISITICS OF THE LIFESTYLE OF THE 15-29 AGE GROUP

Sporting habits

According to a 2008 survey, 38% of young people confirmed that they did some sports in addition to the compulsory physical education at school. As compared to the welcome 8% increase in the period between 2000 and 2004, there was a reduction in the period from 2004 to 2008 (see Figure No. 32). It is true that considering the eight-year period covered by the survey, young people do some sports at a higher number nowadays than in 2000, but the decline in the participation rate suggests that physical activity is not so important anymore.

Figure No. 32. Rate of individuals doing some sports regularly, 2000-2008
(in percentage)



The differences that characterized the period between 2000 and 2004 – according to which men, people in the capital, younger people, students, individuals without financial difficulties and children do some sports in a higher rate – seemed to become less significant. The difference in the participation rate between genders kept on strengthening until 2004; the rate of men doing some sports increased 10% while that of women merely 6%. When the 2008 questionnaires were studied, we found that the athletic rate of both men and women had reduced by 3%. Therefore, it is still true that young men do some sports at a higher rate (44%) than young women (31%).

The analysis made by age groups shows that the increase in participation before 2004 and the subsequent reduction characterized the three age groups to different extents. The rise before 2004 was the most marked in the group of the youngest people (15-19 years of age) and that of the oldest individuals (25-29 years of age) and reached 10% for both of them, while the reduction following 2004 was the most significant in the age group of the youngest (15-19 years of age) persons (5%). Though the number of persons doing some sports regularly is still the highest within the youngest segment (47%), there is a reducing tendency in their group as well, which suggests that young persons give up athletics earlier and

“outgrow” the habit of regular exercise as early as in the years of their secondary education. In 2008, 37% of the persons between 20 and 24 and 31% of the individuals of the 25-29 age group were physically active.

Figure No. 33. Rate of individuals doing some sports regularly in the breakdown of genders, 2000-2008
(in percentage)

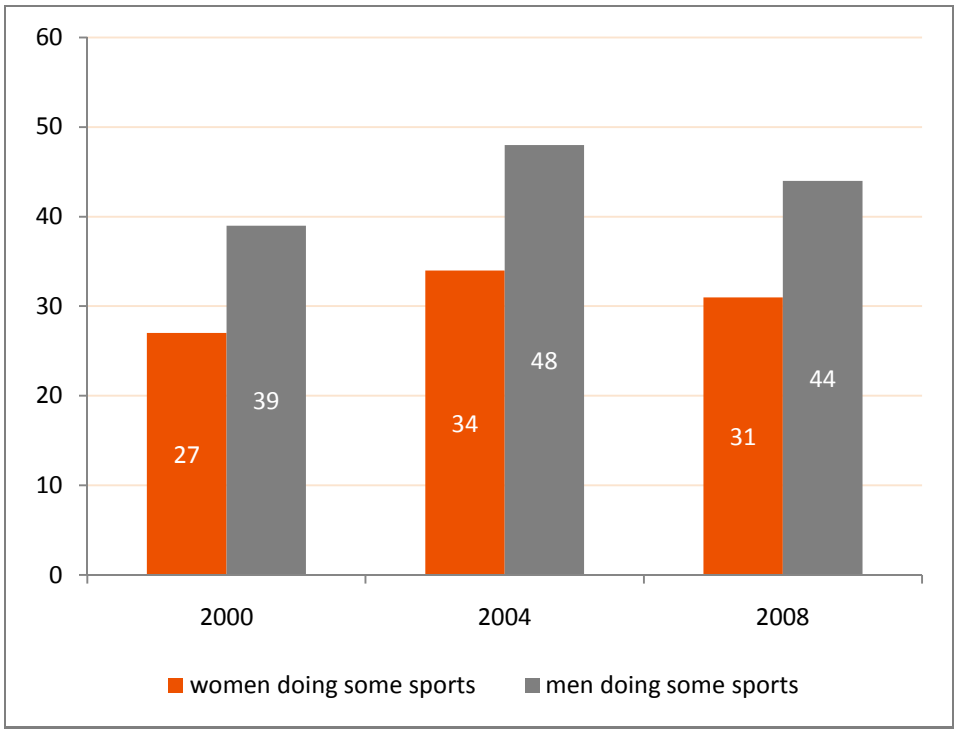
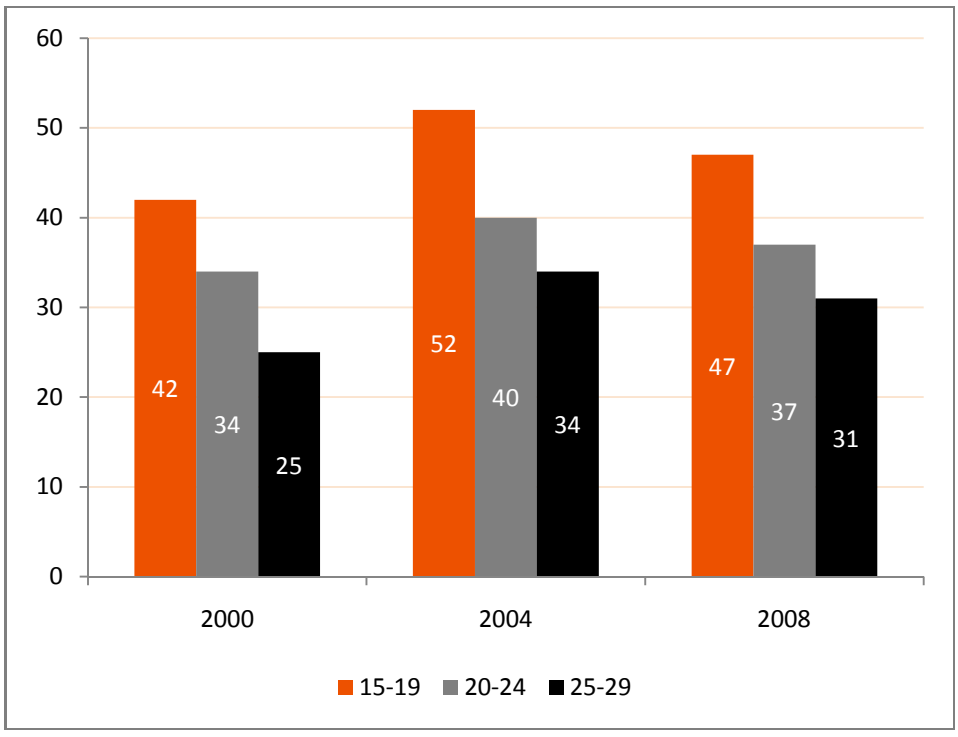


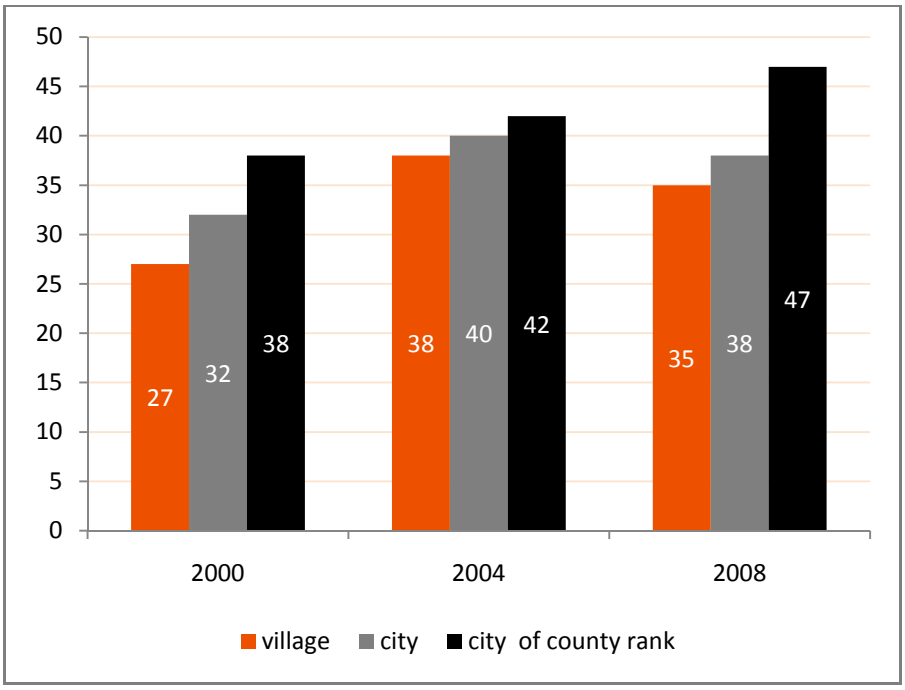
Figure No. 34. Rate of individuals doing some sports regularly in the breakdown of age groups, 2000-2008
(in percentage)



Educational level is still a determinant when a physically active lifestyle is formed since, similar to the results of previous surveys, graduates are still the biggest "sports maniacs" (47%), and persons with a skilled workers' educational level are least characterized by doing some sports regularly (27%). However, it is to be pointed out that in the recent period, the rate of graduates has declined which suggests that career-starter graduates have less free time. This statement is backed by the fact that in 2008, students did some sports regularly at the highest rate (49%), while only 34% of individuals in full-time jobs do some sports, lagging behind the average of the sample. As to exercise, the unemployed (23%), mothers with small children (18%) and the Roma minority (22%) are in a disadvantaged position.

The trends defined for settlement types between 2000 and 2004 – according to which physical activity increases parallel to the increase in the size of communities – changed in 2008. In county cities (in cities with county rank), 5% more people do some exercise regularly, which is probably the result of the opening of new exercise facilities and the launch of sporting programs by the municipalities. On the other side, 18% less people do some sports in the capital; this surprising change is caused by the oversupply of leisure time services, changing attitudes regarding assets, the time lost connected with great distances and transport difficulties as well as by the movement of intellectual families to neighbouring settlements. The reasons listed above should be investigated further when future analyses are made. Therefore, the increase in the urbanization level does cause an increase in the physical activity, which reaches its peak in cities in the countryside but reduces it in the capital.

Figure No. 35. Rate of individuals doing some sports by settlement types, 2000-2008
(in percentage)



The interrelation between the participation in sports and the financial position has increased in the past eight years. When the 2000 survey was made, it was already obvious that twice as many wealthy people do some sports regularly than individuals with financial difficulties or needy persons. By 2008, the differences at the outermost points of social hierarchy had risen almost three times. Among people without financial difficulties and persons subsisting well on wage and salary, the rate of doing some sports regularly – 58% and 44%, respectively – became much higher than the average of the population (38%). Persons living within their incomes show a rate around the average (36%), while only about one-fifth of people with

financial difficulties and that of needy people pursue some sports regularly (22% and 20%). However, as to athletes (i.e. persons pursuing some sports competitively), their rate was rather balanced at the different levels of financial position in 2008, and the rate of needy people was slightly lower (12%), but it was close to the average in all other groups (16%). These results do highlight the opportunities of and conditions for pursuing some sports competitively, but only a further analysis of data may lead to some reliable explanation.

The 2000 and 2004 youth surveys did not extend to examine the reasons for not pursuing sports by young people. Respondents referred to lack of time in the same rate in both samples (52%), emphasized their low spirits (19%) and questioned the importance of pursuing sports (8%). Therefore, in the 2008 survey we tried to reveal young person's reasons for doing sports. Respondents underlined the replies "want to be healthy" (67%), "want to be strong" (60%), followed by the answers "want to feel good" (45%), "is a source of joy" (44%) and "want to look good" (33%). The replies "because of the companionship" (23%), "to lose weight" (12%) and "recommended by my parents" (4%) were rather rare. Athletes selected the reasons of "want to be strong" (62%), "good companionship" (38%), "source of joy" (72%) and "recommended by my parents" (8%) at a greater rate than persons doing some sports in their leisure time; they emphasized "good health" (62%), "want to feel good" (30%), "want to be good-looking" (23%) and "want to lose weight" (3%) at a lower rate.

Table No. 22. Reasons for pursuing sports by persons doing some sports regularly
(in percentage of mentions)

	Pursue some sports (N=820, %)	Pursue sports competitively (N=132, %)
Want to be strong	60	62
Want to be healthy	68	62
Want to feel good	48	30
Source of joy	39	72
Want to be good-looking	33	23
Good companion	20	38
Want to lose weight	13	3
Recommended by my parents	3	8

Furthermore, the 2008 survey extended to the subjective assessment of the health and body consciousness of the youth as well; it examined to what extent young people were satisfied with their strength, appearance and health condition. For all the three variables examined, young people pursuing some sports confirmed being "fully satisfied" at a higher rate, while the rate of the reply "somewhat satisfied" was balanced for people not doing any sport, persons doing some sports regularly and individuals pursuing sports competitively, but the differences were again marked regarding the replies "yes and no", "somewhat dissatisfied" and "fully dissatisfied". The effect of a lifestyle rich in physical exercise is well reflected by the more frequent replies connected with hardiness, looking and feeling good.

It seems that pursuing some sports competitively does contribute to the significant increase in the satisfaction regarding good health, physical consciousness and feeling good. Of course, the dimensions, circumstances and effects of pursuing sports competitively require additional future surveys and analyses to elucidate how serious and regular activity must be to lead to positive changes in subjective satisfaction.

Table No. 23. Extent of satisfaction with strength, appearance and health
(in percentage)

	Fully satisfied	Somewhat satisfied	Yes and no	Somewhat dissatisfied	Fully dissatisfied
Strength					
Full sample	17	33	34	13	3
No sport at all	11	32	36	17	4
Mass sports (not comp.)	24	36	31	8	1
Competitive sports	39	33	22	4	1
Appearance					
Full sample	16	35	37	9	2
No sport at all	13	32	41	11	2
Mass sports (not comp.)	21	39	33	6	1
Competitive sports	32	38	25	4	1
Health					
Full sample	34	40	20	4	2
No sport at all	28	41	22	6	2
Mass sports (not comp.)	43	38	16	2	1
Competitive sports	53	35	11	0	2

Furthermore, the interrelations between the so-called body mass index calculated on the basis of statistical averages of the height and weight of young people, and doing some sports were also examined, in consideration of the fact that the body mass index (BMI) does not take individual bodily differences into account. As far as athletes are concerned, the rate of persons with a normal weight is higher, while that of people who are overweight is lower. The interrelation between doing some sports and subjective satisfaction is suggested by the fact that irrespective of their physique, young people pursuing some sports regularly are more satisfied with their appearance and health, including fat or slightly overweight people. Contrary to all this, young people who do not do any athletics have reservations more frequently ("yes and no") or are unsatisfied with their looks or health despite their normal physique.

The very low participation rates in competition and leisure sports indicate deterioration in the acceptance of athletics and in its significance in the society, the consequences of which are discussed by the public as well. The 2008 survey highlights the rearrangement of the lifestyle of the youth living in big cities, in the countryside and in the capital. In general, data show that the inactive lifestyle with hardly any physical exercise keeps on exerting its destroying effects, which suggests that future generations and the entirety of the Hungarian society have more and more difficulties and deteriorating statuses of health. These phenomena will keep on playing a role in the underutilization of the favourable effects of physical activities.

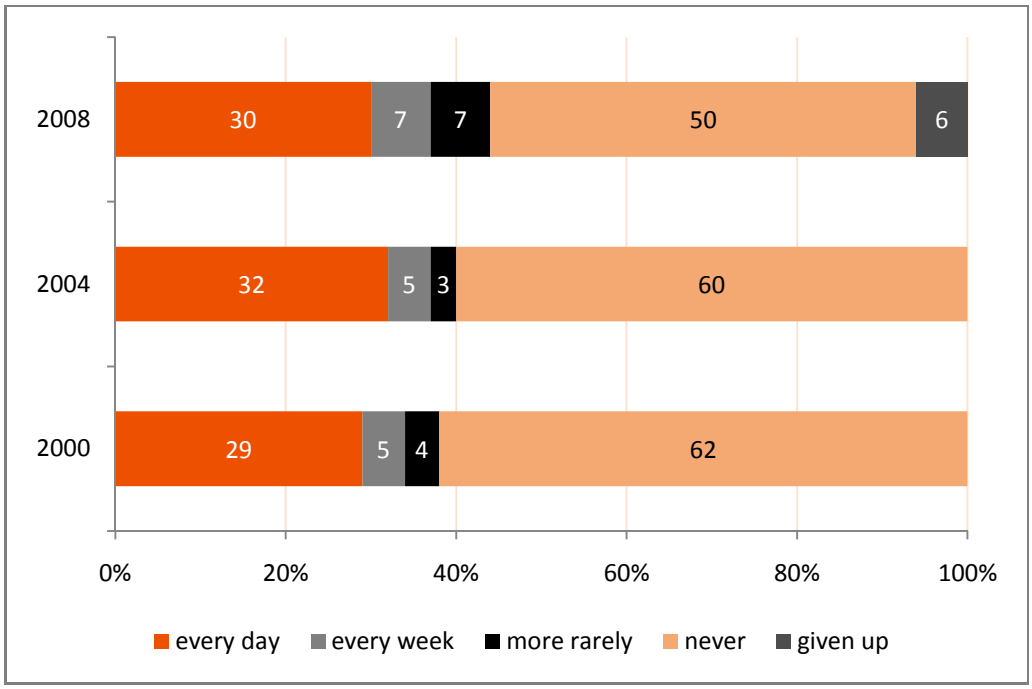
Smoking habits

When our two former large-sample surveys were created, interviewers asked questions to the survey participants. However, in recent years more and more pressure has been put on smokers, especially on young people, to quit or to stop smoking. Therefore, we decided to put the questions on this topic in blocks

filled in by the respondents themselves. All this means is that the comparison with the results of the 2000 and 2004 surveys may only be partial.

Half of the age group surveyed say that they have not smoked at all, three-tenths smoke every day and 7% every week. As a new category – for the very reason of the pressure on smokers – we asked a question regarding giving up smoking. Six percent of the respondents say that though they do not smoke nowadays, they formerly had the habit. No actual change has taken place in the rate of smokers as compared to either 2000 or 20004. However, the number of persons who have never smoked has decreased. At the same time, however, the change has not been assessed in regards to the change in the methodology and the introduction of the new reply category.

Figure No. 36. Smoking and its frequency among the youth, 2000-2008
(in percentage)



The first experience regarding smoking is generally linked to the last years spent in the primary school and the first years in the secondary school. Nearly 60% of the respondents tried smoking at the age of 14-16. The data confirm the fact formerly pointed out that a person who does not try smoking before the age of 20 will presumably not be a habitual smoker. It is alarming that the sample had eight persons who gained their first "experience" when they were 5-6 years old, i.e. in kindergarten. Furthermore, in 2008, 3% of the respondents stated that they had tried smoking before reaching the age of 10. It is interesting that a new tobacco product became popular as compared to 2004. Two percent of the respondents said that they had gained the first experience by trying a hookah. However, it is obvious that the great majority, i.e. 95% tries a cigarette first. Ninety-five percent of regular smokers smoke one packet of cigarettes at most a day.

Similar to former surveys, men form the great majority of people who smoke every day. Thirty-four percent of men in the 15-29 age group use tobacco products every day while the rate of women is slightly more than 25% in the same age group. Forty-six percent of men and more than 53% of women say that they never smoke. As compared to the status four years ago, differences are significant but, as pointed out above, the circumstances of taking the survey have changed. It can be stated that 7% of women and 5% of men said that they had given up smoking.

In the 15-29 age group, the intensity of smoking greatly depends on the age and the educational level. In the lowest age group, the rate of people smoking every day is 20%, while the most active smokers come from the 25-29 age group. The rate of persons smoking every day reaches 35% in that age group. The rate of smokers reduces simultaneously with the rise in the educational level. Twenty percent of the graduates are active smokers and 58% have never smoked. As to the consumers of tobacco products, skilled workers, 46% of who smoke every day, represent the highest rate.

The educational level (in terms of finished studies) of the mother or the father also influences the smoking habits of the child. The lower the father's or mother's educational level, the more probable it is that the child belonging to the 15-29 age group will become a smoker and vice versa. The higher the parents' educational level, the more obvious it is that the child will not be a smoker. From among the children of the fathers with higher educational levels, the rate of smokers is 18% and that of non-smokers is 56%. These rates are 43% and 41%, respectively, for persons with a primary educational level only.

Alcohol consumption

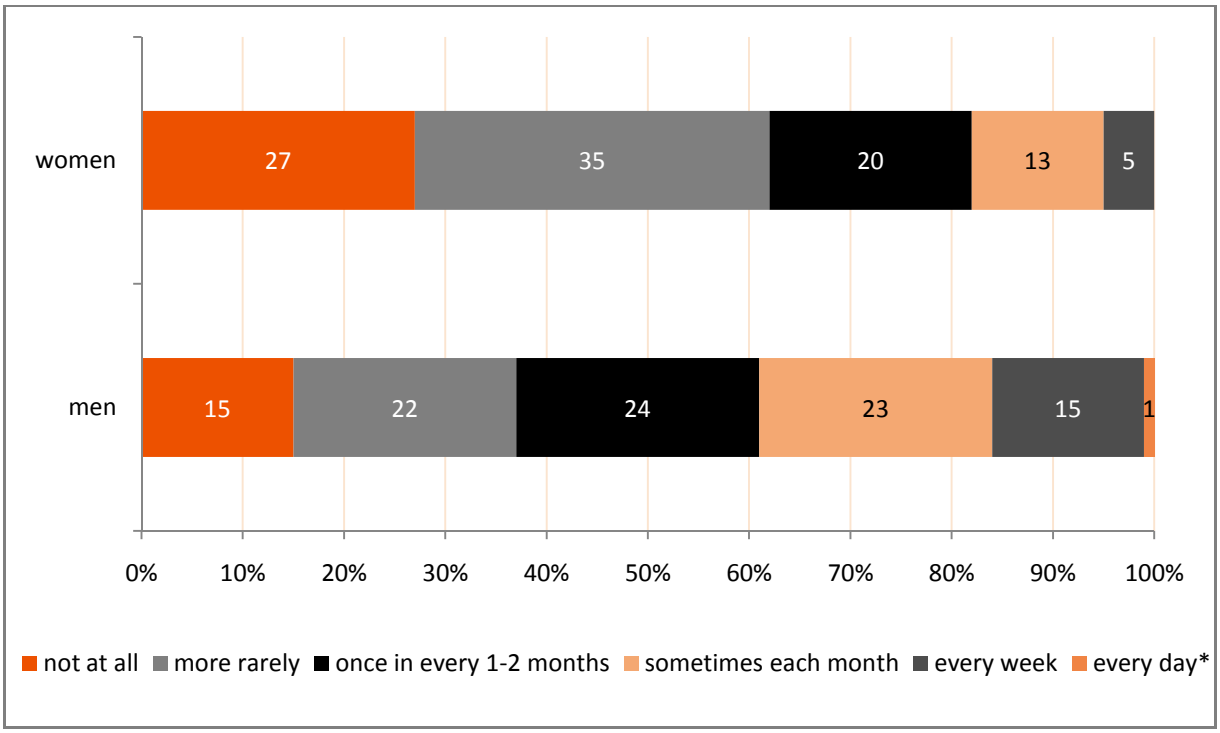
Similar to smoking, the questions regarding the consumption of alcohol were put in the block filled in by the respondents themselves. This means that the change in the data should not be over assessed. About 50% of the young persons replying in 2008 said that they had not consumed any alcoholic drinks or consumed them very rarely in the previous year. About 10% consume alcohol regularly. In addition, 28% state that they consume alcoholic drinks every month or every two months. Similar to smoking, there is a significant difference in alcohol consumption between male and female respondents. Seventeen percent of men consume alcoholic drinks at least every week, while this rate is of 5% for women.

However, no relation similar to the one in the case of alcohol consumption can be found for age groups. Though it is true that the rate of those not consuming alcoholic drinks is the highest in the 15-19 age group (27%), they are followed by young people belonging to the 25-29 age group (20%), while the rate of persons not consuming alcohol at all is 15% for the 20-24 age group.

Alcohol consumption was approached through other questions as well. Based on international standards, young persons were asked if they had had three or more bottles of beer, or half a litre or more of wine or 1 dl or more of spirits at a time in the preceding year. As to beer, 7% of the respondents say that they had three or more bottles of beer on the same occasion, while in the case of the other two beverages 4% state that they often consume such amounts. Altogether, 3% of the young individuals say that they were drunk or had too many alcoholic drinks in the previous year. Nearly 60% say that they were never drunk, and the remaining ones had too many alcoholic drinks at least once in the previous year. As to the men in the 15-29 age group, 5% are frequently drunk, while this rate is 1% for girls. On the other side, 71% of women were never drunk in the previous year, while this rate is only 44% for men.

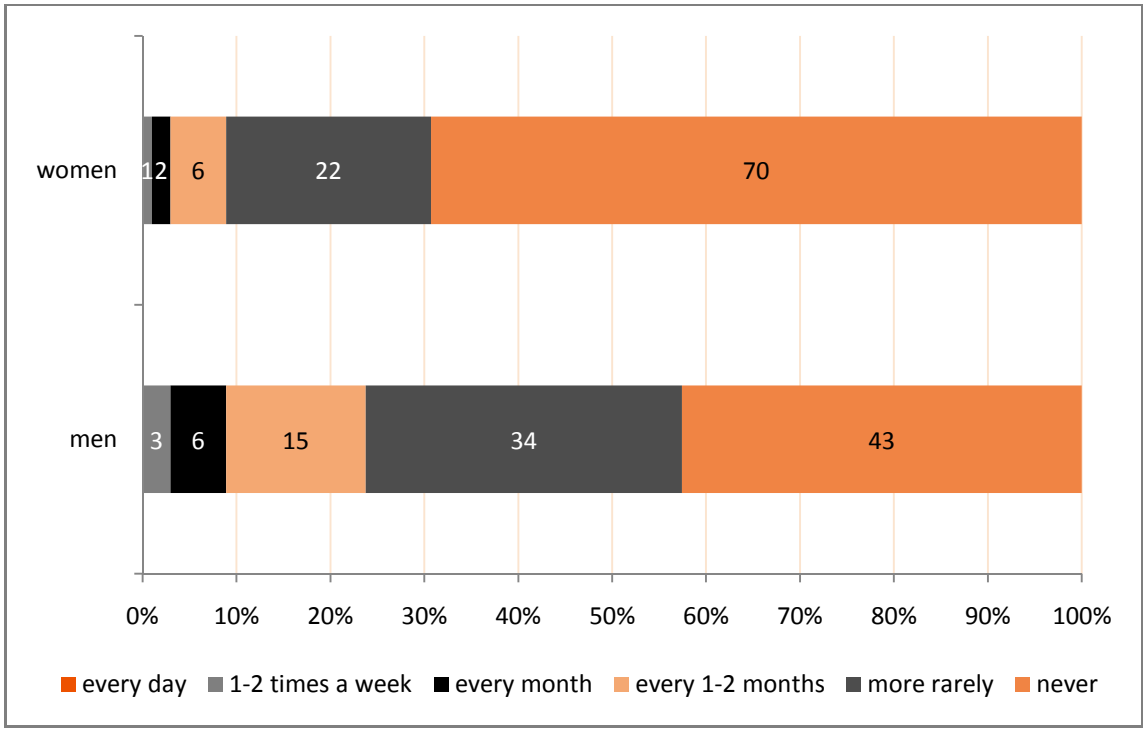
As to socio-demographic dimensions based on 2004 data, we expected that skilled workers would belong to the most risky group. However, we cannot unambiguously prove this for the year of 2008. As to the individuals who were frequently drunk in the previous year, the rate is almost the same for each qualification category. The difference can be stated for the "not at all" category. The rate for skilled workers and people with secondary educational level is 52% each, while it is 63% for graduates and 64% for persons with a primary educational level only (i.e. the youngest individuals). Therefore, persons with a secondary educational level are periodically drunk, through not too frequently.

Figure No. 37. Frequency of alcohol consumption by gender
(in percentage)



*each day or almost each day

Figure No. 38. Frequency of drunken state by gender
(in percentage among those consuming alcoholic drinks)



As for individuals who get drunk, the “frequently” category actually means the frequency of every month or week, while at the same time, respondents state that 2% of such persons get drunk almost every day.

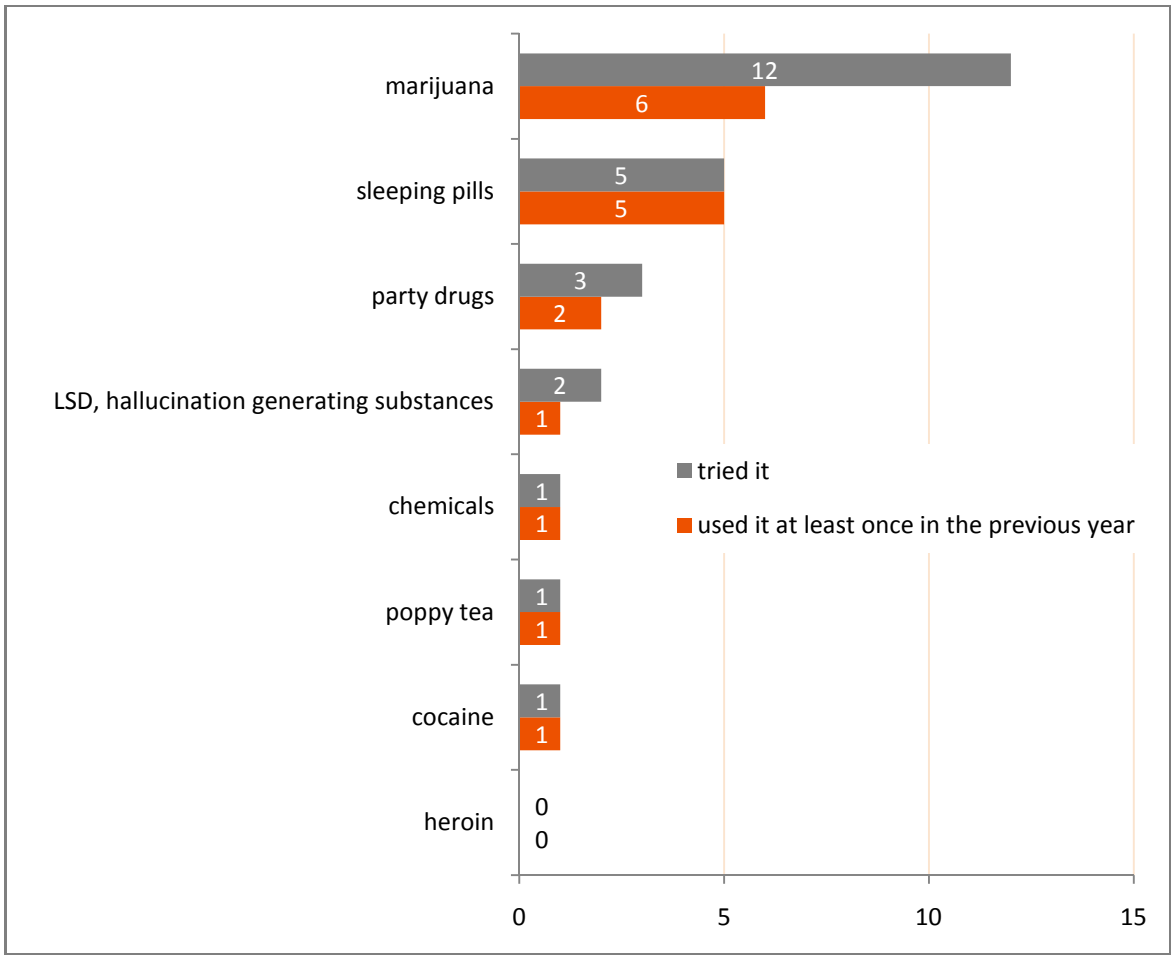
It is interesting that the children of parents with a primary educational level only comprise the majority of those who were not drunk at all in the previous year, and a lower rate is represented by the children with fathers who have college or university diplomas. The interrelation needs to be examined more thoroughly in the volume of studies “Youth2008”.

Drug consumption

In the 2008 youth survey, we posed questions on drug utilization in a block of questions that respondents answered independently and put in a separate envelope. The more than 8,000 questionnaires show that marijuana continues being the most popular drug. Twelve percent of the respondents stated that they had had tried marijuana and half had used that drug at least once in the previous year. The second most popular drugs were sleeping pills used for non-medicinal purposes among the youth in 2008. Five percent of the respondents have already tried the “alternative” utilization of sleeping pills. The rate of those who have tried party drugs is 3% and two-thirds used such a drug at least once in the previous year. In addition to these drugs, hallucination-generating substances, chemicals, poppy seed tea and cocaine are used as drugs among the youth. Thirty-five percent of them stated that there were persons among their acquaintances or friends who had tried some drugs. This is a slightly lower rate than measured four years before (43%).

Figure No. 39. Rate of persons who have tried a certain drug and that of individuals who used such drug at least once in the previous year

(in percentage)



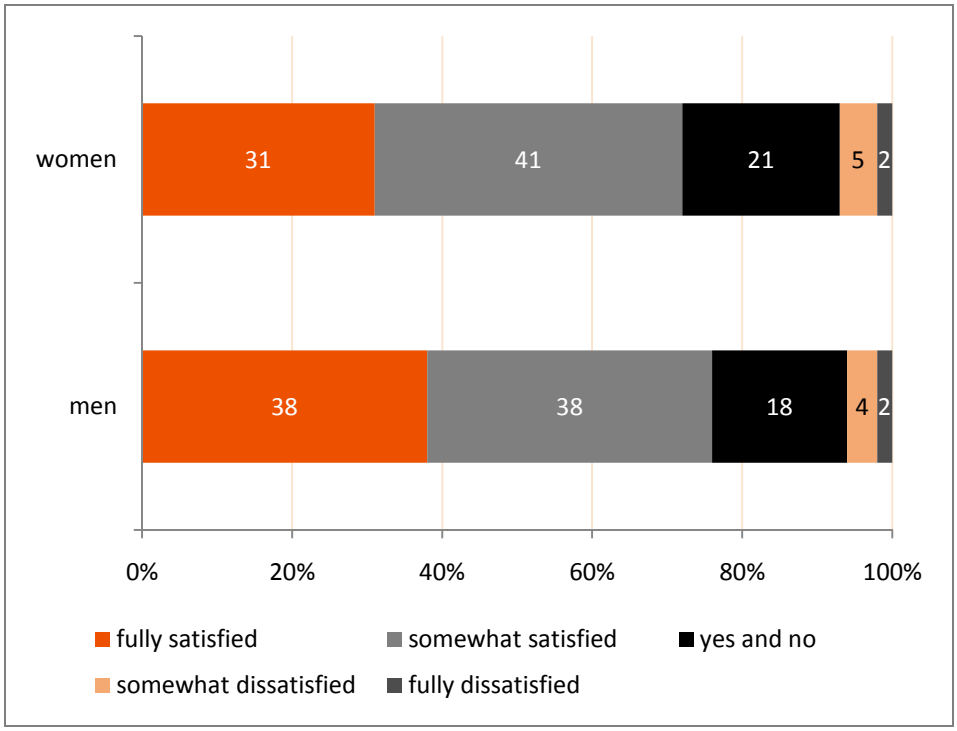
The usage and popularity of different types of drugs have not considerably changed in the past four years. As to all measurable drug types, the majority of the respondents said that they had tried the drug concerned in the second half of their teenage years.

Marijuana is the most frequently used among young people with high status – the bigger the settlement in which people live, and the higher their education level, the more probable is that they will have some involvement with that drug type. All other drug types that can be acquired with difficulty are present in big settlements with greater probability, but the status of their consumers and the utilization of such drugs are not interrelated so clearly as for marijuana. Except for sleeping pills, all drug types are more frequently used by boys than by girls. The utilization of sleeping pills for purposes other than medical ones is not interrelated with the status, the gender, place of residence or the educational level. Its popularity is the same for almost every stratum of youth.

Subjective opinions about the health status

The survey cannot precisely state the health-deteriorating effects of the above conducts. Based on the subjective opinions on health, it can be stated that 35% of the individuals in the 15-29 age group are fully satisfied with their health, a further 40% are somewhat satisfied with their health and general state of health. The rate of those who are fully dissatisfied is 2% and that of ones who are somewhat dissatisfied is 4%. On a scale of 100, the average results give 75.11 index points, which is undoubtedly a high subjective health indicator.

Figure No. 40. Satisfaction with health and general state of health by gender
(in percentage)



The involvement of certain socio-demographic variables only slightly changes the basically positive opinion on the health status. As for the children of parents with a low educational level, the index reaches a somehow lower level with 72 points as compared to the average of 75 points, while the average for the children of parents with college or university diplomas is more than 78 points. Furthermore, it is interesting

that persons without children at all are somewhat satisfied while those with children are less satisfied. Moreover, the subjective satisfaction with the health status reduces linearly with aging. As compared to the 77.6 points of the 15-19 age group, the index reaches 71.87 points for the persons of the 25-29 age group, but all this is only a relative movement since young people are satisfied with the health status on the aggregate.

All this is supported by the fact that more than 90% of the respondents of the sample do not suffer from any steady diseases or handicaps, physical or otherwise.

Sexuality-related attributes

The social life of the youth is basically determined by interpersonal relations, within which "being partners" and the related sexual life play a significant part. The characteristics of the youth's sexual life in Hungary were first surveyed within the framework of the Youth2004 research, through a representative subsample of 4,000 persons who filled in answers to questions themselves. In the Youth2008 research, 8,000 young persons were questioned through the same method.

The opinions on sexuality and the attitude toward sexuality are a part of everyday life. The sexual culture preferred by the society concerned is a reflection of the society since, through its regulatory system of mechanisms, it shows how far the society hampers or contributes to the opportunities of individuals.

Seven percent of the persons asked failed to characterize their sexuality. The rate of heterosexual persons is 87%, that of chaste persons is 5%, while the rate of bisexual people is 1.5% and homosexual persons is 0.2%.

What is considered to be "being together sexually", is a private interpretation. Sexual intercourse is the most commonly accepted form. In 2008, 17% of the respondents had not begun their sexual life yet. Seven percent of the persons had started it before they turned 14, 56% did so between 15 and 18 years of age and 20% had started it before they turned 19. In 2004, young persons began their sexual life at the age of 17 on average. However, there is some difference between men and women. Men began their sexual life at the age of 16.7 years on average, while this indicator is 17.2 years for women. In 2008, young people began their sexual life at the age of 16.7 on the average. The difference between men and women remained – boys began it at the age of 16.5 on the average, and girls did so at the age of 16.9 years.

If the start of sexual life is surveyed in a breakdown of age groups, it is to be taken into account that in 2004, 46% of the persons belonging to the youngest age group did not have a sexual life at all, while in 2008, this rate was 43%.

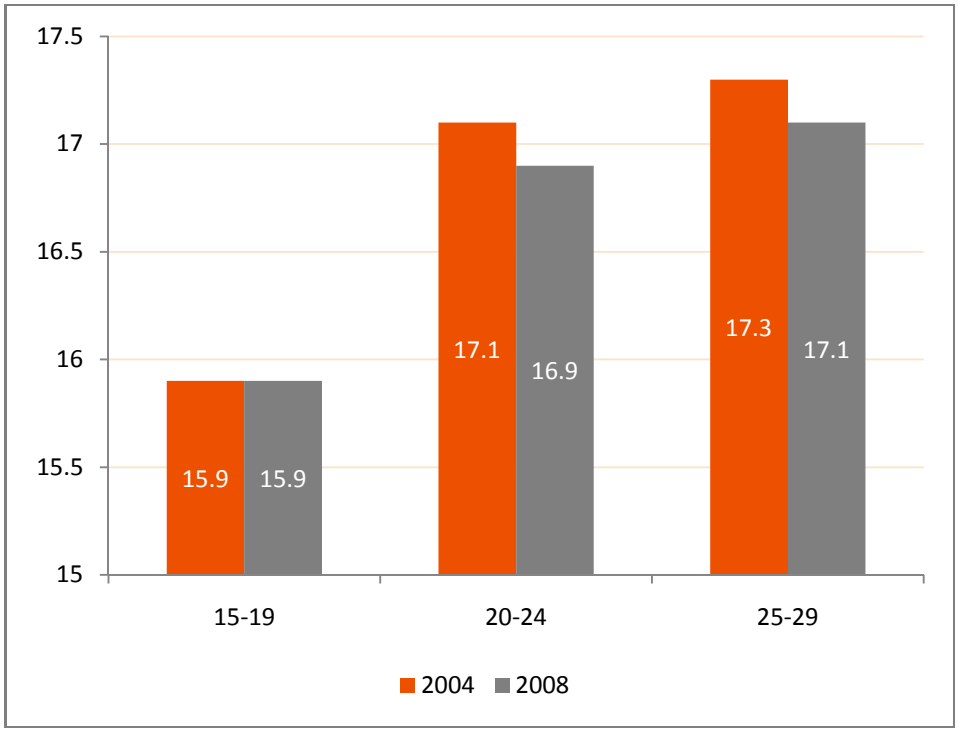
The start of a sexual life may be influenced by several factors that could not be identified exactly through the method of questionnaires when the 2004 and the 2008 surveys were made. However, it can be stated that the start is greatly influenced by the age and the social status. The highest rate of those who have not begun their sexual life yet is among the individuals still in school. Within that group, students of high prestige institutes are the least affected in the field of sexual relationships.

Twenty-six percent of young people who are sexually active live with their spouse and 29% do not live together with the partner. Two percent had more than one sexual partner when the survey was conducted, while 38% stated that they had no partner at that time.

Fifty-two percent of the persons replied to the question regarding the number of sexual partners during their life (four partners on average). Thirty-one percent of the respondents have had no sexual partners at all, 16% have had one, 14% two, 11% four and 6% have had five partners. Nine percent of them have had six to nine partners and 6% have had 11 or more sexual partners. The data suggests that those who have actually had sexual partners answered the question.

If they have a permanent partner, 5% of the young persons are sexually active every day, 51% are active several times a week and 21% every week. These data show a significant change (reduction) as compared to 2004.

Figure No. 41. Start of the sexual life – by age groups, 2004-2008
(in average ages)



A significant portion of young people use some method of contraception. Eighty percent of the age group of 15-19 years confirms that the responsibility for contraception and the prevention of undesired pregnancy is joint. Eleven percent thinks that the responsibility should be assumed by the woman, 3% thinks it is the duty of the man. Six percent did not reply to the question. More than half of the youth discusses the method of contraception with their partner, 7% leave it to his/her partner, 21% assume the duty and 4% say they never use any method. The rate of non-respondents was 15% in the case of this question.

Condoms and the birth control pill are the most popular methods of contraception. If the methods are examined by the age groups, it can be seen that the number of persons using condoms decreases linearly with age and that of persons using the birth control pill increases - presumably as the rate of those having a permanent partner increases. In the youngest age group, 3% do not apply any method, while it is 5% for the oldest age group. As for the 25-29 age group, persons not using any method generally have a stable partner, and it can be presumed that all this is a step towards creating a child.

Figure No. 42. Rate of persons who are not sexually active, by age groups
(in percentage)

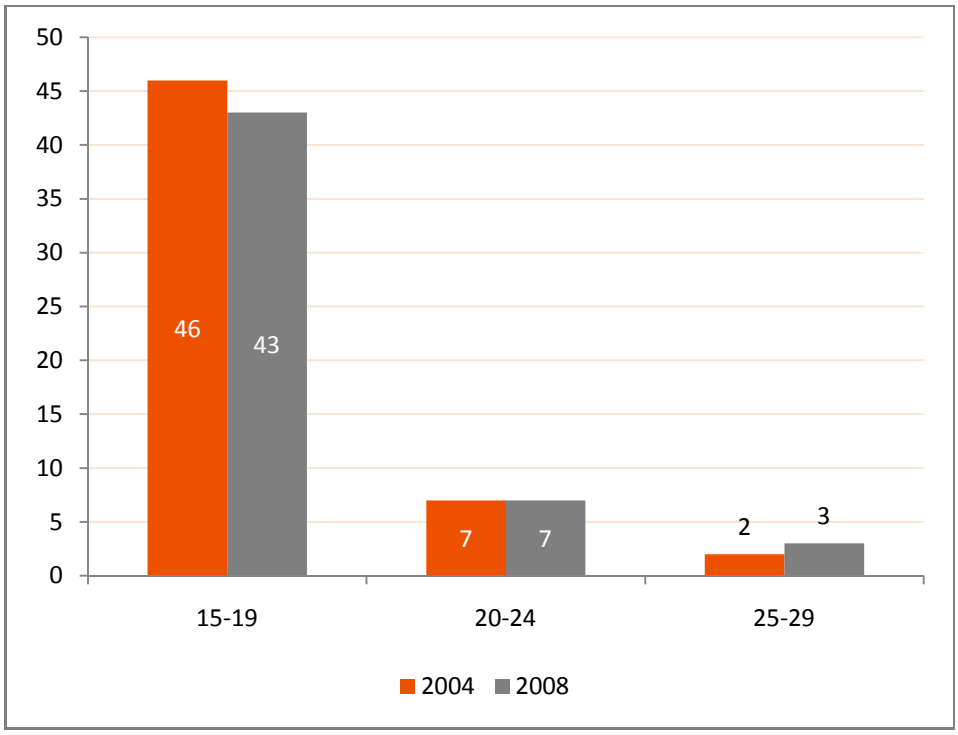
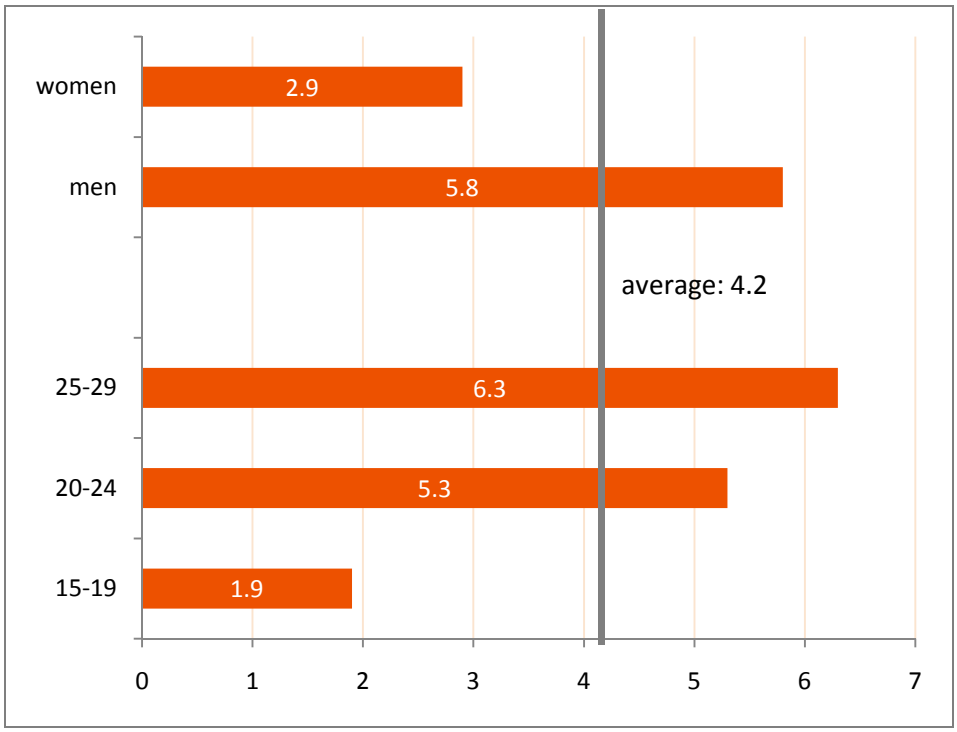


Figure No. 43. Number of sexual partners by age groups and gender
(in averages)



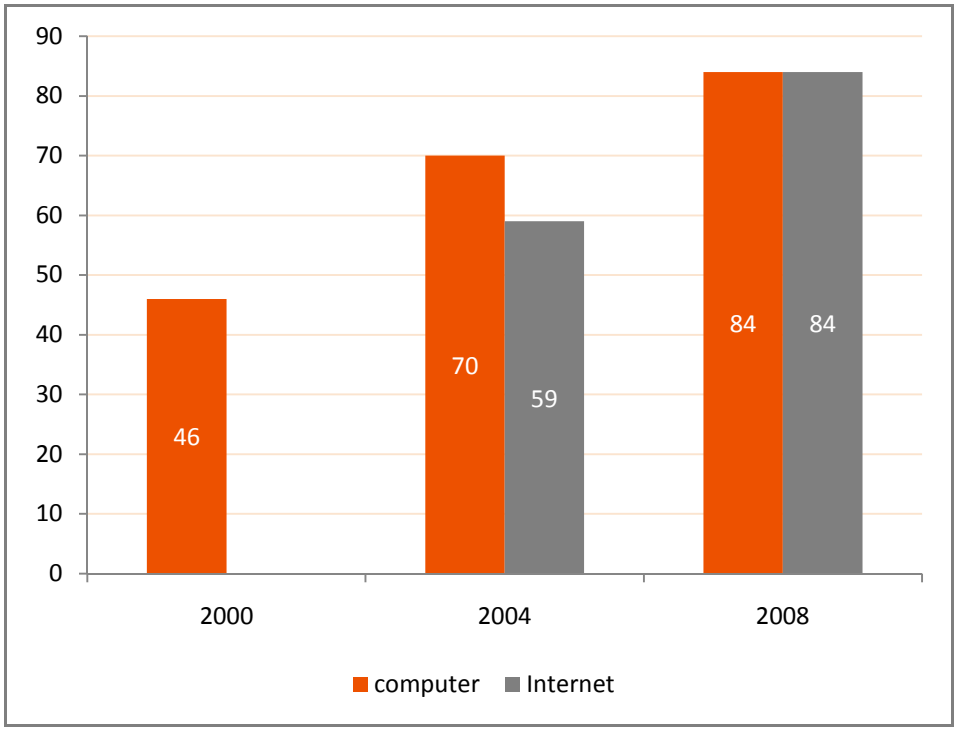
THE INFORMATION SOCIETY AND MEDIA CONSUMPTION

Computer and Internet usage

Based on the main indicators, it can be stated that in recent years, the information society has been on a slow rise in Hungary. As to the entire population, the country is nearing a point of saturation as a result of which computers and the Internet do appear in the households that can afford them and have motivated members in that respect. Simultaneous with this process, the ones without such facilities seem to increasingly lag behind, since it is becoming increasingly difficult to eliminate the gap created among different societal groups who don't have access to the expanding services and functions of the Internet. Resulting separation lines do aggravate existing social gaps, further deteriorating the opportunities of groups already in a disadvantageous position. All former surveys on the topic demonstrated that in the field concerned, young persons represented the group in which those differences were the slightest, as backed by the data of the research in "Youth2008" as well.

In 2008, 84% of the youth in Hungary used computers in some form. This means a significant increase as compared to the situation four years ago.

Figure No. 44. Rate of those using the computer and the Internet, 2000-2008
(in percentage)



In the period between 2004 and 2008, the rate of young people using the Internet also showed a dynamic increase as it rose from 59% in the former survey to 84%. In this respect, it is to be pointed out that the "scissors" are continuously closing, which has long been a characteristic of computer and Internet usage. Today, there is hardly any sense in using the computer independently, or without the Internet, which is backed by the data as well.

Contrary to the flash reports of former years, in which the main question was who were the users of the computer and the Internet, nowadays the question may be phrased as who are the people who do not have access to these facilities, basically determining social relationships and individual competitiveness.

As to the identification of the groups not using either the computer or the Internet – i.e. the ones digitally illiterate – the age, the educational level, the business activity and, to a lower extent, the settlement type play a definite role for the youth as well, in harmony with the results of other researches.

The rate of the digitally illiterate significantly increases with age. While in the 15-19 age group their rate is below 7%, it exceeds 20% for the 25-29 age group. The difference is much more shocking for the groups of youth broken down by educational level. To illustrate all this, only the 25-29 age group was examined since persons belonging to this group have practically finished their studies in the school system. While the rate of the digitally illiterate is zero for the group of graduates, and it is only 9% for the persons with a secondary educational level, 36% of skilled workers and 69% of the persons with a primary educational level do not use the computer and the Internet at all!

While on the basis of the data of "Youth2004", the significance of the "urbanization slope" had been high, but it has considerably decreased by 2008. However, nearly twice as many people are still not using the computer and the Internet in villages (20%) compared to those the capital (11%).

Digital devices in the households

Internet and computer

In recent years, the price of IT equipment and services has significantly declined. This is one of the reasons for the dynamic growth in the number of households equipped with a computer and the Internet. These results seem to back the hypothesis that the establishment of the home IT infrastructure is mainly due to young individuals (primarily secondary and university students) living in the families.

While in 2000 their rate was only 29%, it reached 57% in 2004, and it was nearly 80% in 2008, well over the national average. A growth with similar dynamics was found in the field of home Internet access, in which the 9% and 24% penetration rates of former surveys rose to 70% by 2008. In this field there was a change in the technology too, in addition to the price reduction, since the great majority of households have the widest-band Internet access, and the Internet has been increasingly getting out of the "realm" of the PCs.

Internet (irrespective of its form and of the devices) has become a part of the daily routine for the youth, as 60% of the persons belonging to the 15-29 age group use the Internet every day. Though the rate of intensive users reduces with increasing age, nearly half of the 25-29 age group uses the service each day.

Figure No. 45. Access to the PC and the Internet in the households of the youth, 2000-2008
(in percentage)

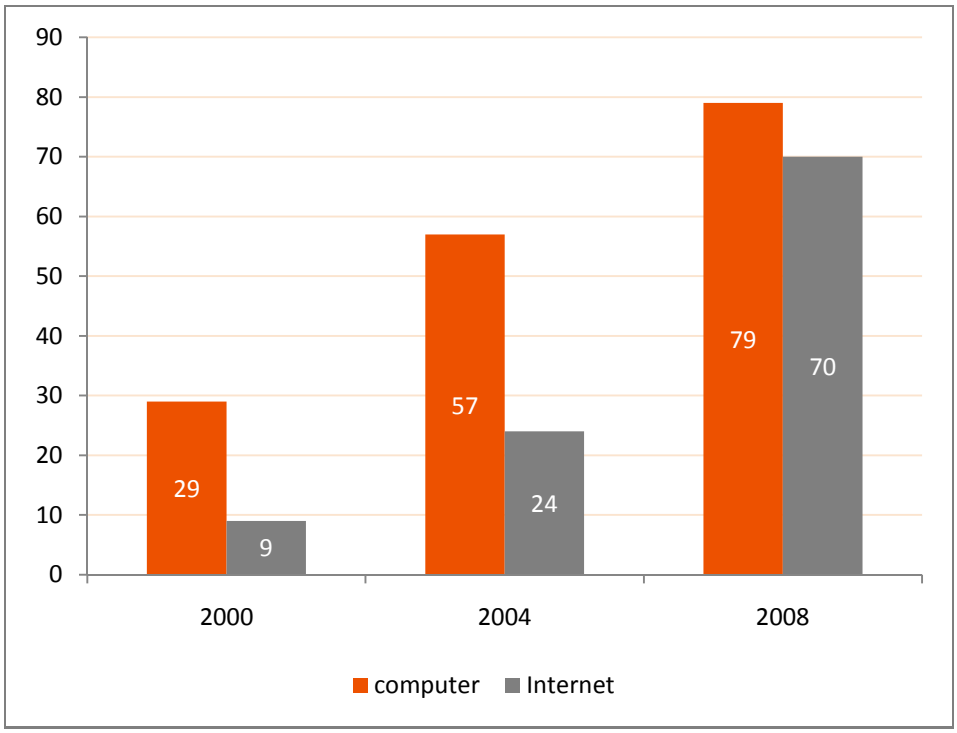
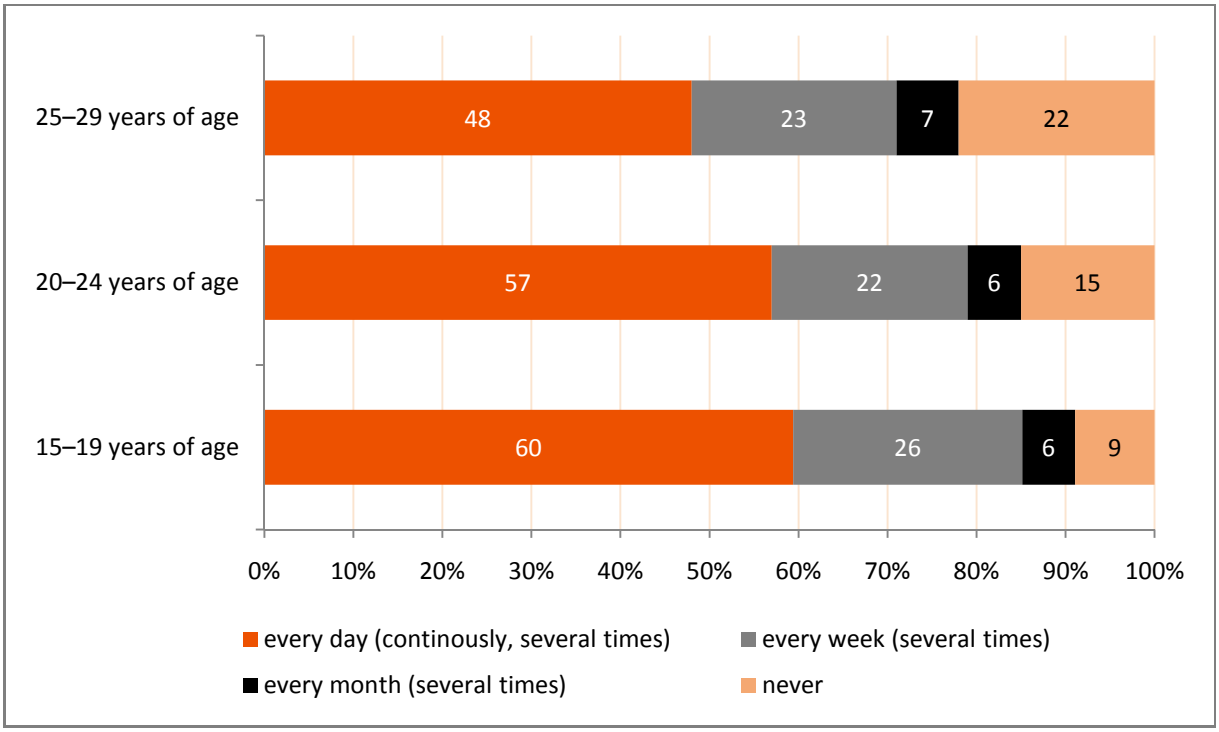


Figure No. 46. Frequency of Internet usage – replies by age groups
(in percentage)



Characteristics of Internet usage

Within the frameworks of the same research, online activities could not be analyzed in detail, but the most important utilization methods related to communication were examined. Based on this, it can be stated that 74% of young people regularly send and receive emails, while 59% send and receive SMS. The third most commonly used method of communication is represented by sending instant messages, which are used by 47% regularly and by 15% rarely. This communication method has achieved great success in recent years, and today it is a means of prolonging the togetherness of secondary students beyond school hours.

Comments on forums and blogs offer an important opportunity of communal communication and of exchanging information with acquaintances or unknown persons; 47% of the youth use these services regularly while 15% do so rarely. Twelve percent of young people make blog comments with some regularity.

The period between 2004 and 2008 saw a jump in community pages as well. Eighty-five percent of the young persons using the Internet have registered on or at least visited such a page.

Figure No. 47. Different forms of Internet usage ("frequency of the below activities")
(in percentage)

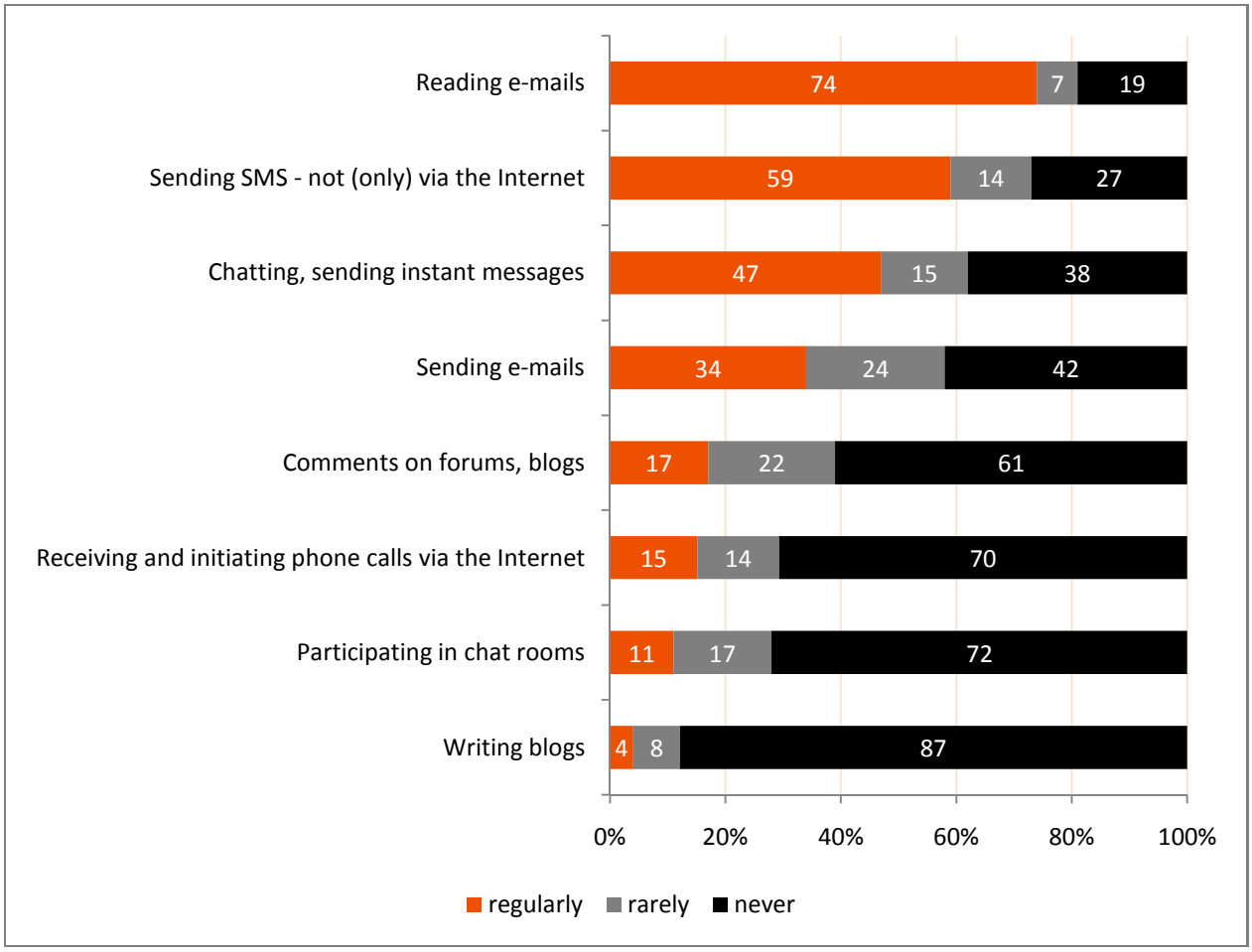
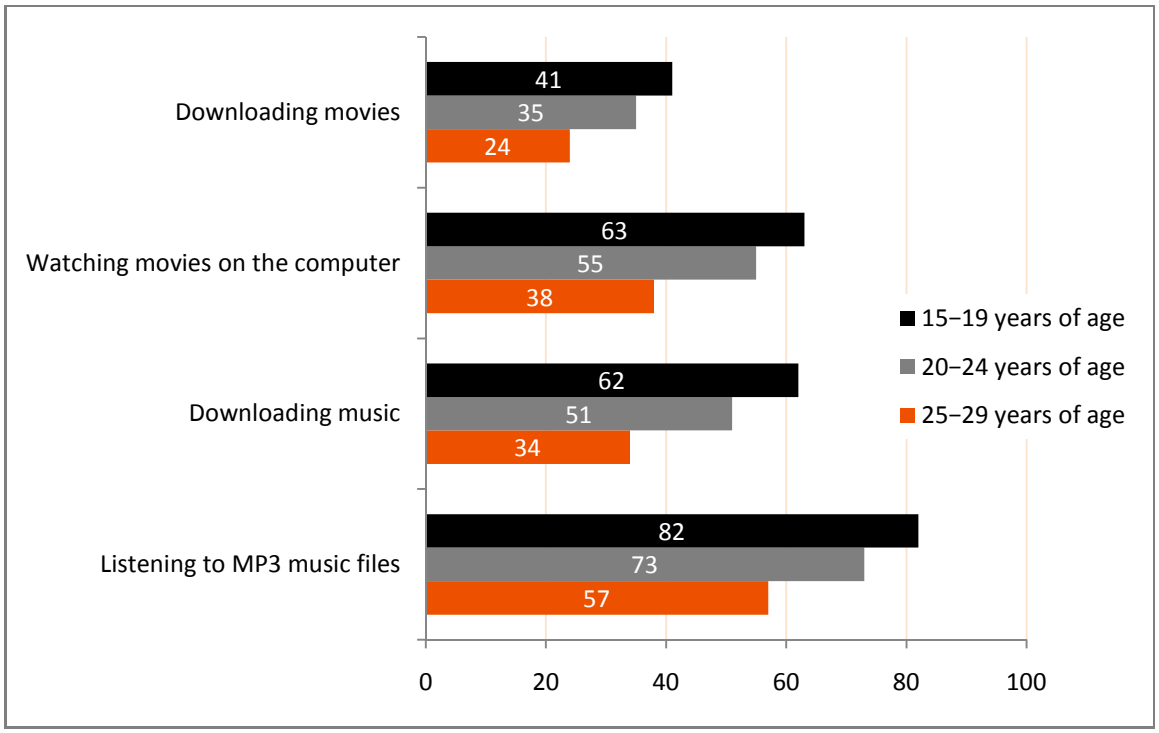


Figure No. 48. Different online activities by age groups
(in percentage)

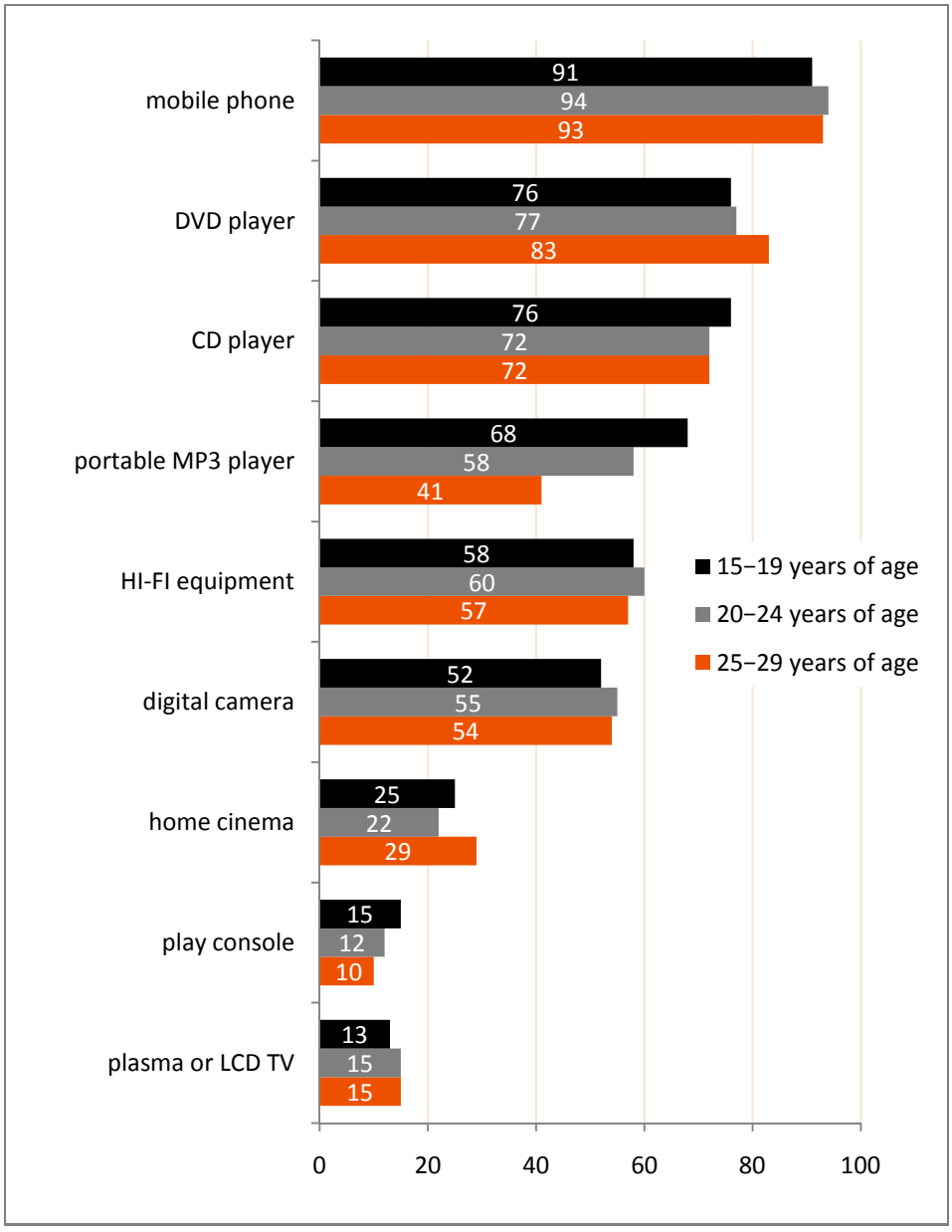


The "movement" of the computer and Internet to households of young people has transformed the basic forms of entertainment at home as well. The exploitation of the opportunities offered by the Internet has caused basic changes, primarily for the youngest age group. Watching movies downloaded from legal or illegal resources has become one of the most popular forms of spending free time, no matter whether the movie is watched alone or with friends or acquaintances. Forty-one percent of the 15-19 age group downloads movies and 63% watch movies on the computer. At the same time, the computer has become an important means of listening to music, as 62% of the above age group downloads music, while 82% uses the computer for listening to music.

Other devices in the households of young people

The penetration of mobile phones can be considered complete among young people, but the great majority also has DVD and CD equipment too. The entire transformation of the music culture was subject to the MP3 format and related portable devices. This process is well reflected by the fact that 68% of the 15-19 age group has such devices, while this indicator is 58% for the 20-24 age group and 41% for the 25-29 age group.

Figure No. 49. Rate of the young people possessing different digital devices in a breakdown of age groups
(in percentage)



TV, radio, daily and weekly papers

Television

The spread of Internet and its integration into daily media consumption has led to a specific rearrangement in the lives of young people. Between 2004 and 2008, the average time spent watching TV markedly reduced both on weekdays and on weekends. As to its absolute value, the drop was the biggest in the 15-19 age group where the weekday average reduced from 143 minutes to 107 minutes (i.e. it decreased by more than half an hour), while the 54-minute reduction for weekends means that the former nearly four-hour average reduced to three hours by 2008.

Table No. 24. Average time spent watching TV on weekdays and on weekends, in a breakdown of age groups
(averages in minutes)

	2004		2008	
Age group	**Weekdays**	**Weekends**	**Weekdays**	**Weekends**
15-19	143	235	107	181
20-24	134	208	105	174
25-29	130	202	104	168

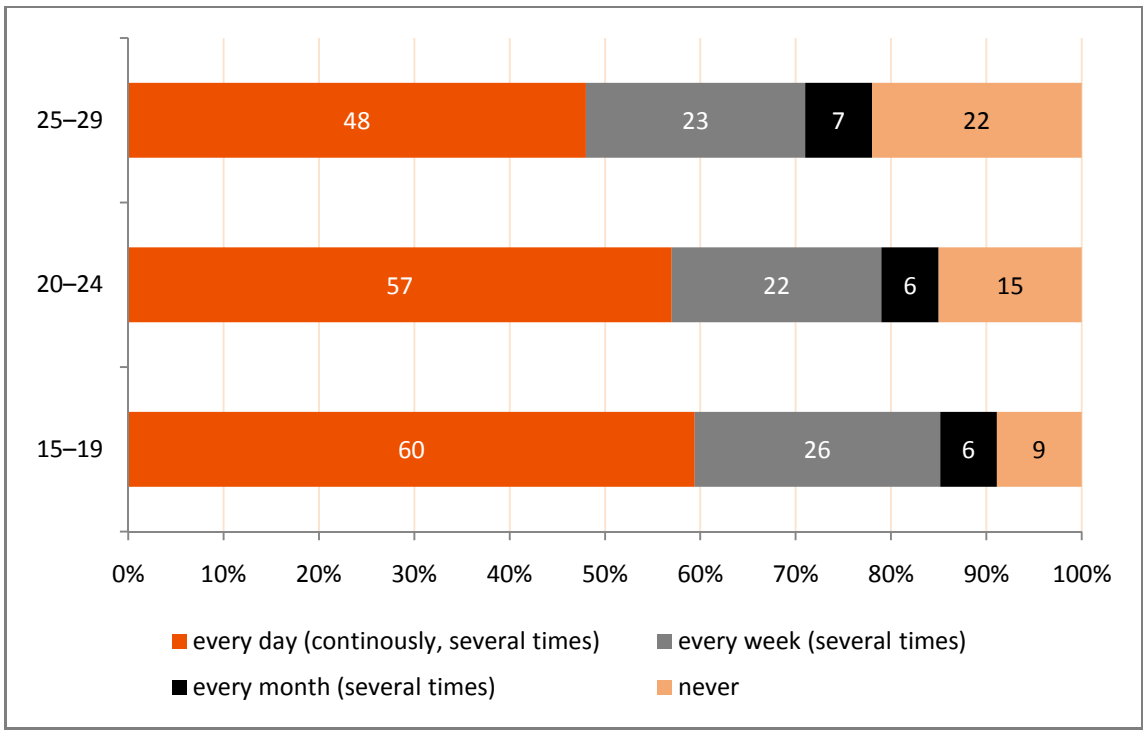
Of course, however, this reduction was not accompanied by the decline of the aggregate time spent on different media outlets, since the time spared on TV was "transferred" to the computer and the Internet. In addition to this, the studied age groups are most defined by multitasking, which is the continuous sharing of attention, generated by the multiplied supply of available communication channels and content.

Two national commercial television channels continued being the most popular among young people. Nearly two-thirds of those surveyed watch these channels the most frequently.

Radio

As opposed to the Internet for which younger people use more intensively, the case is the opposite for listening to the radio. On the aggregate, 41% of young people listen to the radio every day, while 22% listen several times a week, 21% more rarely and 16% never do. Therefore, it can be established that radio keeps on playing an important role in the everyday life of the youth, though this primarily means "background" listening only.

Figure No. 50. Listening to the radio in the breakdown of age groups
(in percentage)



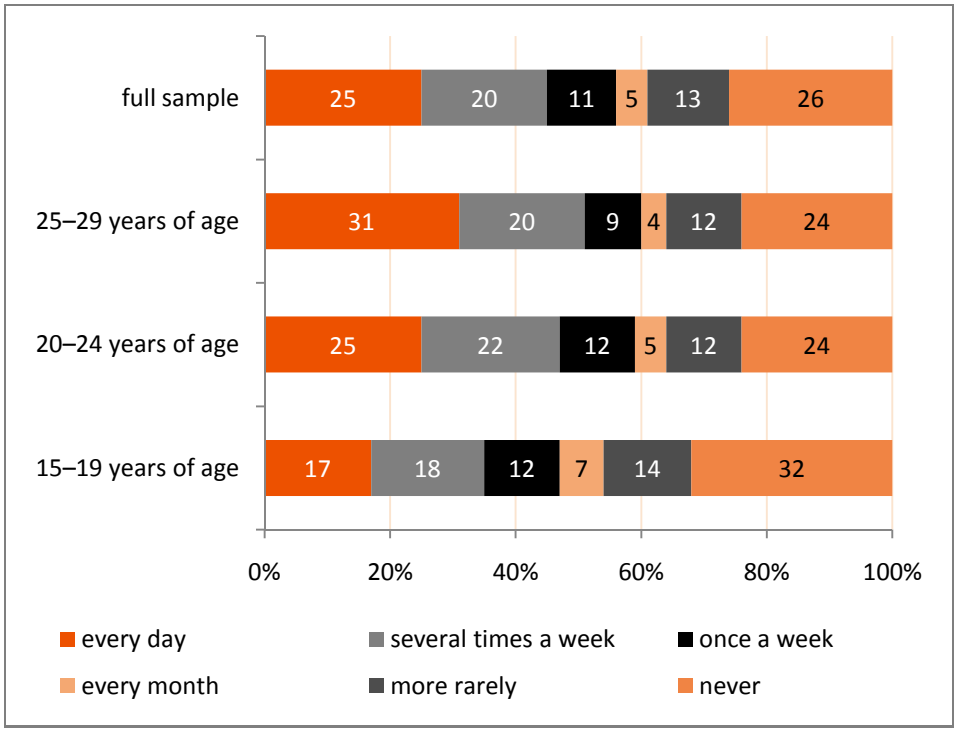
This is supported by the fact that the great majority listens to national channels and a smaller share to local commercial music stations. The frequency of listening to the radio is influenced to a lower extent by other background variables. Only two differences are worth mentioning: the rate of young people listening to the radio is lower in Budapest than among the persons living in other areas. The less intensive listening to the radio in Budapest can be explained by the fact that there are much more entertainment possibilities in the capital, which reduces the time that can be spent listening to the radio. Furthermore, the utilization of the Internet is also above average and more intensive in Budapest, which also strengthens the above effect.

Newspapers

In the past decade there have been significant changes in newspaper reading habits among young people. There has been a jump in the rate of those who are not fond of traditional, hard copy papers (dailies and weeklies as well as different journals). This is reflected by the fact that, while in 2000 the rate of those who did not read any paper at all was 7%, this rate grew to 11% by 2004 and to 26% by 2006. This means that one-quarter of Hungarian people belonging to the 15-19 age group do not read any newspapers at all.

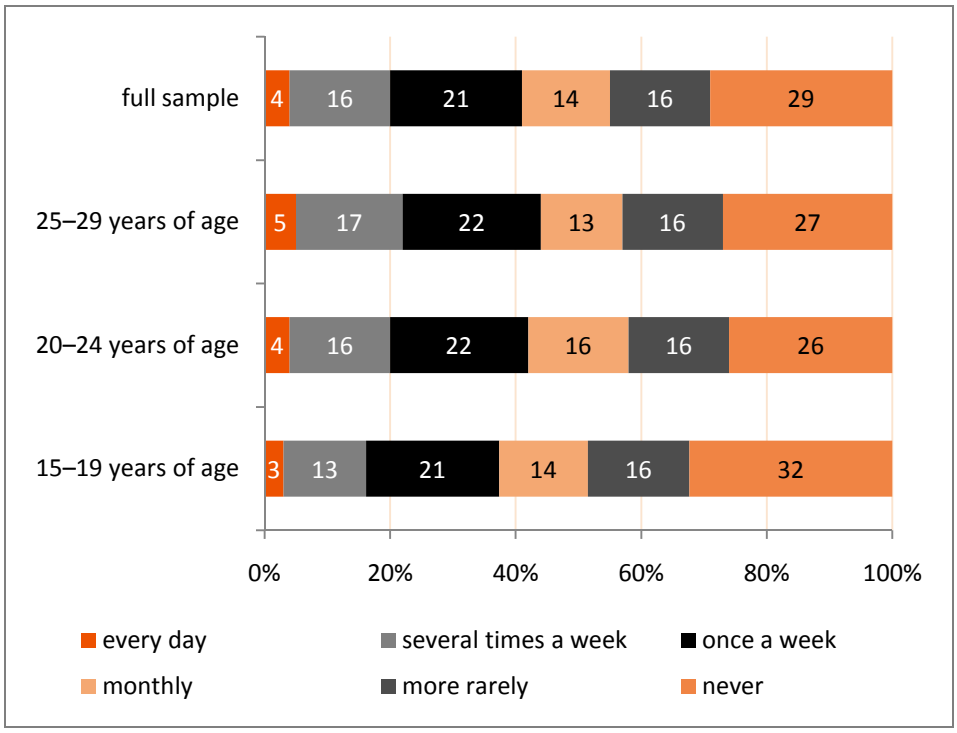
To sum it up, the number of regular readers of newspapers slightly rises with age and that of people not reading them at all declines. Moreover, a higher educational level is accompanied by a more intensive consumption of the dailies – in the 15-19 age group 60% of the graduates, 54% of persons with secondary education, 52% of skilled workers and only 26% of individuals with only a primary educational level are regular readers of the dailies, which means that they read some daily at least once a week. It is to be pointed out that the reading rate of young people is lower in all of the age groups, meaning that there is a specific type of the consumption of culture and media in the capital as compared to the remaining parts of the country. However, mention should be made of the fact that as far as utilization of the computer is concerned, their rate is much higher, and it can be presumed that young persons living in Budapest generally gain knowledge through different Internet news portals.

Figure No. 51. Frequency of reading newspapers in the breakdown of age groups
(in percentage)



As to reading weeklies and journals, the situation is more or less similar to the experience related to dailies. Among weeklies, the ones read the most frequently are tabloid papers and women's magazines. It can be stated for weeklies as well that, on the aggregate, persons with a higher educational level spend more time reading weeklies and journals, but the difference among settlements (with special regard to the one between the capital and other settlements) is less than for dailies.

Figure No. 52. Frequency of reading weeklies and journals in a breakdown of age groups
(in percentage)



A FEW CHARACTERISTICS OF CULTURAL CONSUMPTION, SPENDING LESIURE TIME

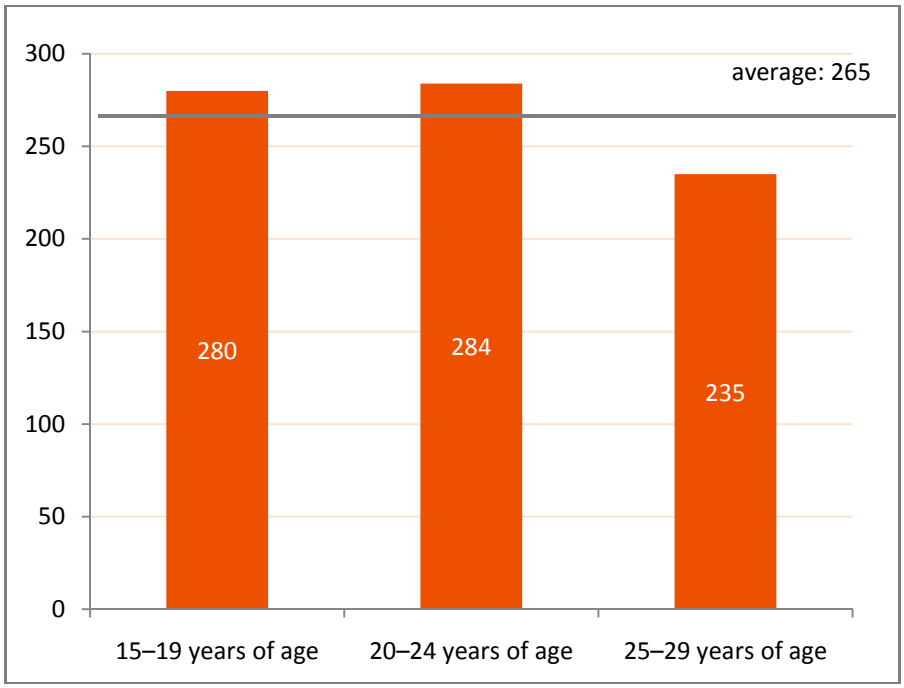
Similar to "Youth2000" and "Youth2004", "Youth2008" surveyed the youth's attitude to culture and cultural consumption through several questions.

Supply of materialized cultural capital[15]

Similar to the "Youth2004" survey, in the recent survey young people were asked about the number of books they had at home. In 2004, there were 344 books on average in the households of young people. At the same time, 4% of the youth stated that they did not have a single book at home. The data of "Youth2008" show a significant drop. There are 265 books on average in the households where young people belonging to the 15-19 age group live. Fifteen percent of the households of young people have 100 books, while 12% possess 200.

The number of books greatly depends on if the person concerned lives alone or with his/her parent(s). As for dependants, there are more than 300 books on average in the households, while this number is 158 for single persons. The situation is the best for young persons living in multi-generational intellectual families, which generally possess an entire "library" with an average of more than 500 books (N=80).

Figure No. 53. Number of the books in the households of young people, in a breakdown of age groups
(averages)



[15] See details: Bourdieu, Pierre: Economic, Cultural, Social Capital in: Süsü a társadalomban, Új Mandátum, 2000, pp. 35-48

Figure No. 53 well reflects the fact that older persons have fewer books, a reason for which may be their reluctance to form a "library" after moving away from home. Among surveys based on big samples, the "Youth2008" survey dealt with the cultural relevance of households for the first time. In the homes of young persons (i.e. in the place where they live), there are 103 music CDs on average. Four percent of the respondents said that they had no CDs at all. As to CDs, the rate of copied ones is 40% on the average. At the same time, nearly one-third of young persons do not have any copied CDs.

Figure No. 54. Number of copied and original CDs and DVDs in the households of young people, in the breakdown of age groups

(averages)

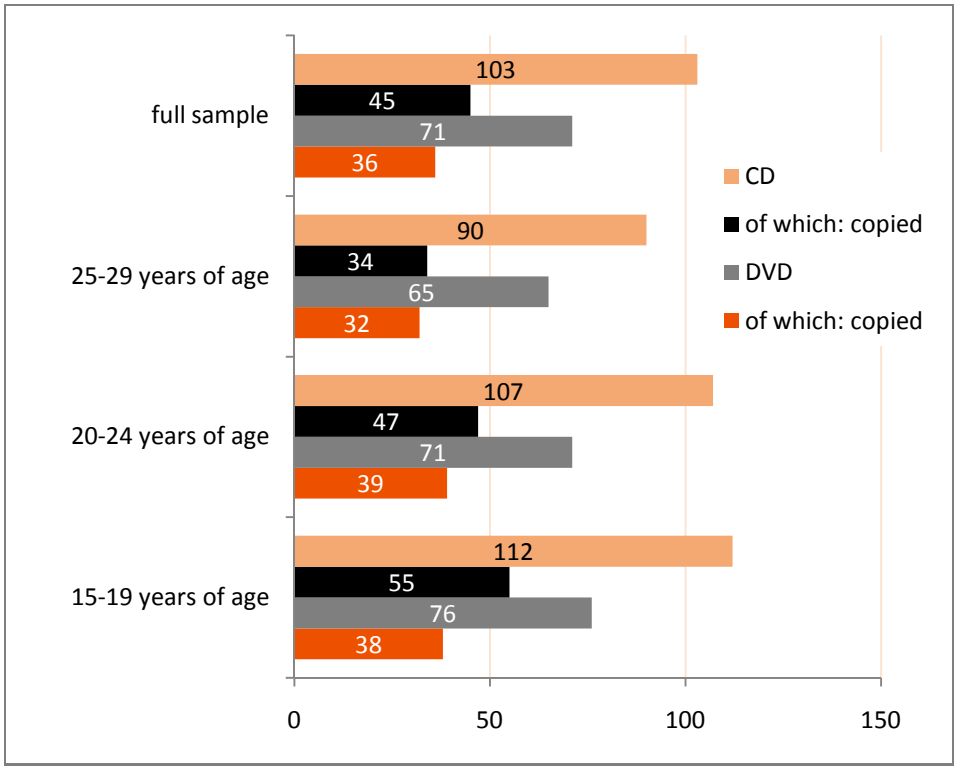


Figure No. 54 clearly demonstrates that younger persons have more CDs , and copied ones are possessed at a higher number. The reason for this may be that persons belonging to the 15-19 age group use the Internet as a source. Young people have 71 DVDs on average, more than half of which are copied disks. Nine percent of the respondents have no DVDs at all and 40% stated that they did not possess copied DVDs.

As shown by the data, the attitude to the materialized cultural capital is changing. There may be many reason for this, but it is important to emphasize that a marked element of change is the spread of computer technology and the Internet, which has rearranged the mode and possibilities of having access to audio and video records.

Scenes of cultural consumption

As to the scenes of cultural consumption, it can be stated that the separation of society has further increased as compared to 2000 and 2004. As far as cultural consumption is concerned, a wealthy group has emerged which mainly uses segments of the elite culture. Other groups, on the other hand, have hardly any access to any cultural products and, beyond a certain point, they do not recognize their needs at all, and as

a result, their cultural activity is formal in the “institutions of the elite culture”. The contrast between Budapest and the villages is especially marked in that respect; in the 15-29 age group, cultural consumption is significantly difference between the two locality types in terms of the features and frequency of said consumption. While, similar to the data of former large-sample youth survey, people living in Budapest rank first place in the consumption representing a high cultural value (e.g. theatre, concerts, library, museum, exhibitions). Persons in the 15-29 age group living in the countryside go to cultural centres, local discos, balls and other programs to entertain themselves. All this is probably interrelated with the supply of institutions and the educational level as well.

This marked disproportionateness is reflected in the frequency of visiting cultural institutions as well. In 2000, nearly one quarter of the youth living in Budapest went to theatres every two months, while this rate for the persons living in villages did not reach one-tenth. In 2004, 15% of the youth living in the capital visited a theatre once a month, while the rate for individuals living in the countryside was only 6%. In 2008, this indicator was 13% for persons living in Budapest and only 5% for persons living in villages. As for going to movies, the difference was twofold in 2000: nearly three quarters of the youth living in the capital were in the cinema once every two months, while the rate of individuals living in villages was only one-third. In 2004, with the multiplex movie complexes spreading, the difference grew – young people living in the capital were at the movies on three times more occasions within a month than the youth living in villages. In 2008, one-third of the youth living in the capital visited the cinema once a month, while this rate for people living in villages was one-fifth. It can be stated that the “cultural scissors” keep on cutting, which may further strengthen the inequality of the youth opportunities.

Similar to the results of former surveys, there is a high number among respondents who never go to certain cultural institutions. The scenes belonging to elite culture are visited in the lowest numbers, and irrespective of age groups, the rate of those never going to art movies, the opera house or classic concerts is more than 70%. About 20% of the youth have not been to multiplex movies, either. Of course, multiplex cinemas are visited most rarely by persons living in villages and the ones belonging to the 25-29 age group.

The selection among cultural activities and the deepness and intensity of such activities are far from the extent that would be needed for gaining appropriate cultural knowledge by the youth. Leisure time programs that are selected rather randomly reflect mainly individual activities and decisions. There are no companions or communities; in other words, the desire for elite, social interaction is rather rare, which, in our opinion, means that the cultural activities of the youth are lacking the desire for sophisticated, communal acts.

In addition to the cultural areas belonging to the so-called “elite culture” used by a section of the youth, there are “sub-cultural” fields, which are more unambiguously parts of the youth culture. These include the sites of social interaction (pubs, cafés) as well as the sites of “light” or sophisticated amusement (e.g. disco, jazz club). Persons in the 15-29 age group go to cafés every 80 days, to pubs every 70 days and to restaurants every 130 days on average.

Table No. 25. Cultural institutes visited once a month or more frequently, in a breakdown of age groups, 2000-2008

(in percentage of those visiting the institute concerned once a month or more frequently)

	15–19 years of age		20–24 years of age		25–29 years of age	
	2004	2008	2004	2008	2004	2008
Bookshop	28	17	34	21	33	18
Library	41	31	33	24	20	14
Movie, multiplex	40	25	38	22	28	18
Theatre	11	7	8	5	8	4
Video, DVD collection	28	12	28	12	22	11
Museum, exhibition	15	7	14	6	12	5

Table No. 26. Cultural institutes that are never visited, in the breakdown of age groups, 2004-2008

(in percentage of persons never visiting the institute concerned)

	15–19 years of age		20–24 years of age		25–29 years of age	
	2004	2008	2004	2008	2004	2008
Bookshop	34	38	33	36	36	38
Video, DVD collection	47	62	49	65	58	67
Library	28	30	42	43	53	43
Multiplex	21	27	23	29	33	43
Art movie	68	68	67	67	70	72
Museum, exhibition	35	41	42	47	49	53
Concert	76	77	76	80	81	81
Theatre	35	40	45	47	47	51
Opera	86	89	87	89	87	90

Spending leisure time

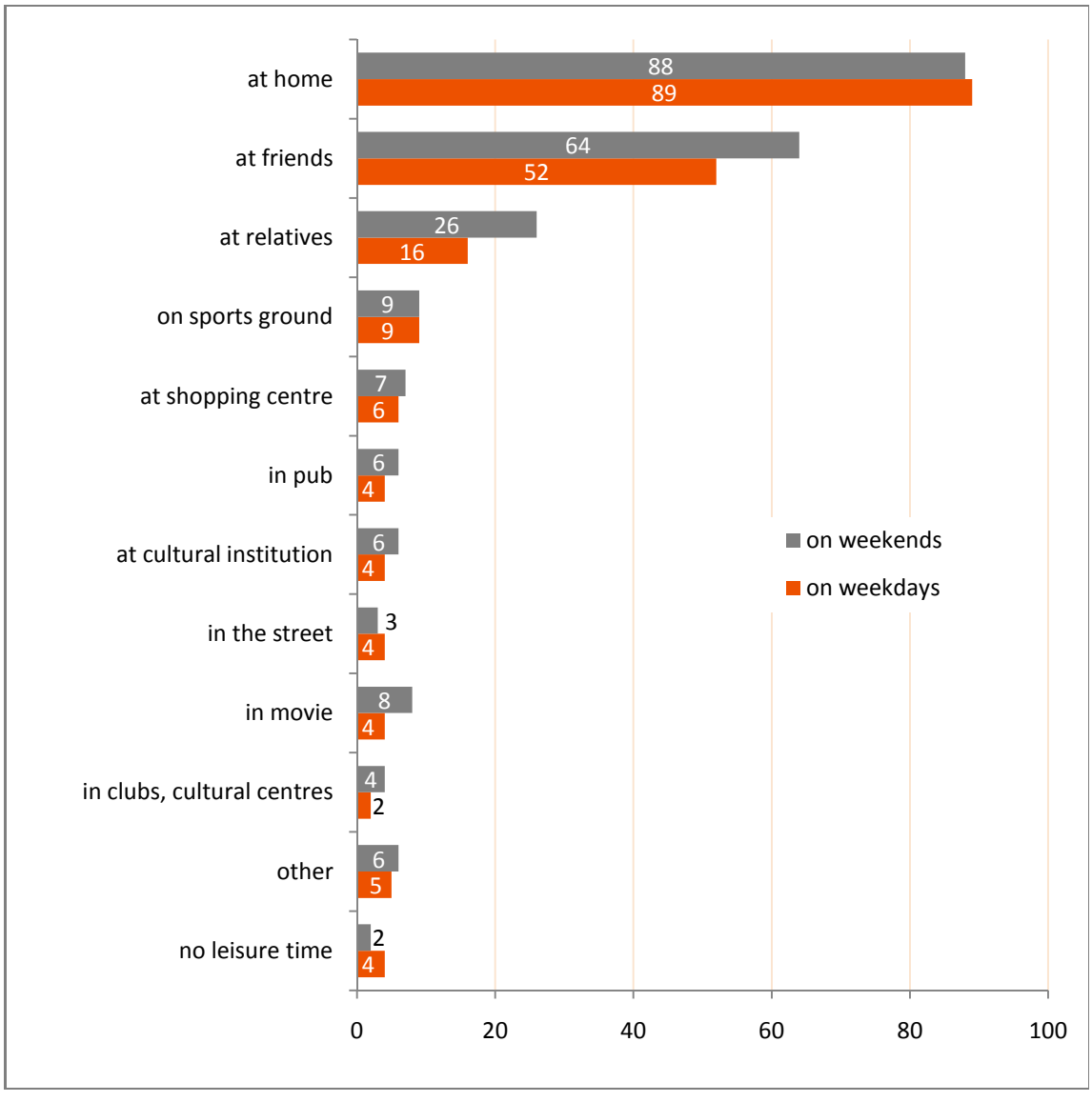
The data of “Youth2000” and “Youth2004” show that a considerable portion of the youth has less leisure time. Moreover, the term of “leisure time” is not clear, either. Our experience shows that individuals belonging to the 15-29 age group equate leisure time with “doing nothing”. Similar to former surveys, it can be stated that there are significant differences alongside the dimensions of economic activity and age groups when the amount of leisure time that can be used freely is taken into account. The older the respondent, the more probable it is that he/she is not a student anymore and the lower the amount of the leisure time he/she can spend freely.

The amount of leisure time on weekdays and on weekends basically differ. As compared to the average of one to two hours on weekdays, the time that can be freely spent is half a day or even one day. However, there are big differences in this field as well, depending on the age and the settlement type of the place of residence. Similar to weekdays, it can be stated that the younger the respondent, the more leisure time is available to him/her on weekends. Furthermore, it is true that in relation to age, financial and income position also influences the amount of leisure time on weekends.

The question arises as to where the youth spend their leisure time. This issue will be highlighted in the following section.

The great majority of the youth stay at home, in a youth hostel, rented flat (about 89%) or with their friends (52%) on weekdays. As compared to 2004, the rate of persons spending their leisure time at home has risen. Young persons who spend their leisure time at socially interactive sites (pubs, cafés) or cultural institutions are in a narrow minority. However, it is to be pointed out that nearly one-seventh of male respondents spend their leisure time at sports grounds. We supposed that in recent years, plazas (shopping centres with entertainment facilities) have become increasingly popular in terms of spending the leisure time, whereas passive (window-shopping) and active relaxing (movies, restaurants, cafés) have merged. However, that presumption has not been proven by research data. About 6% of the surveyed 15-29 age group spends its leisure time in a shopping centre on an average weekday. The rate is somewhat higher for women (8%) and – quite understandably – for persons living in Budapest or in county rank cities (8%).

Figure No. 55. Sites of spending leisure time on weekends and on weekdays
(in percentage)



However, no breakthrough can be identified for these groups, either.

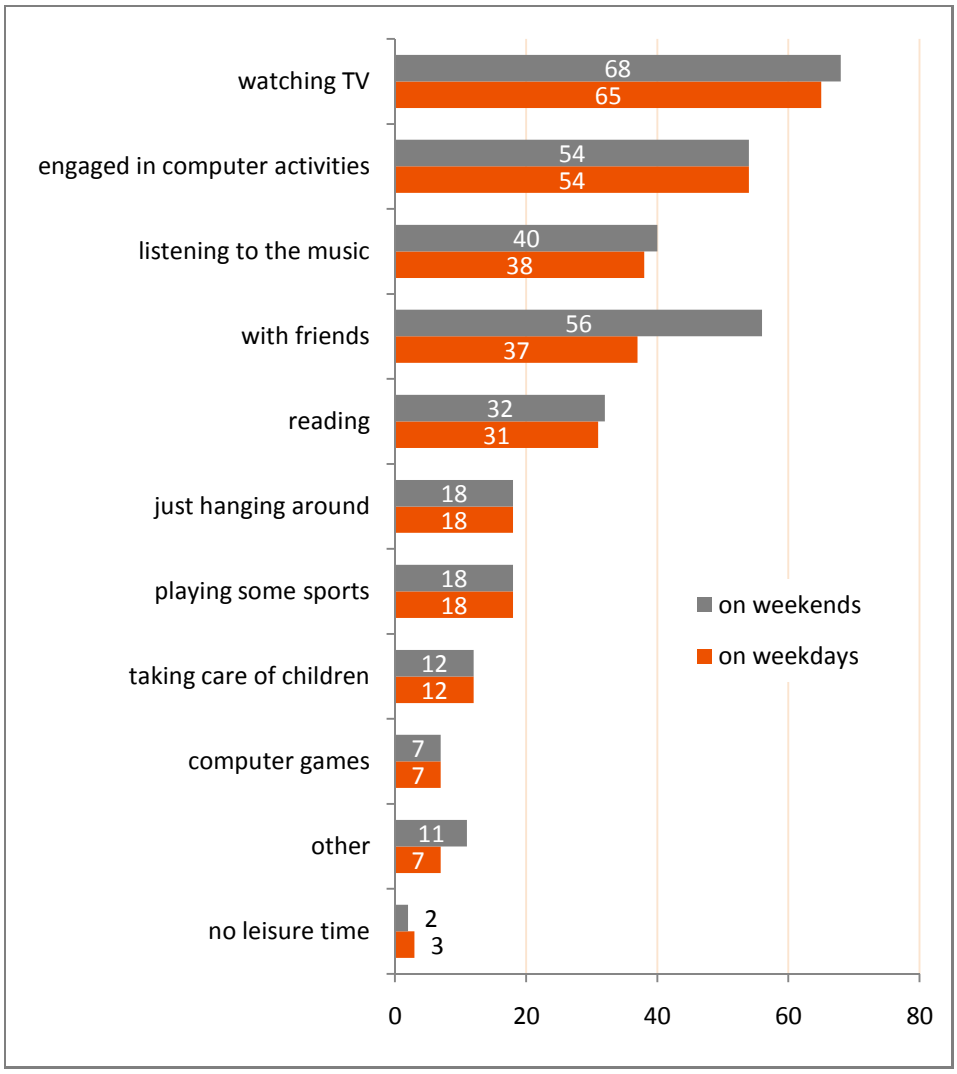
As to the sites where leisure time is spent, there is a much slighter difference than presumed formerly. Spending leisure time at home is still preferred – any significant change can be identified only for friends, since the rate of persons spending their leisure time with friends (as well) has risen from 52% to 64%. Among the different cultural fields, going to movies is the most popular (the rate connected with visiting the cinema on weekends has increased from 4% to 8%), but it can be stated in general that the "utilization" of each possible site has increased 1-2%.

The method of spending leisure time on weekdays depends on the age of the youth and the settlement type of their place of residence. Sixty percent of the persons belonging to the youngest age group spend their leisure time with friends on weekends, while this rate is 43% in the 25-29 age group. A similar linear relationship may be identified for the settlement type of the home. The smaller the locality where the respondent lives, the less probable it is that he/she spends his/her leisure time with friends on weekdays.

As to the mode of spending leisure time on weekends, 73% of the age 15-19 age group spend leisure time with friends, while this rate is 55% for the 25-29 age group. Seventy-four percent of the persons living in Budapest spend their leisure time with friends while 62% of people living in villages do so. It is true for all other sites that persons belonging to the younger age groups and the ones living in Budapest rather than older persons and people living in villages visit these sites more frequently At first glance, reasons seem to be obvious. Older persons are presumed to live in steady relationships and perhaps they have children as well, meaning that they tend to spend their little leisure time at home. However, the division among settlement types cannot be explained so simply. Though we know that the supply of cultural facilities is worse in the countryside, this is not necessarily an obstacle to youth meeting friends.

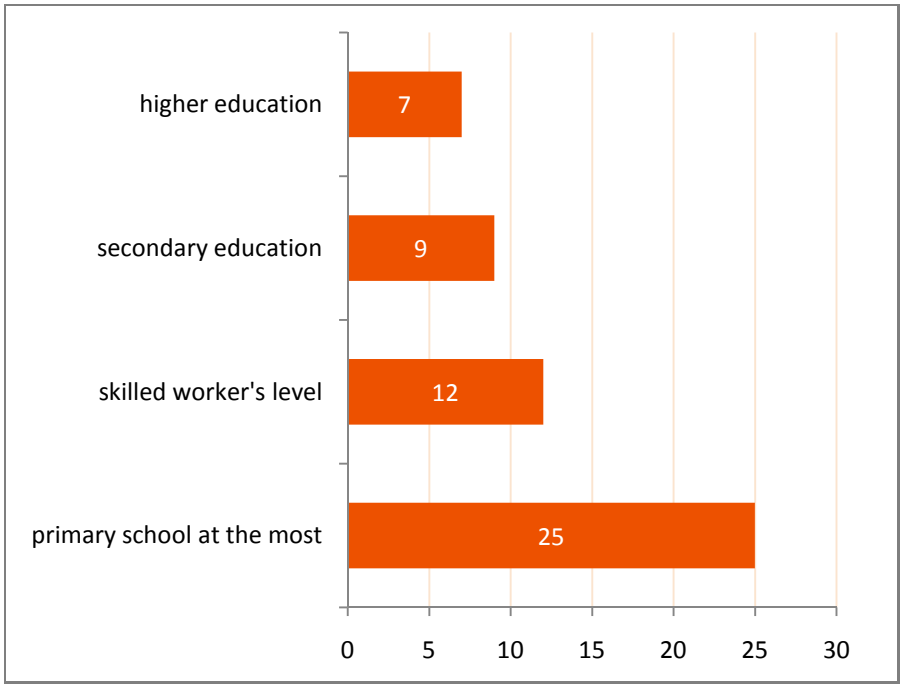
Having friends is a basic and determinate factor. Data of "Youth2008" show that the younger the age group the respondent belongs to, the more time he/she spends with friends and the more friends he/she has. Weekend activities are especially characterized by togetherness with friends. However, it should be stressed that all the activities not requiring friends (watching the TV, listening to music, reading), are equally important. Furthermore, data show that spending the leisure time frequently causes difficulties, as suggested by the 18% rate of the reply "nothing special, just hanging around". This is a feature that characterizes men rather than women and persons living in villages.

Figure No. 56. Leisure time activities on weekends and on weekdays
(in percentage of persons performing the activities)



As answered by the youth, 87% have their own circle of friends, companions with whom they frequently spend their leisure time. It is to be pointed out that similar to the experience in 2004, some “closing” can be identified for villages since the number of persons without friends in the 12-29 age group is relatively the highest in these settlements. Perhaps, the lack of friendships is a reason for spending leisure time mainly at home. Based on the previous data, it is not surprising that the highest number of persons with friends belong to the youngest age group (92%) while the lowest one can be identified for the 15-29 age group (81%). More surprisingly, the educational level also exerts an influence on having or not having friends. The higher the educational level the parent has, the more probable it is that his/her child has friends, and vice versa; the lower the educational level of the mother or the father, the more probable it is that the child has only some friends.

Figure No. 57. Rate of persons without friends in the breakdown of the educational level of the mother
(in percentage)



Some dimensions of spending leisure time have been examined under a focus group survey as well.

Owing to their specific lifestyle, young people try to meet the expectations implied by a double role. The related conflict is characterized by the collision of different strategies regarding the present and the future, which can often be difficult to meld together.

> *I have to make a choice quite frequently and this effects everything – to go to a party or to learn, meaning that I have to make a decision on choosing from among the possibilities.*

- On the one hand, a wide scale of present activities can be identified. These two scales are characterized by the "push" and "pull" effects.
  - "push" effects are the activities which afflict the individual as a result of some outside pressure
  - "pull" effects have a pulling force, meaning individuals generally feel good when performing such activities
- On the other hand, the future orientation motivates the youth, which manifest itself mainly in learning and training.

Push effects are generally accompanied by negative connotations. Young people consider school as a constraint and deem the procedure of job seeking negatively if they are unemployed or working exaggerated hours.

Pupils in the secondary school tend to consider the school as a constraint, excluding the cases when it is not only about learning.

Well, being with companions, doing silly things all day and the like. It is good when learning is not the reason.

For young people with families, their lives are characterized by exaggerated working hours and little leisure time, which makes it difficult to find the balance between children, family and work.

I have little time for the child, so my parents provide some help. My child is not taken to the kindergarten, but the grandparents take care of him. My spouse works in two shifts, and it is quite difficult to take care of the child when you must be at the workplace by 7.

The engagements of young working people working have implications that exert an unfavourable influence on their relationships, marriages and friendships.

I spend little time together with my husband, and it is not rich in content. I work for two workplaces to earn the money for starting our life. Our relationships with friends have been getting ruined for some time.

The pull effects concerning the present are characterized by spending leisure time. Respondents frequently mentioned friends, parties, soccer and bicycling. These acts motivated by pull effects are full of positive feelings. Primarily togetherness with persons of the same age is definite.

Well, I mentioned soccer, parties and cycling. Soccer and cycling as hobbies and parties on the weekends.

It is a fortunate mix of the push and pull effects when a job and the hobby is the same.

I may say that I am fortunate because my goal was to be a regional vet and to work in a clinic for pets for 8 or even 12 hours a day and not in a scheme of a secondary job. Well, my situation is fortunate as I am absolutely ready to devote my leisure time to that. Before having a family, my job was my hobby, as I loved and do love to do that.

Future orientation is characterized by going to school and gaining wealth. As for students, finishing their studies and preparing for some vocations are the activities that exert an influence on the future. Exercising, preparing for the university, retraining and studying for the diploma are the activities for apprentices, secondary school students, the unemployed and for university students, respectively, which means a current investment in the future.

THE YOUTH'S PUBLIC MOOD IN SOCIETY, THEIR ATTITUDE TO POLITICAL ISSUES

Public mood

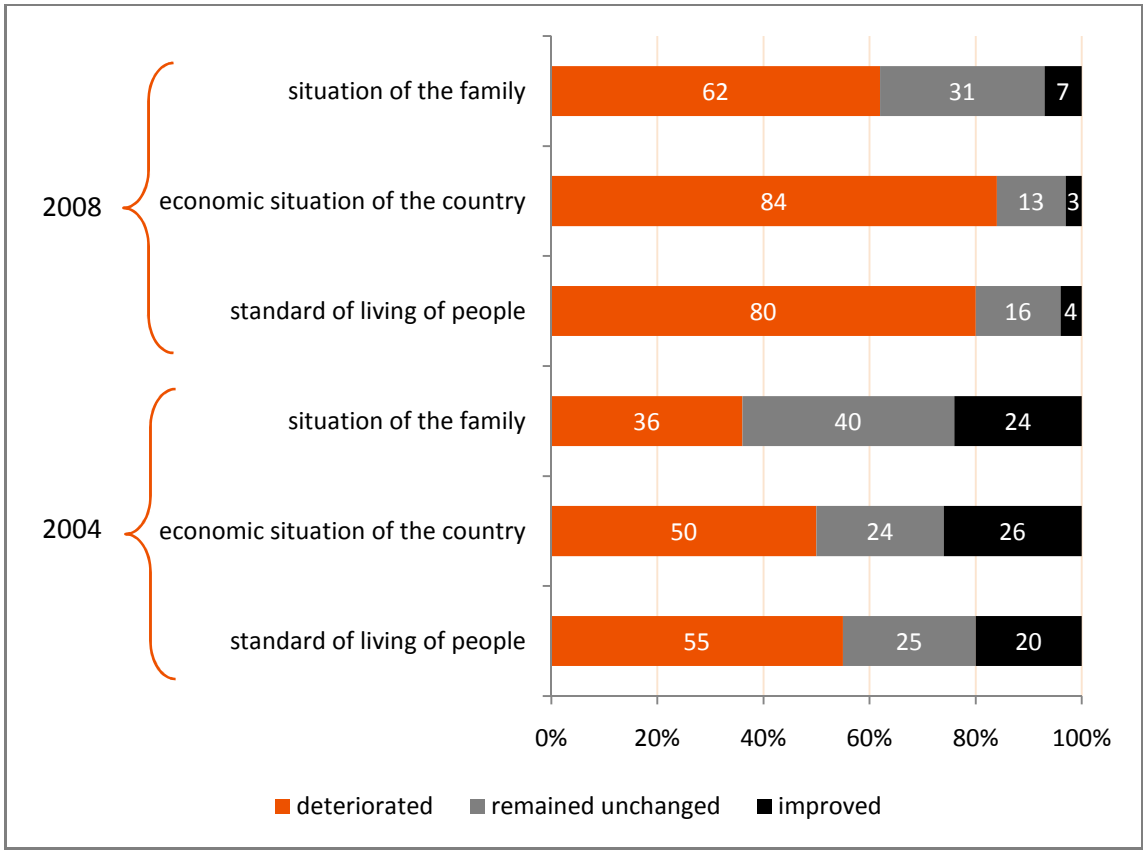
The survey approached the developments in public mood in a traditional way, through assessing how the economic situation affects the quality of life, the life of people in general as well as personal situations in life, presenting a multifactor dimension. As compared to 2000 and 2004, it is a change that the retrospective review does not go back to the regime change but looks back only 10 years. The regime change is assessed in a separate dimension. Therefore, the comparison of the data may be merely partial, but the changes are so significant that they cannot be explained only by the transformation of the time factor.

At the beginning of this chapter, it should be mentioned that deterioration can be identified nearly in all the dimensions as compared to 2000 and 2004. The review of the past 10 years is dominated mainly by negative replies. Unlike the case of the "Youth2000" and "Youth2004" surveys, the 15-29 age group considers the developments in the economic situation rather than in the standard of living the most unfavourable. Eighty-four percent of the respondents giving valid replies think that the economic situation has deteriorated in the past 10 years, 13% think that it has not changed and only their 3% are of the opinion that the economic situation has improved. Both the direction and extent of the changes are dramatic as compared to 2004. Data does not show a simple deterioration but an economic collapse.

The assessment of the standard of living of people is similarly negative, though to a lesser extent. Eighty percent of the respondents in the 15-29 age group think that in the past 10 years the standard of living has deteriorated, while only 4% think that it has improved. The direction of the changes is clear in this field as well. As compared to the former two surveys, the rate of persons considering the changes as positive has relevantly reduced in terms of statistics, while that of people viewing them negatively has simultaneously risen. The rate of those assessing their situation as unchanged is 16%.

The assessment of the "personal situation" is much better. In both previous years of the surveys, this dimension showed the most positive results. The aggregate situation is the same for 2008, though the results show significant differences. In 2004, 40% of the respondents said that their families' situation had not changed. This indicator is 32% for 2008. The real change can be identified in the fact that while four years ago, one quarter of the youth confirmed definite improvement, now their share is only 7%, while the rate of those considering the change in their situation as negative has risen from one-third to 62%. However, the data that were collected in 2004 was in a period when the two, 100-day programs of the Medgyessy cabinet had already been completed, an outflow of income unprecedented since the regime change took place in the public sphere. Therefore, the change can be explained as compared to 2004, but it is much more interesting that the negative movement is clear even in comparison with the 2000 data. It must be stated that the effects of the financial crises emerging in October 2008, followed by an economic one, began manifesting themselves among people and the thinking of the youth.

Figure No. 58. "All in all, how do you think the … has developed since the regime change/in the past 10 years?" – assessing the economic situation, 2004-2008
(in percentage)

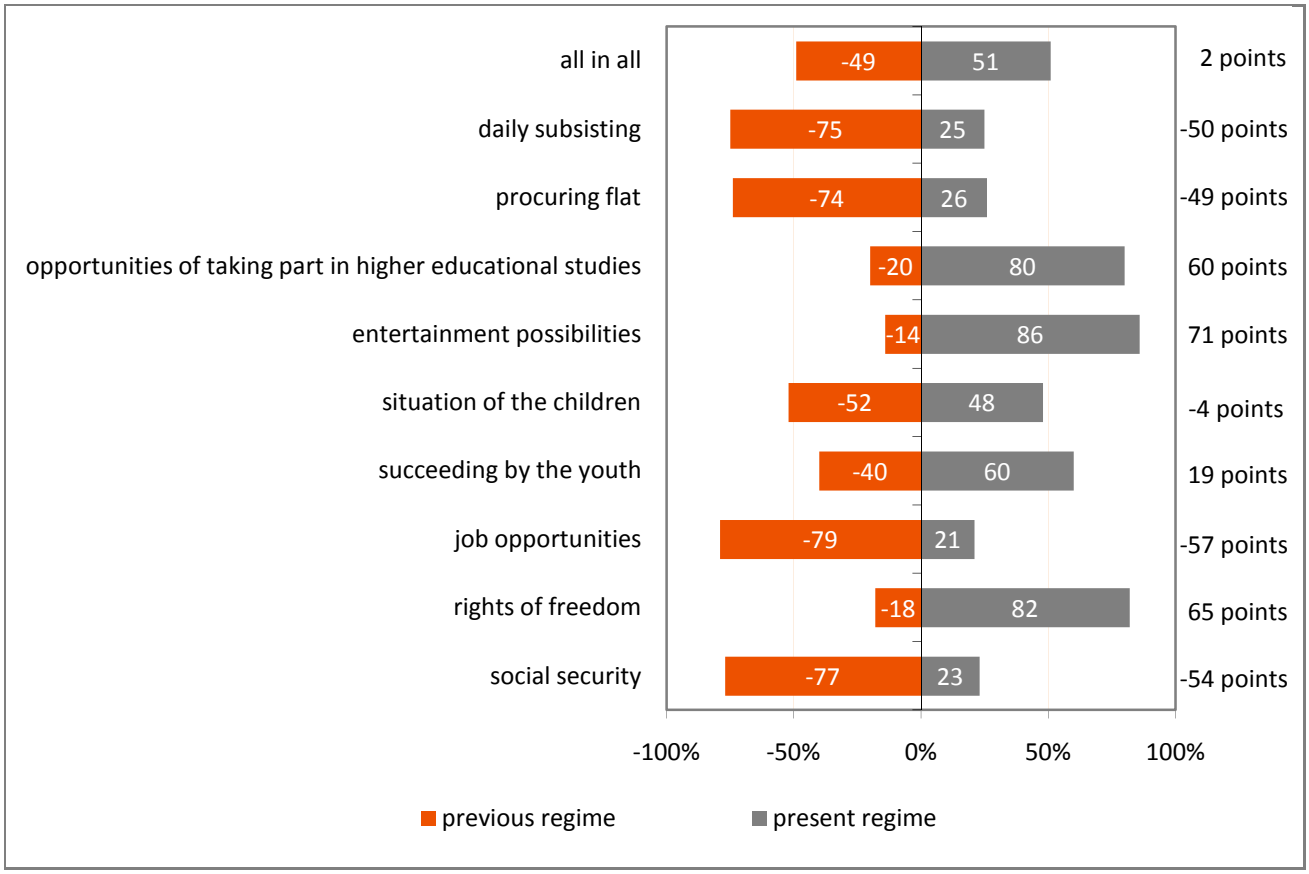


In general, it can be stated that the highly educated children of parents with a high educational level assess the past 10 years relatively more positively. For example, for the children of fathers with a high educational level, the rate of those assessing their own situation as stagnating or as deteriorating is practically the same. Furthermore, it can be clearly stated that the public mood of young people is also influenced by their political affiliation. In 2008, the voters for the right-wing opposition were thinking much more negatively than the voters for MSZP (Hungarian Socialist Party).

As mentioned above, the assessment of the regime change, or more precisely the assessment of the present political regime and that of the Kádár era, were surveyed through other questions as well. The youth were asked to state which regime/era was considered more positive on the basis of 10 aspects. When the questions were responded to, it was clear that the great majority of the 15-29 age group surveyed had hardly any memories of the Kádár era. Therefore, as to the two regimes, related replies reflect not only the opinion of the youth, but also that of the entire society and the generation of the parents as a result of socialization.

Before describing the actual data, it is to be emphasized that the rate of uncertain people is relatively high (15-20%) for the 10 questions. The members of this group consist of mainly the youngest persons and the children of parents with the lowest educational level, i.e. the persons who have less knowledge in terms of public life and politics. Figure No. 59 does not contain the opinion of uncertain persons, because in such a way, the versatility and the apparent conflict in the thinking of the persons in the 15-29 age group may be identified more fully.

Figure No. 59. Comparison of the present and the former (Kádár) regime according to different aspects. "Which regime do you think was better based on the following aspects?"
(in percentage of respondents and averages in the ±100 degree scale)

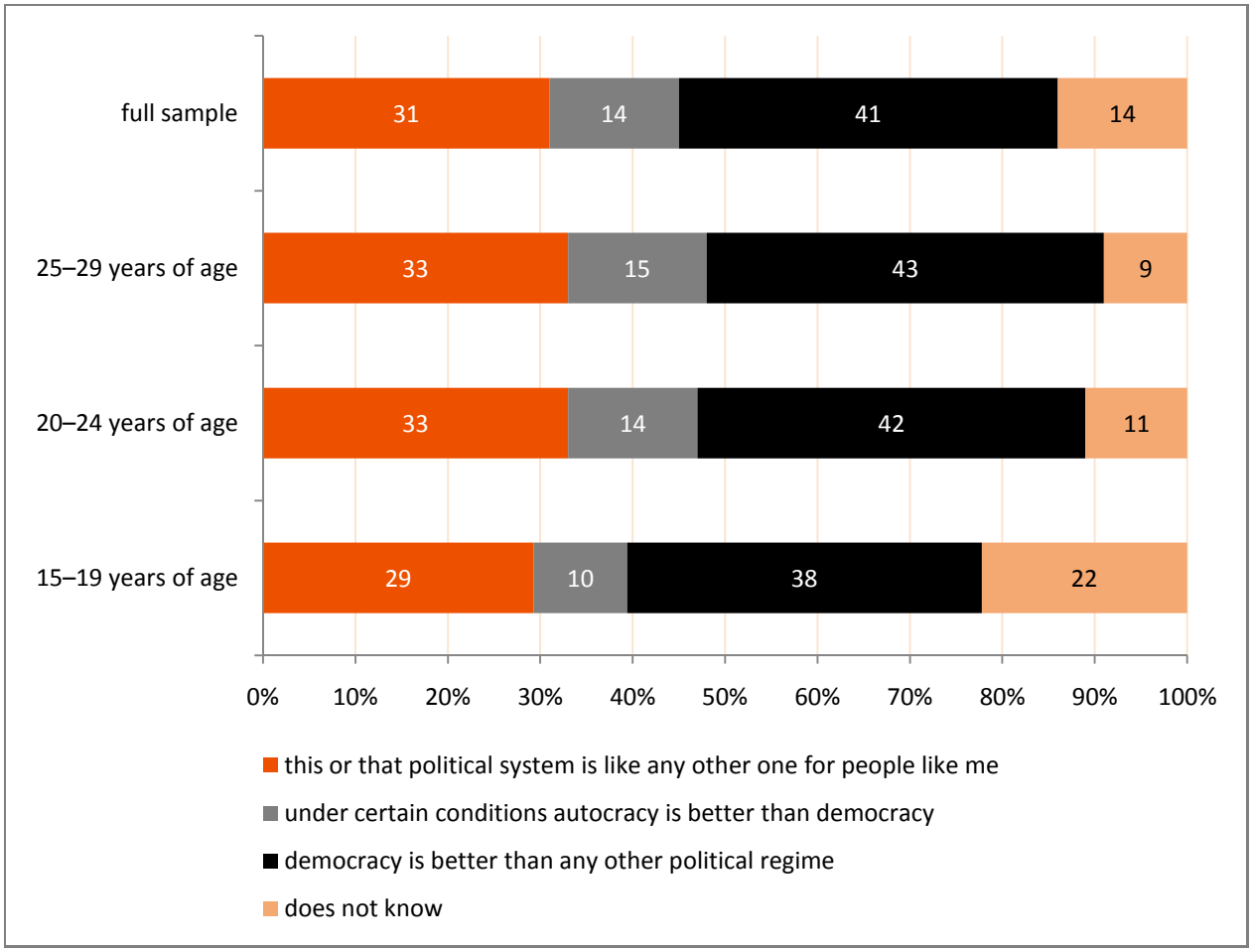


Remark: the figure contains the percentage indicators of the previous regime marked with "-". The reasons are related exclusively to depiction technique and have nothing to do with preferences.

The data leads to a very mixed picture which is worth studying further through multidimensional statistical methods as well. To sum it up, it can be stated that (only) 51% of the young Hungarian respondents think that the present regime is better than the previous one. The preference for the Kádár regime is obvious regarding the questions related to subsisting and security (e.g. social security, work opportunities). However, as far as the questions regarding the situation of life of the youth are concerned (e.g. entertainment, opportunities for pursuing studies in higher education), the members of the 15-19 age group have greater sympathy for the present regime. At first glance it seems that the features related to multiple compromises and relative security still have a role in the collective memories of the society.

Owing to the topic, it is important to show another exciting question, which implies perhaps the most surprising information. Political socialization surveys traditionally analyze the society's attitude to democracy and autocracy. In the course of the youth surveys based on large samples, this was the first time that questions were put to that end. Based on the ambivalent opinions on the Kádár era, it is not so unexpected that 14% of the persons in the 15-29 age group are of the opinion that under certain circumstances, autocracy is better than democracy and nearly one-third are indifferent about whether they live under an autocratic or democratic society. Furthermore, it is surprising that 14% cannot decide which statement is more appropriate.

Figure No. 60. Assessment of the democratic and autocratic political systems according to age groups – "Which of the following statements is the closest to your opinion?"
(in percentage)



System-sceptic replies can primarily be identified from the children of parents with lower educational levels, for persons living in villages and for people with skilled worker's certificates only. The replies of the children from parents with higher educational levels, those of graduates and persons living in the capital, are more extreme. They are in the majority in both the persons preferring autocracy under certain circumstances and for people considering democracy to be the best political system. As compared to the previous question it can be stated that 55% of the persons considering the present regime as better think that democracy is better than any other political system. However, persons preferring the previous regime are more divided in terms of their replies. The relative majority (44%) think that "this or that political system is like any other one for people like me" while 28% prefer democracy. It is to be pointed out once again that both issues are worth studying more thoroughly and in detail – only the most important thoughts are described hereunder.

The next significant dimension of social mood is the assessment of the present situation which was analyzed with consideration to several factors at a time. The situation of the youth, described by 10 factors had to be assessed on a five-grade scale similar to the school marks. None of average responses to the factors was below 2.5, i.e. the average of the scale. Based on this, it seems that persons belonging to the 15-29 age group consider the main fields of life as positive. The satisfaction is especially high for their relationship with their partner and with their friends, the two factors most influencing the life of the youth.

Only the opportunities of working reached a value lower than the average of 3 (2.9) and 40% are somewhat dissatisfied, one-third are somewhat satisfied and 28% are uncertain in relation to said opportunities.

As compared to 2004, two new factors were examined – level of knowledge reached so far and financial position. The latter one was also tested with the help of other questions in 2004. There is not any extraordinary difference in either of the cases as compared to other dimensions. Young people consider their current knowledge attainment as good enough and their financial position as less favourable.

If the changes since 2004 are examined as a whole, interesting statement can be made. As to the factors especially exerting influence over the life of youth (friendships, relationships with partners and the opportunities of learning), there are no actual changes in terms of the scale averages. However, the indicators that best indicate public mood and expectations toward standard of living and the future have deteriorated. Therefore, it is not surprising that there is some movement for the general satisfaction factor. The rate of persons unambiguously satisfied has decreased 6 percentage points, while that of persons somewhat dissatisfied has increased 8 percentage points. If, however, the 2000 data are also taken into account, it can be stated that the data are more favourable as compared to the situation eight years ago, meaning that the rate of persons who are somewhat satisfied or fully satisfied with their lives increased in that period of eight years.

Figure No. 61. Satisfaction with the different dimensions of life, 2004-2008
(average values of valid replies in a five-degree scale)

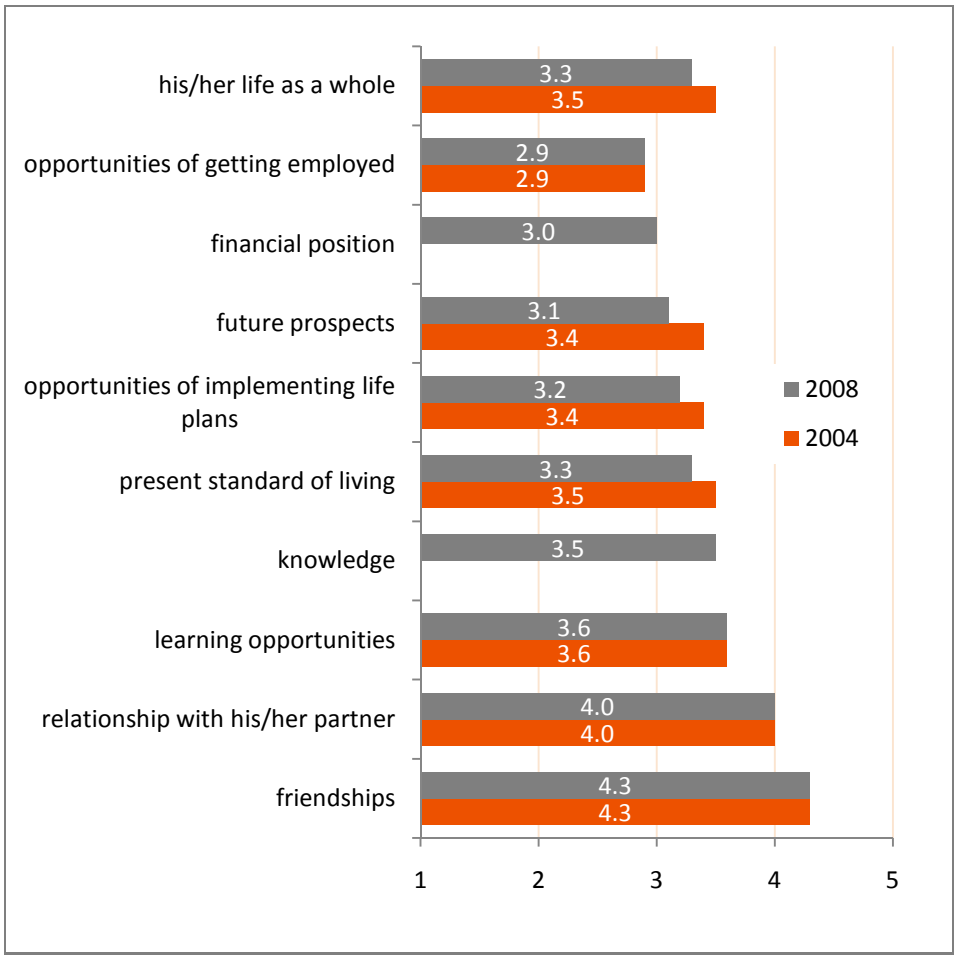
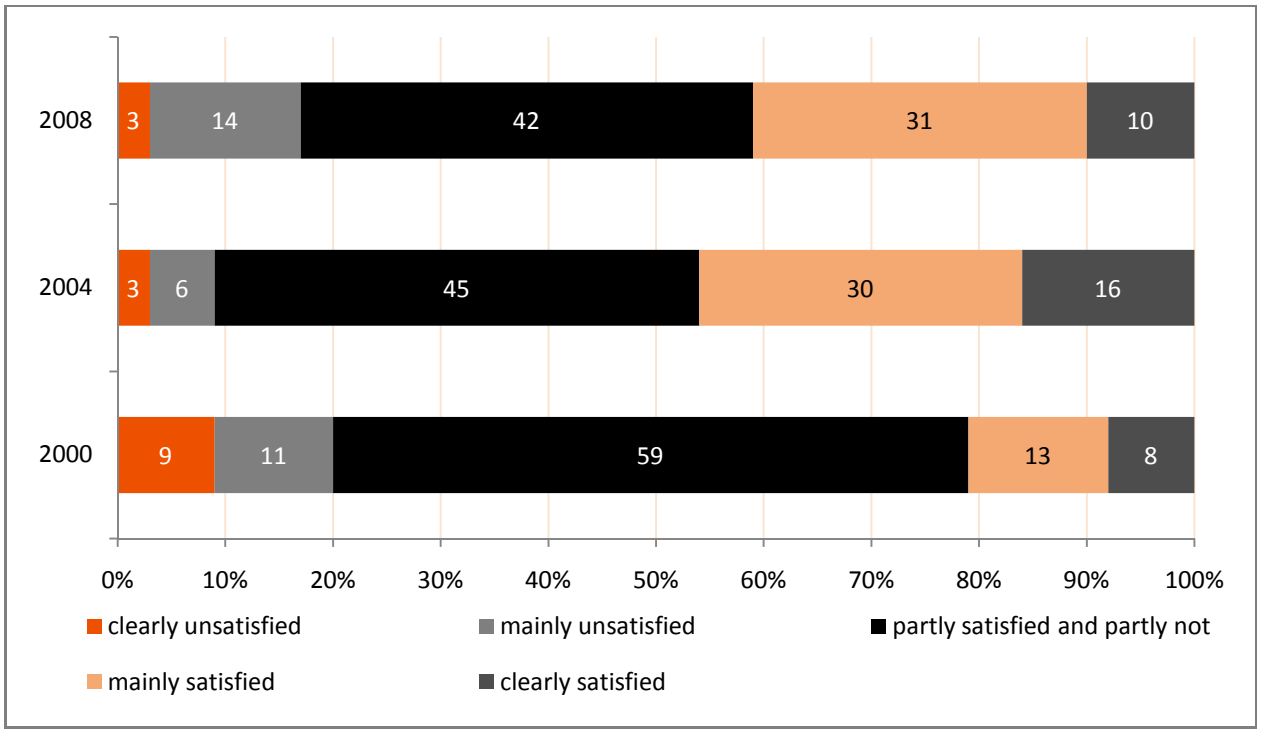


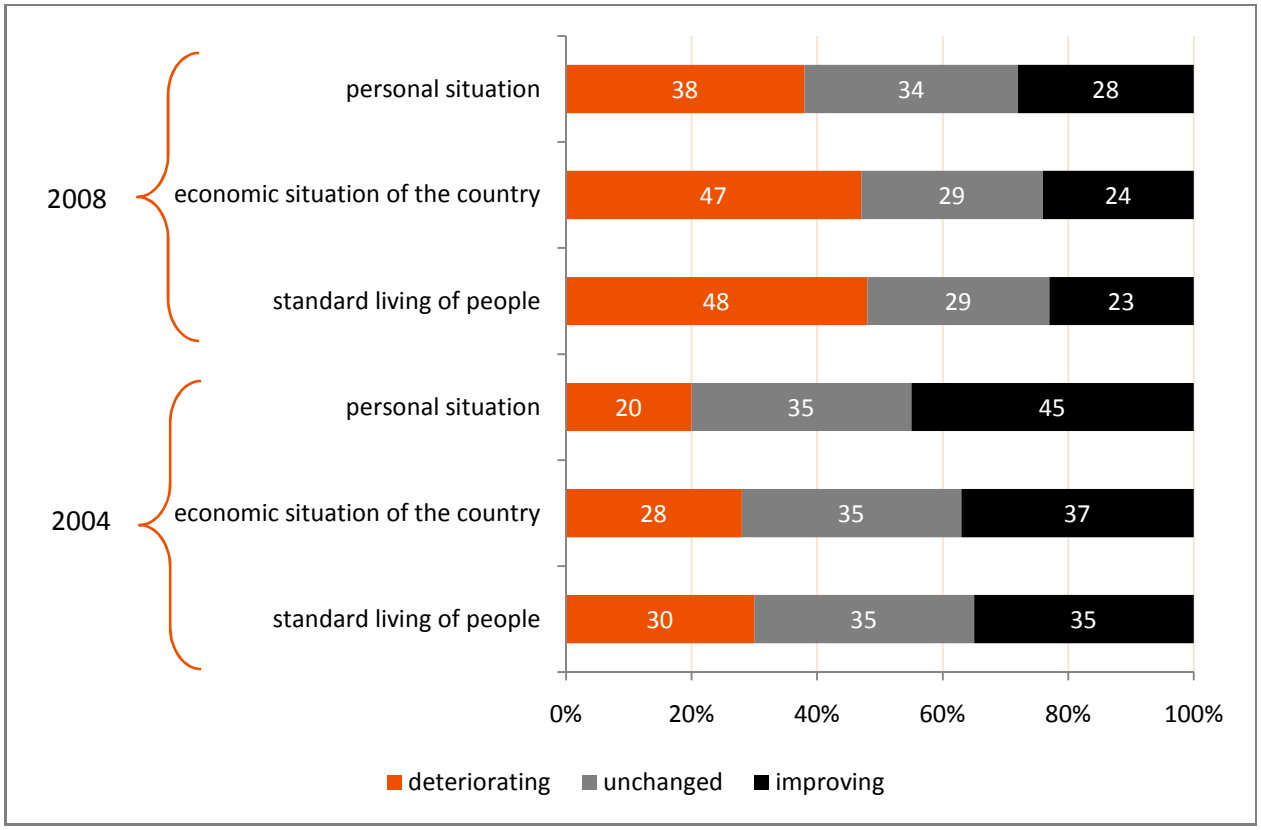
Figure No. 62. "All in all, how much are you satisfied with your present life?", 2000-2008
(in percentage)



The expectations regarding the future, the third factor determining the social mood, were dominated by an essentially optimistic attitude in the responses from the previous two, large-scale youth surveys. For example, in 2004, persons expecting improvement or satisfied people were in majority for all the questions related to the future. However, the above analysis already indicated that there has been a slight deterioration in respect to the youth's satisfaction indicator connected with the future. In addition to subjective satisfaction, the decline can be identified by the indicators of social mood as well.

Nearly half of the respondents (47-48%) expect unfavourable changes in the economy and in the standard of living of the people. Thirty-nine percent expect it in their personal life. In all of the three cases, the rate of ambivalent persons is around 30%, while the share of ones forecasting deterioration is about 25%. This data shows a significant negative change as compared to both 2004 and 2000. Therefore, young people are much more pessimistic towards the entire society than to their personal everyday life. Similar to the retrospective assessment of the past 10 years, the future orientation is also more positively assessed by persons living in the capital and the graduated children of parents with a higher educational level.

Figure No. 63. "When thinking of the future, how do you think the …. will probably change?" - economic expectation, 2004-2008
(in percentage)

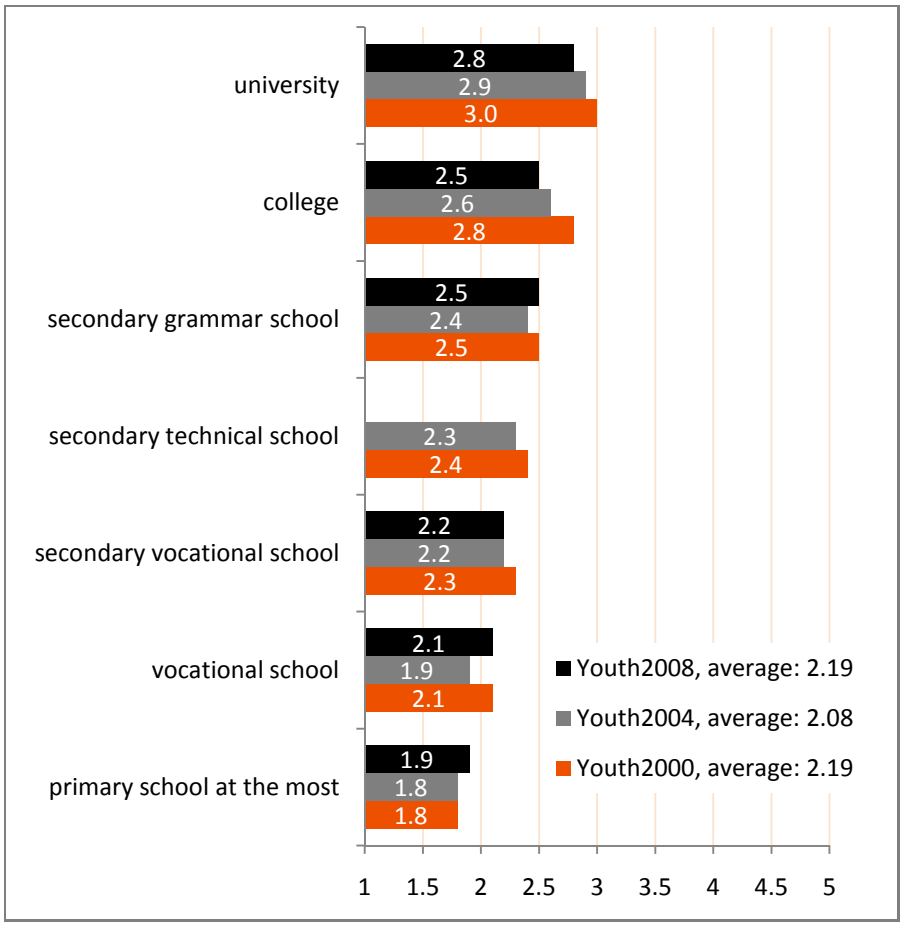


Political interests and opinions

The past two youth surveys pointed out that the political interests and activity of the persons belonging to the young age groups are rather insignificant. Furthermore, it was proven that contrary to all appearances, the public activity of the youth groups had not changed considerably in the period of the election campaigns. However, since the latest elections in 2006, there have been political events in Hungary, which may direct the 15-29 age group towards public affairs.

However, the level of the interest in politics continues being very low within the age group. Sixty percent of the respondents are not interested in politics or are not interested in it at all. The interest is moderately intensive for 30%, and it cannot be identified for 9%. The data do not show any increase as compared to either 2000 or 2004; the average of the five-degree scale was 2.19 both in 2000 and 2008, while in 2004, it did not reach even 2.08. It can be stated that in the past eight years, the political affinity of the Hungarian youth has been more or less the same.

Figure No. 64. Interest in politics among the youth with different educational levels, 2000-2008
(averages of the scale values from 1 to 5)



However, it is still true that the educational level exerts an essential influence on the youth's attitude to politics. The relationship is nearly linear. The lower the educational level the respondent has, the less he/she is interested in politics, and the higher the educational level he/she has, the more probable it is that his/her interest is around or higher than the scale average.

The slight affinity to politics may be interrelated to the fact that the great majority of the age group surveyed (about three quarters) think that the politicians are not actually interested in the opinions of the youth. They believe that national politicians are even less interested in their opinions than local ones. This may lead to the fact that persons in the 15-29 age group think that they basically do not have any say in public affairs, with special regard to national ones. Contrary to our hypothesis, the youth's residential settlement type is not irrespective of the youth's opinion on their opportunity of having a say in public affairs. It can be stated, however, that the higher the educational level the respondents have – and the more they are interested in politics – the more likely it is that they think they have a say in national and local public affairs. At the same time, only 27% and 21% of the graduates consider the possible results of the political activity as positive. As to the 15-29 age group, 52% want to have information on local public affairs. Within those wishing to have information, the rate of persons with an opinion about influencing politics is twice as high.

Figure No. 65. How much of a say do youth have in local and national public affairs?
(in percentage)

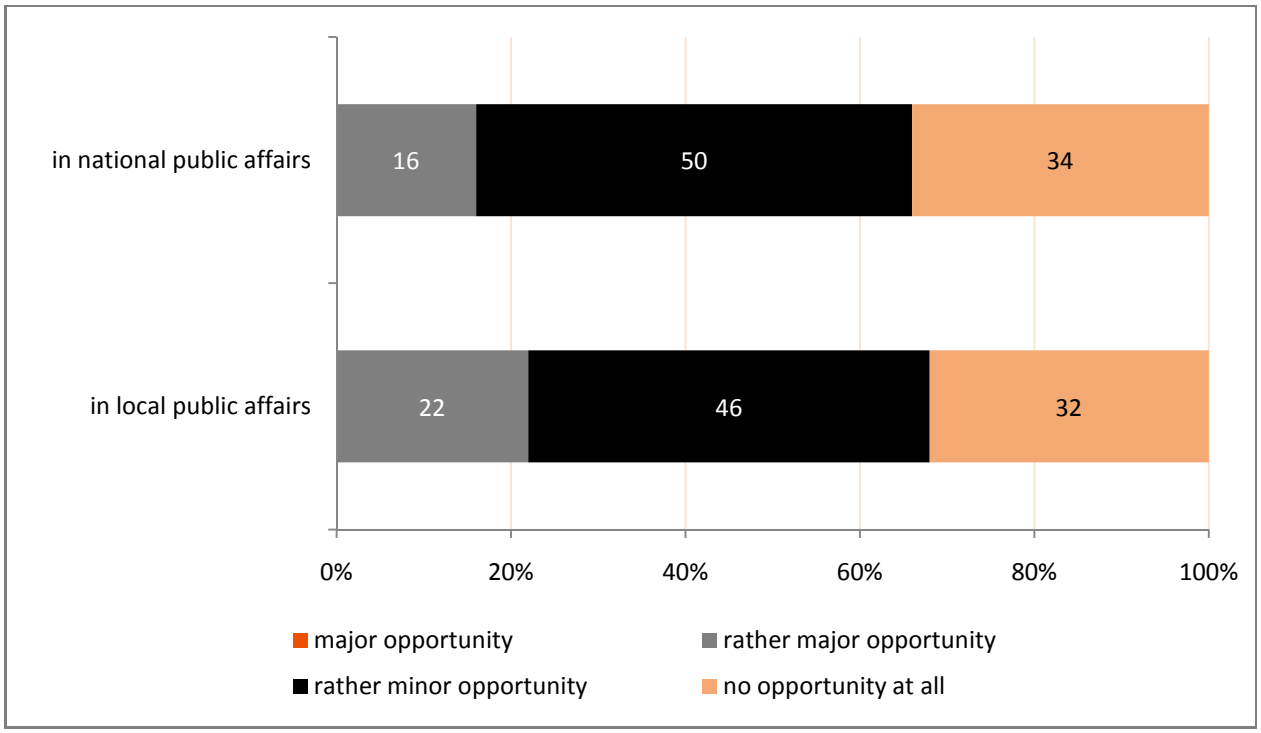
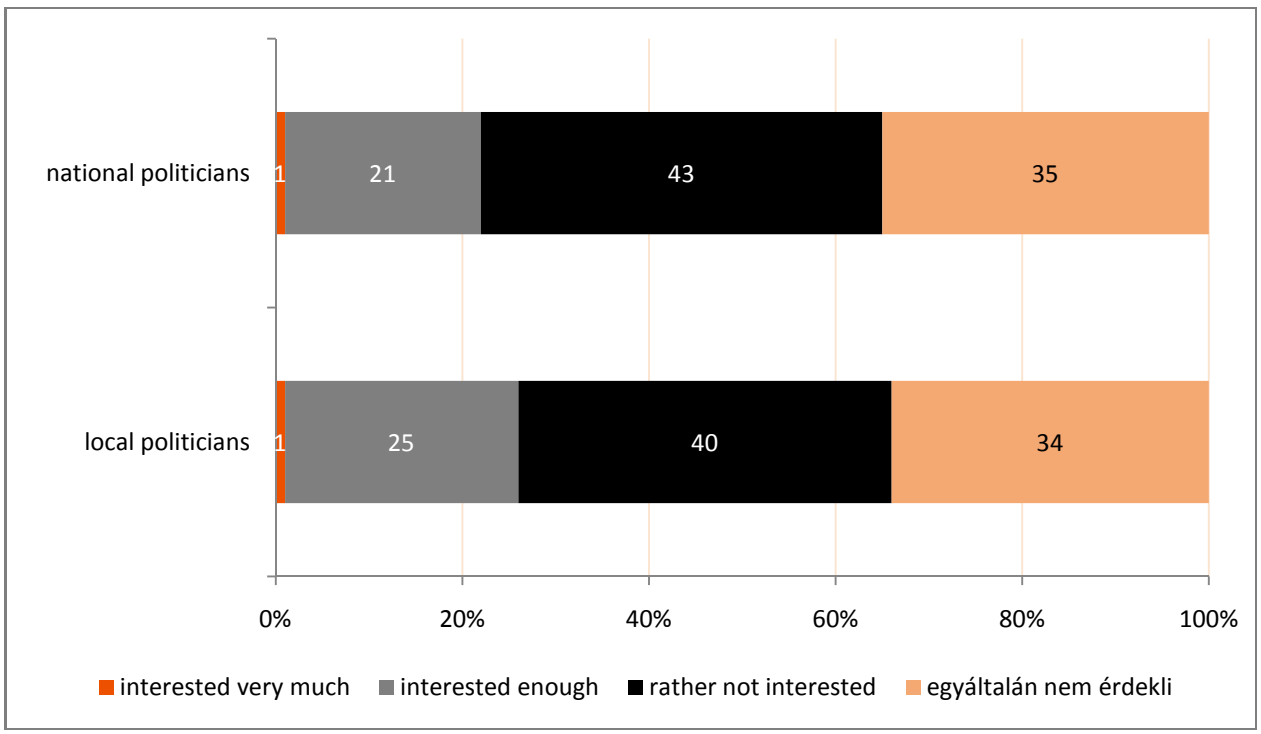


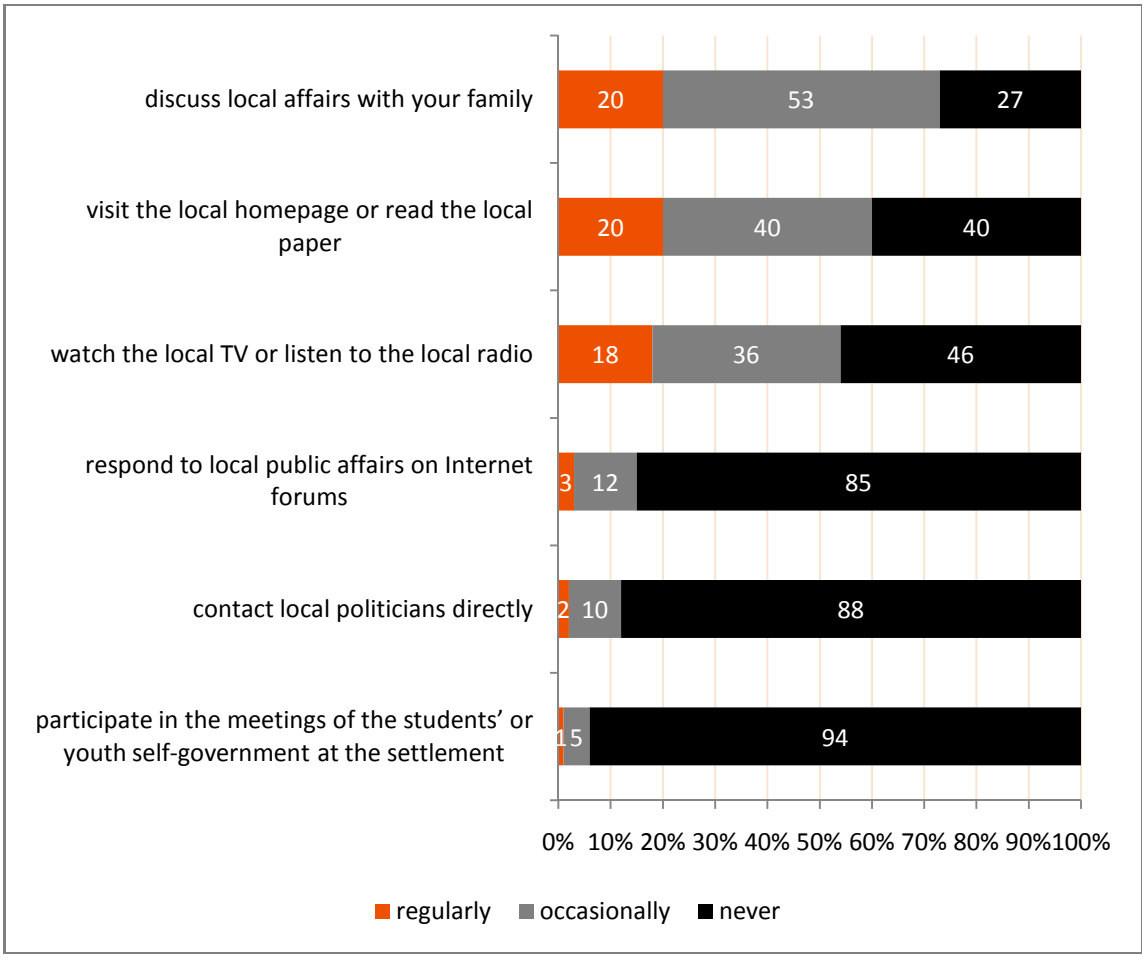
Figure No. 66. How much are national and local politicians interested in the opinions of the youth?
(in percentage)



Nearly three quarters of the persons belonging to the 15-29 age group discuss local affairs with their families regularly or occasionally. Sixty percent reads the local paper at least occasionally or visits the local homepage. About a half of them watch and listen to the local television programs and radio channels,

respectively, at least occasionally. However, only 15% of the youth use Internet forums to express their opinion on local public affairs at least occasionally and 12% contact local politicians directly at least occasionally. It is important and an indicator of the public life of the youth that 6% participate in the work of the local students' self-government or local self-government at least occasionally. In general, it can be stated that the smaller the local community and the higher the educational level of the respondent, the more probable it is that they want to have information on public affairs and to take part in its developments. An exception is the students' self-government and the self-government of the youth within a community, in relation to which, persons with higher educational levels are as passive as the ones with lower educational levels.

Figure No. 67. Local public life activities – "How frequently do you ...?"
(in percentage)

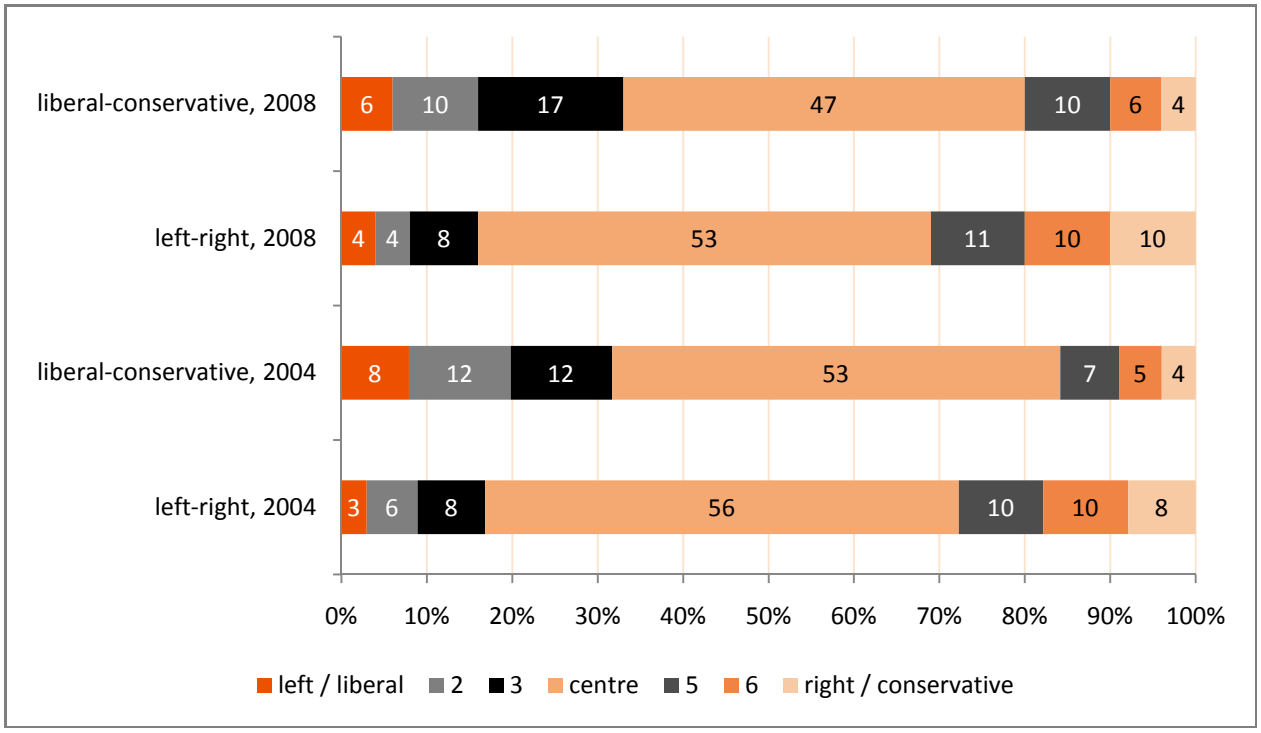


There is a great correlation between the general political interest and the wish to have ideological information and the ideological self-ranking. Persons more interested in politics can be found at the two ends of the ideological palette, while apolitical young persons position themselves generally in the middle. The ideological field is traditionally divided into left and right as well as liberal and conservative parts. However, when the 2008 data were collected, this field was extended and the moderate-radical as well as the traditional-modern dimensions were also examined. In the detailed analysis of "Youth2008", these topics will obviously be analyzed in detail. However, the Flash Report points out only the dimensions analyzed in recent years as well.

Seventy-seven percent of the participants of the survey of the 15-29 age group ranked themselves, of which 53% ranked themselves in the fourth degree on the scale from one to seven, which can be considered as neutral. The aggregate rate of those in the left wing and in the centre left is 8%, while that of the centre right and the right wing is 21%. These data essentially comply with the measurement four years ago. The significantly higher aggregate rate of the centre right and right wing among the youth, a feature specific to the generation concerned, could be identified at that time and can be identified nowadays as well.

As to the liberal-conservative political value orientation, more respondents are on the liberal side. About the same number of the participants ranked themselves. About 47% of the respondents positioned themselves in the middle. Seventeen percent of the 15-29 age group consider themselves somewhat liberal while 10% say that they are somewhat conservative.

Figure No. 68. Left-right and liberal-conservative orientations, 2004-2008
(in percentage of valid replies in a seven-degree scale)



In addition to the low intensity of the political interests of the youth in the 15-29 age group, distrust in the political and certain civil institutions can also be identified. In 2004, it was proven that the Parliament, the basic pillar of the representative system and the political parties, had a low confidence index. In 2008, the field was amended and expanded, and it was accepted that there was a democratic difference as far as the actors controlling the political institutional system were concerned. Furthermore, institutions such as banks, insurance companies or the president of the republic (which/who had frequently been attacked) were also involved in the survey.

The data show that in an originally four-degree scale retransformed up to -/+ 100, four institutions can be found in the negative and six ones in the positive domain. The opinion on the government deteriorated the most, but neither the index of churches nor that of the Parliament improved. The financial crisis that emerged in October 2008 seems to have considerably afflicted the bank sector, the certain manifestations

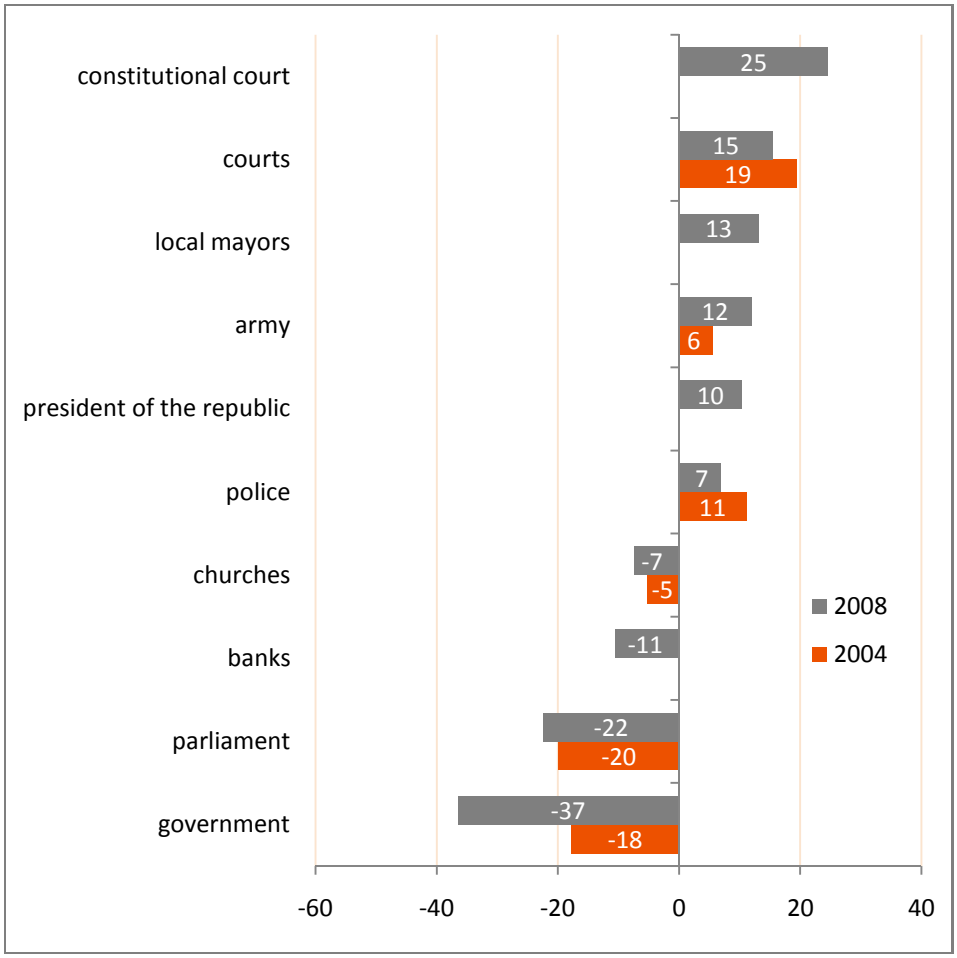
of which can be identified in our survey as well. Both banks and the insurance companies are in the negative domain with an average of minus 10.5 points.

As compared to 2004, the confidence index of the army was the only institution to increase among the ones surveyed, and it showed a significant rise from 5.6 points to 11.9 points. We think that in this case, we may be experiencing the emerging of a new type of "national pride". We are proud of our soldiers who excellently perform their duties within the framework of foreign missions and are acknowledged internationally. They are able to provide assistance to the country's population at the time of floods and natural disasters. The police and the courts were in the positive domain four years ago, but the opinion on them shows a negative change. From among the actors examined for the first time, the opinion of the Constitutional Court is the most positive (average of 24.6 points), and it is interesting that although mayors are the actors in the political institutional system, the opinion formed on them is still relatively favourable with 13.1 points. Finally, the trust index of the president of the republic slightly lags behind that of the local mayors and the army (average of 10.4 points).

The opinion of mayors and banks/insurance companies formed by persons who consider autarchy as better than democracy under certain circumstances differs considerably from the average. As to mayors, the indicator moves to the negative part, while banks and insurance companies are assessed the most negatively from among the groups surveyed.

Figure No. 69. Trust in the institutions of the republic and other institutions, 2004-2008 – "How much do you trust …?"

(average of the ±100 degree scale)

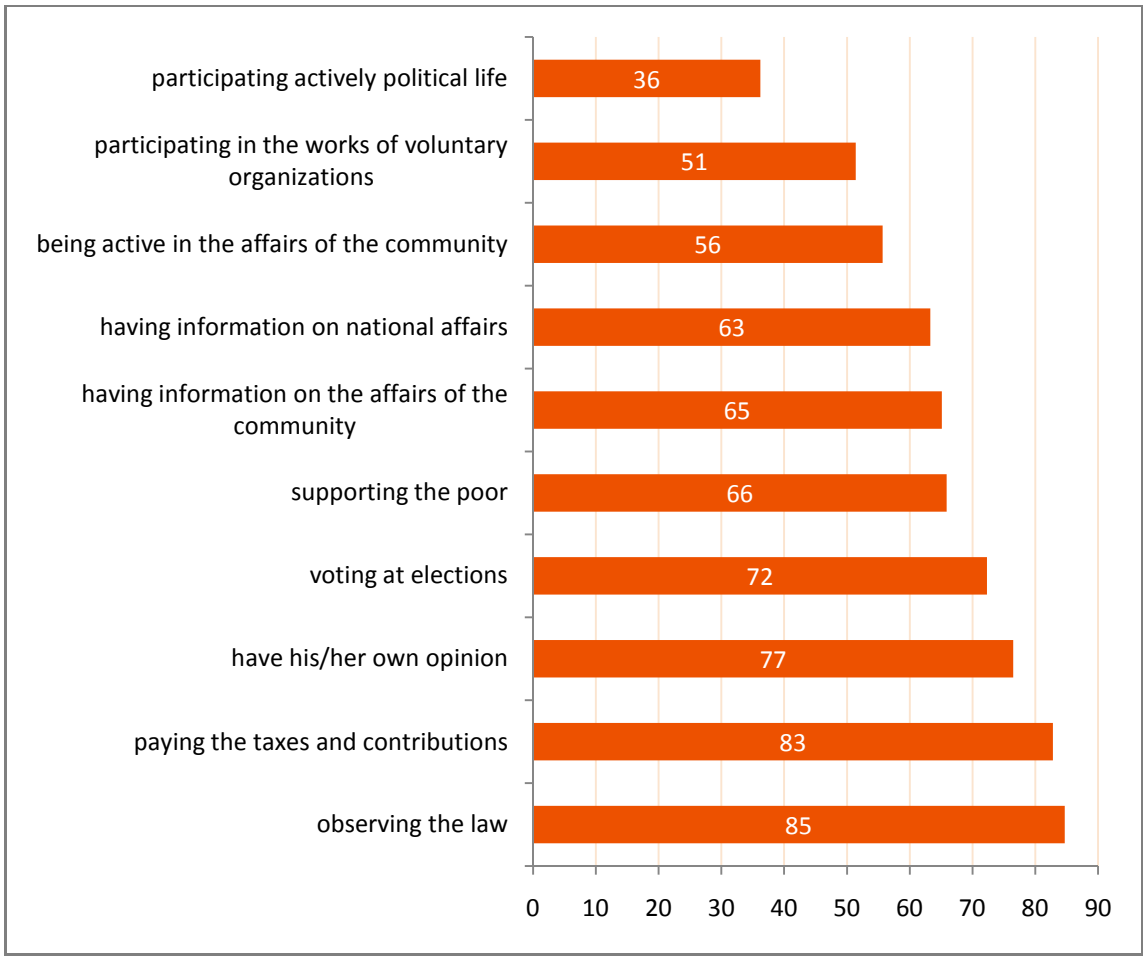


It is an important issue whether the possible distrust of the political and other social sub-systems and the criticisms of the regime are linked to the refusal of the citizenship attitude. The question is if there is an example of a “good citizen” for the youth. The answer is definitely yes. Considering the standards of an international survey, persons of the surveyed 15-29 age group had to decide on the basis of 10 aspects what conduct is necessary for becoming a good citizen. We think it is important that the rate of uncertain respondents is unusually low (1%).

Hungarian young people in the 15-29 age group believe that first of all, one must observe the law and pay taxes and contributions to become a good citizen. These two aspects are far ahead of all other dimensions, meaning that these two assets are “inherited” through school and family socialization (which is frequently lashed). Furthermore, these two aspects explain why civil unrest and boycotts accepted in Western Europe have been unable to become customary in Hungary.

The second group includes the aspects between 70 and 80 points, i.e. ones that continue being important, including forming independent opinions and the participation in elections. An apparent contradiction, however, is to be pointed out in this respect. Though the members of the 15-29 age group are aware that they should form their own opinion on public affairs, what is more they should take part in elections, the actual propensity to participate – as shown below – is extraordinarily low within said age group. Therefore, the norm and the daily routine are not always linked to each other. The third group consists of five aspects ranking in the middle, while the last factor (active participation in the life of politics) is the least important for the age group, which is not surprising if the low amount of political interest is taken into account.

Figure No. 70. "How much is ... important for becoming a good citizen?"
(average of the scale from 0 to 100)



The exact reply categories are as follows:

- supporting those who live under worse conditions
- voting at elections
- observing the law and rules fully
- forming his/her own opinion, independently of others
- being active in voluntary organizations
- paying the taxes and contributions
- actively participating in the political life
- having grounded information on the affairs of the community at the place of residence, at school, in the workplace
- participating actively in the affairs of the community at the place of residence, at school, in the workplace
- having grounded information on national public affairs

The above data refers to the fact that on the level of norms, Hungarian people of the 15-29 age group are law-abiding "citizens". Similar to 2004, it can also be stated that though there are opponents of the democratic regime and there are regime-sceptic young people as well, the great majority of the surveyed age group observe the norms and are conformists. This is also confirmed by the fact that the relative majority (48%) of the youth are of the same opinion as their parents in terms of political issues. One-tenth of the 15-29 age group state that their opinion is different while slightly more than one-third of them agree with their parents in certain issues and disagree with them in other ones, or they agree with the mother

and disagree with the father. Seven percent could not provide any reply to the question, the reason for which may be that they do not discuss politics with their parents. The above data do not suggest a rebelling youth since, as compared to 2004, and the rate of those accepting the parents' standpoint has risen.

The most conforming standpoint can be identified within the 15-19 age group, persons living in villages and the ones with only a primary education. It is obvious that the older the person is and the more information and individual experience he/she has, the more probable it is that he/she will have an opinion on political issues that is different from his/her parents' opinion.

Finally, the last segment of thinking on the social mood and generally on public life is a topic surveying what conflicts, or social and political "fault lines" are perceived by the 15-29 age group in the Hungarian society. It is needless to say that this topic may also be of utmost importance when the youth is integrated in the "adult" society. It can be stated that a surprising low rate, not reaching even 1%, selects the "does not know" reply category, meaning that the respondents of the surveyed age group have some opinions on the social and political conflicts.

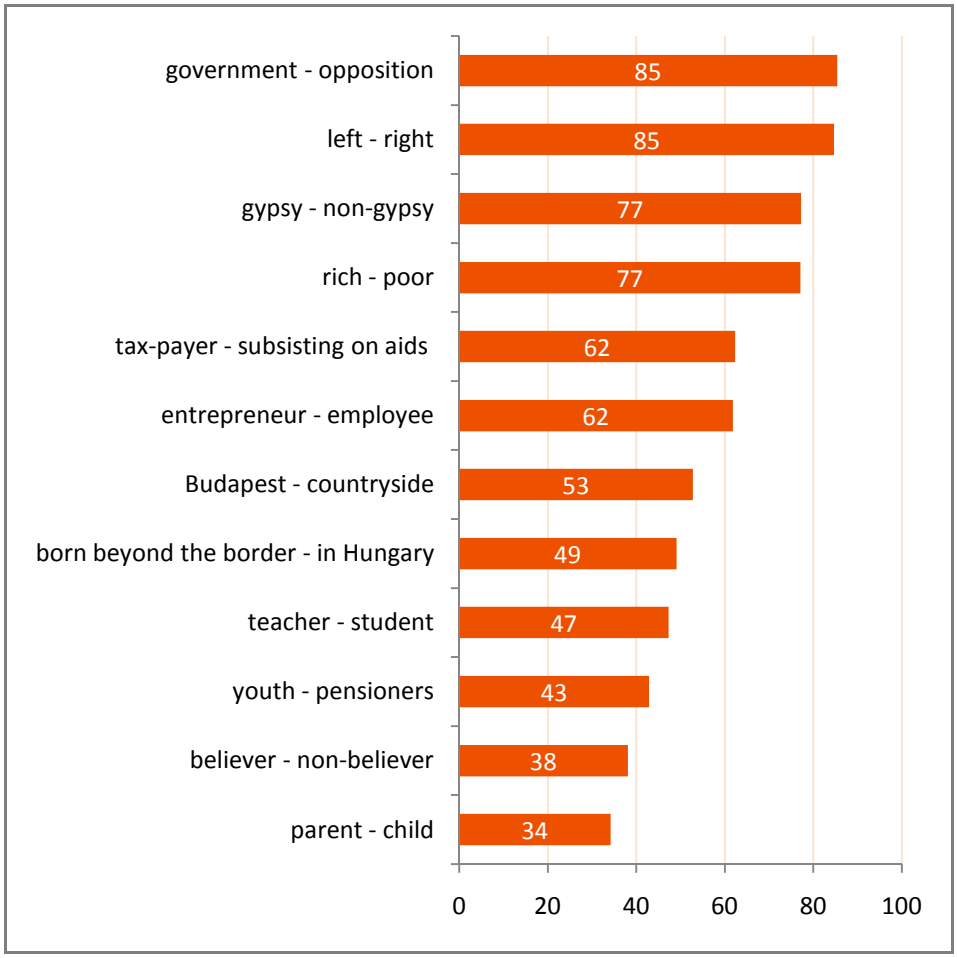
Figure No. 71 shows that persons of the 15-29 age group consider the conflict between the political actors as the most stressed. The average value of the indicator concerning the conflict between the leftists and the rightists and that of the government and the opposition is more than 85 points, which means the nearly 90% of the respondents selected the original value of 1 (very big) and 2 (big) on the original scale from 1 to 5. From among the social conflicts, the one between the gypsies and the non-gypsies and that of the poor and the rich are by far the most significant (77 points). In both cases, the category of "very big conflict" was selected by 40% while the one of "big conflict" by 35%. Unfortunately, the economic crisis may make this clearly existing conflict potential even more significant.

The 15-29 age group perceives a medium or a slightly bigger conflict between the taxpayers and those subsisting on aids, between the entrepreneurs and their employees and between the persons living in the capital and the people living in the countryside.

Possible conflict potentials affecting the direct world of the youth were given lower values on the scale from 0 to 100. The conflict is the slightest between parents and their children (average of 34.2 points), and it is relatively low between the youth and the pensioners. This latter is all the more interesting as there is a stereotype in the society according to which pensioners still working take the job opportunities from the youth.

This topic is worth studying in more detail in the volume of studies, i.e. within the framework of "Youth2008", to identify the factors contributing to the perception of the conflicts.

Figure No. 71. How big are the conflicts in the different groups of the Hungarian society according to the opinion of the youth?
(average of the scale from 0 to 100)



The exact reply categories are as follows:

- between the government and the opposition
- between the leftists and the rightists
- between the rich and the poor
- between the entrepreneurs and their employees
- between the gypsies and the non-gypsies
- between those living in the capital and those living in the countryside
- between the believers and the non-believers
- between the youth and the pensioners
- between the parents and their children
- between teachers and students
- between tax-payers and people subsisting on aids
- between the Hungarians moving to the country from abroad and the Hungarian persons born in the country

Political activities

Before conducting the survey, our hypothesis was that the participation structure of the youth had basically changed since 2000. We concluded that formal membership is not relevant anymore but loose and informal linking is, as young people link to informal groups, circles of friends and other companions rather than to formal organizations.

In 2000, less than one-sixth of the youth were members in some civil, social, political, religious, charitable, athletic or cultural organization, community, club or body, while in 2004 this indicator reached 15%. Sports associations and clubs and church organizations were the most preferred organizations. In 2008, we tried to identify the youth's attitude toward organizations through four categories. One could have some traditional, formal membership, participate in the works of some organization, link loosely to some organization or take part in its events. Finally respondents were asked if they belonged to some civil organization which is not a formal, registered community or movement. Related results are extremely interesting. Formal membership has clearly declined – only 6% of the 15-29 age group stated that they were members in any of the 20 kinds of listed organizations. Nine percent participated in the work of some organization and 7% go to the events of organizations. Five percent of those in the sample who link to some organization, link in all the three ways or at least in two ways.

We expected very much from the linking to informal communities and movements. We thought that this would be the most dominant within the age group surveyed. However, our hypothesis cannot be verified to the least extent. Only 2% of the respondents in the 15-29 age group stated that they linked to some unregistered group or movement. If all this is merged with the previous block of questions, it can be stated that 1% are represented in the sample by those who do link exclusively to informal movements or communities. For 2% of the people, both informal and some formal link can be identified. In the course of the detailed analysis of "Youth2008", these data should be thoroughly surveyed based on several dimensions and the related sociological background should also be examined.

Figure No. 72. Specific features of linking to organizations
(in percentage)

Affiliation with some party, political direction or youth organization could be practically interpreted in 2000 and 2004 since the membership in political organizations hardly reached 1%. In 2008, many direct political organizations or organizations closely related to politics were examined with the presumption that the youth's affiliation to political organizations can be better detected in that way. One percent of the 15-29 age group linked to some political youth organization in some way, another 1% to some party while a further 1% to civil circles. At the same time, the 3x1% does not mean 3%, as there is a great overlap among the individuals linking to such organizations. All this means is that no significant growth can be identified as compared to previous years. However, it can be proven that different political organizations are able to approach basically the same circle of young people.

Former survey results seem to repeat themselves as far as the order of preference of the youth is concerned. Most of them link to some sports club or association (15%) followed by pupil and student organizations as well as leisure-time organizations (10% each).

The higher than average linking can be identified for men (32%), persons belonging the youngest age group (36%) and the children of parents with a high educational level and status. At the same time, it should be mentioned that these strata have the most leisure time, meaning that they are able to most easily accept the obligations implied by such a linking.

When the issue is surveyed in terms of the interest in public life, it is undoubted that the more the young person is interested in politics, the more probable it is that he/she will link to some organization. Fifty-five percent of those greatly interested link to some organization, while this rate is 23% for those who are not interested at all. As to individuals positioning themselves to the right or left from the centre, they link in some way or another to some organization at a rate higher than average. However, among radicals, the rate of "combined forms", i.e. those with multiple links or memberships, is relatively high.

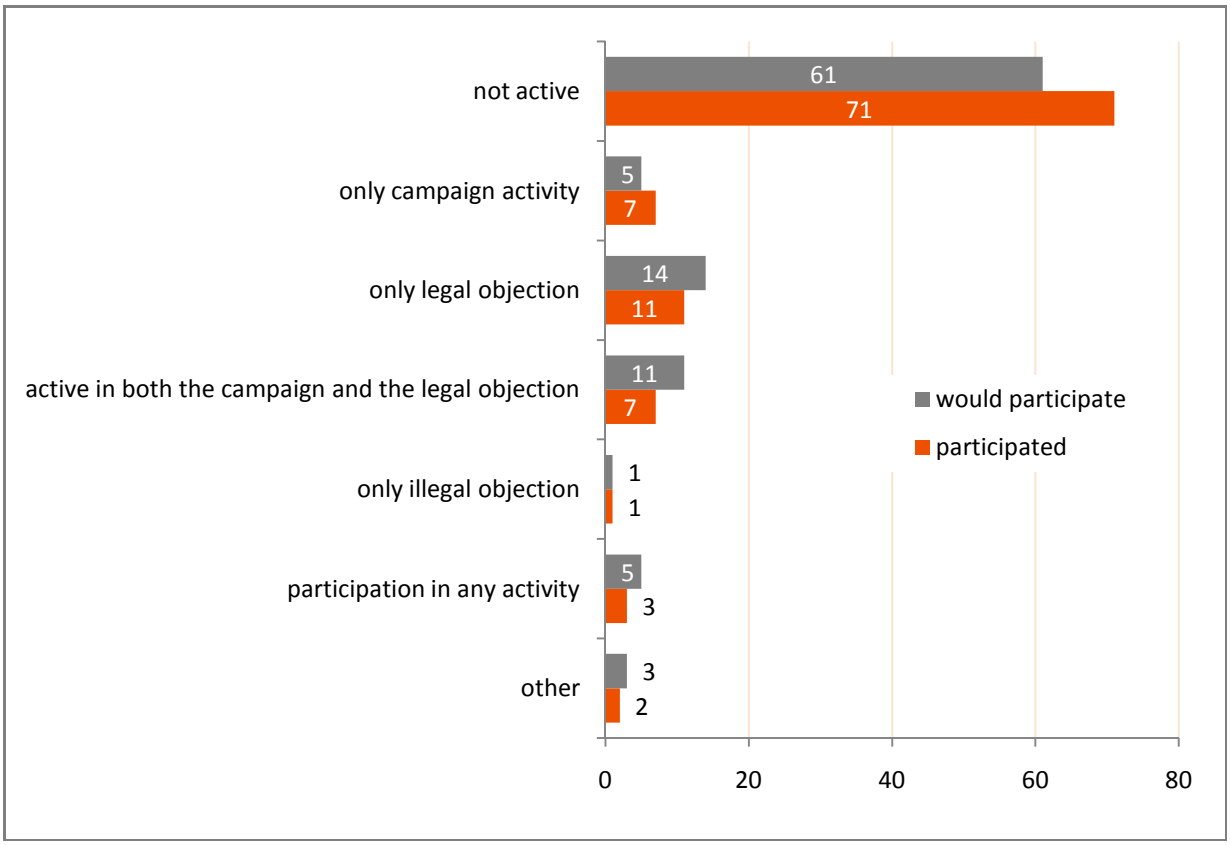
The last dimension of the chapter examines direct political activity and the potential to object. International literature makes a differentiation between potential and actual participation. Potential participation surveys the expectable while the actual one surveys the current or possible past potential to object. Similar to 2004, a separate block of questions that was filled in by the respondents themselves was used to survey the propensity to participate. There was some change in the questions as compared to 2004. Direct political participation forms were divided into three groups – campaign activity, legal objection and illegal forms[17]. Irrespective of the questioning technique, nearly three-tenths of the participants of the surveys confirmed participation in some direct political activity, similar to the case in 2004. Most of them (11%) participated in some legal objection form, followed by campaign activity and the combination of the two. Only 3% of the respondents is indeed active, consisting of the persons who took part in at least one form of the listed three ones. The statement made in 2004 according to which the 15-29 age group prefers nonviolent and legal acts, shows that low energy and free time is spent on these kind of activities.

It is to be pointed out that our survey included separate questions regarding participation in the street rioting that takes place several times a year since 2006. Based on the preliminary examination of the data, it can be established that as compared to 2004, there is an increase in the rate of those who can be mobilized for some illegal act (about 6%). It is also clear that young people participating in street rioting form a tangible group, although not at a high rate (2%). The members of this group include persons who position themselves to the right and who consider themselves radical at a much higher rate (giving six or seven points to themselves on the scale from zero to seven). Otherwise, it can be stated that in the different forms and intensities of political participation, persons positioning themselves to the right and considering themselves radicals are more active.

The objection potential regarding the future is much higher than actual participation. Forty percent of the respondents would take part in future objections, 14% in legal objections, 11% in objections and campaign events, 5% in campaign events only and a further 5% would take part in every form of political activity. The potent participation in illegal events is somehow higher than the actual activity. Most young persons would take part in collecting signatures, signing political declarations, distributing leaflets and industrial actions.

[17] Campaigning activity means displaying political placards, collecting canvassing tickets, distributing leaflets and painting slogans onto walls. Legal forms include the signing of political declarations, collecting signatures, permitted industrial actions, demonstrations, the closure of half of roads. Illegal objection includes demonstrations not permitted, street rioting, causing damage to public or private property, throwing something at individuals (e.g. eggs), violence against people, the closure of entire roads as well as refusal to pay leasing fees.

Figure No. 73. Potential and actual participation in campaign activity and objections
(in percentage)



Youth services

When the "Youth2008" survey was made we first examined the types of youth services, the demand and the efficiency of the state/municipality youth institutional system in contacting young persons.

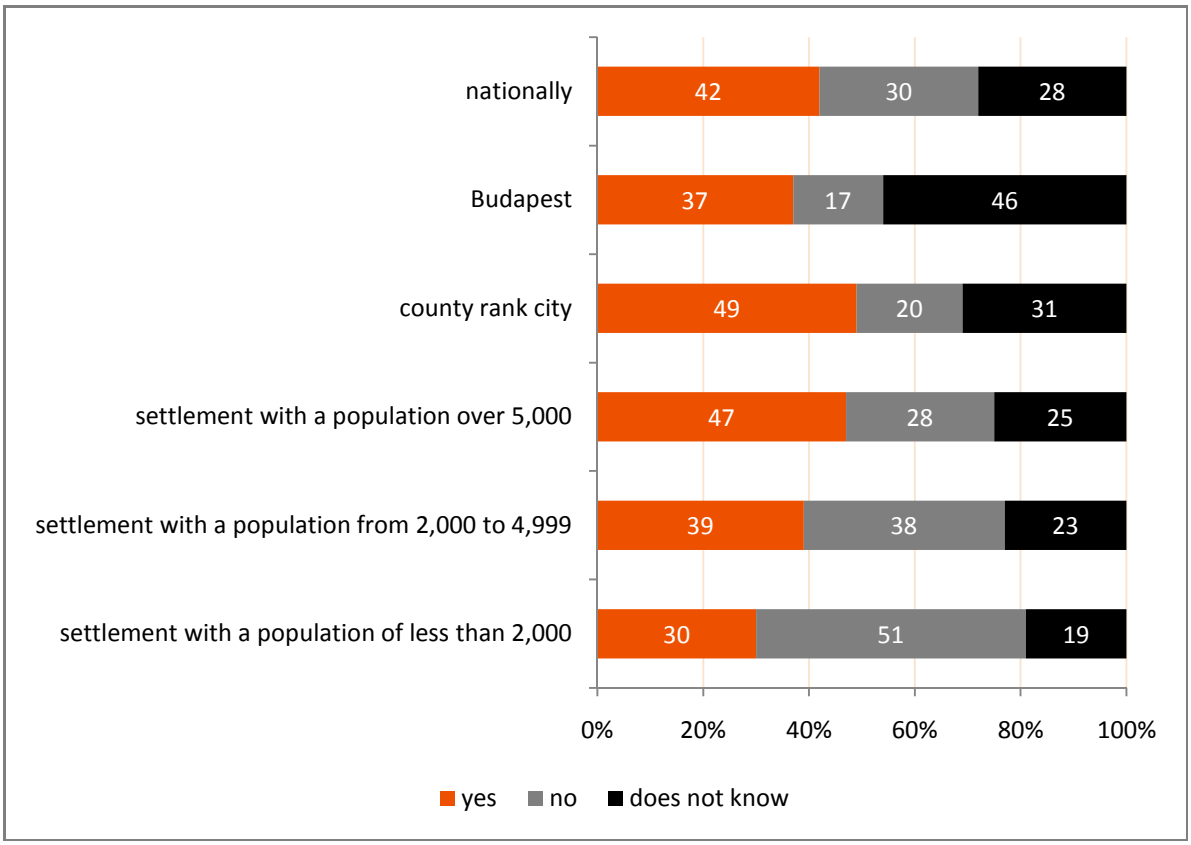
On national level 42% of the youth stated that they had some civil or church organization in their vicinity, which organized public events for the youth. The bigger is a settlement, the more probable is that there is such a church or civil organization in it. The capital is an exception. Persons only in settlements with a population of less than 2000 state in a lower number that there are programs similar to the ones in the capital. It is probable that organized programs are communicated to the youth with some difficulties in the capital. Young people are not interested in the programs offered which is suggested by the fact that the rate of the replies "does not know" increases simultaneously with the size of the settlement of the place of residence.

The programs organized for the youth are more easily communicated to the individuals with higher educational level. Of course, this does not automatically mean that they do take part in such programs.

On national level only 6% of the youth stated that they regularly took part in the public programs organized by local organizations. Their 42% take part in them sometimes. Forty-six percent stated that they never participated in such and 6% said that there were no such programs in their vicinity. The smaller is a settlement, the lower is the rate of those who never take part in the public events organized by local

organizations. All this means that smaller settlements offer fewer programs but young people participate in such with a greater probability.

Figure No. 74. "Are there civil or church organizations or services in your vicinity which organize different programs for the youth?" – in a breakdown of settlement sizes
(in percentage)



Youth institutions, cultural and sports institutions established long ago are still the most available to the youth. More than nine tenth of the respondents stated that they had cultural centre, library and school in their vicinity. All this, of course, does not necessarily mean that these institutions are "alive" and there is a continuous youth work in them. Amateur cultural and tradition guarding associations represent another group of institutions easily accessible to the youth. More than half of the youth may have consultation on health issues or take part in the activities of some church organization for the youth. As to the above institutions and services, it can be stated in general that their availability is somehow in harmony with the needs of the youth. They are widespread and needed by the youth.

However, as far as the availability of the institutions and services related to modern youth policy are concerned, there is a bigger gap in terms of the needs of the youth. Telehouses, club rooms, career consultation are available to less than half of the youth, while consultation regarding drugs and youth offices are available only one third of them. In addition to the cultural centre, the sports ground and library, these institutions and services accessible with more difficulties are needed by the youth the most.

Irrespective of the place of residence and educational level it can be stated that the gap is the biggest between the needs of the youth and the availability of these services.

About one fifth of the youth have access to youth self-government or students' self- government, though it is true that such are not needed by young persons.

Some environment protection or environment improvement association is operated in the vicinity of the place of residence of 40% of the youth, for which the demand is great. It can be stated in general that the youth do require youth services and institutions. As to the measured approaches, none of them is rejected.

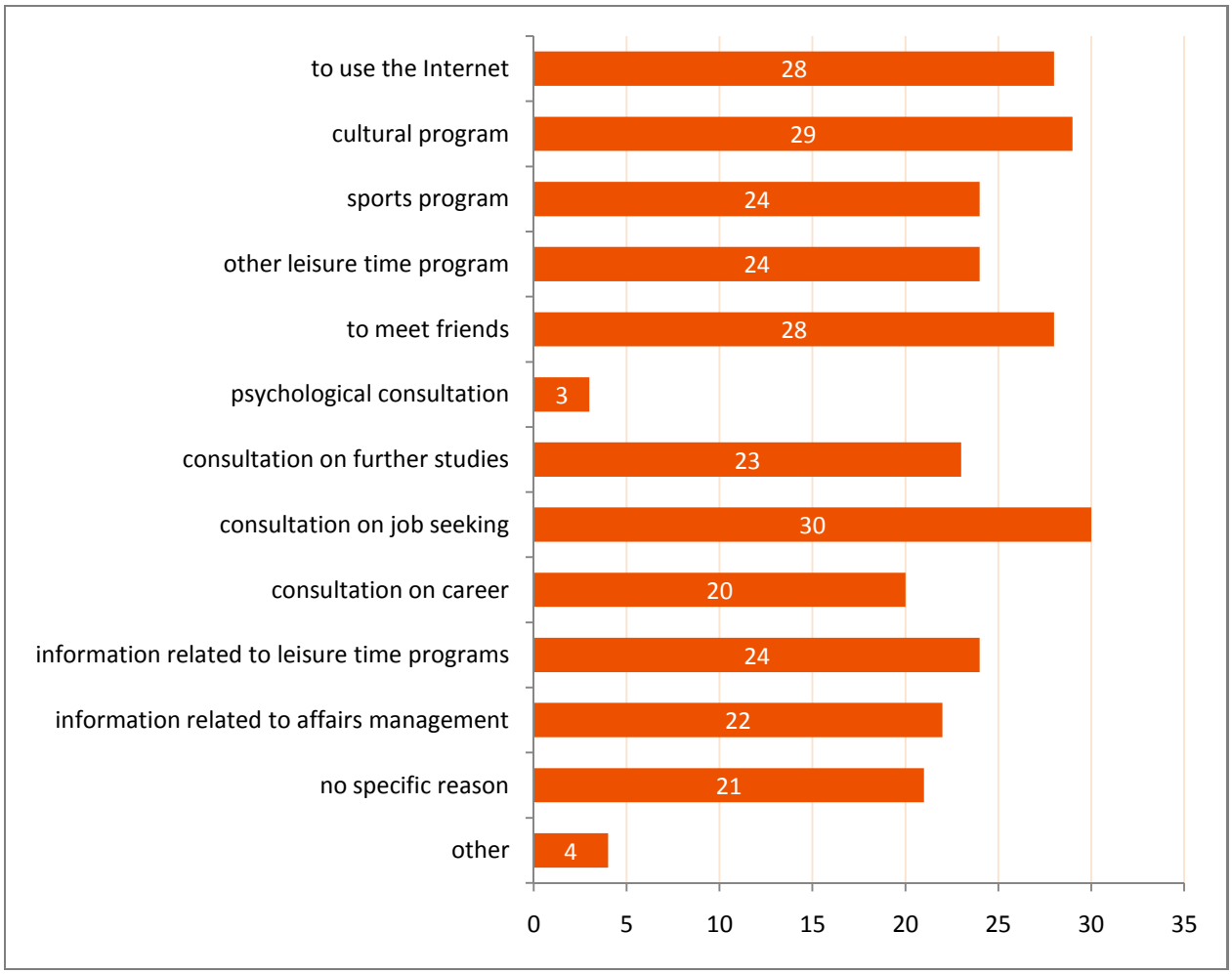
Each settlement type is supplied well in terms of libraries, cultural centres and sports grounds. Even though all this does not necessarily mean actually operating institutions in small localities, young people do keep them in mind. As to all the other institutions it can be stated that the higher is the population a settlement has, the more probable is that there is such an institution in the locality. Budapest is an exception to this statement. Persons living in Budapest are less willing to state that there are such institutions in their vicinity as compared to the individuals living in county rank cities or small towns. The reason for this surprising fact may be that though the services, institutions concerned are available in Budapest, they are not present in the "mental map" of a considerable rate of young persons living in Budapest.

Youth offices and youth desk officers

Fifteen percent of the youth have been to a youth office at least once (the rate is higher for persons with higher educational level), their 80% have never been there and 5% have not even heard of such an institution. Youth offices operate with the highest efficiency in country rank cities where one fourth of the youth stated that they had already visited such an office. Twenty-thirty percent of the youth ever visiting such an office utilized each of the services offered by the youth offices. The only exception is psychological consultation with 3%.

Eighty-seven percent of those who have visited the youth office stated that they were satisfied or somewhat satisfied with the service and only 13% said that they were dissatisfied or somewhat dissatisfied. This means that the great majority of the users of the service think that there is not any problem with the quality of the services. The low visiting level is not caused by the above but the fact that young people get to such offices with difficulties or the youth offices have difficulties in reaching the youth. Only slightly more than the half of the young people living in settlements having youth offices stated that they had such an institutions in their vicinity.

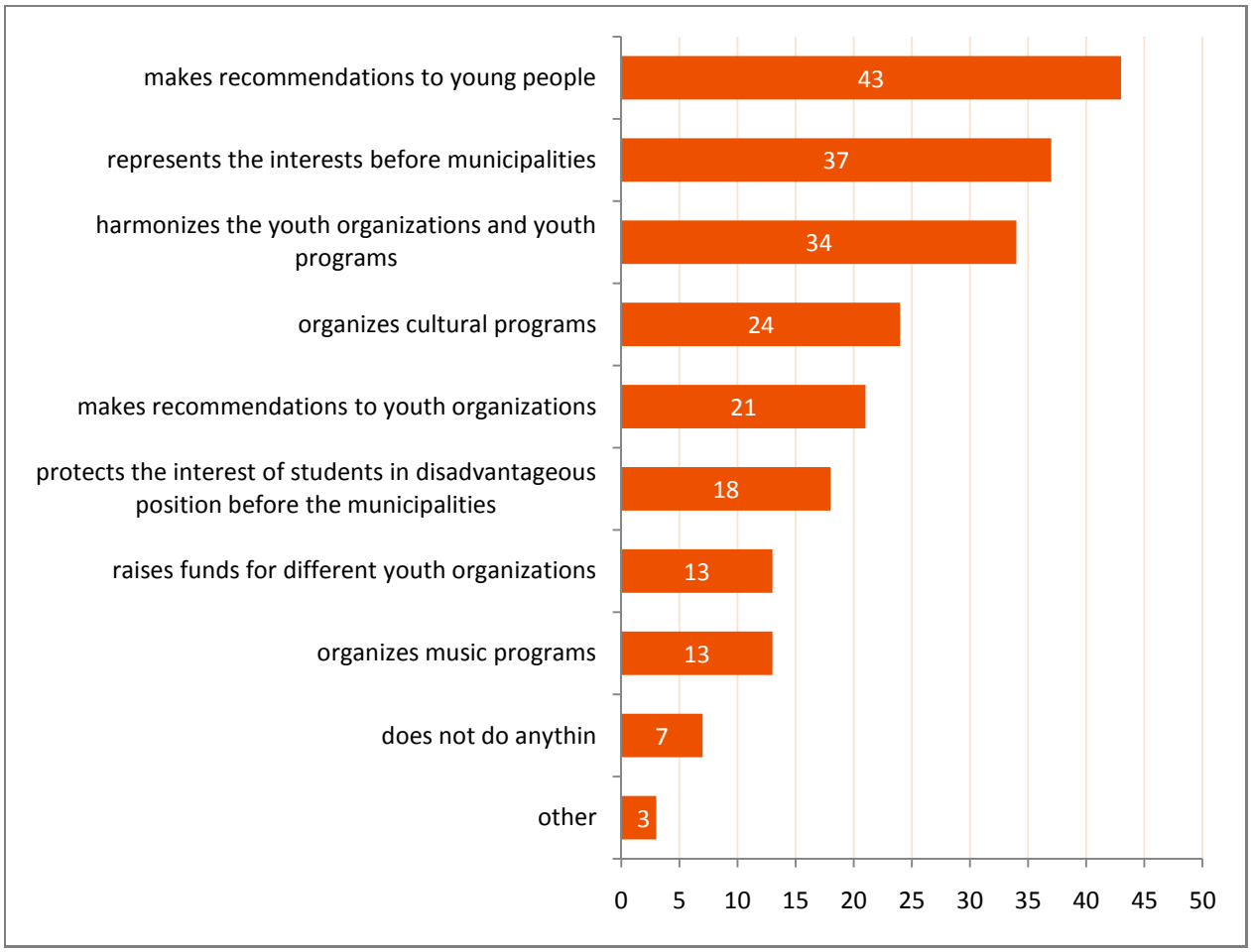
Figure No. 75. Reasons for visiting youth offices
(in percentage of replies of the visitors of youth offices)



As far as youth desk officers appointed by municipalities are concerned, they are much less known than youth offices. More than half of the youth (56%) have not even heard of them. Only 9% of the respondents stated that they had such a person in their settlement and 20% said that they had not any while 15% could not give an answer. The rate of those knowing the institutions of the youth desk officer is higher among the persons with higher educational level and the ones living in bigger settlements.

Furthermore, in addition to the shortcomings in being aware of the institutions of the youth desk officer, young people do not have a clear idea on related activities, either.

Figure No. 76. What do young people think a youth desk officer does?
(in percentage)



In the course of the survey we gave to 2,000 respondents the definition of the youth desk officer person and then we asked them to outline what they think the contact person does. They had to select from among a list of actual activities the ones belonging to the duties of the youth desk officer. An incompatible reply was also inserted, namely the one according to which the youth desk officer protects the interests of students in disadvantageous position at schools. This option was selected by 18% of the respondents.

To sum it up, the data show that the youth do need a wide assortment of youth services, but many of them do not know existing youth services and a part of the persons knowing them do not make use of said services. However, persons utilizing the services are generally satisfied with their quality. As to the youth, they have an especially considerable demand for services connected with modern youth policy, including the consultation on career, the consultation related to drugs, alcohol, diseases related to passions as well as for club rooms, telehouses and youth offices.

RELIGIOUSNESS

Four years ago, in the "Youth2004" flash report, we stated that changing the religiousness of a society was a slow process. Then, data showed that the statement was true also for the continuously changing youth response to religion. However, the data of the 2008 survey pointed out a change rather than stability. According to all the comparative indicators in the "Youth2008" survey, the religiousness of the 15-29 age group tends to decline. Only a later and more detailed analysis will identify which portion of the age group is affected and to what extent by the change. However, it has to be mentioned that the data facilitating the comparison with former surveys nearly exclusively concerns the qualitative changes in religious institutions that can be linked churches. Only an independent religion sociological survey could enlighten the changes in the individualization of religiousness, religiousness not related to churches or the ones in personal faith and in the phenomena of seeking sense.

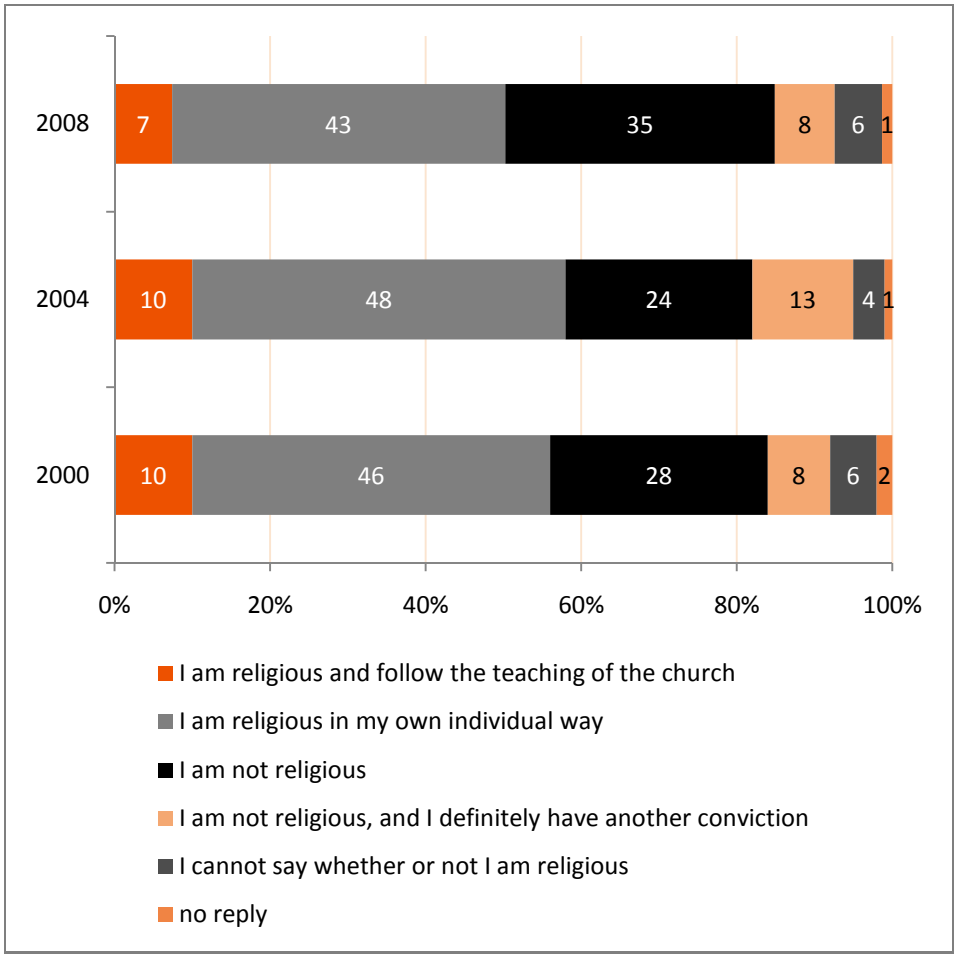
This flash report deals with self-positioning in terms of religiousness, religious education, belonging to some denomination, practice of religion, the belief in some supernatural power as well as the results regarding the relationship to some religious ritual and, if possible, it makes comparisons with former similar surveys. The comparison is facilitated by the fact that the 2008 survey includes a block of questions expanded on the basis of the 2000 survey, supplemented by the questions of the 2004 study and a new, independent block of questions.

In 2008, half of the 15-29 age group considered themselves religious. From among the two categories of questions related to self-positioning, the reply "religious in some individual way" is much more frequent than the answer "religious as taught by the church", as compared to the results of previous years and the ones of surveys made among the adult population. The rate of both categories has reduced since 2004 – by one quarter of the "traditionally" religious and by one-tenth of the "individually" religious. If we take into account the observation backed by former surveys, according to which the moving away from the "traditional" way means, at the same time, some nearing to the "individual" one, it can be presumed that the latter category would show a more marked reduction in recent years if it were not compensated somehow by the leavers of the other group.

On the other hand, the group of young people saying that they are not religious has increased nearly 1.5 times, and currently, more than one-third of the youth can be categorized in that group. However, it is eye-catching that the number of persons belonging to the other non-religious group of atheists of definitely different conviction has not changed since 2000 and has reduced as compared to 2004. Therefore, the reduction in the religiousness of the youth is caused by the lack of interests rather than by objecting to and refusing religions.

The change in the replies regarding religious education is smaller than in self-positioning. As compared to 2000, the number of those receiving religious education at home has decreased only by 2 percentage points. At the same time, however, there has been a reduction in the rate of those uncertain about the question, for who some religious effect may have been exerted but it has not been sufficient for a "yes" reply. Therefore, the rate of those not receiving religious education has increased somehow markedly by 7 percentage points on the aggregate. Given the results of the previous question, the following hypothesis can be derived: the rate of parents and families preferring religious education has not reduced markedly, but the success of conveying religiousness, which is strongly conditional upon the wider social environment, has declined.

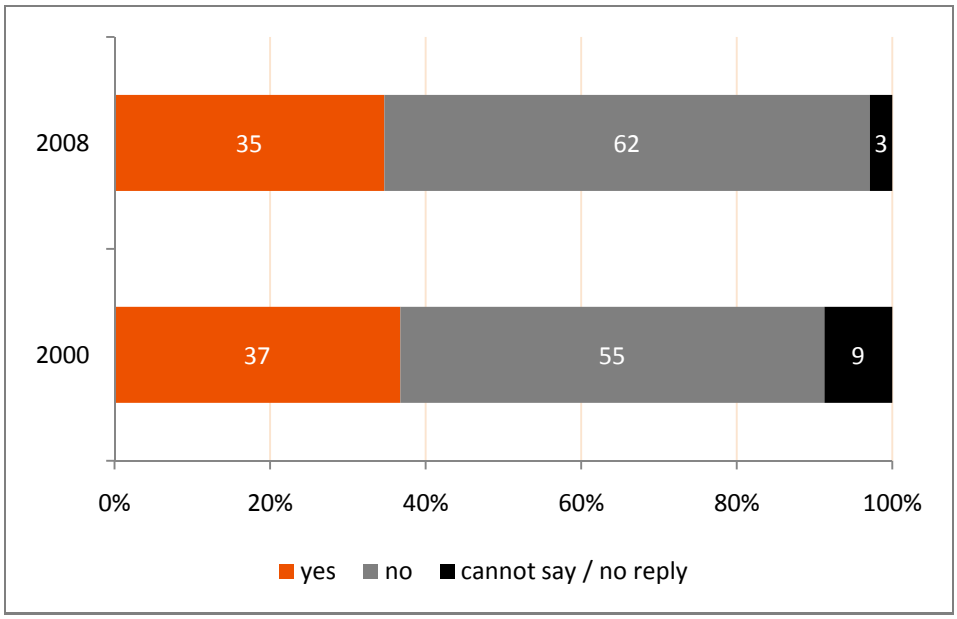
Figure No. 77. "What is the most characteristic of you from among the following statements regarding religiousness?", 2000-2008
(in percentage)[18]



Similar to the case eight years ago, two new questions were asked regarding denominations in the "Youth2008" survey.[19] The first one may be linked to formal membership (based on the decision of the parents) while the second one concerns the membership based on subjective linking. One of the most significant changes can be found in the formal connection to some denomination. As compared to 2000, the number of those not baptized (not registered) has doubled – one-fifth of the persons born between 1979 and 1993 state that they have not been baptized. It will be seen how far this tendency will continue for the persons born after the regime change.

[18] The respondents of "does not know" category were taken together with the ones of the category „I cannot say whether or not I am religious" for all questions.
[19] In the „Youth2004" survey only the question of belonging to some denomination was posed, therefore, the results cannot be compared with the ones from the 2000 and 2008 survey.

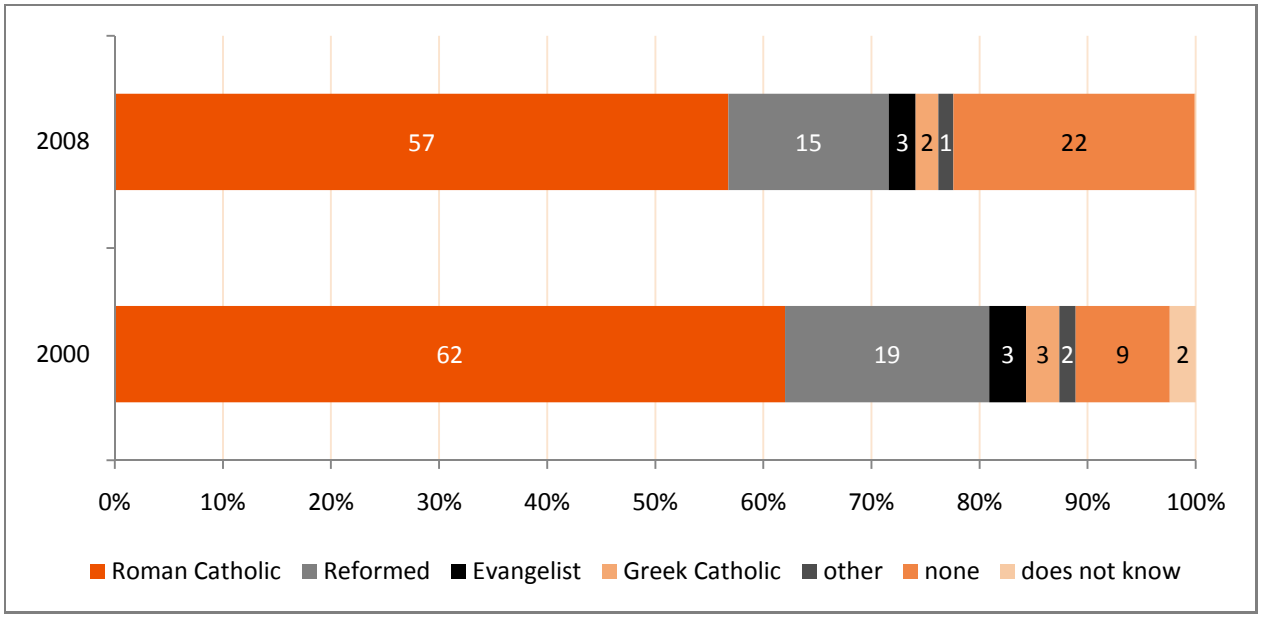
Figure No. 78. "Have you been educated religiously at home?" – 2000, 2008
(in percentage)



There is an apparent contradiction between the stagnation of the number of those receiving religious education and the reduction in the number of persons baptized since both questions measure the religiousness of the family. The contradiction is apparent as the reduction in baptism is, presumably, the characteristic of quite a large group of those who do not provide religious education for their children. The fact that this religious link is losing its significance can be an attribute of losing cultural traditions

The reduction in the number of those baptized concerns both the big and smaller churches and religious sects. Within all this, Reformed people show a more considerable decline than Roman Catholic ones. As for baptized persons, the rate of Reformed has increased from 70% to 73% and the one of Catholic ones has reduced from 21% to 19%.

Figure No. 79. Rate of those baptized and registered under different denominations, 2000, 2008
(in percentage)



In the light of the information above, it is somehow surprising that the feeling of belonging to some denomination seems to be much more stable than to the number of those baptized. Practically, the number of persons not belonging to any denomination has not changed, similar to those who think that they are close to some denomination in terms of their conviction. The only significant change can be identified in the slight increase in the rate of Roman Catholic persons. Simultaneously, the rate of those belonging to small churches and sects has reduced. However, membership to new religious movements keeps on being negligible among the youth.

When the two issues are examined together, it can be stated that persons baptized under the Roman Catholic Church feel closer to the church (71%) than the ones belonging to the Reformed sect (64%). In addition to the reduction in the number of baptisms, this is a new data which refers to the fact that the decline of religiousness afflicts the Reformed more than Roman Catholic persons. At the same time, there is no interaction among the youth within the two denominations – the rate of those thinking that they are close to the other church does not reach 1% in either of them.

Figure No. 80. Rate of those belonging to different denominations, 2000, 2008
(in percentage)

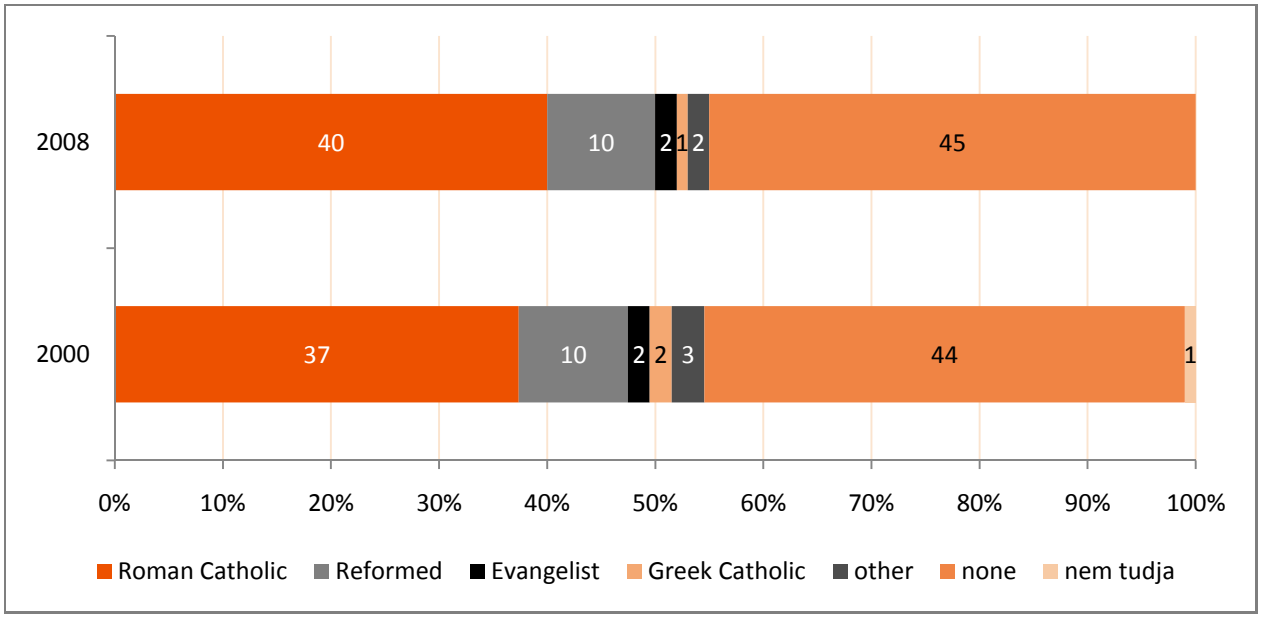
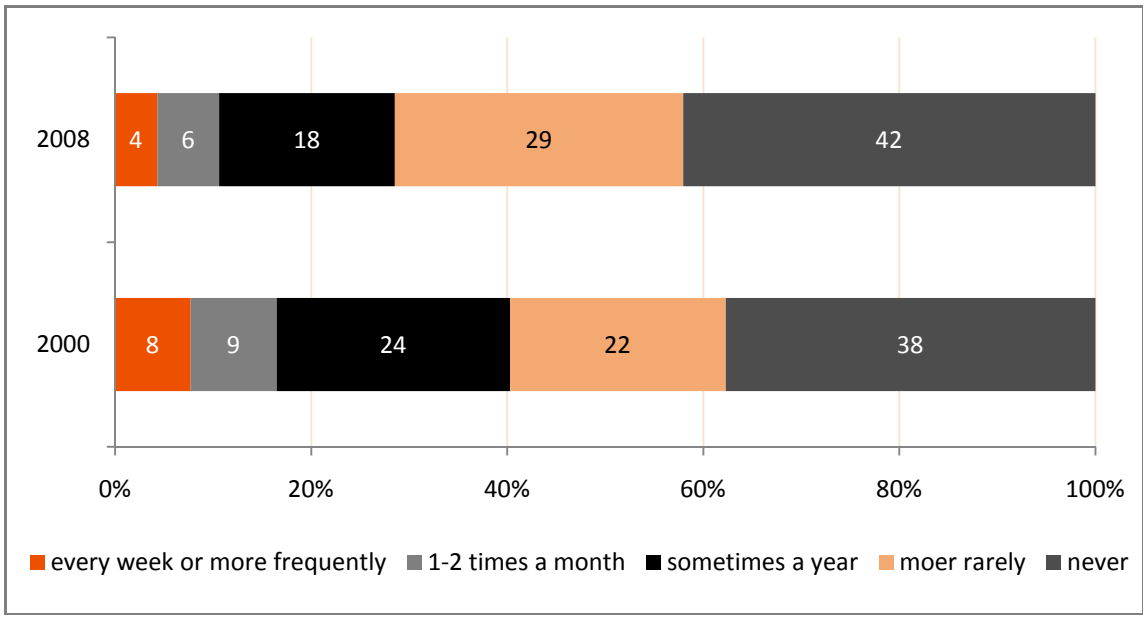


Figure No. 81. "How frequently do you attend ceremonies of the church or religious communities (mass, church service) excluding family events (wedding, burial, baptizing)?" 2000, 2008

(in percentage)[20]



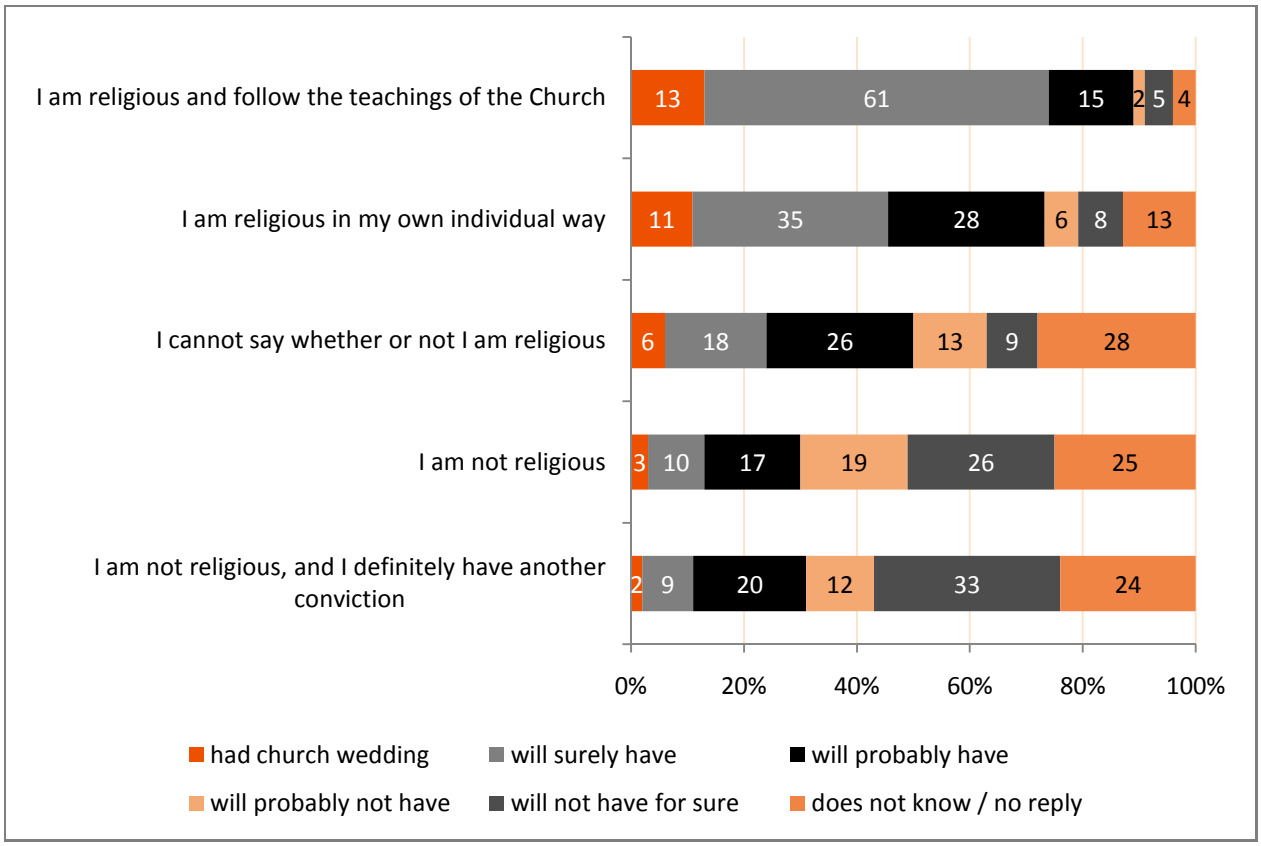
The appearance of religiousness in the society is generally identified through the practice of religion. This indicator of religiousness linked to formal churches shows a reduction in both regular and occasional practicing. The rate of those practicing the religion has reduced by half in the past eight years while that of ones going to the church at least once a month reduced by more than 40% in the 15-29 age group. Furthermore, a reduction can be identified in irregular practicing. However, all this does not imply total rejection – since 2000, the rate of those going to church "more rarely than sometimes a year" has grown more significantly than that of the persons who never go there. The majority of the 15-29 age group is still linked to the churches at least due to church holidays, which offer the most frequent occasions for attending ceremonies.

Following 2004, for the second time, the survey included a question aimed at examining the effect of traditional religion on individual lives through a life event which most characterizes this age group.[21] Accordingly, about one-third of the 15-29 age group is sure that they will have church wedding and within it, a small group has already had one. If the 22% saying that they will probably have church wedding is also taken into account, it can be stated that the majority of the youth continues considering church ceremonies as important and only every sixth young person is sure that he/she will not have church wedding. Of course, having a church wedding strongly depends on the religious identity of the person concerned, but only every third respondent in the group of "definitely not" religious persons absolutely rejects the possibility of a church wedding. (It is obvious that in addition to the intent of the respondent, several other factors may play a part in the related decision making.)

[20] This question was asked in the 2004 study as well, but it was not asked to those who categorized themselves as "definitely with other conviction", therefore, it cannot be compared to the results of the other two surveys. Certain reply categories were merged for lucidity.

[21] Unfortunately, the questions cannot be fully compared, as in 2004, this question was not asked to the persons with „definitely other" convictions, thus the reply categories were different.

Figure No. 82. Rate of persons wishing to have church wedding in a breakdown of religiousness
(in percentage)

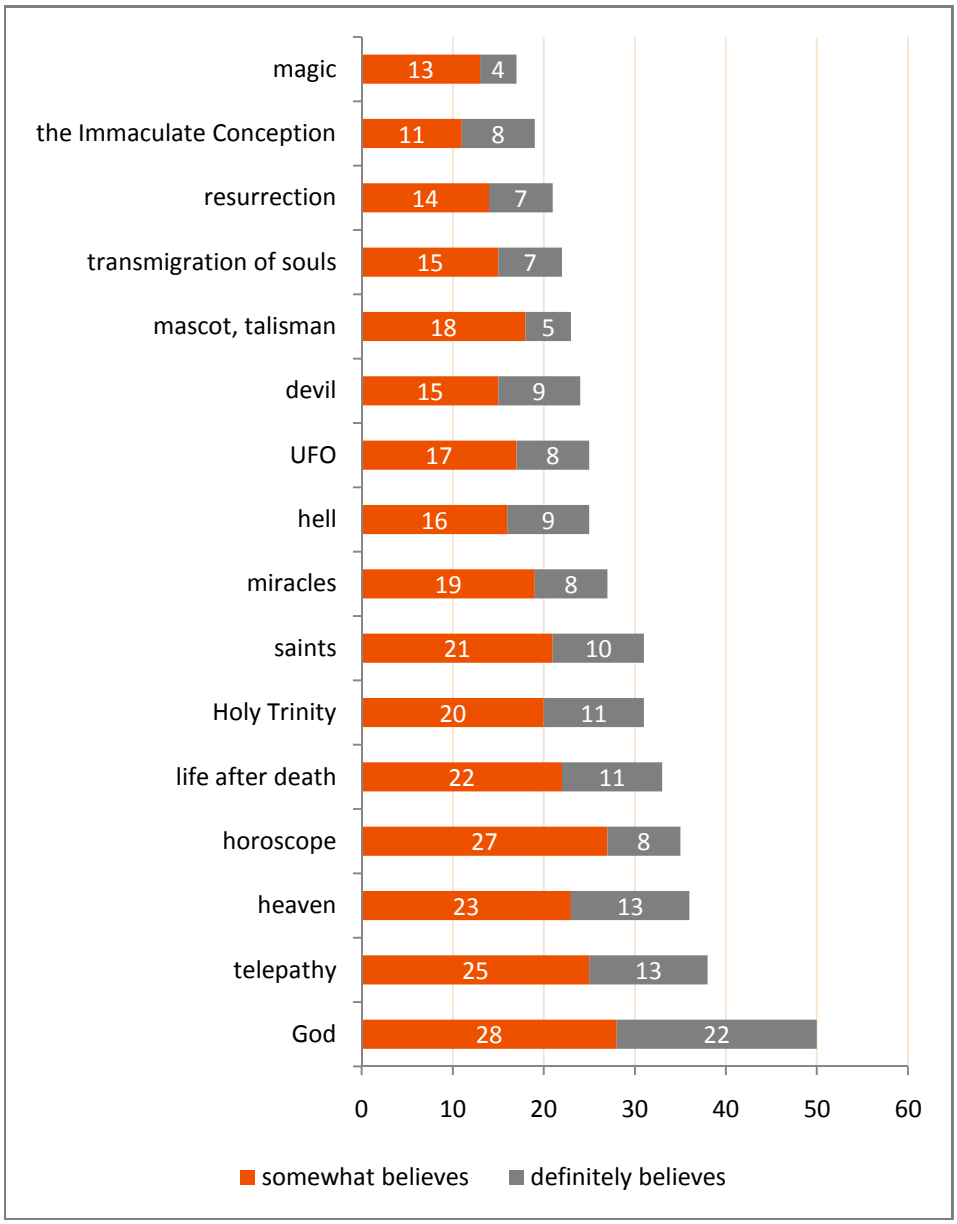


As compared to former youth surveys, it is a novelty that in addition to self-positioning and the religious practices, questions were also asked concerning faith, another dimension of religiousness. A total of 16 questions regarding the supernatural were posed, and the respondents[22] could select from among the categories of definite faith, uncertain faith and definite refusal. Nine of the sixteen options may clearly be linked to the Christian tradition (God, heaven, hell, devil, life after death, resurrection, immaculate conception, saints, Holy Trinity) and the category of miracles may also be considered such. The other six options result from other religions, have esoteric roots or come from science fiction (mascot, talisman, horoscope, transmigration of souls, telepathy, magic, UFO).

Only one quarter of the respondents do not believe in any of the above, and a similar-sized group states that they somewhat believe or surely believe in one to two cases, and about half of them believe in more than three things with more or less certainty. One respondent accepts three elements on the average. The most frequent case is believing in God, which characterizes every second young person. As to other frequent replies, both Christian based (heaven, life after death) and esoteric ones (telepathy, horoscope) may be found. Similar to the findings of the surveys made on the adult population, it is true for the youth as well that positive beliefs (heaven, life after death, miracles) are more popular than negative ones (hell, devil).

[22] The questions were put to a subsample of 2,000 persons, which represents the full 15-29 age group, meaning that it is suitable for independent analysis.

Figure No. 83. Rate of those with different religious beliefs
(in percentage)



Persons who are religious according to the teachings of the church believe in seven elements out of the 10 Christian elements on the average but 62% are willing to accept at least one from among the six other things. As for non-Christian elements, respondents who are religious according to church teachings believe in telepathy the most (36%). People who are religious in their own way believe in four Christian-based elements on the average, but as compared to persons who are religious according to the teachings of the church, a higher rate (73%) accepts at least one from among the esoteric and sci-fi elements.

Nearly two-thirds of the two groups of non-religious persons refuses all the Christian-based beliefs but 51% of the non-religious group and 55% of the individuals with definitely other convictions accept at least one non-Christian element.

In addition to the block of questions connected specifically with religiousness, the questionnaire included questions related to this topic in another part, too. The block examined the membership in civil organizations where the category “church organizations, religion communities was also indicated, in

addition to 19 other types of organizations. Three percent of the surveyed persons stated that they belonged to some church community or organization, which has become, as a result, the seventh most popular organization type.

THE MOST SIGNIFICANT PROBLEMS OF THE YOUTH

The 2000 and the 2004 large-sample youth surveys illuminated the perception of different problem groups. While in 2000, the most significant problem of the age group had been related to the socio-economic processes and problems (unemployment, scarce financial resources, housing), the map of problems essentially changed by 2004. Undoubtedly, four years ago the spreading of drugs was the most important source of tension for the 15-29 age group. Furthermore, an important change was that the spreading of alcohol, another source of deviance, also became an element of the four most important tension potentials. Therefore, in 2004, the youth thought of the affairs in their own world when they were asked about the most important problems of the youth.

A new change was seen in 2008, or rather the return to the situation of 2000. Presumably owing to economic problems, the 15-29 age group once again considered unemployment, scarce financial resources, impoverishment and uncertain living conditions to be the three most significant problems. Spreading of drugs ranked only fifth. However, the items neighbouring the spreading of drugs are very interesting – no future prospects at all, having no targets. It seems as if these two uncertainty-based factors were combined to describe the effect of the spreading of drugs.

The youngest age group, i.e. persons of 15-19 years of age, considered the spreading of drugs to be much more significant as compared to the average, while unemployment was emphasized by career starters in the 20-24 age group and those belonging to the 25-29 age group. The problems related to the establishment of secure livelihoods including the lack of prospects, lack of targets, uncertain living conditions are emphasized the most in the map of problems of the persons belonging to the remaining groups.

Similar to the two former large-sample surveys, persons living in Budapest consider housing problems and the establishment of a secure livelihood as more important than average, while unemployment and the related scarcity of resources are mentioned more frequently than average in villages. Alcohol problems are a concern among young people living in villages, while the spreading of drugs does not show a characteristic pattern according to the settlement types of permanent residences.

The developments in the map of problems show that the youth assess their environment in a differentiated and situational adequate way. Four years later, everybody returned to his/her own narrow worldview from the sphere of general social issues, while in 2000 and 2008 the perspectives became wider. Therefore, the data show that the stereotype that “the youth are not interested in anything” is not true.

We think that all three surveys clearly support that the 15-19 age group consider and assess the social and political environment realistically.

Of course, the youth may relate the term “the most significant problem of the youth” to macro-social phenomena, while the local society relates it to other affairs that are closer to their individual worlds. However, this hypothesis cannot be confirmed. If the macro- and micro-level problem maps are compared, it can be stated that there are much less differences than formerly expected.

Figure No. 84. The most significant problems of the youth, in the opinion of the youth, 2000-2008

(aggregated percentage of the two replies that could be given)

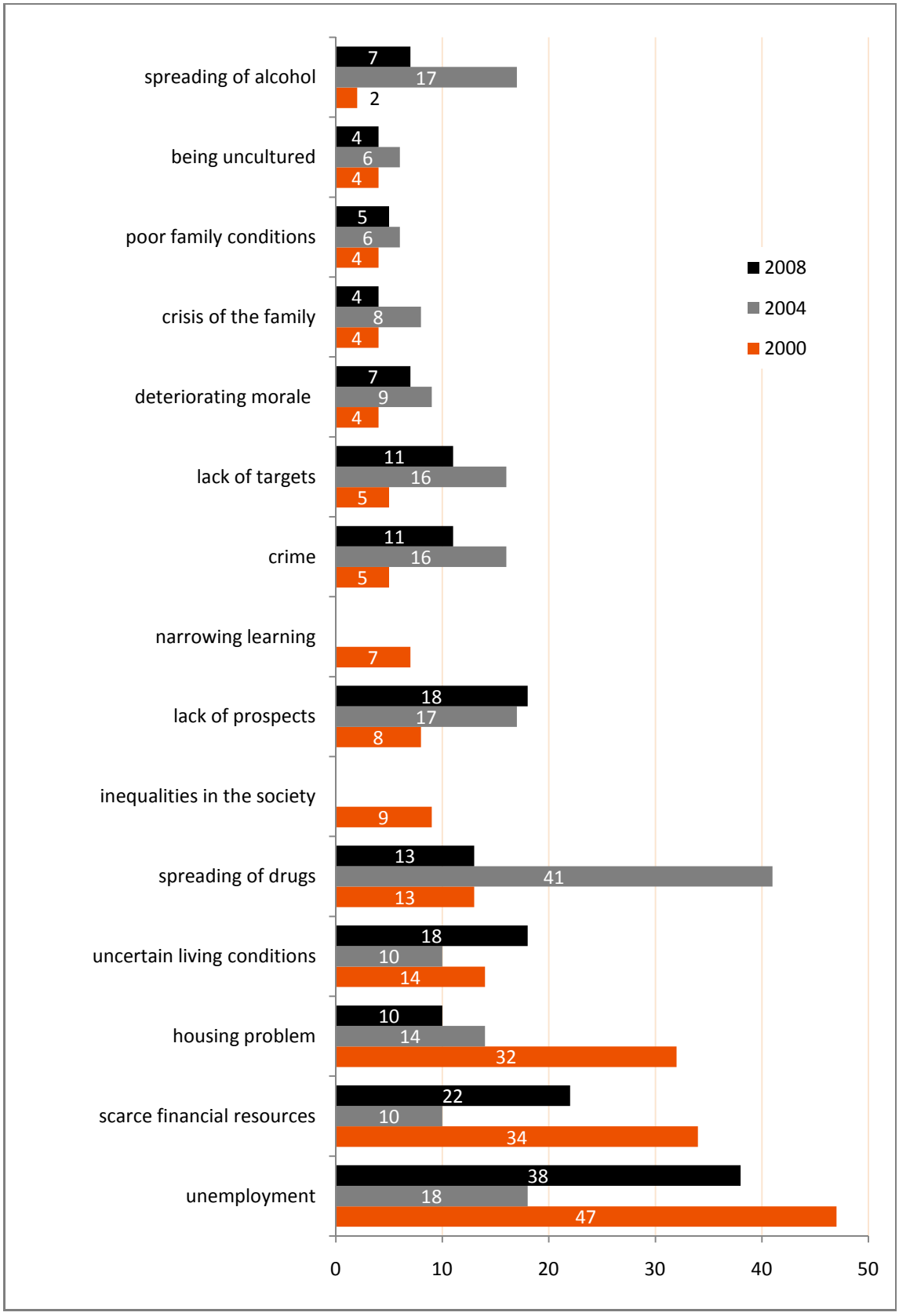
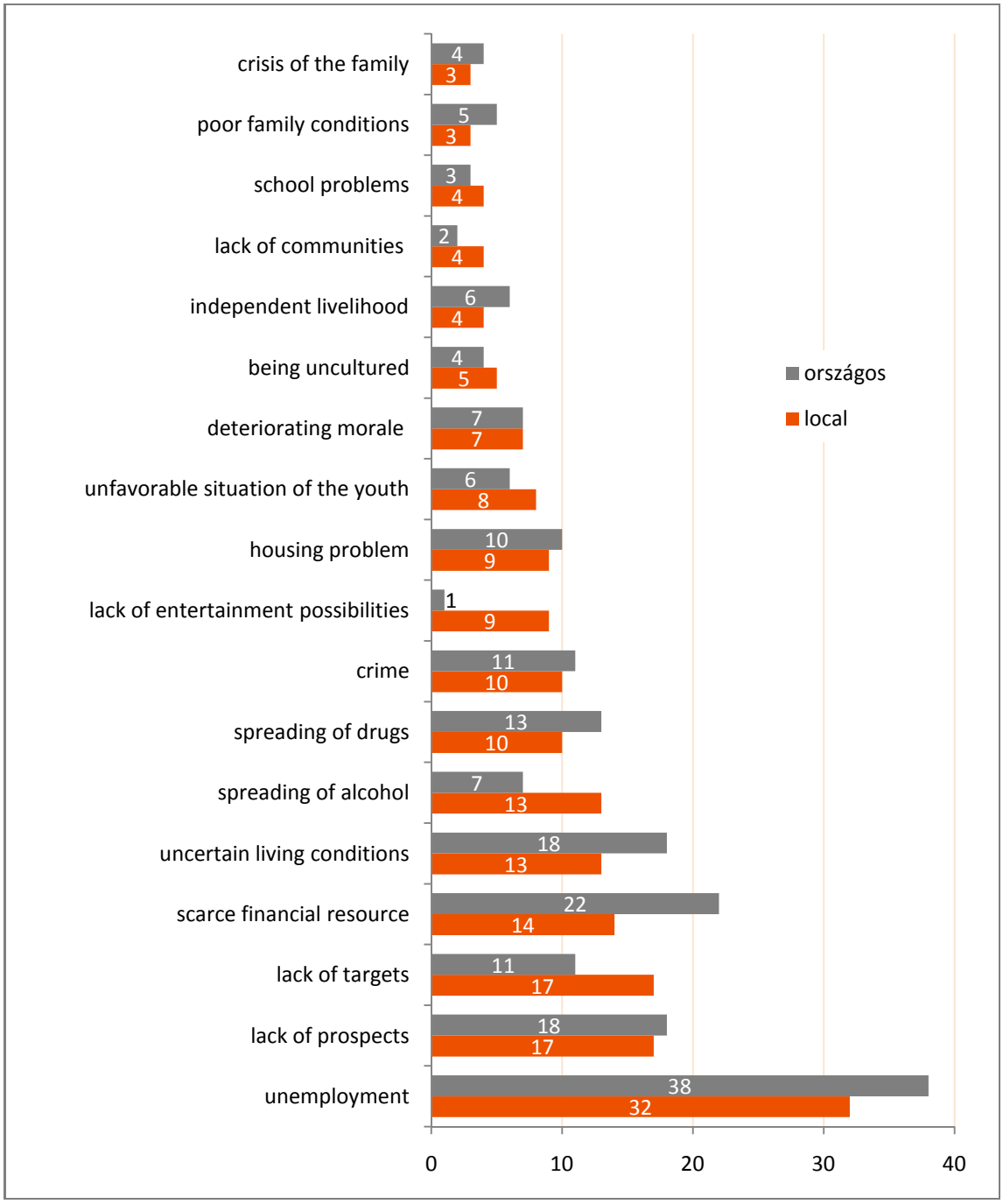


Figure No. 85. The most significant problems of the youth locally and nationally, in the opinion of the youth, 2008
(aggregated of the two replies that could be given)



Financial problems and the related uncertainty about the future cause the most considerable concerns for the youth on both a local and national level. However, it is interesting that as far as local problems are concerned, the spreading of alcohol is more significant than that of drugs. As a matter of fact, only one factor with local implications can be found among the first 10 ones – this is restricted entertainment possibilities or the lack of them.

CLOSING STATEMENTS

When the "Youth2008" flash report is created, there is no opportunity to compare the three big sample surveys more thoroughly, but we think that some changes manifesting themselves at this level of the flash report should be emphasized. These changes are outlined and mentioned in the order of the chapters of the flash report:

1. Based on the report issued by the Central Statistical Office, it can be stated that the number of the population surveyed reduced 182,969 during the four years of the study.

2. The changes in family and partnership relations and the features of steady relationships underwent dramatic changes. For example, the rate of married women belonging to the 25-29 age group reduced further as compared to the 2004 survey. As far as the 15-19 age group is concerned, the rate of individuals with children is lower than 0.5%. Similar to the tendencies in Europe, those who do have children, on average, have a low educational level and are in socially disadvantageous positions. It seems obvious that the age at which persons have their first child increases to more than 20 for the persons with at least a primary education or a higher educational level.

3. In the past four years, the participation of the 15-29 age group in organized school training rose 6 percentage points. The expansion may be identified the most strikingly in the 25-29 age group where the rate of persons still pursuing studies rose fourfold as compared to 2000.

4. Employment and its structure underwent further changes. While in 2000 the rate of persons doing physical work was two-thirds, this share reduced to about one-third by 2008. In 2004, the phenomenon of working and learning simultaneously was atypical, but this form became common by 2008.

5. One of the most important lessons of the focus group discussions is that there are no given prior strategies regarding selecting schools or a job, or if there are, they are based on information which may prove false at a later date. The same applies to the case when somebody gets into a difficult position – he/she cannot find a job after finishing school, spending some time at home with the child or he/she loses his/her job. The life training taught in school does not cover the possibility of becoming unemployed; therefore, no techniques emerged in the course of the discussions that could help someone get out of a difficult situation.

6. The families' and the youth's attitude toward gathering of wealth and preparing for the future changed after the regime change. Prompt consumption has become popular together with possessing related status symbols. In 2000, such symbols were represented by the DVD player, in 2004 by air conditioning equipment and the plasma television set. By 2008, said assets became common. Status symbols were procured, not from saved incomes, but on credit. All this is also shown by the data of the survey, according to which, the rate of persons saving and depositing money considerably reduced, and the rate of individuals using credit increased as compared to 2000.

7. In 2008, 84% of young Hungarian people used the computer in some form or another. As compared to the situation four years prior, this shows a significant increase. Between 2004 and 2008, the rate of young persons using the Internet also dynamically increased. The "scissors" were gradually closing,

which continuously manifested itself in the rate of the computer and Internet usage. Today there is hardly any sense in using the computer by itself.

8. The spread of the Internet and its integration in everyday media consumption has led to specific rearrangements in the life of the youth. Between 2004 and 2008, the time spent watching TV markedly reduced both on weekdays and on weekends. Of course, this reduction does not lead to any decline of the total time spent consuming different media, since the time "spared" on television is spent using the computer and the Internet, implying the so-called multitasking lifestyle. The studied age groups are most defined by multitasking, which is the continuous sharing of attention, generated by the multiplied supply of available communication channels and content.

9. The cultural and "social scissors" opened up further, even as compared to the former two large sample surveys. Today, it can be stated that the upper segment of education (university) is almost unavailable for children from parents with low educational levels, similar to their exclusion from elite cultural areas, leading to a lack of appropriate socialization. It is to be pointed out that visiting historical and cultural sites found in syllabuses is mainly linked to the school, and only the children of highly qualified strata and individuals living in big cities tend to visit such places together with their families.

10. We preliminarily presumed that shopping centres (plazas) had been strengthened in terms of spending leisure time, offering the opportunity of combining passive (window shopping, walking) and active (movie, restaurants, cafés) entertaining. However, this presumption could not be confirmed. About 6% of the surveyed 15-29 age group spend their leisure time in shopping centres on weekdays. The rate is somehow higher for women and for those in Budapest and in county rank cities. However, no breakthrough has taken place in the case of these groups either.

11. Activities performed during the leisure time reflect individual choices if there is a lack of companions in certain communities. Furthermore, mention should be made of the fact that, as compared to 2004, there is an increase in the rate of those who allegedly have a circle of friends. Our survey has not determined if this relation is personal or maintained via the Internet. We think that the communication related to the areas of socialization has disappeared at least partly. Nearly one-fifth of the youth just "hang around" by himself/herself and spend his/her leisure time passively.

12. A marked deterioration was identified in each dimension of public mood in the course of the survey as compared to both 2000 and 2004. Clearly, negative answers dominate the retroactive assessment concerning the past 10 years. While in 2004, nearly one-third of the 15-29 age group evaluated the period since the regime change negatively from their own perspective or the perspective of their families, in 2008, two-thirds of the youth expressed such an opinion.

13. Furthermore, the future orientation of the 15-29 age group shows a deteriorating tendency. While in 2004, 45% of the youth thought that their personal situation would improve in the near future, this rate was only 28% in 2008.

14. To sum it up, it can be stated that hardly half of the respondents think that the current system is better than the former one. As to the questions related to subsisting and secure livelihood, the Kádár era is clearly preferred (e.g. social security, employment opportunities), while in the case of the issues connected with the life situation of the youth (entertainment, participation in higher education), the 15-29 age group have more sympathy for the current regime. At first glance, it seems that the collective memory of the society did remember the relative social security of the Kádár era, although it

was built on multiple compromises. This is all the more interesting, as the great majority of the persons belonging to this surveyed age group have essentially no personal memories of the former regime.

15. One of the most exciting findings of the survey is that one-seventh of the 15-29 age group is of the opinion that under certain circumstances, autarchy is better than democracy. Furthermore, nearly one-third are practically indifferent about whether they live in a democracy or autarchy.

16. When the three big sample surveys were made, the map indicating the most significant problems of the youth underwent interesting changes. According to every statistical indicator, in 2004, when the general social situation was more favourable than the present one or the one in 2000, the 15-29 age group tended to deal with the problems of their own individual world. This meant that the spread of drugs, a lack of goals and increased crime were the most significant problems, similar to young people in Europe. At the same time, in 2000 and 2008, prospects were similar; in both years the most problematic fields were unemployment, uncertain living conditions and poverty. We think that all this clearly confirms that persons belonging to the 15-29 age group assess the world around them in a differentiated and situational adequate way and have a true notion of the social and political environment.