

*EMERGING ADULthood AND  
THE QUASI-PROFESSIONAL  
SYSTEM OF  
CHILD PROTECTION*



*Andrea Rácz*

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## INTRODUCTION

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The economic and social changes of the past few decades have given rise to a dual process effecting the definition of “life sequences”: biological maturation occurs earlier, while social maturation is postponed. Moreover, this dual process has led to an emerging interest in understanding and systematizing the special problems and needs of children and adolescents. The child protection system has responded to the issue of “extending post-adolescence” by providing an assistance and care service for young adults up until the age of 18-24 (25 in exceptional cases), which can be turned to on a voluntary basis.

The focus of this research<sup>1</sup> is on the educational career, labour market participation and future perspectives of young adults in aftercare provision and in aftercare services, and on their opinion of the support system itself.

The first chapter has studied the role of children in society in the course of history. Furthermore, the study has attempted to examine how transition between the different life phases of the young generation of Western societies can be interpreted.

The possibility of staying in the child protection system after coming of age has arisen since 1997, suggesting that those being brought up in care need further support during the emerging adulthood period. This is especially important in acquiring the roles of adulthood. However, aftercare provision and aftercare services are currently parts of a system that is based on protecting children’s rights. It is important to note that those who reach their majority in care undoubtedly need specific support and professional assistance, but as young adults, and not as children. More specifically, they do not need to be allocated special rights; unlike children, they are able to assert their rights and protect their interests for themselves. In this respect, nurturing and care are not of crucial importance for them anymore. Instead, most importantly, they need help in acquiring skills which are crucial for everyday life and which help them to identify with adult roles.

In the second chapter, the study has outlined the development of European child protection, and then gone on to scrutinize the most significant characteristics of the Hungarian child protection system. The hypothesis claims that the child protection system in Hungary is stuck in the period of ontology, in contrast to international mainstream child protection.

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<sup>1</sup> This study was based on Andrea Rácz’s Ph.D dissertation: “Do-It-Yourself biographies, sequential (system)requirements” - Study of the educational career, labour-market participation, and future perspectives of young adults who were brought up in the public child care (Budapest, ELTE, 2009.)

The third chapter of this study has also attempted to obtain an insight into both Hungarian and international research on emerging adulthood, especially into areas of study which are related to the situation of children and young adults in care. In Hungary there is a lack of research dealing with children who were brought up in care, after they come of age. Consequently, we do not know much, for instance, about their educational progress, employment success, or how they start a family. It is also largely unknown how effective the system was in preparing these young adults for the challenges of everyday life, and how successfully they were able to integrate into society. Interestingly, however, many international studies point out that those who were in care tend to suffer from social discrimination and fail to cope with their disadvantageous situation. It seems that care leavers do not get sufficient help from the system; thus, they are unable to develop the skills that are indispensable in everyday life. Care leavers tend to have low self-esteem and self-confidence, and, due to their poor educational results, their job prospects are not promising either.

The other two chapters of this study (chapter IV and V) are based on research. The research focuses on the biographies of the 40 care leavers examined in the study, who were brought up in care and have already come of age, but are still within the system of aftercare or make use of aftercare service. The author aimed to investigate where they are placed on the continuum of life course, where the two extremes are “normalized” and “selective”. Similarly, the author also aimed to demonstrate how the above-mentioned young adults look on the child protection system, the content and quality of professional support, and finally, what they regard as failure or success in their lives. While analyzing the life courses of young adults who were brought up in care, the author touched on numerous issues, for instance the decision lying behind aftercare, identity of those in care, personal relations, educational career, labour market participation and future prospects. Finally, the research has focused on Foucault’s approach on professional mentality. The author has carried out research with 20 child protection professionals and examined their self-reflection on assistance for young adults. In the author’s opinion - due to the fact that the system of childcare is stuck in the ontological stage – child protection in Hungary can be deemed quasi-professional. As the results of the interviews show - in accordance with the opinions of young adults - the child protection system itself does not work appropriately, and the personal success of young adults is entirely due to the knowledge and competence of certain professionals.

## CHAPTER I: CHANGING CHILDHOOD, EMERGING ADULTHOOD

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### I. 1. „THE CHILD IS NOT AN ADULT”

It is becoming widely known that human needs and skills are significantly different at different stages of life; these different stages are based on and strengthen each other, and vice versa. There is no strong consensus in national or international practice regarding how a human life can be divided into stages. Generally, “child” or “young” groups within nations are defined by national criteria, with a lower age limit for males and females enshrined in law. According to the Unicef (2000) they are as the following: compulsory education, access to employment and child labour, sexual activity, majority and political franchise, marriage, availing certain services without parental permission, contributing to welfare services and programs.

#### *Historical development of childhood*

Ideology connected to children, conception and the sociological construction of child and childhood correlate strongly with the way a given society sees itself, its people and human nature (Domszky 1999, Vajda 2000). Child, as a value examined in an historical context, relates to the position the child bears in the micro environment, that is to say in the family, and of course within a wider perspective, such as the macro one, society (Kerecsi 1996).

Theories concerning child development and growth are manifold. Basically, there are two scientific approaches to consider concerning the historical perspective on childhood development. One of them argues that childhood changes through history (eg. Ariés, deMause). The other states (eg. Pollock) that differences are not significant when examining childhood from an historical perspective. Pollock argues that over the course of history there are more permanent factors than temporary ones to be found concerning the raising of children. Pollock refers to universal aims such as protecting the child’s health, shaping behaviour or transferring certain cultural values, aims which are independent from the different historical eras and cultures (Szabolcs 2000).

Ariés examined childhood from a scientific perspective. According to Ariés’ research, in the medieval and early modern era, childhood was not considered to be an autonomous stage within human development. There was not even a concept of childhood as a specific period of life. This did not mean however, that the child was uncared for or held of little account. Children had their separate life far from the adults’ one, beside their mother, for as long as they needed constant care, *“as soon as there was no need for constant care from mother or nanny, the child stepped immediately into the world of human society and from that time on no disparity existed between the child and the adults”* (Ariés 1979 [1960]: 736; 1987). At the age of 6 or 7 the child reached physical

independence, became a member of adult society, took part in adults' occupations and did not differ from them in clothing. Due to high child mortality rates, at this age the child was not considered to be worthy of financial or emotional investment (Szabolcs 2000). According to Ariés' research, uncertainty existed in relation to particular social activities such as work, play or using weapons, due to lack of definition about age limits. In deMause's opinion, development cannot be interpreted through social changes but rather by the psychological phenomena which characterised the relationship between parent and child (Szabolcs 2000).

According to deMause there is a visibly lower standard of child care the further back we go in history, and a greater chance of the child suffering death through murder, abandonment, maltreatment, being terrorized or sexual assault (deMause 1998 [1974]: 13). DeMause defines and separates six stages in his theory in which it can clearly be seen how the parent approached the child, how the parents established skills in order to meet the child's demand. The 18<sup>th</sup> century was called *the pushy phase* (Phase 4) when parents wished to get closer to their child, they tried to touch their soul. The 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries are the so-called *socializing phase*, when training was not a tool for breaking the child's will. Educating the child, forming a scale of values, and improving adaptability came into focus. According to deMause's view, the so-called *supporting phase* started from the middle of 20<sup>th</sup> century, when the concept that the child knows his needs best became wider spread. Moreover, it is important for him to feel his parent's understanding, and to feel comfort as the specific and increasing demands occurring at different stages in life are met (deMause 1998 [1974]).

Civil society developed in 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century and that made ideal of childhood delineated, and gained justification in the way of thinking about society. Ariés declared that economic, social and cultural changes in civic Europe connect with the change between parent and child: the changes in the child's role and attitude towards children are derived from the changes in moral principles (Szabolcs 2000, Kerezi 1996). Birth of the intimate family atmosphere drew attention to the fact that the child's personality could be shaped, the child has special needs at different ages, and one of the most important tasks for the family is to meet them (Domszky 1999). The idea became widely accepted that the child is not mature for adult life and needs unique treatment, "*adults are beginning to admit that the child might also have personality*" (Ariés 1979 [1960]: 734)

With developed industrial society, especially with large-scale capitalism, production reached beyond family borders. That is why it became an essential value in modern economy that labour be represented at the labour market as an independent employee; increasing needs made female and child work en masse (Kerezi 1996). As the household is no longer a production unit, home and workplace were divided; working and free time became separate. In the modern society, different age groups are organized around institutions. Civil society began to emphasise that children must obtain proper knowledge at school. Differences between children and adults became institutionalised, with the modification of schools, public education and the appearance of boarding

schools (Domszky 1999). This process led the period of childhood to extend firstly until the age of 10, then to 12, 14 and finally 18 (Kerezsi 1996). Kerezsi calls attention to the fact that there is a significant change in the relationship between the state and the individual as well. The liberal civil state entrusted families to carry out family duties, consequently the state did not get involved or take responsibility in solving any family conflicts that might arise. Children's upbringing was the families' duty and parents could choose their pedagogical method (Kerezsi 1996).

As far as the approach to and treatment of children are concerned, slight improvements can only be seen from the Enlightenment. More and more opinions appear to agree that *"the child is not a miniature manifestation of an adult, but a totally different individual entity, which consequently needs provision, care and treatment. Modern pedagogy, child psychology and Paediatrics are the offspring of this change of perspective"* (Hanák 1993: 87).

Alongside general welfare improvements, falling infant mortality, improving nutrition, scientific and economical development, legal and healthcare institutions were established in 19<sup>th</sup> century, which governed the child's life. Raising children became a public affair and did not belong to a families' personal life anymore. The one-sided right of parents to decide, based on the authority of the father became restricted, and new public educational institutions were established. During the 19<sup>th</sup> century many countries in Europe made an effort to introduce compulsory school attendance. Until the 20<sup>th</sup> century it was generally accepted that the child must be trained for the difficulties in adult life, and "spoiling the child" was considered to be damaging. The needs of the developing industrial societies' lifestyles and the division of labour contributed greatly to the birth of the so-called *"protected world"* which could be adapted to the characteristics of a child's life. Consequently, children and adolescents need more time to acquire the main characteristics and lifestyles of adult society; that is to say *"to take experiences of adult life in and process them"* (Vajda 2000: 99). The relationship between parent and child changed a great deal because of the decrease in infant mortality and new developments in contraception. Parents became more conscious of parenting and family-planning, changes in society influenced the emergence of the intimate relationship between child and parent (Vajda 2000). Elias (1987) speaks about changes in civilization which changed everyday habits significantly, for instance, changes in attitude towards the body. Winning control over bodily functions meant new demands for family education. Relationships between adults also changed due to the civilization process; expressing emotion and passion openly became less of an issue. (These processes did not happen simultaneously in different social classes.) As a result of this process of civilisation verbal punishment replaced physical violence, which resulted in a more controlled way of expressing emotions (Vajda 2000).

Research on child development proved that not only the child's needs differ qualitatively from the adult's ones but the way of thinking and view of the world as well. Consequently, authoritarian upbringing, non-professional treatment involving punishment turned out to be an inappropriate way to ensure the development of the child (Vajda 2000). Modern psychology believes that there is no



successful way to raise a child without permanent parental love. Ellen Key calls the 20<sup>th</sup> century *the child's century*, the expression of pedagogy based upon the child originates from her. *"Let the 20<sup>th</sup> century be such, when all children are able to develop their inborn capabilities."* (apud. Aczél 1979: 721) According to Aczél (1979) inborn universality is hidden in the concept of child. As an individual, the child is innocent, not responsible for the circumstances she or he is born into, meanwhile she or he is vulnerable due to those factors. Aczél's view is consistent with those authors mentioned above who elaborated child development from an historical point of view. The view declares that speaking about the child reflects the society which determines the child's present and future, and defines their opportunities – based on their capabilities –, to succeed in the society Aczél describes childhood as a period when personality can be formed in different ways; at this stage the child *"learns, copies, acquires"*, adopts everything which were outer originally. According to his argument, the child is conditioned by others not only physically but also mentally. *"If the child does not manage to adopt enough from the adults (or not valuable, good, and beautiful enough) in this period which is mostly based on education (but, of course, is slightly influenced by other factors as well), the child's personality and character remain undeveloped"* (Aczél 1979: 725).

#### *Development of children's rights*

The most important period in the history of children's rights is the 20<sup>th</sup> century. In Therborn's opinion the development of children's rights shows a tendency against the Marshallian view, as in the case of children, firstly the essential social rights were to develop, like right for survival, education, being nursed. These were followed by political and finally civil rights (apud. Darvas 2000: 25).

Movements for children's rights focusing on children directed attention to them as individuals, causing parental authority to decrease (Wallace – Bill 2006 [1992]). The name Eglantyne Jebb must be mentioned here; she was the founder of the Save the Children Fund. She elaborated a code of rules called the Children's Charter to acknowledge children's rights. The document was approved and accepted by the League of Nations on 24 September, 1924. It became known as the Geneva Declaration. The document – even though it was not legally binding– included basic rights for ensuring child welfare. On 20 November, 1959, the General Assembly of the United Nations recognized the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, although it was not as yet a binding document. For the state, international law considers child protection of essential and high importance. The Declaration on children's rights states that the child needs special protection and care, taking his lack of physical and mental maturity into consideration. Due to health documents containing economical, social, cultural rights, as well as civil and political ones, recognized in 1966, the first overall treaties of human rights appeared. These documents contain some rulings which apply to children. One of great importance is that the child has the right to be protected by family,

society and the state. The General Assembly of the United Nations marked the year 1979 as the International Year of the Child.<sup>2</sup>

The state's duties towards children are laid out in their entirety in the Convention of Children's Rights (20 November, 1989, New York). The Convention was announced in Hungary along with the law of LXIV/1991. The Convention lays out children's basic rights in two ways. Firstly, it states that the child is entitled to all rights that everybody shares, but recognises that the child is obviously less able to enforce these alone. Secondly, the child requires further basic rights to be provided due to his age and specific conditions deriving from it. The Convention considers a person as a child until the age of 18, except in the case when the age limit is reached earlier for other specific reasons. As for basic rights, the Convention determines the following – amongst others – as basic rights: right to identity, family, protection of family unit, proper health conditions, safe environment, proper living standards, education, economy, against sexual exploitation, protection of personal liberty, etc.

Diósi (1998) raises the concern that it is pointless for a child to have rights if they can only be enforced in the adults' way; in other words, does a child have interests if they are represented by adults? In the case of children being raised in families, it is the parent who must recognize and represent the child's interest in the best way. Several precedents are known where the child's interests are not enforced (eg. maltreatment), or when parents direct their child's life according to their own expectations (eg. career guidance).

According to the Child Protection Law, the following institutions provide child protection, and grant special attention to the over-riding importance of children's interests: local governments, the court of guardians, the court, the police, the public prosecutor's office, other organizations and persons providing and ensuring the given laws. Of course, we are aware of several cases (eg. Diósi 1998, Szilvási 2006) when the child's primary interest is over-ridden by another one. This interest is based upon the decision maker's ascendancy that is to say in the interest of power. The principle of the child's interest (over-riding) is the most debated in Hungary as well, the most difficult to interpret. However, it is without doubt the highest value, which determines the whole Child Protection Law. The National Strategy (2007-2032) called "*Let the children's life get better!*" mentions the principle as a primary, strategic and special one. The former one means that only those acts and solutions can be unanimously supported which are in accord with children's rights. The latter one emphasizes the importance of *fair decision*. This focuses on making all efforts to meet the child's interests through all decisions and activities, leaving no chance for violating it either directly or indirectly.

The Convention of Children's Rights declares that the family is primarily responsible for raising the child, and for providing the living conditions necessary for the child's healthy development. The

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<sup>2</sup> The idea was already conceived in 1972 with the aim of calling the world's attention to the necessity of meeting children's special needs.

Convention also recognizes the responsibility of the state and society in providing and ensuring possible support for families in need, in order to let them meet the given requirements (Unicef 2007).

#### *Basic rights of children in national law*

In Hungary, basic human rights are laid down in the Constitution. Generally, it ensures rights independent of age; however, it contains some special orders related to children. It recognizes the institution of marriage and family, and it declares that Hungary protects children with special legislation. According to the Constitution, every child has the right to be protected and cared for, and the right for proper physical, mental and moral development.

Child protection law is an important law targeting the enforcement of children's rights. This is not a general law as not all the basic rights of children are included, but rather mainly contains social rights (Szöllősi 1998). Before preparing the law - later I will discuss the concepts born at that time -, there was a plan that the law should contain all the basic legislation related to children. Consequently, not only the basic provision of children's welfare, or child protection would have been governed by it, but also those state duties related to children, such as education or children's health care. According to the Child Protection Law, the right to be brought up in a family, the right to be protected, the right to maintain family connections or identity are basic laws having social content. The child under temporary or constant care has the right, for instance, to the full provision of permanence and emotional stability. The child has the right to be provided with proper upbringing, education; the opportunity to take part in talent development programs; to express opinions about education and care services; to be heard on issues related to him personally; to maintain personal relationships. Protecting the rights embodied in the child protection law is the duty of every natural person and legal entity concerned with education, teaching, child care services or acting in the child's behalf.

#### *The child entitled with rights*

In connection with rights, Winn (1990) writes in the book *Children with no childhood* that if we entitle children to similar rights to adults, we emancipate them. Consequently, we do not take into consideration the fact that there are actual differences in development between the child and the adult. Winn believes that the aspect of emancipation integrates the child into the adults' world, and as a result we eliminate the borderline between the child's and the adult's world. That is to say the borderline which came about in the course of long historical development vanishes. Over-emphasising emancipation, vesting the child with rights (or let us say burdening) which can only be enforced with the help of adults would make the adults feel that children should be treated as adults. However, it was recognizing the actual differences in development that caused adults to treat and define children in a different way. According to Winn, this is a process which could have contradictory effect. It could deprive the child of safety and protection that they could have felt in a

world built up in hierarchy (Winn 1990). In Herman's opinion, the problems emerging from the American way of raising children are based on the fact that parents disregard the completely different needs a child should be provided with. Parents see children as equal; they share their experiences with them over-looking an important fact; children cannot receive these experiences due to the lack of maturity (apud. Winn 1990: 263). According to Neubauer's view, it is unclear in which situation children reach a higher level of maturity, under a longer or shorter period of parents' protection. Based on experiences from praxis, Neubauer came to the conclusion that the sooner the child faces challenges of life the longer he remains a child. He does not even become precocious.

If we accepted Winn's approach, then we would state that establishing child's rights and enshrining them in the Convention of Children's Rights does nothing but harm as it does not lay the basis for different treatment for children but rather their equal rights with adults. Children's rights are totally different both in structure and content and hence we should not consider the child as a small adult.

The historical development of childhood shows that it took long time for the family, the state and the society to treat the child in a different way. The conception and enshrinement of children's rights happened only in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. If we acknowledge that children are not small adults with 'mini-rights' – not leaving out the existence of pedagogy and development psychology –, but individuals with different needs, ways of thinking, and world view; representing a specific group – given their age and level of development – having definable and independent interests and needs; being active subjects of their own rights; then we must see that their rights possess a special structure. Children can only enforce their rights via others, mostly parents, or those working in child protection services, care or education. This means that the technical word "*active subject of rights*" is misleading as the child can only enjoy his rights as a child as a result of others' active and positive contribution. If we take as a starting point the child's age and developmental differences, then the child, considered as the active subject of rights, can only stand up for his rights according to his age, and according to this ability participate in decisions with a significant influence on his future.

When co-operating with children, the British Psychological Society finds it cardinal that communication with the child must always be done from the perspective of the level of development. The following must always be taken into consideration: age/level of development, ethnic background, culture, language, skills or lack of skills, temperamental factors. Experts working in the child protection service must be prepared to co-operate with the child. It is essential that they explain to the child what is happening to him/her, the child must be encouraged to speak his/her mind. Experts must be aware of the existing differences in power between adult and child which have an influence on the child. When communicating with the child, it is crucial to pay attention to what the child says (The British Psychological Society 2007).

### *Who is a child?*

From a children's rights point of view (a person under the age of 18) it is really easy to give the definition of a child, but in a social context the concept of childhood is not as simple. Winn's view as mentioned above includes radical criticism about society and states that the globalization did harm to the child's innocence, burst open the shield protecting the child which had come about through long-time development. As a result of this, the child cannot really be seen as a real one. Without subscribing to the view that childhood is lost, it needs taken into account that children's life has changed significantly. These changes cannot, however, be grasped using out-dated terminology. It seems obvious that childhood as a social construct (that is to say not adulthood) can be understood through interpreting adulthood. This evidence is cultivated by a new period of life appearing between childhood and adulthood, which in Erikson's point of view is *"a psychosocial phase between morality studied by the child and the ethics improved by the adult"*. (Erikson 2002: 259)

## **1.2. „EMERGING ADULTHOOD”**

### *Changes in stages of life and roles of ages*

According to Mérei and Binét (2003 [1970]), the end of childhood consists of several factors. This process is first realized at the age of 12 and 13 by the changes happening to the child's body, like sharpening of facial features, changes in body proportions, appearance of sexuality. Day-dreaming is natural at this age, which is ego-focused. Self-understanding develops, although the child is not fully aware of himself, or his possibilities and limits, either. Struggle for independence is also natural; the child wants to make his own decisions. *"Struggle for self-dependence equals with the real perspective of development, as it will be realized some years later"* (Mérei and Binét 2003 [1970]: 284). This demand is unrealistic however, as desires and skills are not in harmony with each other. At the age of 13 the child wants to be a real adolescent, not an adult, while on the other hand the teenager wants to become adult, and wishes to get rid of all the roles of a child. He fights not against parents but for his own identity, reworking childhood characteristics (Bagdy 1977). The teenager's changes occur alongside changes in the family such as rules within the family. Accordingly, other family members' individual development happens simultaneously (Balogh 2000).

The welfare state, secularization, political, cultural and sexual liberation, feminism, but more than anything public education extended the length of adolescence. Keniston first used the concept of post-adolescence in 1968. In his view, in modern societies the day of sexual maturity, becoming an adult in social context or gaining employment have become gradually separated from each other. Youth during the post-adolescent period meet almost all the psychological criteria of becoming adult, but do not meet the social requirements as they are not yet integrated into the institutional structure of society. These young people are oriented towards the present; they lack the capacity to strive for consensus and safety (du Bois-Reymond 2006 [1998], Somlai 2007).

Several authors write about the need for new models and definitions to be introduced, with which to describe the shifts between the life-cycle stages of young generations in Western societies. It seems that the experience and future prospects of today's generation are much more complex but at the same time less defined than the earlier generations'. Therefore models of linear structure are less applicable when describing or giving definition to emerging adulthood (Wyn – Dwyer 2006 [1999]).

One essential way of defining adulthood is through life path. In another context, Jones, for instance, believes that *"the life path is indeed a biography of the individual, product of his and his fellow-beings' relationship"* (apud. Wallace – Bill 2006 [1992]: 270). It can be interpreted as a series of stations and phases which are organized based on the chronological order of years. These phases are often considered as one episode followed by another in the sequence of necessity: childhood is followed by adolescence, and then comes adulthood and finally old age (Brannen and Nilsen 2003). According to Somlai, *"during modernization, changes in life phases and the roles of different ages stood strictly together with planning and realizing career and rationalization of planned life"* (Somlai 2000 [1997]: 108). In Kohli's opinion, the standardized life developed in modern societies where childhood and teens are the so-called *preparatory phase*; active adulthood is a so-called *seeker phase*, and the final phase is characterised by old age, the so-called *settling phase*. These three sequential phases of life were located in an ordered way, where irreversible changes happened (apud. Somlai 2000 [1997]: 108). A standard life consequently corresponded to a sequential model because it meant the fixed chronological order of life's main events, regular succession of phases and irreversible order of these (Somlai 2007). By the end of 20<sup>th</sup> and beginning of 21<sup>st</sup> century, a modified model of life was born which developed along with post-adolescence, the extended teen-age (Somlai 2007). To mark the careers having developed this way, mostly individualized, non-sequence and non-standard technical words are used, Beck (2003) for instance speaks about *do-it-yourself biographies*.

At the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> and beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century three types of individualization patterns are distinguishable. We speak about *Progressive individualization* when the adolescent is able to get rid of traditional forces and can weigh up several different possibilities, making his own decisions concerning private life or educational options. *Regressive individualization* is a feature of those who were unsuccessful in the education system, they are threatened by unemployment, or the chosen profession does not have a place for them. (Assumedly, most young adults having been brought up in the child protection service fall into this latter category. In order to examine this, I will discuss it further in the research section of the thesis.) The third pattern is the so-called *alternative individualization*. This characterises those young people who are not willing to participate in consumer society. Self-realization is important for them; they go for idealistic aims, and join alternative groups (Gábor 2005: 20-21). If we wish to reinterpret the concept of adolescence alongside the concept of civil status, then adolescence is the phase when the young person becomes a full member of society with civil rights. However, civil rights can only be gained gradually by the adolescent. Rights and duties given by laws are structured according to age. There are some civil

rights, for example, the right to work, which can be exercised by the adolescent before coming of age. In Hungary for instance, the law of XXII/1992 in Labour Code declares that employment relations may only be established by an employee over the age of 16. Students, over 15, at primary school, vocational school, secondary school, or as a full-time student can only get employment in the school holidays. Under 15 you can only work with the permission of a legal representative. Another such obligation is, for example, obedience to the law; according to Criminal Code, an individual over 14 years of age can be impeached according to criminal liability. However, most political rights, like the right to vote, can only be practiced after becoming adult.

### *Road to adulthood*

According to Arnett (2004), the road to adulthood is a long and winding one for the adolescent today; in Arnett's opinion a new terminology and a different approach are required. He calls this stage of life "*Emerging adulthood*". In his view, this period is not only an "extended teen-age" because it differs significantly from the teen-age featuring the loose control of parents; it is rather an experimental phase. It cannot be called and described as young adulthood as this suggests that the individual reached adulthood while at this age he cannot yet be considered as an adult in a sociological context. He denotes five characteristics typical of this period:

1. This is the phase of discovering identity, experimenting with different possibilities, especially in the areas of love and work.
2. This is the phase of uncertainty.
3. This is the most ego-centric phase of all.
4. This is the phase when the individual's position is interim, beyond adolescence but not yet adult.
5. This is the phase of possibilities, when the individual is full of hopes, when there is the possibility to change life (Arnett 2004).

### *Adolescents between standardized and chosen life*

Some time ago education was followed by employment, but today most young people mix the two up. Leading a double life also originates from the changed economical and social circumstances, but it is still a matter of personal choice in several cases (Wyn–Dwyer (2006 [1999])).

Wyn and Dwyer (2006 [1999]) apply a five-phased typology for locating the adolescents' position between the so-called standardized and chosen life. The first two types correlate with the standardized model, when 1) the emphasis is on obtaining vocational training in order to let the adolescent decide or ground his later career (*focusing on vocation*), 2) the adolescent shows favour towards work and all the life choices this offers (*focusing on work*). The remaining three types rather



fit into the chosen life. The third type is the so-called *focusing on contexts*, the one who chooses one context in life, like family, community, dual relationship or work, and the emphasis is put on it. Researchers call the next one *the changed pattern*. The adolescents who belong to this category always go back on their original decision and as a result they get redirected, choosing another path. Type five is the so-called *hybrid pattern*. The adolescents have several goals and put the same emphasis on different activities.

Wyn and Dwyer (2006 [1999]) found that out of 2000 Australian young people the hybrid pattern is the most characteristic with 43%, followed by those focusing on vocation with 27%, then comes those focusing on work with 13%, then those focusing on contexts with 10%. The smallest number were those with the changed pattern, with 7%.

### *Image of adulthood, the adolescents' frame of life*

Du Bois-Reymond was seeking answers for the adolescents' ways of thinking about adulthood. How do they live with uncertainty and the mass of possibilities occurring in several situations of life? Five individual concerns were identified by du Bois-Reymond such as 1) demurral - mass of possibilities; 2) professions connected to individual development; 3) flexibility - professional future; 4) relationships, family and work; 5) later or never become an adult. Chart 1 shows main characteristics of the five parts.

CHART 1: RECOGNIZABLE PROJECTS IN JUVENILE BIOGRAPHIES

Type	Characteristics
<i>demurral - mass of possibilities</i>	Young people are often forced to commit themselves to a certain profession, but they do not know where it leads in several cases. The education system is not able to provide an overall view of vocations and possibilities and risks of the future labour market.
<i>professions connected to individual development</i>	Several young people feature this approach in which the aim of work is to improve personality, so they seek for possibilities which serve this. Developmental chance is more important than money.
<i>flexibility - professional future</i>	Young people make long-term investments into their professional future; they are desire a flexible lifestyle. The adolescent's attitude moves between two poles: they are flexible, for instance in case of unemployment they do any kinds of job, putting trust in becoming a possible millionaire.
<i>relationships, family and work</i>	They have no definite image of founding a family or parents' roles. They either have no time for lasting partnerships or they are rather choosy. Most of them give up active sex due to their occupations.
<i>later or never become an adult</i>	Adulthood is rather suspicious for the adolescent, where they can lose their playfulness; they might become serious and boring. Adulthood is partly boring, moreover, it involves responsibilities.

(Source: Manuela du Bois-Reymond: „I do not want to commit myself yet”: based on *The Young's Frame of Life* 2006 [1998]: 287-295)

Du Bois-Reymond's qualitative research with adolescents from the Netherlands shows that adulthood is not attractive for them because they find it boring and involving too much responsibility. They could hardly imagine working all their lives; they find full-time work till their



retirement unbearable. They consider adulthood as only one of the phases in life that is why it is not even compulsory.

#### *Planning future – time-orientation of young adults*

The way of individuals determine and sense time has a significant effect on their ability to plan the future. Consequently, future planning is influenced by the present; future gets a “here and now” meaning in this context. Brannen and Nilsen were occupied with the time-orientation of the adolescents (2002), having proceeded from Nowotny’s concept of the so-called “extended present”. Researchers have outlined three models of the adolescent’s visions of future (that is to say way of thinking about time, looking forward to adulthood from the present) based on focus group interviews with British and Norwegian young adults (aged 18-30). The first model is the “*deferment model*”, in which young people live mainly in the present and their plans are focused on the extended present. They think of adulthood as one becoming similar to their parents’ one. They assume that they will settle down sometime, but that time has not come yet. In the near future they see themselves working. The adolescents who belong to the “*adaptability model*” consider future as a risk that has to be reckoned with, and which has to be kept well in hand. This could mean positive challenges for them as well. These young people take only one step at a time, they test themselves step by step whether they are prepared for the future or not. They sense future as changing constantly which enables them to become accustomed to change. They are never afraid of trying out more workplaces; they do not want to get stuck in boring jobs. As for the future, they are self-confident; they are convinced that it depends on them to what degree they shall succeed. The third model is the “*predictability model*”, which is the traditional bread-winning perspective. Young adults are proud of the profession of their own choice, which ensures them an acceptable living. They consider adulthood as the central phase of a well-chosen, predicted and standardized life, based on life-long work<sup>3</sup> (Brannen–Nilsen 2002).

Economic and social changes in the last decades induced a dual process having significant influences on the definition of ages; biological maturity accelerated, and social maturity got delayed. Due to these processes new activity emerged with the aim of systematizing and recognizing the different problems and needs of childhood and adolescence. Historical development of childhood indicates that it was a long process before the family, the state and the society treated children differently. The birth of children’s rights, or rather their enshrinement, happened in 20th century. Children are not small adults, but ones having different needs, ways of thinking as adults; moreover they represent a specific group which has independent interests and needs; they could only enforce their rights by adults’ positive actions towards them. Concerning children’s rights (every person is a child under 18), it is easy to give a definition for the child. However, it is much more complex to do

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<sup>3</sup> According to the results of the research, people with low education, unskilled British and Norwegian women belonged to the first model, Females having university education belonged to the second model, meanwhile skilled males following the traditional role of bread-winner belonged to the third one.

the same in social context. By the beginning of 21st century a modified model of life emerged; the sequence structure of earlier lives relaxed which went along with delaying teen-age, that is to say, with the development of post-adolescence. Adolescents during post-adolescent period meet mostly all the psychological criteria of becoming adult, but do not answer the social requirements as they are not yet integrated into the institutional structure of society. Most of them do not have their own income or independent residence, and even those who have achieved financial independence are still influenced by their parents when making important decisions.

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## CHAPTER II: VALUES UNDERPINNING CHILD PROTECTION

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An exploration of the values underpinning child protection is carried out through a demonstration of the historical development of child protection in Europe; examination of one of the main approaches of international child protection; the content of professional discourses, and finally the characteristics of child protection in Hungary.

### Three-phased model of European child protection

The three-phased model of European child protection is linked to Ligthart. The first phase, the so-called *mythic phase*, lasted till the 1700s when the child was not considered an independent entity but part of the social environment where opportunities are determined by outside factors (Volentics 1996: 40). Placing children out to foster parents is rooted in the mythical way of thinking, according to which if the child with behavioural disorders is placed into a new family, he may be easily assimilated and as a result his behaviour will change. The second phase is the so-called *ontological phase*, in which the aim of education was to make the child mature into an adult as soon as possible. According to Ligthart, the collective education in foster-homes aimed to let the child get his bearings within the boundaries of society. Teaching for norm-following behaviour was backed by establishing separate institutions far from the society in order to *“let the children be protected from the influences of city environment and the harmful influence of their own immoral families”* (apud. Volentics 1996: 41). After the ontological phase, in the 1930s the newly appearing and spreading therapeutic theories had a significant effect, which put the individual in the centre, or rather his problematic behaviour. They influenced education in foster-homes significantly, but several types of problems remained untouched. Staff employed at institutes did not hand on practical knowledge which would have been useful in life; they did not pay particular attention to the development of children’s and young people’s personality; education was promoted in order to acquire employment, but no attention was paid to the productive use of free-time. There was a failure to provide continuous support after leaving the child protection system.

In most countries in Central, and Eastern Europe in the post-WW2 period, a network of boarding foster-homes were being established one after another, and over-dependence on institutions was typical. For children of each age-group suffering from different problems –like children with disabilities, abused, orphaned, offenders, or children with behavioural problems – different care systems were maintained. *“The principle that the state is responsible for people’s welfare in society was distorted, in order to encourage disadvantaged parents to abandon and leave their child behind”* (Unicef 2007: 60). Children having left families became known as “orphans of society” (Firstly, it was known that only 4 or 5 per cent of children under public care were indeed

orphans.<sup>4</sup>) From the 1970s in Europe social ecological theories had a heavy influence on child protection work, the change of perspective led to establishing the so-called *functional phase*. In child protection, the functional approach turned attention to the disadvantageous effects a problematic environment has on children. In a socio-ecological approach, the child is part of an environmental system, but an independent entity having inherent developmental possibilities. *“According to the institutions’ perspective this means that our aim is to let children develop positively even in a problematic environment.”* (Volentics 1996: 43) The reason for transforming crowded institutions was to provide family – like environments for raising children. The functional family model – attained in an artificial environment – is for preparing the child to be able to live independently, to become integrated into society. Greater and greater emphasis was put on arranging problems with the help of the natural family, which helped the child’s upbringing within the family. In 1980s, expert opinion clearly stated that social work providing a permanent placement is capable of protecting the child from damaging effects of the system.

### Examination of the development of Hungarian child protection, in relation to the European model

In so far as we examine the historical development of Hungarian child protection within the three-phased Lighthart model, the first major setback can be realized in the 1930s, the time when concepts of pedagogical and social work were spreading: in our country these were not influential, *“consequently, the professional development of child protection was delayed, and it remained the charity works of good, child-loving, simple people”* (Volentics 1996: 50). Stagnancy’s characteristics in the ontological phase is, for example, the delay of the therapeutic concepts which had significant influence in Europe but did not become determinant in the Hungarian child protection.

Following the Western European trends, in Eastern and Central Europe, including Hungary (however, with some delay) significant changes happened to the child protection system, in its structure, in its establishment, moreover in enforcing children’s rights. However, it seems that theoretical views do not appear in everyday practice. According to Domszky: *“The 80s launched lots of changes in child protection. It happened because evidently the socialist society cannot eliminate the factors negatively influencing the child’s development. Hence, the political approach became more ‘permissive”* (Domszky 1999: 42). Demand for general child protection rather than a specific one became conceptualized; and more and more emphasis was put on the client-centred approach. The shift from an institution-centred way of thinking towards client-centred one assumes that all forms of support is individual-based, it adjusts the child’s and his family’s specific needs to each

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<sup>4</sup> In our country, of all those children under child protection system, 3% are known to be orphans. In the year of promulgation of Child Protection Law, the rate was about the same with 2,7%, while the common conception is we are helping orphans (Domszky 1999: 12).

other. The law XXXI/1997 of child protection and public guardian (as stated in Child protection law) grounds as a basic principle that official child protection must always be preceded by services available voluntarily. It recognizes that the child can only be taken out of the family if risky conditions remain in spite of multilateral support. As the operation of the child protection system is the duty of the state and local government, or can be provided through contract by a non-state organization, the child protection became multi-sectored by law. According to its principles it is client-centred and the emphasis is put on meeting personal needs (Domszky 1999: 56-57).

What does this change of system in child protection mean (placing duties of children's welfare and child protection into standardized structure, reconstruction of institutions of professional care, registering child protection workers' qualification requirements, importance of professional programs etc.)? Does it mean that it has resulted in a real professionalism where the problem-solving child protection has elaborated the professional contents in a streamlined and targeted way; has identified the basis of child-raising within the family; has managed placement in case of children already exposed; in hopeless cases has used methods aimed at young adults' in order to prepare them for independent life? How are the pedagogical and support methods adjusted to child protection as raising in special life situation?

### Main subjects of international child protection

Recently in international practice (mainly in Western Europe) it has become evident that crisis-based child protection focuses only on those already in a vulnerable situation, where some kinds of state intervention has happened. It means that disadvantaged families are forced by the delegated state representative of child protection to solve their problems on their own, otherwise there will be a need for intervention into the family unit. The Crisis-managing approach to child protection indeed weakens parents' responsibility. In Western Europe, according to the new approach to children's needs, children's needs and provided support must be examined alongside each other. Level of the child's needs is determined by the degree the family could meet the child's needs when he is exposed to a dangerous environment, and by the type of supports provided for the child and his parents (Unicef 2007).

The necessity of practice based on evidence is getting more and more emphasis in international child protection. According to Tomison (2002) formal, rational child protection based on scientific evidence could generate a much more efficient and economical service system. It is a basic expectation that professional work (service process) must be well-documented, registering input and output indicators; set and achieved targets; planned and realized tasks; to what degree the intervention served the child's interests; what changes happened to preserve the family unit, strengthen the child's family status; what were the intervention's successful and non-effective elements. All in all, how did the professional work effect the child and his family? In O'Connor's opinion (2000) when examining services', programs' and different interventions' efficiency targeted

on child's welfare and protection, we must not overlook social and cultural context where they are indeed realized. As several principles of child welfare and protection offer different interpretations, child protection always faces the challenge of working out the best way to make a clean-cut in the case of a successful intervention, to serve the child's welfare, and preserve the family unit. Evidence-based practice is also needed because child protection practice is mainly based on collective wisdom and not on grounded knowledge, consequently, child protection is forced to prove the necessity of its own existence in several instances (to protect itself) (Gordon 2000).

Besides the need for elaborating standards and protocols in international child protection, greater emphasis is being put on the aspects of cost effectiveness in the child welfare context (child welfare contra child protection), as well as on the cost and output differences between each provision (institutional contra foster parents' provision).

### *Stagnant national child protection in the ontological stage*

Content hiatuses, which are characteristic of the ontological phase in European child protection, cause the problems presently facing Hungarian child protection. Below, I deliberate on why child protection in Hungary stagnated, describing the characteristics of its historical development following Ligthart in the so-called ontological phase, and why it had no opportunity to progress to a functional one.

### *Structural change of child protection system*

The institutional network of child protection is manifold; theoretically, there is a wide range of key possibilities. After enacting the Child Protection Law, the provision of primary child welfare and child protection became separate, child care services were born, institutional structure of professional care was adapted, reorganization and restructuring of big institutions made institutions homely, more open for local communities, for residential areas.

Demolition of numerous orphanages and the establishment of the home system started in the early 1990s, mainly in the countryside. This did not prove to be a smooth process. Purchasing buildings suitable for the purpose was restricted not only by financial matters but also by bureaucracy, such as obtaining several permits and licences, (for instance Public Health and Health Officer Service, fire protection regulations, etc.). Moreover, neither children nor professionals were prepared properly for life in institutions with a small number of residents, not to mention the initial powerful resistance of local communities (Vidra Szabó 2000). Parallel to this, improving the network of foster parents became even more important, although opinion on foster parent provision is still extremely divided; there are some who consider this way of placement suitable for every child, others still question the capability of laypersons to meet the expectations an orphanage would face (Herczog 2001). Underlying the failure of fosterage is the problem that foster families are over-

stretched, or children are placed into large families that have little time to give attention to those who require much more care. The responsibilities of child protection should be taken into account when evaluating the capabilities of potential fosterers (Vida 2001). It is, however, important to see clearly that fosterage and the function and requirements of children's home cannot be the same. According to Józsa (2005), an institutional type of lifestyle could be the solution for those needing a lower level of everyday care where this does not result in emotional dissatisfaction. It is partly suitable for those at the age of 12-15 who may be placed back into their original families within a short period of time; for those adolescents at the age of 16-17 for whom professional support proves to be helpful in obtaining knowledge and skills for social inclusion, or to establish an independent life; for those children showing neurotic, psychotic, dissocial symptoms, or for children with deviant behaviour whose development and therapy could only be dealt with in an exclusively institutional surrounding. However, the institutional system cannot cope with the latter target group. These children are mainly moved from one institution to another *"in the hope of reaching the age of majority, the age of adulthood"* (Vidra Szabó 2000: 20). In B. Aczél's view (1994), those young people in the worst situation are those who are not only moved from one institution to another, but from one foster home to another. In most cases it happens in adolescence, typically *"foster parents do not identify teen-age symptoms and conflicts in their own right, but experience them as disappointment in themselves and the child; they consider it to be their own failure"* (Vida 2001: 30). In the case of children under care, there are four groups of traumatic effects. *Traumas before child care service* originate from the consequences of neglect, maltreatment, aggression towards the child. *Trauma of placement* is the result of being taken out from the familiar environment which is accompanied by lowering self-esteem, feelings of uncertainty, hopelessness and helplessness. *Problems emerging from institutional lifestyle* due to the fact that children become institutionalized (body, intellectual, emotional and behavioural deflexion), pressure of permanent accommodation, rivalry, becoming a scapegoat, the so-called institutional stigma. *Difficulties in fosterage placement* consist of provisionality, conditionality, experience of dual status, self-identity problems, sense of being second-rate (Kálmánchey 2001).

Improvement of child protection structure is not yet complete; there must be greater emphasis put on basic provision development in the future, as the aim is to bring the child up in his own family. All services in the basic provision of child welfare are to be improved, especially child care ones and the provision of temporary care. In child protection care, it is necessary to modernize institutions or create facilities suitable for those in special needs and care (Szikulai 2006a). When arranging the place where the child will be cared for, arrangements remain *ad hoc*: *"this could not even be changed by re-examination, planning obligation and team meetings (...)When a decision has to be made on placing the child it is, unfortunately, not the case that the interests of the child are taken into consideration"* (Herczog 2001: 167-168).

### *Insufficiency of essential professional contents*

It shows a basic failure of the profession that 10 years after the enactment of the Child Protection Law we still talk of how the legislation is insufficiently understood, that many concepts of child protection are undefined and their purposeful content is missing. Professional discourses are still about, on the one hand, how child protection services must not mean the dead-end destination for children and young adults, with no way back to their family, or on the other hand, whether the children and young adult's specific needs should determine what form of provision is necessary.

According to Herczog (2001) the majority of professionals do not possess the competence and experience in child protection needed to provide for those in professional care. In connection with child protection, Szikulai highlights establishing the theoretical basis as one of the most important tasks, as *"Common acceptance of theoretical basis creates the opportunity for establishing standardized professional contents and rules (...)"* (Szikulai 2006a: 4). It is crucially important to work out a standardized conceptual apparatus, to make some technical words clear (for instance child's interests above all), and to elaborate methodical protocols. The latter ones give common standards to each area of work belonging to childcare. Laying down rules based on a professional-ethical approach is indispensable in achieving quality work; however, for child protection, this aim seems to be impossible without theoretical basis and standard terminology. In the process of becoming a profession, there is the need for setting up trainings at different levels, broadening the post-graduation system providing specialist knowledge, a code of ethics comprehensively regulating today's child protection service, as well as establishing an independent quality system which is necessary to consolidate professional work to the highest standard (Herczog 1997, 2001, Szikulai 2006a).

There is an interesting picture regarding the expectations of professionals towards children and those of the professionals towards experts. Professionals mostly air their grievances as decision makers, putting emphasis on children's rights but none of their duties are mentioned. Negative views of theirs are like apud. Vidra Szabó (2000), according to which *"children under public care seem genetically predestined for bearing rights for everything, everything is at hand"* while preceptors have no rights. Herczog (2002) calls attention to the fact that there are several reasons for the children's rights not to be enforced even when all conditions are given. One of the reasons, for instance, is that some professionals are not aware of children's rights and measures or execution of measures is not controlled in a proper way.

Criterion for an ideal child protection expert is that he must have a stable but flexible scale of values, the child is not compensating for his own family, he must have his own child, *"possibly not too young ones, as all the routines of raising a child can be transmitted"* (Vidra Szabó 2000: 19-20). Domszky (2004) provides a more exact picture of expectations towards child protection professionals: they must have human characteristics like love for profession, love towards children,



flexibility, as well as the skills of the profession such as empathy, co-operational skills, and professional awareness. Workers in the child protection service talk about identity crisis, they cannot place themselves in the system, and they cannot determine whether they do pedagogical or rather social work. They could not give accounts of standardized educational concepts or coherent aims of care, neither could they identify the skills and abilities needed for their job (Rácz 2006b).

The ontological state of national child protection system is proved by the fact that it is occupied with defining itself, looks for its place in social policy, in a narrower sense within social politics. From time to time it is necessary to prove that child protection is not a kind of social provision. For the child protection system the assumption above is evident, as not only the measures of the two fields (child protection and social provision) are different but target groups and applied methods, tools and tasks as well (Szikulai 2006b). European development also shows that children represent such a special target group which has clearly defined, individual interests and needs. The fact that the child protection system has stagnated and is caught in the ontological phase is also illustrated by the publications (also research) made since the change of child protection system; these mainly describe structure of the system, its basic functioning, and its changing tendencies. The structural adjustment of the child protection system has been completed, so it would be important to deal with matters which not only build on the self reflection of child protection and its theoretical efforts to increase its grip on reality, but with ones that analyse the situation and problems of those living in or having left child protection and the set of criteria for their starting an independent life.

### CHAPTER III: RESEARCH ON CHILDREN GROWING UP IN THE CHILD PROTECTION SYSTEM

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#### II.1. HUNGARIAN RESEARCH

Few research projects have been carried out in Hungary in connection with the school career and preparation for independent life of children raised in public child care, and the range of statistical data available is also limited.

According to the 2006 child protection statistical data there were 21,216 children and young adults living in public child care. The number of those living in after-care provision is 4,064; 48% of these lived with foster parents and 52% availed of the benefits in the framework of institutional provision in 2006. The reason for using the benefits was, for 67%, that the young adult was studying and, for 30%, that s/he was unable to sustain an independent life due to lack of sufficient income. Some 87 people (3%) were expecting admission to a social institution, and 829 people were in receipt of after-care (Child Protection Statistical Guide, 2006).

According to statistical data, a significant proportion (65%) of those children in public care who have finished elementary school continue their studies in vocational school. There is a significant difference to be observed between the further studies of children being brought up in residential homes (in the Hungarian system: children's homes and apartment homes) and those raised by foster parents. Of those living in residential homes who had finished elementary school, 76% studied at a vocational school, 7% at a grammar school, 14% at a vocational secondary school, and 3% attended an educational program accredited within the National Record of Qualifications and provided outside the school system. Of children living with foster parents, 55% attend vocational schools, 13% a grammar school, 31% in vocational secondary school and only 1% receive education outside the school system. (Child Protection Statistical Guide 2006) According to the data, children being brought up by foster parents are higher achievers than children brought up in residential homes; however, it is important to note that the mental abilities of children are very likely to determine the care location to which they are sent. Children with adequate mental development, of a low age and free of problems have a higher chance of receiving foster parents (Neményi – Messing 2007). One can note, regarding the orientation of children living in child-protection system and attending vocational schools, that in the 2005/2006 school year 37% studied an industrial trade, 13% an agricultural trade, 24% catering and 27% of them continued their studies in other areas (Child Protection Statistical Guide 2006).

According to Szikulai's (2006a) research on after-care provision and after-care, a significant difference can be observed between the two groups in terms of qualifications: those in receipt of after-care mainly completed eight elementary grades; those in receipt of after-care support typically continue their studies in vocational schools and vocational secondary schools. There are many (40%) unemployed amongst those receiving after-care. Most of those employed are blue collar workers. In

spite of this, unemployment is around 15% amongst those receiving after-care support. Since the overall majority of studies require full-time studentship, the proportion of employed is low amongst those living in after-care support. The high drop-out rate from school attendance constitutes another major issue. In the case of young adults in receipt of after-care support, 70% have not given up any commenced studies, while there was an uncompleted school study for 64% of those in receipt of after-care. The 2008 research by the Capital Regional Child-Protection Agency, concerning the issue of education, should be mentioned. This study sought to map the situation of young people living in after-care provision with foster parents belonging to the Capital Regional Child-Protection Agency and leaving from this care due to their age or other reasons during the previous ten years. The proportion of those having a certificate of graduation from secondary education is relatively high (44%) among young people raised by foster parents; 34% of them have a trade, and 17% completed elementary studies only. Only 5% of them have a degree of tertiary education. Two-thirds of those employed work within the field which they studied (Zsoldos 2008).

## II.2. INTERNATIONAL RESEARCH

Numerous international studies draw attention to the social exclusion of people raised within public child care and their failure to overcome their childhood disadvantages. On the labour market, and for social integration in general, the greatest obstacles for these young people stem from their interrupted educational career. Leaving school many times is a consequence of being placed into a new home; the series of school changes, along with the subsequent integration into new communities makes their situation more difficult, and damages the ability of children to make social connections. Therefore, upon receiving a new foster parent, it is quite often not possible to find a suitable school for them straight away.

According to Sallnäs (apud. Höjer et al. 2008: 40), in Sweden it is problematic that workers in institutions offering nursing and care consider the application of therapeutic methods to be highly important and place less emphasis on school careers. An analysis of the professional reports of institutions showed only 19% identified pursuing school career and obtaining the appropriate qualification as being most important. Children raised in the foster parent system are in a better situation in Sweden too; the importance of education is more emphasized in foster families. Höjer (apud. Höjer et al. 2008: 44) conducted group interviews with Swedish parents whose children live in foster care. According to these parents, they would like to know about the school performance of their children and they wish to participate in various school activities; they would like to be part of their child's school life. In Denmark, a professional development plan has been established, aiming to raise the quality of work done by professionals active in the child protection system. This professional concept considers school as a development platform where children might be enabled to overcome their traumatic childhood experiences. It is typical in Denmark that internal schools

operate within boarding institutions where teachers primarily seek to develop social rather than scholarly competences. However, the integration into regular schools is difficult from these schools. Danish professionals consider that children leaving from public child care are in need of further support, mainly in the fields of studying and work (Bryderup 2008). According to the 2003 estimates of the Social Exclusion Unit, children brought up in care in the United Kingdom face a ten times higher risk of dropping out of school than their school mates who are raised in families (Höjer et al. 2008: 39). In the framework of research carried out by the Rainer Foundation in 2008 entitled “*What Makes the difference?*”, 250 young people living in public child care were interviewed on how much the care given by the state was perceived as *parental* care. According to these interviews, the experiences of those in care are quite far from the aims of the state. Young people raised in institutions mostly wish to be loved and those living with foster parents wish to be able to feel like family members. Of those who had felt personal support, 67% continued their studies after the age of 16 (Höjer et al. 2008: 41). According to Jackson (2007) the effects of receiving public child care are unclear: those entering the system as adolescents have the same bad outcomes in the educational field as those taken into care at a younger age. Poor school performance is closely related to the operation of the system, with its uncertainty in placement due to frequent changes in the care locations. The expectations of caregivers are also low, and they generally neglect the issue of study and further education. In addition, the responses given by school staff to questions over child protection are incomplete. According to Baginsky (2000), although most schools have child protection programs, teachers consider that the majority would not notice if a child is abused, and they are uncertain over the issues on which they should consult professionals, despite the fact that most teachers have participated in some kind of child protection training. According to a research project from 2005, which examined the social integration of young people leaving public child care, the majority of those with low qualifications and interrupted studies considered that, while in care, they did not receive sufficient opportunities to continue their studies and adequate support was also missing. One of these young person said: “(...) *there are no limits in care; basically you could do everything you wanted. As a child I had no sense of responsibility and I stretched the limits as adolescents do*” (Barn et al. 2005: 25).

According to Stein’s theory, (2005) care leavers can be divided into three groups. The first one includes those who are able to overcome their disadvantages and *become successful* in life. They are mostly workers with managerial or top managerial qualifications having good social skills. In Stein’s opinion, these young people make strong efforts in order to get rid of negative experiences of the past; overcoming them they are able to meet successfully the requirements of their adult roles, like becoming a parent, maintaining independent living. Their life is stable and consistent, they can successfully adapt to challenges of independent living, and they are in possession of an extended network of relationships. Their school career was consistent, and they are successful at work. When they must face financial problem, they make use of welfare benefits, but according to Stein they are the easiest to support because they are settled in other aspects of life.

The second group includes the so-called *survivors*, whose main characteristic in life is uncertainty, instability during the public care period, at leaving and later as well. There is a high rate of them receiving different welfare assistance and support. They became care leavers relatively soon mostly with no qualifications. Lots of them even experience the reality of homelessness for a short time. They represent a high rate of unemployment, and those who work are underpaid, or only employed temporarily.

The third group is of the so-called *victims* whose lives are marked by the feeling of being torn-away from family. They distrust everybody. It may be assumed that they experienced serious traumas in the original families, which determined their life during public care and their after-life as adults as well. Most of them changed places several times in the care system; consequently they left early with no proper support at the actual time or after. They are adrift in life, they avail of homeless provision, many of them become wrong-doers or victims of criminal acts, are forced into prostitution, struggle with deviancies like drugs, alcohol.<sup>5</sup> The majority of victims are desolate and friendless, mental diseases are a frequent occurrence. Leaving child protection system, it is crucial for them to be provided with complex support (Stein 2005: 19-22).

All in all, in Hungary there has not been much research that deals with children who were brought up in care. Consequently, we do not know much, for instance, about the school career, job progress, or founding of a family of those who were in care. It is also largely unknown how effective the system was in preparing these young adults for the challenges of everyday life, and how successfully they could be integrated into society. Interestingly, however, many international studies point out that those who were in care tend to suffer from social discrimination and fail to cope with their disadvantageous situation. It seems that care leavers do not get sufficient help from the system; thus, are unable to develop the skills that are indispensable in everyday life. Care leavers tend to have low self-esteem and self-confidence, and due to their poor educational outcome, their job prospects are also not promising.

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<sup>5</sup> In Great Britain quarter of young homeless, and 38% per cent of prisoners were raised in child protection care (Furlong 2003: 45).

#### CHAPTER IV: DO-IT-YOURSELF BIOGRAPHIES, SEQUENTIAL (SYSTEM) REQUIREMENTS

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In my research I am presenting possible types and characters of young adults raised in public care and currently in after-care provision, along with their life so far and future expectations. I am examining what young adults think of the child protection system, the content and quality of professional support, what they consider their success and failure and what future plans they have. When analysing the life of young adults raised in professional care, I am touching on several subjects, such as the decision behind leaving or staying within child protection system at the very time of reaching adulthood, child protection identity,<sup>6</sup> family relationships, school career, participation in labour market and time-orientation.

The research based on qualitative methodology includes the examination of 40 semi-structured interviews, 30 of which were done with young adults who are in after-care provision at present, 20 of whom are doing their studies<sup>7</sup>, while the remaining 10 feel entitled to draw on after-care as they cannot make ends meet alone (having a job or seeking for one). Furthermore, 10 interviews were done with adolescents who became care-leavers reaching adulthood, are currently studying or their school career might be said to be finished as they are working or looking for jobs. In order to keep these young adults anonymous, interviews are numbered from 1 to 30. At referenced interview parts, I am using the word *supported* (eg. supported 1); and for those in after-care, I am using the word *released* (eg. released 1)<sup>8</sup>.

On the basis of the analysis of the interviews, it might be declared that among the young adults currently in after-care – along with their life, school career and future expectations –, there are two different types to be distinguished; *the successful* and *the survivor*. It is important to highlight that these types are not to shape schemes but to combine characteristics of similar lives shown up in child protection into one.

I am defining these two types on the basis of Stein's (2005)<sup>9</sup> approach:

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<sup>6</sup> By child protection identity I mean how young adults account for themselves: they identify themselves as raised in public care, an excluded group member, or rather a young adult not raised in their original family, but as for their childhood, they still have nothing to feel shame about. Examining their child protection identity, I am searching the answer for how the young adults meet prejudices due to their child protection background – which mean psychological threats and pressure in social context –, and how they could or can deal with them, to what degree they got confined by these as to their freedom of self-identification and what effects prejudices had on their self-evaluation.

<sup>7</sup> Interviews with the young people doing their studies in after-care were made within the research frame of YIPPEE: Young people from a public care background: pathways to further and higher education in five European countries EU 7 (2008-2010).

<sup>8</sup> The word „supported” refers to those in after-care. As occasion requires, after-care service could mean full provision as well (provision of catering five times a day, accommodation, washing products, clothing, supervision at night). The „care-leavers” live their own lives but with help to set up home, as requested. In this case their case worker provides professional support firstly in finding a solution for long-term residence.

<sup>9</sup> Stein examined young adults who got excluded from the child protection system. However, I believe that *the successful* and *the survivor* types, as he called them, could be used for young adults under aftercare as well. Among Stein's excluded young adults, his third type, *the victim* could also be noticed; whose majority were moved several times within the system

*The successful* are those young adults in my view who do their best so that they could defeat disadvantages deriving from their past. Their school career might be considered relatively smooth, they are in possession of a relatively marketable profession or their studies are on that way.

Among them it is characteristic that they are in higher education or planning to get admitted. They are surrounded with a supporting atmosphere and there were professionals in the child protection system also who supported and motivated them.

I consider young adults whose lives are rather uncertain and unstable *the survivors*. They could barely overcome their disadvantages from the past, skipped school years many times, even re-attended some or got rejected. Those with a profession acquired an unmarketable trade and those currently studying face the reality that they are provided with an education which they themselves believe not sufficient to be able to enter the labour market successfully with. They miss a supportive atmosphere and there were no professionals in the child protection system for them to be helpful and motivating enough. Indeed, they are in need of support in decision making but because of their limited networks they can hardly find a person to turn to with trust. Due to their background in child protection system they must face a lot of stereotypical approaches. To lead their adult roles not only do they need emotional support and advisory help but also financial backing as well.

Under these two main types, there are further sub-types to be distinguished: *three within the successful type, four within the survivor type*. In order to create distinguishable sub-types within the two main ones, I have defined ten aspects such as child protection background, connection with natural family, “child protection identity”, school carrier, interpersonal relationships, young adults availing child protection support, focus of living space (du Bois-Reymond 2006 [1998]), features of life (Wyn – Dwyner 2006 [1999]), type of individualization (Gábor 2005), future image/time orientation (Brannen – Nilsen 2002). These of course show similarities among many aspects, but there are still significant differences between members of sub-types in the aspect of their life so far – with background factors, mechanisms –, outlook upon life and focused present.

The sub-types are represented below in Table 2.

TABLE 2: SUB-TYPES OF THE SUCCESSFUL AND THE SURVIVOR TYPES

<b>The successful</b>	<b>The survivor</b>
Sub-type 1: Down-to-Earth – successful professions, professional success	Sub-type 1: afraid of future, living in extended present – focusing on vocational training
Sub-type 2: Star-gazers – those following dreams of childhood	Sub-type 2: afraid of future, living in extended present – focusing on jobs
Sub-type 3: Make-doers	Sub-type 3: „Waiting for Godot” - passives
	Sub-type 4: Life-does-it believers

during their care, leaving child protection provision at an early stage. They are getting washed away in life, could be seen in the unemployed care, many of them become victim of crime or even become committers, get forced to prostitution and fight deviances. I had no intention to seek and examine these young adults.

Examining the life of those in each sub-type, raised in professional care, the main subjects are determined by the most significant characteristics. I also put emphasis on themes which were considered important by adolescents. When demonstrating features of sub-types, the highlighted themes differ in examination of members' lives in different sub-types, only those which could demonstrate characteristics of child protection significantly.

### *Main characteristics of young adults involved in the research*

Five of the 40 young adults were born in 1985, 8 in 1986, 7 in 1987, 16 in 1988, 3 in 1989, and 1 in 1990. The average age is 21,8 years. There were 23 males and 17 females. 18 of the 40 people live in the countryside while the rest, that is 22, live in the capital. They were all born in Hungary except for one. There was one who emigrated from Iran unaccompanied at the age of 16. 5 of the 40 admitted to having Roma/Gipsy origins. 3 interviewees have their own child, all of the children are under 3.

Among the ones in after-care there are 14 young adults who are in foster care, 9 are in after-care home, 6 are in after-care department in children's home and only 1 lives in lodgings. 2 in after-care service live alone, 1 lives with a partner. However, all of them avail the service in foster care officially, and 1 young adult is supported at an after-care home and lives with the natural mother. 4 young adults in after-care live in lodgings, 3 have already moved into their own flats which were purchased with the help of home-setting support, 2 young adults live in municipal housing (home-setting support was spent on renovation), and 1 lives in his brother's own flat (the flat granted is being renovated, which is partly covered by the home-setting support). As for main daily occupation, 20 interviewees are currently at school full time, in evening classes or correspondence course. 11 young adults work (except for 2 as they have permanent contracts, and except for 3 as they are not blue-collar workers), 8 are unemployed, and 1 is on one year child allowance. 10 of those continuing their studies receive higher education (4 of them will not be given diploma because of the types of education), 4 attend high schools, 6 go to vocational schools. 2 young adults have health problems which might delay finishing their school, or might prevent them from work (asthma, amblyopia). 7 of the young adults were put back a year from the school they attended, while 11 young adults skipped school for up to 1 year.

The period of skipping school lasted for 3 months in 11 cases. The majority of young adults interviewed (34 people) still would like to study in the future; some are planning to get admitted to higher education, obtaining a GCE or a vocation, finishing in different training courses and acquiring foreign languages.

Before coming of age, of those participating in the research, exactly 21 were raised in foster care and 19 in institutional care (children's home, apartment homes). 12 of them got into the system at infancy (0-3), 21 of them at the age between 4 and 13, 7 of them got in the public care system



between the ages of 14 and 17. On average, they got placed under child protection care at the age of 7,2; the longest period of placement in one location was 9,8 years. Since their placement into child protection, they were raised in 2 places on average, 4 locations of care were the highest number with 5 youth involved.

5 of those in after-care were in after-care provision before leaving the child protection system. After reaching legally adulthood, 5 young adults left the system at the exact age of 18, 1 left at the age of 19, and 1 more at the age of 21. There were 3 young adults to leave at the age of 23. Reasons for leaving include in 5 cases the intention of the young adult “to be free and independent”, 1 left the system behind due to birth of a child, 2 had to leave the home because of behavioural problems, and 2 made the decision to leave as being convinced that the system “could not help in starting up an independent and new life”. Help, support are usually provided in foster care. 12 young adults could count on their case workers, on their present after-care workers as well as on their supporter in after-care provision. 12 interviewees stated that they get help from the partner as well; however, they could hardly count on their natural relatives. They might not have one to turn to or the relationship is shallow. As for support, the majority believes in importance of friends as well (friends raised in child protection and families). The type of support here is mostly emotional, and of course financial, or possibly a kind of advisory one, and also help in finding a job.

#### IV.1. THE SUCCESSFUL TYPE

##### IV.1.1. Down-to-Earth – successful professions, professional success (Sub-type 1)

Six of the 40 young adults belong to this sub-type. Five of them were raised in foster care before reaching the legally adulthood, three of them were placed with professional fosterers. At the age of 16, one of these young adults was placed into an apartment home due to frequent conflicts. Five members of this sub-type are in after-care provision and one, at the age of 18, became a care-leaver. All the young adults are in higher education except for the released one who is currently working. Three young adults attend courses which do not provide a diploma. When examining situations of those in the sub-type, I am highlighting two themes such as 1) school carrier and 2) time orientation.

##### *School career, school experiences*

The school career of these young adults could be described as smooth. However, out of those currently studying (that is 5 persons) not all were really sure where to move on to after obtaining GCE. Necessity of further studies was evident for them and this was the field their fosterers and case workers really helped in. In spite of initial uncertainty, they made decisions on their own in relation to changing careers. Acting is always preceded by choosing, when the young adult is sizing up the alternatives along aims, personal motivation, and possibilities. Doing this always happens while

taking account of aim and tool values (Csepeli 2001). Decisions of those in this sub-type are always grounded in rationality. However, in connection with choosing a career they believed that it is indeed important what marketable profession they would choose in order to maintain a reasonable lifestyle which is otherwise suitable for their interests and personality.

*"(...) I looked around at the market at what is going on and I found tourism and hotel trade, and I believed it to be interesting – people will always travel and eat, I will always have a job, that is how it happened."* (Supported 16)

One of them is at a faculty of political science; the reason for choosing this career was the following:

*"Not long ago I was thinking about what I expect from myself and from my own life. And then I found out that these are the things I like being occupied with, the science of politics, and doing so, and making decisions. I am rather a decision maker type."* (Supported 18)

Individual decisions were already existent at the time of choosing secondary school, however, it is important to know that then the supported were all under 18 and they all received help from the environment they were placed into. Decision in choosing secondary school was with the aim of laying foundations for the school progress.

*"My mother (fosterer) told me to decide on my own, and choose what I want to do and then I've chosen it (...) That is why I have tried to choose a high school of high standards, which may bringing a bit better results at GCE."* (Supported 8)

Young adults are convinced that making decisions and taking individual responsibility are obvious but of course they are aware of being surrounded by a supporting environment which provides them with help. They can count on professionals of child protection, friends, and partners. In spite of accidental set-backs, they consider the choice very important even if the decision turns out to be a wrong one later. All alternative actions with negative outcome are profitable for them; possible failures and their successful resolution strengthen their self-confidence, or their future expectations are becoming clearer. They get encouraged to think over what aims and means they have and what solution they would need for realizing their plans. Making independent decisions, "having a go", trying themselves out in new fields were basic requirements and given values at the place of raising.

*"(...) she (fosterer) always told me that I must be self-dependent, I have to do everything on my own. She let me decide as well. I might have made the wrong decisions but I do not regret them. I do not regret them as I have always carried all my things through; it was a*

*great experience anyway. And now it has the saving grace that I do know what I want.”*

(Supported 8)

These young adults think that attributes of child protection professionals are supporting, many of them highlight the importance of learning as a basic value, and the principle that “you learn for yourself”.

Giving priority to continuous studies by foster families and children’s homes made young adults convinced that getting ahead is conditioned by good school performance. Knowledge appears as their own expectation towards themselves, on which they of course put emphasis before coming of age as well. The adolescents value their studies as the foundation of their future profession; their target is not only to obtain higher education qualifications. They also lay stress on the quality of their school performances, or after finishing current studies, they are planning to obtain at least a trade too.

At school, the adolescents did not face prejudice because of their child protection background, which is mostly due to their results at school and the relationships built up with teachers and schoolmates. They believe that they have received a proper education, their lives are in order, they organize their weekdays independently so they do not give others reasons to look at them critically or segregate them prejudicially. They were not expecting to be better off due to their child protection background; they expect to be acknowledged for their achievements, they want to be handled as an equal in the family. According to them, those raised in institutional care feel a kind of “forced extra tolerance”<sup>10</sup> from educationalists which they have no need of. They believe that being raised in a so-called “protected world” is rather harmful. As for the “forced extra tolerance” attitude of educationalists, young adults observe that their educators are not really prepared to educate underprivileged children, especially those raised in child protection care.

*“Children, here, should not have protection cover. The fact that they were smacked on the face once in life— like me as well –, should not mean that from now on they must be protected from everything, because oops, it is mentally harmful for them, this is bullshit. Later it will be even more harmful, life proves it all the way through. There are some who at the age of 3, 4 or 5, or I do not know, get big smacks in life. None can avoid it. Once smacked, no cover should be given (...) they (educationalists) cannot deal with them either. They are not prepared to educate such children.”* (Supported 18)

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<sup>10</sup> One of the interviewees’ statement (Supported 18)

### *Time orientation*

The youth who belong to this sub-type bear the characteristics of the so-called “*adaptability model*”. They are confident about the future; they are well-assured that they are able to form it. They are not afraid of taking risks, moreover, they do not mind doing so. They share the view that they have to try out themselves in several things, and go for self-realization which they are the most successful in. Their future decisions are motivated by hope; they believe proper decisions have consequences which might bring important changes in their lives. As they look into the future without the sensation of fear, they face the consequences of their decisions, so they are never delayed in being committed to choosing from alternatives in different situations of life. They attach importance to their personal development and to get involved with activities they are indeed fond of.

*“It doesn’t work at the age of 20; a man knows what will happen in 5 or 10 years time, but you have possibilities, you hear things, and then just go for it with success or failure. Sooner or later in one of them you might succeed. Sport or hotel trade, whatever, or the business issues. (...) I will continue the one I am better at or in which I see a lot or I experience more success in.”* (Supported 8.)

Three of the six young adults belonging to the Down-to-Earth type are in possession of an own flat (two as private property and one as rental apartment). Those who are planning to have their own homes feel a bit worried about the real value of this support. Namely, the possibility that this would not only mean real help, but coercion as well. This would be a tied-up limited situation for those who would like to obtain a flat far from or close enough to the location where they were raised. Moreover, the deadline of using up the sum is not synchronized with the future plans of the young adults’.

*“As for me, the location of my future flat depends on the workplace I am at. That is to say, for me it does not matter if I am 20 or 18 and I have to go to find and buy one – and of course with that money I cannot purchase a flat in a relatively good district.”* (Supported 8)

### **IV.1.2. STAR-GAZERS – THOSE FOLLOWING CHILDHOOD DREAMS (SUB-TYPE 2)**

There are *four* young people in this sub-type. Two of them are in fosterage and the other two were raised in institutional care. Currently, all of them are in after-care support. The young people in this sub-type differ from those in the down-to-earth one mainly in that they have special interests around which their life is organized. They either want to realize their childhood dreams or their life has been determined by their hobbies since their childhood. For supporting their talent and realizing their childhood dreams they received and receive help and they make the most of it. The youth in this sub-type share the opinion that the only way to break out of their child protection past is to

study and to make sacrifices to obtain success. As the past, present and future of these young adults' are all directed by realizing their dreams and aims, I am examining two themes in their cases, namely 1) school career and 2) judgement of professionals.

#### *School career, school experiences*

Young adults *focus on context*. They choose one context in their life, characteristically the field of learning in order to make childhood dreams come true, and then put emphasis onto it. Their school career could be declared as smooth, all of them are in higher education (one of them did not get admitted so he attends a two-year course). Despite changing schools many times during fosterage, they could compensate accidental disadvantages really well after being placed into their final location of upbringing. They have positive experiences in connection with school; they became social people who took an active part in school life with their individual performance (e.g. playing a role in students' government, being an assistant in class, etc.)

*"I have always been in the centre: I was always the one who organized lots of programs, and I participated in many kinds of things, Students' Government and similar organizing programs."* (Supported 17)

It was obvious for them to go on to further studies. This aim was mostly connected to the need for realizing childhood dreams, or they chose the school where their talent (e.g. sport) would never be pushed into the background. They insist on great importance of establishing their future profession, but the most determinant factor is their individual development, that is to say, they want to feel well and want to have their talent unfolded. The university student preparing for a military career has wanted to work in air-control or as a pilot of an air-fighter in the air force since his childhood. Behind their choice of career there was no intention to realize a childhood dream but a think-over of what course of life his childhood dream provides. They consider calculability of their life course important, hence they believe that fortitude, professional success, commitment and self-confidence are the most important.

*"But, at around the age of 18, the future of a young person should be getting outlined: what he would like to become, what the things are that he is interested in and what the thing is (...) he would like to be occupied with in his retirement and where he would go to work every day with a feeling that his job is his hobby."* (Supported 13)

They have several hobbies, lead a lively life and find pleasure in trying themselves out in new fields. They have a wide social network but they have had few real friends since childhood. None of them lives in a permanent relationship, their desire for independence appears in their relationships as well; they feel they might get engaged later.

### *Judgement about professionals, supporting background*

Child protection professionals provide support for the young adults in realizing their dreams. They all agree that it is so because they deserve the supporting attitude of child protection workers on the basis of their success. They can prove that they are on the right way, their commitment make them differ from their mates living in the child protection system. This could also mean that the child protection system is ready to support talented youth after coming of age. The system's expectations towards young people being raised in child protection turn out to be little. According to young people's opinion, the child protection background is not enough for leading a typical flowing life, for expectations of child protection. They are not willing to meet the requirements the system got used to.

*"(...) well, graduating is a miracle. I do not feel it. So, I did it, and I tell you that I prepared for it, studied etc., but it is, you know. I will definitely be happy when I get my diploma, clap my hands that I got that over with. (...) I do not know, maybe those in public care are not so restricted. I mean, how far to go, what dreams they have: that is to say whether it will be good to have a vocation in hand, or I might get GCSE etc. That's all. I do have greater aims than these."* (Supported 17)

For those raised in institutional care it would be a great help to support their expenses at the school of their interests. In their cases it is mainly financial backings, as they are not really in need of emotional help. In the forms of institutional provision of child protection there a lot more possibilities to support children or young adults with money, while in fosterage a greater emphasis is put on emotions and maintaining motivation.

*"To reach my targets, my mum (fosterer) helps me a lot. Not in financial matters, but with encouragement."* (Supported 10)

### **IV.1.3. MAKE-DOERS (SUB-TYPE 3)**

There are *four* young adults who are make-doers. Two of them are in after-care; the other two are already out of the system, but they were also in after-care provision earlier. All of them were living in institutional care except for one interviewee. The young people who belong to this sub-type within the successful main one are sharply different in their outlooks upon life. In their cases, there were 2 or 3 changes in placement which is why their school careers were interrupted. However, they could manage situations well. Three of them have job; one is studying and has temporary work at the same time. This mixed model is specific for the young people's focus on the present where they put equal emphasis on work, school, friendships and hobbies. Working young adults are also planning to go on to further studies later. The significant difference is that they no longer need the support of child protection professionals as they have already experienced adult roles. During their child

protection provision they found some people who played key roles in their upbringing. They remained independent though; they are self-reliant and convinced that they are capable of retaining control of their life in every situation. They are not afraid of new situations; they willingly try themselves out in situations. They even have experience in working abroad or are planning to take their chances abroad. They do not hide the fact that they were brought up in care but their identities are not affected by this; they are able to apply experience gained during their time in care rather well in all areas of life. They have never experienced prejudice or if they have, they could handle it. Their outlook on life enables them to integrate into communities quite easily. This is what makes them different from the rest: they consider their child protection background a fact of life, they reflect on their past and the present; they do have plans. They have mixed opinions about child protection workers, rooted in the experience of being raised in the system. I am highlighting two themes in their cases, which demonstrate their specific characteristics well: 1) judgement of professionals, and 2) individualism.

#### *Judging professionals and the supporting background*

Interviewees' experiences of the system of children's homes were that the education staff did not find the method which they could motivate children raised outside natural families with. Pedagogy based on the traditional rewarding and punishing method is not able to reach targets as children believe that they should be rewarded for their mere participation in school life as well.

*"Because I felt that if I attend school, I should be given something in return. As in every children's home, if the child gives, he gets, simple, although I go to school for my own interest."* (Released 7)

According to their experiences there are only few professionals who are indeed determinant in their life before coming of age, whose opinions were adopted. They share negative views in general about child protection workers, especially about their humanity, personality and they do not find the majority of them competent.

*"I think it is mostly up to educators (...) maybe there were 2 or 3 people during public care, who I would say were OK, I am still in touch with them anyway, let me say we are so-called friends, but honestly it was the same then. (...) Just look at it, what qualifications are needed for becoming a children's supervisor, honestly it's pathetic. Moreover, there are so many ill people appearing in child protection, you would never believe. Anyway, it could be a social worker, or a psychologist, to put it plainly not every man is up to this task, I believe."* (Released 6)

Young adults did not ever meet discrimination due to their child protection background, but some of them share the view that the education system is not able to handle those living in child

protection provision discreetly. School communities' good-willed behaviours are aggressive in many cases, which give birth to humiliating situations for the young people. One of them told a story that happened at a school Xmas party:

*"(...) Xmas is well, rather a critical situation, you know, and the school one, well, it was a horror to me, it made me upset. Moreover, the most embarrassing thing happened to me. I went into the school, and you know, we drew from a hat, bought a present and then we gave them to each other. Then the form master told me that he and the class decided to give me an extra present, a Xmas tree. Imagine how annoying it was for me to carry that fucking Xmas tree in the street, I threw it into the first bin I found. You all go to hell I thought ..., I just cried and cried, humiliate your fucking mother you all!" (Released 7)*

They are criticizing faults of the system in connection with their coming of age as well. In the words of one of them, when they reached the age of becoming an adult, it would not mean anything in the child protection system but reaching the age of culpability.

*"Consequently, coming of age does not mean in the head that I have grown up, but reaching the time by which I have become punishable, here it starts." (Released 7)*

According to adults already released from the system, those being raised in child protection need professional help, especially just before coming of age, but due to the incompetence of experts, young adults would rather go and face and of course solve their problems on their own. They want to make do alone. In their views, the actual after-care system operating is not any more suitable for giving help to overcome disadvantages than the one that failed them before the time of reaching adulthood. Those already released have the opinion about after-care provision that it only prolongs the time spent in the system and that is why it keeps those under care unmotivated for many long years not to become independent and autonomous enough. As for the state's attitude, it is a kind of "luxury" to keep the youth in the system till the age of 24 providing accommodation and in case of continuous studies to provide full provision. They believe that 2 or 3 years of intensive support would be enough for letting the young adults leave the system and get prepared for independent life.

### *Individualism*

The specific characteristic among the individual patterns of the young people belonging to this sub-type is the progressive one with no doubt. They make decisions on their own, they have several plans and many of them are planning to do further studies, or even apply for jobs abroad. They accept their situations, do not agonize about the past, look forward with an optimistic eye and form their own future. The centre of their outlook on life is to be occupied with having their life in the first place above all.



*“I have my own outlook on life: for instance, I would never panic because of a small problem. Of course I cry etc. – but I move on and I don’t really care. Others would not be able to handle this. Or rather, how to put it, I am a bit stiffer in these cases. (...) I keep my life as it is mine. And I do not really care about others’ problems, they are not mine, you know.”* (Supported 20)

It is important for the released young people to have an independent life to the full, to lead their life in good financial conditions and to have their needs covered by an income of their current work. It is also important for those in after-care provision, or for those at universities to have a financially stable life. In order to maintain this, they work as well. The 16-year-old Iranian immigrant was put into this sub-type as well, who currently lives and works in after-care provision. He is planning to apply for a job abroad in an English-speaking area in case he assumes Hungarian citizenship. He also wants to acquire the profession of a cook or a hairdresser besides his current one.

They consider themselves fortunate as they have found the thing they like being occupied with, in which they experience success, and which secures their future life for founding a family.

*“People might have families, a car or I don’t know, own a flat and everything. Who cares? I will have them as well. This is what I have, and I accept it. However, I can consider myself fortunate really. I have had very good jobs; I do have a perfect vocation for providing me enough to make ends meet. Well, I am lucky.”* (Released 7)

They play their adult role with courage, having several plans, they are not afraid of their future. They review their decisions and possible consequences. They are aware of having disadvantages due to their child protection background; however, they all agree that they must turn it into an advantage. They could be affected emotionally by the lack of a family but it also means a kind of freedom for them in that they are independent, they provide for themselves, they do not need others’ benevolence, or even commiseration when they face the most difficult situations in their life.

*“Well, my disadvantage is that I have no family, nowhere to go home; so when I struggle with any serious problems I cannot turn to my mum, dad, or to any of my relatives; then again for them it’s difficult to solve a certain problem which is just a piece of cake to me. That is to say for example I have never had problems in finding a job.”* (Released 7)

Well, these young people are mobile as far as jobs are concerned. They are daring, they try out whatever comes (which is remunerative both professionally and financially); they take the

opportunity; they declare that it is always time for a change if a better chance offers itself. One of them worked for many months in three European countries.

*"(...) then came this chance for working abroad, I accepted it and went to Scotland to work. (...) And then came another foreign journey to Greece, to work in a brand new hotel starting up as a cook. I also got a job in Spain. I spent nearly five months over there. I am not at all sure it is optimal for a young person to experience so many workplaces, (...) what I say is, go and see and experience as much as you can."* (Released 7)

As for young adults who belong to this sub-type, they consider founding a family as a chance to get their childhood disadvantages over with and for them the family is to hold on to. They have no supporting family but will have their own one in which they might find emotional stability.

## IV.2. THE SURVIVOR TYPE

### IV.2.1. Those afraid of the future, living in an extended present – focusing on vocational training (Sub-type 1)

Among the interviewees we can find many people who belong to this sub-type. *Nine* of the young adults are here. All of them live in after-care provision; two of them are in fosterage. There were one or two changes in their placement before adulthood, most of them got into the system in their infancy or in years of primary school. Their school career is not smooth; they met lots of prejudices due to their child protection background, their negative experiences determine their self image as well, but they aim to get over their grievances.

They have it in common that they do quite well with professional help; they are up to learning but their future plans are still uncertain, they have little self-confidence so they do not dare challenge the future and hence they focus on an extended present. Typically, they put emphasis on vocational training. They wish to have a job according to their qualification but have no further plans. They make their own decisions on the basis of education which provides the basic focus in their current life; however, they are still insecure in their decisions. They can hardly choose from the possibilities which offer themselves, they depend on advice in assessing their environment.

For demonstrating specific characteristics of those in this sub-type I am highlighting two main themes, such as 1) focus on the present, and 2) judging professionals.

#### *Focus on the present*

As far as I see it, young adults in this sub-type make the desired group of after-care for the child protection. As Cséres (2005) concluded they are the ones who obey rules.

The young believe that it is important for them to gain at least one qualification, even if many of them would rather work instead. Beyond the possible difficulties at school they stand their ground; with their behaviours, attitudes and styles of living they do not generate discontent of child protection professionals. Most of them are planning to get GCE after gaining a vocation. However, there are young adults who have intention to gain one or more vocations after GCE.

*“I learn for becoming a welfare worker and a nurse. However, I would like to study for GCE as well in evening school.”* (Supported 6)

Choosing the right vocation - in which experts help them - does not happen according to competitiveness. Two young adults for instance are about to gain their second vocation, one of them is a qualified upholsterer and currently studying as a leather worker.

*“I am in class D right now in light industry. This is my second vocation. You know, I finished the four-year studies of upholsterer and needle-man. And now I am back here for two years as a leather worker.”* (Supported 12)

The other young adult says:

*“I have finished my studies for becoming a pasta-maker, and now I am a wafer-maker.”* (Supported 4)

In connection with the non-competitiveness of their vocation, young adults are aware that they will not be able to get established in their job and sadly, professionals do not provide them with information about the future labour market positions. Both in institutional care and fosterage it was highly crucial to insist on the importance of obtaining vocation as the basic condition for establishing self-dependent life.

*“They insisted on our learning. If we do not obey, we will have no vocation, we might get on the street. They just repeated it, and anyway, it would happen. We had no objection. And we learned as we wanted to have a vocation, a job. And as an adult nothing more but a house – that is all.”* (Supported 2)

Almost all the interviewees stated that they had negative experiences in their peer group in the past because of their child protection background. They asked for help with no avail. The educators could not treat their situation either.

*“I told them they could eff and blind, my foster mother must not be cursed, but my natural one, well, I do not really care. (...) well, I was called a state bitch sometimes, as I am in public care, you know.”* (Supported 1)

Those with a Roma/Gipsy origin met prejudices more often.

*“Where I attended primary school in F. there were more or less only Hungarians. So they, as Hungarians did not let us stand in the row, we were always separated. It hurt me so bad. We were hated (...) they gave us a roasting just because we are Gipsies.”* (Supported 6)

#### *Judging professionals and the supporting background*

Young adults in institutional provision do not have the feeling that they could trust child protection professionals or that they would be treated as equals. Those in after-care share a problem that they cannot talk about their everyday problems or their future plans to educators discreetly in person. Typically, professionals follow conversations of routine with them. Lack of trust is also proved by the fact that in some cases professionals turned out to have given confidential and personal information away. Breach of trust and secrecy here abuse universal norms of child protection. As András Domszky says, model of professional care is nothing but *“personal relationships in a context of professional system”* (Domszky 2004: 47). The home-providing system could only be effective if personal interests and needs of those under care are met in order to establish and maintain the necessary conditions for everyday occupation, personal relationships and of course if it helps to overcome difficulties. The presence of a permanent care worker is essential not only in babyhood but later as well in order to maintain continuous observation, follow-up and immediate help in problematic situations. Educators’ personality affects children strongly which is undisputed in letting the child develop and in ensuring a successful upbringing (Buda 1986/1995).

*“(...) I have discussed with the educator whether I have had any illnesses, and I have told him and I also said that I do not want to make it known. Later, children repeated my words, so I reheard every word of mine.* (Supported 3)

Chances for social integration are highly determined by the degree of skills children and young adults got within the system in order to become able to lead a self-dependent life. Help in acquiring basic skills for being able to make ends meet and lead an own life is only one of the factors in the process of getting prepared for self-dependent life. As for profession of child protection, there is an essential question to be asked that how encouragement in gaining competitive vocations, building a network of relations, strengthening natural family relations, and arranging long-term of housing makes social and economical position of the young adult stronger along the changing social processes. It is a question whether professionals consider it important at all. According to young adults’ statements, it is clear that acquiring skills of independence are based on rather specific practices. Strengthening social and economical position does not occur in the practice of after-care provision.

It is astonishing that support for those becoming of age is based on exactly the same routine-based caring methods as previously. Serving the young adults, or involving them only in insignificant tasks should not be the basis of the preparation for self-dependent life. For instance, it means that when shopping food their only task is to carry them home but not decide what to buy. They can only choose items connected to personal hygiene.

*“They do the shopping in general; we just go and fetch them. For instance, when we go to buy cleaning products, then we might decide what to buy; the cheaper one or once rather the better one which is the more expensive one of course. And of course in the aspect of hygiene, for instance tampons – those are the things we can choose. But that’s all. And of course educators discuss it over whether the grouping is OK. You know, they are sure about the quantity of meat, pasta, potatoes etc. So really they decide about the menu as well, we have no voice in that matter. (Supported 3)*

The young air their grievances that regulation of short leave is limited also for those legally coming of age. Young adults have to ask for permission to leave when they would like to meet friends or a partner. There stands an example for the pedagogical methods applied before adulthood as well; no matter if they are adults, they are punished (revoking leaves). Basic professional rule in connection with punishing those under 18 is that the way of punishment cannot be autotelic and humbling. Human rights of a person under care cannot be violated. Therefore punishment cannot target basic rights for instance revoking leave or forcing to do housework. The collective must be involved in the process of preparing domestic duties (Domszky 1999). The young comprehend domestic duties and they are aware that in every collective (such as in a block of flats, at workplace, at school etc.) there are existing norms but they do not consider applying the punishing methods adequate ones. During the support of young adults they should be let to schedule their free time on their own of course with obeying rules of coexistence.

According to Csepeli (2001) the concept of rules and norms are distinguishable along active or passive dimensions; however, both target following social regulations. Establishing rules, making them accepted and followed are conditioned by young adults’ activity, because those living under one roof (professionals included) make effort together to determine certain behaviour patterns specific to certain situations. On the contrary, norms mean passive following. It seems that in several placements of care there is no agreement in rules or a consensual establishment.

*“Well, I am an adult, I will be 21. And I would like to, well, let me say I would like to have a short leave from Friday to Sunday, as I want to go to my friends. So I am telling it to my educator straightaway that I would be grateful if they could give me the permission, then (...) There are rules everywhere, at work, etc, and everywhere there are rules... Well, I have*

*to do my duties, I have to come home on time. I am not back on time, I'm gonna be punished."* (Supported 6)

On the basis of subjection conformation of Jones and Gerard we can find that there is a so-called *asymmetrical subjection* between those working in the child protection system and those already adults. It means that young adults have the possibility only to follow norms and plans having been established by professionals, to adopt purposes focusing on extended present. It is based on being exposed from which the young adult cannot break out due to the unequal power, although it would also be specific that he does not want to break out because young adults doing well need help even if they make their own decisions. On the other hand, it is quite possible that the young adult does not want to get rid of dependence as the position is a rather comfortable one for him. Unequal power creates negative consequences as after leaving the child protection system the situation cannot be maintained. That is why the process of becoming independent is indeed a bit delayed by the system itself in case it helps in eliminating dependence. A further menace is when the released appear in the social provision system after leaving child protection due to the incapability of self-sustained living. It also strengthens socialization for provision. This relation of dependence can easily turn to become a so-called *pseudo-dependence* in the case of young adults being as a part of the system and not as an individual; *"they meet their uncongenial requirements eminently"* (apud. Csepeli 2001: 165-166). Of course I do not take it that after-care provision would operate similarly to the total institutions on the contrary to crowded foster-homes where individuals were controlled by the system appearance (uniform) and behaviours.

A sharp child protection aspect seems to be outlining according to which the young adult could be an adult for more time if they stay in after-care provision and continue their studies even if they reached the age of compulsory school attendance.

*"We did not have a lot to do at all, only to learn, and of course keep our environment clean."* (Supported 14)

Their only task is to learn, and to gain a vocational qualification or GCE during after-care, and to keep their habitations clean. In the case of young people who already have a GCE, they are encouraged to gain vocations even if they would be able to sit for diploma in higher education. It is because it fits into the period of care. Professionals see perspectives of gaining higher education only in those young who originally had the intention to go for further studies and their targets did not break their straightaway school career (sub-type 1 and 2 within the successful).

#### IV.2.2. THOSE BEING AFRAID OF FUTURE, LIVING IN EXTENDED PRESENT

##### – FOCUSING ON JOBS (SUB-TYPE 2)

Within the successful type the difference between sub-type 1 and 2 is that most of those in sub-type 1 are currently in their studies of vocation, while those in sub-type 2 have already started working or are seeking jobs, so we can say that the focus is on the job. Six of the young people belong to this group. Three of the interviewees are in after-care provision; three have already been released from after-care. Young adults focusing on jobs have features in common, which is that their position on the labour market is rather weak; they are underpaid employees working illegally mainly which roots in the lack of marketable vocations, and their school career was interrupted many times. The purpose of the young is firstly to keep their job. Their future plans are vague, similarly to those in the previous sub-type. Moreover, they are in lack of self-confidence, and their life is specifically unstable. They put emphasis mainly on keeping their work and strengthening their present situation with the help of their income. They are uncertain about their important decisions in life; they are difficult, they are in need of permanent support in assessing possibilities, and they expect to be directed. Significant differences can be noticed in the individual cases: in case of those focusing on vocation it is rather progressive; meanwhile it seems to be regressive in case of those focusing on job as they are threatened with weak position on the labour market or even with unemployment due to their interrupted school career. The job they have chosen does not provide them with enough to make ends meet. Two specific themes are hereby highlighted in relation with characteristics of those in the sub-type, such as 1) focusing on present, and 2) time orientation.

##### *Focusing on present*

For the interviewees, the most important aim is to keep their jobs, and in one case to become employed as soon as possible. Jobs are considered the way to earn money, not to make them satisfied; they cannot find and realize themselves in them. They might not be able to see a possible way of change either; they are not willing to give up their present, apparently secure work for something that is uncertain; they do not want to face difficulties in getting integrated into new communities. They are not satisfied with the income they earn either, it does not enable them to start up a self-dependent life.

*“(...) I can do nothing with this small salary; I can hardly live within my budget. For finding a better job I would need more, or let us say lots of qualifications, that would make me able to find something much better.”(Supported 27)*

Those who have already left the system regret not having the possibility of staying in after-care. They put the blame on themselves when difficulties occur in the present; however they all strive for standing ground. One of them could not take after-care provision due to his behavioural disorders consequently he had to leave the system at the age of 18. This case demonstrates that the

young adults are in possession of basic information, as for example, everyone might make application for after-care provision till the age of 24.

*"I would have done it later, when I knew better, you know, I used to be rather quick-tempered during my teen age, and later I grew mellow at almost the age of 18, well, then I started to think. Unluckily, it was too late then, I was not liked very much, so the director made me go at the age of 18. Two weeks before my birthday I already knew that I had to leave. (...) so I was not afraid of life, then I realized finally that life is not all honey, but more difficult than I thought. (...) I got out of public care on the very date of my 18<sup>th</sup> birthday."*

(Released 8)

Released young adults hardly find their place, although they had been eagerly waiting for independence; they hoped that an easy life would be waiting for them. After leaving they got involved in criminal acts; one of them even faced consequences of drug abuse. A stable partner had a positive changing effect.

*"I could hardly find my feet, so I had some incidents you know with the police. (...) finally she (girlfriend) told me to stop, otherwise she was gonna leave me. That was the reason for me to stop."* (Released 8)

The majority of those focusing on jobs also met prejudices that we could see examples of in the previous sub-type. Discrimination due to the child protection background occurred exclusively at school, moreover, in interpersonal relations the behaviour of schoolmates was the most critical and they showed a prejudiced attitude. When it comes to prejudice, those having Gipsy origin are even more in a disadvantageous position. They have experienced that they might meet discrimination not only at school but at on the labour market as well, and even in public health care.

One of them met discrimination at school from a teacher:

*"(...) there was a firemen's day at school, and there was a moment when one of the firemen asked me a question, you know everybody of us was asked somehow; and then when I wanted to answer, the teacher told me to shut up as I am just a stupid Gipsy."*

Later, the same kind of situation happened in public health care:

*"Well, it is okay that he pulls on his gloves, every doctor does that, but he got cloaked, put on a hat, a mask, whatever, he covered his face with something, put on a bigger coat just to listen to my chest. I said that I was going to make complaints, and have check-up*



*elsewhere because he treated me like a I don't know what. He even made a remark that I am a stinky minority."*

When seeking a job he also met prejudice:

*"Well, to be honest I met discrimination at workplaces as well, you know I had some job interviews and encountered a dispraising style, like okay, okay, okay, thank you, we will inform you etc. I got some really strange glances, but honestly I did not really care, you know, that was not my shame but theirs!"* (Supported 27)

#### *Time orientation*

One of the specific characteristics of young people who belong to this sub-type is the so-called *"deferment model"* similarly to those focusing on jobs. These young people live in the present and their plans also focus on the present. They have the intention of keeping their workplaces in the near future or to seek new ones maybe, but no effort is made to change their situation. The young adults do not dare plan for years ahead. They would like to have a perfectly sound financial situation and somehow they work towards arranging a long-term residence. They have low self-esteem; they need emotional support and motivation.

*"Well, I do not have dreams about anything. Well, I have been given a lack of self-confidence, but not ... er ... at school, you know (...)"* (Supported 30)

All of them would like to have a normal life – they have realistic dreams. Those who have partners are planning the extended present with their love; however, they would go for founding a family if their circumstances improved. Having an own family is of high importance but clearly it is a kind of compensating mechanism; they would like to compensate their unhappy childhood with providing much better circumstances for raising their own child in their own family. The phrase *"normal family"* means absolutely the opposite of what they experienced during their upbringing.

*"(...) let me wait for a while before founding my own family, you know it is because I would really like to have children when I am able to provide everything you know, just in inverted commas you know, what a child would need I mean. For instance I would never like to see them grow up as I did."* (Released 8)

According to independent young adults, everlasting partnership can be maintained with responsibility when conditions of self-dependence are established.

*"I am telling you now, when you are in public care, you have to establish your own life first, and then you might think about girlfriends. I would rather get my own life sorted out first,*

*be it having a flat, a job to pay my way, and then I go wherever I want. Then will my freedom begin! Until then it is a force, a forced prison.”* (Supported 27)

#### IV.2.3. „Waiting for Godot” – passives (Sub-type 3)

There are *eight* passive young adults who belong to this sub-type. All of them but one are unemployed. He was expecting an official letter from the school at the time of being interviewed to say whether he became excluded from school or not due to his absence without leave. School careers of these young people are often interrupted, they consider learning as a constraint rather than an important duty; they do not value knowledge. Many of them quit school. Failures, playing truant and expelling were typical. All of the interviewees except for two were in institutional care, and many replacements happened in their case before coming of age. All but three young adults have already been released from the system, they can hardly manage independently, and they would need professional support. In connection with expectations of their coming of age it is specific that they take it with suspicion; they would like to become adults a bit later. Adulthood involves too many responsibilities. Their life features the so-called *changing pattern*; young people are always forced to rethink their concepts and consequently to get redirected, find new ways. They are seeking their place, they would like to arrange everything around one stable job, but firstly they have to decide on orientation. These young adults feature regressive individualization: they were unsuccessful at school; they are threatened with long-term unemployment as they do not have proper qualifications. Most young people live in the present and their only plan for the near future is to find a job. Their relation with the future is similar to those in the successful group focusing on vocation or job. The most specific characteristic of those in this sub-type is probably that they are incapable of finding their place in the present, so they have no realistic concepts in connection with their future. Consequently I am highlighting two themes in order to demonstrate the characteristics of those in this sub-type, such as 1) focusing on present and 2) time orientation.

##### *Focusing on present*

Present positions of these young adults are strongly determined by the fact that all of them but two only have qualifications from elementary school –as for the two, one of them is a carpet-weaver and the other one is a hair-dresser. They have memories of school as a place where they did not like to go and learn; they did not get occupied with learning as they thought it to be boring; the majority of them were rejected because of their behavioural problems. They were suffering from restraints; however, they have realized by now that gaining vocation would have been important.

*“Just learning all the time day by day, no free time, well, I decided not to care about school.”* (Released 2)

After finishing elementary school they tried many secondary ones, but they could find their expectations nowhere.

*"(...) I've been to many schools. Even to Újpest, at D. M., there I started up as an electrician, finished the first year, then I left it because I did not like that school at all. Moreover, I was not keen on the vocation either. After that I went to study catering, I also completed one year there, but I did not manage to finish that either, you know there was one more year, but I skipped that. After some time I got back to the same kind of school, but without finishing there either. Well, I have started many schools, but honestly I didn't graduate from any of them."* (Released 2)

Three of the released were in after-care provision. After coming of age they left the system, but when they had used up their savings they immediately applied for after-care provision. Soon after this they left, they desired freedom, they could not stand the restrictions of after-care homes, and they had no intention of adapting to institutional requirements.

*"Frankly, there were constraints, and those make it bad, that was what I did not like. You know, arriving back in time, answering certain requirements. It could not go that way. So, I got out."* (Released 2)

The adolescents spend their week seeking jobs, and they expect their friends' help with this. There are some who try to find a job with the help of the family's case worker in the family centre. When it comes to their desired employment, the majority of them do not have a clear idea of what they want. Their attitude towards job-seeking is similar to their judgement on their studies.

*"I want to work in a shop, as a loader. I do not really know what to do."* (Supported 28)

The young adult who is a hairdresser is thinking about starting up her own enterprise, in which the family's case worker would help. She has some fears, of course, and would rather get employed somewhere else but she feels there is little chance of that. In her experience it will be quite difficult to do well as a hairdresser due to her Roma/Gipsy origin.

*"Well, I spoke to our family's case worker about whether or not it is worth starting my own enterprise, but, you know, I do not dare to do it alone. Theoretically I am a hairdresser, but I will never get employment, just as an independent contractor. Well, it would cost more money for me I guess. (...) There have been several occasions when everything seemed to be OK on the phone, but it lasted until meeting in person, indeed it counted the most."* (Released 1)

The young adults basically need support; firstly, they would need encouragement for their future plans and help to strengthen their self-confidence; at the same time they would need professional emotional support and help with the decision making process. They put a lot of pressure on their immediate surroundings, demanding help due to their instability and inability to make decisions. According to the Jones and Gerard's dependence typology, the young people in this sub-type show so-called reactive dependence, which means the young adults' behaviour is forced; no endogenous factors could be realized such as plans or goals. In this dependent relation the young adult has a lack of foresight; he can only act if he responds to the actions of the environment (e.g. partner, friend, brother or sister), and can only make decisions with an eye on others' reactions (apud. Csepeli 2001: 167).

*"Well, I would need no help in everyday life, but emotionally, I mean to encourage me, that is what I would still really need. I upset M as well (brother), and the same happens to everybody around me ... er ... I cannot really make up my mind sometimes (...) because, you know I am afraid of uncertain things, and that I am unable to make decisions."* (Released 1)

They do not wish to become adults, or rather think that it is not so urgent. One of them gave a definition for the adult role.

*"(...) What I think is that only adults are convinced that there are lots of problems with me, I would rather say I am absolutely average teenager. I may have come of age, but only according to law."* (Supported 28)

#### *Time orientation*

Young adults live in an extended present; they do not attempt to face the future; they feel it uncertain. What they would like to do firstly is to find a job. Their own testaments' show that they are occupied with their present and not bothering about the future. They have no positive experiences in targeted planning.

*"Honestly, I do not have such a big plan, no; I would rather seize the day. I do not have stray thoughts as I have realized that it is not good. I have had my own aims, you know for me, myself. I have tried to do many things; I was told to have goals and I just attempted to reach them, but something always interfered and I got misled. So I found that it didn't work like that, I should not hope for anything. What will be will be."* (Released 2)

Some of them have already realized that their attitude must change. The greatest shortcoming is their lack of clear ideas, their reluctance to take risks or create goals.

*"(...) the biggest problem is that I cannot make long-term plans. That is my biggest one; I cannot set a goal, something realistic which might be reached. Or, I do not know, I can't even set out something unrealistic."* (Released 1)

The so-called changed pattern is so specific to them that due to their non-success (interrupted schooling, unsuccessful job interviews, underpaid temporary jobs, unemployment) they cannot but choose to look for new ways. These new paths are uneven, unpredictable, so they can hardly find their place; their attitude towards their own life is driven by fears and pressure. They are afraid of the future which places too many responsibilities on them, while they are aware of the fact that it is crucial for them to find employment in order to earn a living. Still, they hope that once they can settle down and have a peaceful family life that provides them with safety.

Finding a stable partnership is rather important for women, meanwhile men usually tend to seize the day, as they would like to settle down for life.

*"I would like to be a merry-maker, you know, to live my life, girls come and go and of course I am to catch them all honestly, and then, at the age of 35 or 40 a family might come."* (Released 2)

Those in partnerships believe that their partner (personality) is not strong enough to make changes in their way of life, or to motivate them.

#### IV.2.4. LIFE-DOES-IT BELIEVERS (SUB-TYPE 4)

There are *three* young adults who belong to this sub-type. They have not yet considered family life, or having a child. Two of them are in after-care provision in fosterage, and one of them applied to end his care after he became aware that his partner was expecting a baby, however, he was offered the possibility of prolongation within the system (he was raised in a children's home before coming of age).

Two of the fathers have a trade and work, but both say they have been unable to find a position. The mother who is on one-year leave with her child is planning to obtain a trade and apply for a job when the child reaches the age of 3. The two young adults who are currently in after-care provision might get help in raising their children from their partners and foster parents. The foster parent let them decide on their own about having a child. She has been supporting them ever since.

*"She said (fosterer) that I have come of age, moreover there are another two children being raised besides us, and she told me to decide, what I would like to do on my own, to*

*keep the baby or not. She said it will not be easy, but it is up to me, so I have made my own decision.”* (Supported 22)

Due to the experience of unexpected pregnancy, the young adult have experienced that their child to be born could also get into child protection. Abortion came into question. The young person, who is already out of the system, left after-care provision to start a family, despite the fact that he does not live with his previous partner. He takes part in raising the child, providing financial support; he meets his child weekly.

As the young couple became new parents they were faced with the urgent problem of getting employment and housing. They had to have a place to bring their child up.

*“Yes, it was in the air (abortion); firstly, we did not really want it, but there was a house to be arranged within a month for us, and if I go to work, my child can not be taken away from me, otherwise they were sure to have done this.”* (Supported 21)

It was considered too early for them to fulfil the parents’ role, but they are really happy with their child. They are sure that their child’s birth helped them to become adults and to take responsibility for their decisions. Their future plans are being arranged in order to provide their child with a stable family background. They were all in the process of purchasing a flat when they were being interviewed.

*“Well, finally I have work and I have a family. Our flat is being sorted out right now, and you know, we will have to renovate that flat. If I have a family, having my own flat, why not have a motorbike, and a car? You know, what if I have to take my little T to kindergarten, to school or whatever.”* (Supported 21)

Due to the birth of their child, the mothers’ studies and her attempts to gain a trade were postponed; meanwhile fathers put their plans related to their previous studies away and they focused on getting employed in order to raise their child. Birth of child meant demurral for them – because of their relatively weak labour-market position –, consequently they only focus on the extended present. Moreover, their child’s birth made them into situation; after making decision on giving birth to the child, they were compelled to keep making effort to make the conditions needed for expecting and raising a child. This target group feature regressive individualization which is also demonstrated by the fact that their child is not a result of their conscious family planning. The chosen vocation cannot provide chances for getting employed or financial stability.

## CHAPTER V. THE QUASI-PROFESSIONAL CHILD PROTECTION SYSTEM

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According to Foucault power is not only repressive but productive as well. Power is productive in the field of supporting those in child protection if it operates a child protection system which is based on an elaborated sense of responsibility in profession in the fields of ensuring and protecting rights, provision, services, professional instrumentality and methodology, which is not set up to punish parents, to take the child out of the family as a way of punishing the child, to hide those in child protection or even to maintain the negative social image of them. It has set up an aim to unite families as soon as possible. If there is no chance of this, it must lay grounds for social integration for those living in child protection provision, to get prepared for self-dependent life. Foucault's examination targeted at governing and direction does not exclusively cover participation of the state and power mechanism of the intervention, because he speaks about a kind of governing mentality called "*gouvernementalité*"<sup>11</sup>, which creates practices focusing on directing others and ourselves from the level of state organization to the level of individual life. (Takács 2005)

In the following, I am partly examining the occurrence of practical realization of Foucault's governing on the level of individual life. That is to say I am focusing on how the young adults raised in child protection care consider the child protection system itself and the content of the professional help. On the other hand following Foucault, I find it essential to examine practical forms of achieving a professional mentality, state participation and intervention. That is how experts look at their professional work, or rather the young adults who are in need of professional care in establishing their independent life even after they reach adulthood. How is it possible that in the 21<sup>st</sup> century child protection experts believe their work is authentic and professionally grounded if they had the vision of the young adult raised in the child protection service as similar to a "*farmstead dressmaker?*" (Józóné 2005). In my view, the national child protection system could be described as quasi-professional.

Firstly, I am demonstrating opinions of those of after-care provision and its operating system, moreover the quality of support provided in child protection on the grounds of the interviews made with the 40 young people. Following this, I am describing the self-reflection of the child protection system in connection with types of support. By this I mean how the child protection thinks about the ways of supporting young adults. In order to give basis for this, 20 interviews were made with child protection experts; like educators, after-care workers, fosterers and head of institutions.

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<sup>11</sup> In: Foucault, M. (1990). *Felügyelet és büntetés*. [Discipline and Punish] Budapest: Gondolat Könyvkiadó

### V.1. YOUNG ADULTS' OPINIONS ON THE CHILD PROTECTION SYSTEM

Young adults gave several critiques of the child protection system and its after-care provisions, and commented on its shortcomings.

Respondents still in their studies and making use of the care services are convinced that enjoying possibilities of child protection provision in the field of education is of crucial importance. In the case of interviewees currently studying and in after-care provision it is noticeable that the experts rather put greater emphasis on obtaining a trade and GCE even if they of course support further education. To those with a smooth school career they even give support in their higher education. In case of young adults being raised in foster care there are some examples when the fosterer would prefer some kind of adult education after GCE, due to concerns that the adolescent would not be able to stand his or her own ground. Moreover, the fosterer is somehow convinced that a marketable trade is a better chance to get ahead. The young adult who is at faculty of law at present is backed by the fosterer, although she would have preferred an air-hostess course. Supporting the first-generation intellectuals is not a clean-cut situation even if they had had smooth school career.

Preparation for self-dependent life is not given enough emphasis according to those young adults who are partly freed from their duties needed in establishing independent life, such as shopping, cooking etc. Many of them complained about the way the short leaves were organized, as they could stay away from home only with permission. The traditional way of education is opposite to the one that would treat the young as adults. Consequently, it strengthens the practice in child protection which still keeps those coming of age in a child's role. The system values common decisions based on apparent consensus instead of individual ones.

*"(...) there are problems, for example that s my group leader interferes in everything. She would place me somewhere else to work if she was the person to decide. She would not work, am I right? I will do that, it is my decision anyway."* (Supported 6)

They consider it a clear weakness in the child protection system that it does not prepare for adulthood, or acquiring the role of an adult. The system serves those involved but does not provide a realistic image of life beyond the child protection system; after-care provision just prolongs care time. With the service of after-care provision the system maintains the situation which young adults already experienced earlier and got used to during their temporary or long-term education: there is no need to look after yourself as others will do that instead. This attitude in after-care provision does not motivate the young adults to set targets and get prepared for self-reliance (Szikulai 2004b).

*"The problem with the system is that the child is in it, he gets everything and that is what he gets used to. Then he gets out and just blinks that Oh my God, I have nothing, am I to*



*provide for all I need? That is the time when he goes to the wall! (...) the problem is that the system supports them to do nothing, I mean to start something up alone.” (Released 7)*

For the young adults the biggest problem is solving their housing. In their opinions, after-care workers cannot do much about it, although a move-out plan is made in the last year in co-operation with the supported. In connection with the move-out plan, young adults share little information. In general they are not clearly aware of what is happening to them, what services they could go for in order to help establish self-reliance (Szikulai 2006a). According to Grice, efficient communication can be only realized if it is based upon the principle of co-operation. Four maxims are set up: such as *quantity, quality, relevance and manner*, upon which the successful provision of information depends. *“The more maxims are hurt, the less clear, limited and understandable the communication becomes.”* (apud. Csepeli 2001: 178). It seems that factors in child protection which determine efficient communication are frequently impaired.

*“Well, allegedly, there is a move-out plan to direct me where to go when I am leaving this place. It starts in the last year, but, you know I do not believe that they can do anything much with only saying what will happen. It is always the same thing that happens you know, they find you cheap lodgings, but you have to work for that.” (Supported 27)*

Another issue which the respondents find problematic includes the amount of home-settling support and the way young adults spend it after coming of age. As they see it, it is unwise to let them have access to their savings at coming of age as their experiences show that the sum got used up in a short time.

*“(...) this adulthood, you know, and that money, ah, catastrophic. I am telling you, the child gets some money, I do not know how much exactly, around 1,7 million HUF supposedly, this is the sum for establishing a home. What is this money enough for at the age of 24? Nothing! (...) Well, I do not know when it would be better to have access to it, I guess at the age of 18, it is too early. (...) I have bought what my eyes desired, or just the things I believed to be good for me.” (Released 1)*

For those, who are planning to decide where to live and where to get loans to solve their housing after their graduation, according to their place of employment, the time-bound use of the home-settling support is surely a restraint.

According to the respondents' it is clear that the child protection system itself declines to take account of its inadequate functioning; it preserves a dreamlike picture of itself that the released people are able to become integrated into society and they can stand on their own two feet. Young adults' integration into society is inversely proportional to the quantity of time they spent within the

system: the more time it was the less chance they have for successful integration into society (Szikulai 2004b). The system does not want to face its negative output indicators.

*“I would just look into their eyes (speaking about decision-makers, the State) I would introduce some people to them, like look, here is this handicapped boy, nobody employs him, he has been hungry for days, he is in public care, in after-care, I mean. He can do nothing with his life; he gets no help from the State. I would tell them all that hey guys, go up there, look into his eyes and tell him yourself straight that We do not help you that is why you are in this situation.”* (Supported 27)

As young adults see it, those raised in child protection system suffer from disadvantages which they are incapable of overcoming alone. They have to face these drawbacks when coming of age with no help from parents or a supportive background. Especially the adolescents in after-care who have no proper school qualification see no chance to escape from their current situation. The problem is even more intensified as they are in a rather a weak position on the labour market. In the words of one of them, to overcome their disadvantages as compared to a so-called “healthy man” is impossible.

*“(...) you are 18, from that point on you have no mum, dad, nobody you know, from that time on, I do not know, you fell as if you were left no legs to stand on, your life turns upside-down, and falls on the ground. (...) to leave and rise up from public care, and become a man of normal life, there are so many disadvantages you know, as if you got your arms and legs removed and put into a wheelchair. We are at such a disadvantage compared to normal people (...) I work for no good, and earn 70,000 HUF when the flat takes a minimum of 80,000 HUF away. Moreover, you are alone, there is nobody to count on. (...) This way, I believe, you cannot make it; you cannot make your fortune. It is impossible.* (Supported 27)

Interviewees call attention to the system of support connected with after-care provision, as professional help does not meet personal needs. Child protection does not operate well as a system; successful but accidental child protectional outputs are determined by the works and competences of experts. Support must fit the needs and actual life situation of the supported and that must be met by professionals; *“realistic system of aims, duties and methodological principles, would give ground to build their programs of properly flexible professionalism”*. Workers in child protection system have to keep in mind that one who is occupied with working in child protection provision *“enters into a life course and shall become one of its factors himself as well”* (Domszky 2004: 48, 49).

*“You have an educator, who perfectly knows what to do and he behaves humanly you know. But, is this why the State is good? No, of course, not. That man is OK. State does not give anything, I do not know, to poor R, or to M, or to Cs, or to anybody in this house (after-care home), so nobody is given a flat, you know, like social housing. (...) so, they do not examine the individual, or cases and situations, you know.”* (Released 6)

The required qualifications of child protection workers, duties of the profession and operational conditions of welfare and child protection institutions and persons’ are laid down and determined in the Decree 15/1998. (IV.30.) by Ministry of Welfare. Further professional skills required beyond competence is the *“skill for discovering and evaluating life course; skills for establishing and maintaining supporting relationship; skill for involving children and their parents in their own problem-solving process; emotional support, creativity, professional conscience, efficient conflict management, co-operation, and skill for understanding and describing”* (Domszky 2004: 48). The majority of the respondents express their critical views about professional competence of experts; in their opinion, many of them are not in possession of professional characteristics required, irrespective of their competence.

*“(...) you know, such square-headed men told me what is good for me, moreover they, you know, just practised on you the things they learned at school, and they were so fucking emphatic. It is really a specific feature of this profession. And they had no clue about it at all.”* (Released 6)

#### *The “three-S mentality”*

Basically, there are two distinguishable forms of support: episodic and existential. It is an episodic way of support when the person gets into an emergency and the only way to get out is to have others’ help. In contrast with this, the repeated and continuous one is the existential support (Csepeli 2001). All forms of support can only be really efficient if the situation is clearly defined and there is an agreement between the supported and the supporter. There is an essential requirement in professional care that the one who is in need of help must be involved actively in defining emergency. Both forms of support are provided as claimed by the child protection system’s provision which supports adults. At the same time, on the basis of respondents’ opinions there are three types of support distinguishable in connection with the child protection system, quantity and content of professional support. These might include episodic or existential contents. I call the schemes of support in respect to those raised in professional care the so-called *“three-S mentality”*<sup>12</sup>. That is to say the system: *“supra-help”, “supports” and “suffers”*.

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<sup>12</sup> In Hungarian I used the term: *“three-T mentality”*. That is to say the system: *többlettámogat, támogat, tűr*.

By *supra-help* I mean when the young adults, who gain distinction among peers with their talent, motivation, clear and continuous school career, are not only provided with full provision, but their tuition fees, costly hobbies, and the occupational expenses of their personal interests are also covered. Beyond existential support, they receive emotional security as well.

*“The school I attend now also has tuition fees. It is 350,000 HUF for a year, and they pay it for me. Well, I have always received the full support. (...) When I wanted to do sport, they paid for it. The only thing they wanted to see was that I wanted to do it, and I was doing it, and I did not give up. And, you know, there is the hobby of taking photos; you know I like it very much: recently they bought me a camera. That was not cheap either.”* (Supported 17)

Support might cover professional activities of after-care provision by law: that is they help in solving problems of further studies, getting employment, life; moreover they give advice on making ends meet, they even support the young adult to overcome social problems, and to solve independent housing.

*“Well, we receive our pocket money, money for monthly bus pass and of course food from the children’s home. And there is always someone who cooks in the morning. It is written down what the meals are.”* (Supported 14)

Specifically, those in after-care who have had an interrupted school career, are currently attending secondary school vocational training, or may already be in work, come in for standard forms of support. In many cases these are realized in an unequal power framework, in an asymmetrical relation of dependence. Consequently, the young adult follows the plans and targets which have been set up with the backing of child protection professionals, seemingly a compromise situation. This means actually that the professionals consider the young adults as children; guided care is based on authority, following norms, and obedience. The system still operates with the accustomed awards and punishment methods.

The system *suffers*, when it does not provide motivation for young adults, does not help them in obtaining proper school qualifications, in finding jobs; does not give information about the optional forms of support they have recourse to, and it does not prepare them for the self-reliance. Lack of support (being tolerated within the system) is specific to those having no qualifications and being threatened with unemployment, whereas they would be rather in need of getting professional help in establishing their independent life.

*“(...) they made you wash, cook, clean, anything, they got crazy periodically. (...) Well, there (after-care home) there was a person, you know, our after-care worker, whom we could have talks with periodically, you know. There I did what I wanted really, the only requirement was to learn, or work. (...) I did neither of them for a time.”* (Released 1)

Lack of motivation has the consequence that those supported do not gain the skills to fend for themselves as the system makes claims on them. This results in the fact that *“recognizing his targets he is less motivated for changes unaided – just with the help of after-care”* (Szikulai 2004b: 220).

## V.2. EXPERT’S VIEWS ON SUPPORTING YOUNG ADULTS HAVING GROWN UP IN THE CHILD PROTECTION SYSTEM

Professionals’ methods of supporting those coming of age are helping in social integration, reuniting families, and establishing self-reliant life of those in supportive after-care. The methods currently used are firstly assistance in visits, talks and administration which means mainly emotional support for the young adults (Szikulai 2004a).

The interviewed child protection experts believe that they have few tools at their disposal with which to prepare young adults for self-reliance. There are no forums, trainings and retraining which might be helpful for them to decide what professional trends they should follow in co-operation with the young adults.

*“There is a very tender spot concerning living at a children’s home; that is the dilemma of how it could serve in preparation for the future. (...) I am sure it is an area the system doesn’t deal with, and I cannot provide real support either. I am not that competent either.”* (Professional 4)

The reason for not having enough tools does not stand up to professional scrutiny. Experts recognize the importance of motivating and backing the supported emotionally; lacking the tools needed for supporting those having come of age experts agree that the level of self-expectation of those in care is rather low.

*“Their expectations are humble – there should be higher I guess; moreover we should be encouraging but sometimes we have no ideas about the methods. We are also looking for solutions.”* (Professional 1)

There is a significant difference between workers of institutional care and fosterers in the respect of how they treat young adults. In general, institutional care workers think that the co-operation is good when the young adult is manageable; that is, the supported act upon the professionals’ advice.

*“(...) be manageable, you know, a person you can speak to, and a person who tells his problems.”* (Professional 1)

The philosophical principle of institutions is self-justification; that is to preserve the “status quo”. Donáth et al. (1999) made interviews with workers of after-care provision. Results show that professionals are convinced that the young have legally come of age, but not mature mentally.

Professionals are sure that important factors in preparing young adults for self-reliance are to gain skills gradually in housekeeping, to become able to fend for themselves and make ends meet, and to spend their income independently. At the same time, support of the young adult is exaggerated by experts with reference to the fact that the supported are not adroit, so they need help.

*“Honestly, I always go with him. I even accompanied him to a lung-examination. Moreover, I showed him where to hand in, to sign, and there is the paper, whatever. (...) Oh, Well-done! Even now he needs to be praised. That is what is to be done, praise him all the way in order to let him have self-confidence.”* (Professional 1)

According to Donáth et al. (1999), it is also specific to after-care provision that no proper tool is chosen successfully for planned and outlined targets; it occurs accidentally that experts use different inconsistent methods. For instance, there is an outlined plan, like preparing for independence of which the method is *“the young adult is looking at the Expressz News, they telephone together, and the after-care worker is talking”* (Donáth et al. 1999: 29). Researchers air their criticism about the system: concluded agreements in reality are formal, they do not include the most important conditions either; however, the contract could be an efficient method for aligning aims and tools.

Generally, professionals regard those in foster care as more independent, more motivated and emotionally more balanced. During their upbringing they are capable of learning budgeting and practising economy. The majority of foster parents pay great attention to treating the supported as a real adult.

*“They are adults, let them make decisions as they want.”* (Professional 9)

According to foster parents, the most important thing is to strengthen their skill of responsibility, and to provide a stable scale of values from childhood on. They are sure that honesty, trust-based communication, maintaining family traditions, and preparation for holidays are essential values. They confirm in young adults the importance of work and economizing their incoming financial sources.

*“It is the matter of money and work: how much you have to work for that money. (...) You make note of it, you know, income, and then outgoings, and of course meanwhile you are learning how to do it. These are the things we consider as values.”* (Professional 9)

To raise the level of self confidence of the supported is also stressed; the young adults are not forced into relation of asymmetrical dependence. They represent the idea that the young adult can turn to foster parents with trust in case of emotional and financial problems whenever needed; their

future is not up to fosterers, but they must learn to make own decisions, to take responsibility for them, and direct their own way.

Professionals are sure that those living in child protection provision have nothing but success in school as a way of breaking free. Recently, an even greater emphasis has been put upon ways of assisting successful school careers of those children and young people in national child protection. It has been claimed that establishing and improving independent learning skills and importance of in-school and out-of-school education should be emphasized more and more because the children are so under-motivated and unsuccessful at school. *“The school career of those children in child protection is highly influenced by the factor whether the children’s home and the school (and the fosterer) are willing and capable enough of giving mutual help, harmonizing requirements, activities, and realizing parental competence of the students involved (Józsa 2007: 35).*

In educational work many emphasize (e.g. Csáky 2001, Herczog 2001, Szikulai 2006a, Józsa 2007) the importance of further studies, preparation for self reliance, family or in a wider context, social coexistence; however, there is no methodology of standard elaboration in practice, which would serve realization of these targets. Analysis of the professional programs at the 16 children’s homes operating under the municipal council including vocational guidance, career planning, job counselling from the point of view of education and care showed that independent programs are missing, and vocational guidance does not appear significantly enough (Popovics without year). In respect of education in vocational school and vocational training where students obtain typically unmarketable vocations or the school studies are interrupted, the system discharges itself declaring that children get into the system at older age with serious emotional burdens, and failures rooting back to school in family period which would definitely bar the students from their successful school career. No questioning emerges (due to effects as opposed to professional targets) about the weak performance of professional care from those who spend long years in the child protection system. Establishing an idea of the future and a positive image in general is rather important because the majority of children in care live in the present. They are separated from their past and their family when removed; the future makes them rather worried, and if they own any future vision, it is often over-idealized and unrealistic (Kálmánchey 2001).

Many of the respondents declared that they would put emphasis upon individual education, and they would support each young adult according to personal possibilities and skills in vocational guidance.

*“There are perspective planning in connection with each child, considering what he could reach according to his possibilities and skills. It is obvious, isn’t it, that we would never chase a man of humble skills to get admittance to college. We look for a perfect vocation for him.” (Professional 13)*



One of the official foster parents believes that personal guidance is rather important.

*“Well, I was also in studies at this time, and worked simultaneously. And I finished with Grade A. I was also motivated to be seen to be working and studying at nights, and early in the mornings etc. (...) And then they came saying that “hey my mum did not fail, so I mustn’t either”. You know, there was a kind of playful competitions at home between us.”*  
(Professional 11)

Professionals consider after-care provision important as it lets the supported get over their disadvantages. I mean those disadvantages which they could not get rid of until coming of age; that is to obtain at least one vocation, or sit for GCE.

*“(...) this principle works in foster-homes as well, I mean, to have one vocation at least. It is rather among boys, you know. However, they would rather go for a GCE at us. We are encouraging them to study as long as they are here and have the opportunity.”*  
(Professional 12)

At the same time, as young adults highlighted, child protection limits in the fields of studies are narrow; they cannot meet the requirements of the principle “to have school-leaving or vocational education”.

Professionals believe that after-care provision is the last chance for young adults to get prepared for an independent life, and to establish their future. However, it seems that this is a possibility for only those well-behaved young adults who deserve it and are able to deal with their own situation. It is a professionally unacceptable attitude of mind – when it is believed that the only way of successful integration into society is the after-care provision –, which contrasts those left in after-care provision with the ones whom the system finds unneeded; of whom the system despaired before coming of age. Child protection does not provide after-care provision typically for those who would really need complex professional support. Due to the child protection background, the available after-care provision is permissive in practice: legally, after-care provision can be claimed after coming of age; although, not everybody is an abandonee from the child protection system’s perspective. Professional support provided within the framework of after-care provision is discretionary. The type of support (supra-supported, supported, or suffered in the system) given to the young adults depends absolutely on discretion of the child protectional experts. The practice for claimers, which is built upon discretion, can hardly be estimated, it creates an exposed situation. Beyond codified conditions of provision claims; the law ordains behavioural rules for young adults; they are expected to be obedient, manageable, and be up to accepting decisions based on apparent consensus. The discretionary practice’s specific feature is *“personal dependence reminiscent of feudal relations”* (Zombori 1997: 102).



*“However we look at it, it’s all unfortunate. The supported get into the system from one social class. And if we are unable to do anything with them, then they will return there. And when they start a family, their children will bear the same fate. But, the chance is given here. Anyway, it is quite hard to convey to them that they are the only ones in their family of 6 or 7 who might get ahead. And then to make them understand and accept that nothing will come of the rest of their brothers and sisters. But they have the chance; so they are silly if they let it pass.” (Professional 3)*

Child protection professionals draw attention to several deficiencies in relation to after-care provision.

Many emphasize that the Child Protection Law lays greater stress on physical conditions than personal ones. The child protection provision is said to be generous in providing luxurious circumstances for the supported with not enough attention to support children and young adults emotionally. Those in the system of child protection provision get used to be given whatever they want, so according to professionals’ experiences they do not value their own possessions, moreover they do not value the opportunities the system might provide.

*“What I think is that you could be brought up well in more moderate circumstances as well. There are families in such conditions, even worse ones. I would put greater emphasis on personal provision, I would make that better. (...) 6 or 7 people should work beside children instead of improving surroundings.” (Professional 13)*

Neither young adults nor the professionals engaged in helping those come of age are aware of housing-support system. Savings and the amount for home-creation are not enough for purchasing a sufficient property; it could be enough in a place where there it will be impossible to find a workplace, consequently starting to live independently confronts him with difficulties. A frequent problem is that the young adults spend the money within a short time which should have been spent on their housing, or the natural family appropriates the money for their own use – as has happened to some of the respondents. (Szikulai 2004b) As for coming of age – in harmony with the young adults’ opinions –, all the interviewed professionals agree that problems occur when, with adulthood, free will also arrives. It means that the young adults have their entire property at their disposal. Professionals are sure that it is a mistaken child protectional practice which enables young adults at the age of 18 to do whatever they want with their savings.

*“What I consider to be a very big problem is that at the age of 18 the supported gets his money, and after that no one can interfere. He does whatever he wants with that money. (...) we collect the family allowance for him as tax-payers, you know, it is quite a lot of money. As for its market value, of course, it is only a little money, but from another*

*perspective it is a large amount – over 1 million HUF. And we just give it to a man of 18; he does whatever he wants with it.”* (Professional 13)

In the words of Mária Riegler, the child protection provision “sees” instead of the young adult until the age of 24, “without a thought to teach after the age of 24 about – and during the whole developmental process –, what information could be utilized from other modalities (...) for efficient adaptation” (Riegler 2000: 82). The majority of the child protection professionals I interviewed would postpone the upper age limit of after-care provision to 26. According to their experiences, those in the child protection system are not mature enough emotionally and mentally for their peers who have been raised in families. As one of the respondents says, the supported should be released gradually, when the after-care service discontinues, they should have further support (follow-up) meeting personal demands until the age of 30, provided by child welfare services or family support centres (lacking youth centres). The majority of young adults would prefer to have a system of intensive support lasting for some years set up, instead of after coming of age.

Professionals also highlighted that young adults are not informed properly about the possibilities of claiming after-care services. The so-called implicit selection shows up, conditions of claiming are unknown. According to one of the foster parents, as those entering a career are prepared for the work, young adults should be similarly prepared for getting out of the system, fully aware of the support available to them.

*“I think a child must be as prepared wherever he is, in foster family, in institution, in children’s home, just as the fosterer is prepared for raising a child. (...) you will be an adult, come here and let us talk about your possibilities. It is the information which cannot be shared among children saying, like: I am 18 so I can get after-care service.”* (Professional 9)

According to the professionals interviewed, the most efficient form of supporting those who have come of age is fosterage, where establishing a sense of dependence is already initiated in childhood and forms an integral part of the caring and educating process after placement. Furthermore, with an eye to cost effectiveness, professionals would attach importance to increasing the number of outside accommodation where young adults could live independently along with after-care support.

### V.3. DEFINITION OF QUASI-PROFESSIONALISM

The phrase of *quasi-professionalism* is mentioned among the characteristics of caring professions relevant in the countries of South-East of Europe by József Gerevich (1987). He declares that the professionals, who are not provided with conditions within the institution in order to do their efficient work to the highest level, become quasi-professional experts. In respect of this, due to the lack of conditions, professionals hide their quasi-professional side and work as if they were real

ones. In Weber's view, the expert differs from the dilettante as she or he uses the applied methods with no hesitation, is capable of estimating and controlling the significance and consequences of the support provided by him (Andok-Tímár 2002). Professional support supposes high-level and complex qualification. Qualification and motivation are not enough to maintain the supportive work at professional level; a methodological base is needed where experts make up a community, their operation is professed within an institutional framework, their work is done according to ethical and professional rules, moreover, all tools are given to enable experts to solve the problems of target groups (Andok-Tímár 2002, Domszky 1999).

Other specific features of the caring professions are mentioned by Gerevich, the so-called *Potemkin-effect*, *oligarchy*, and *counter-selection*. What he means by Patomkin-effect is when organizations of caring professions go about their work with no professional basis, being forced continuously to prove the importance of their operation; that is why the institution over-administrates. This makes it a quasi-institution with malfunctioning characteristics. Operative and ideological aims become separated; emphasis gets shifted towards the ideological ones. The main feature of oligarchy is that the institution is strongly hierarchical; the horizontal communication is rather weak; certain groups or persons are underprivileged. Counter-selection leads to the following problem: as the caring professions have a low level of social prestige, not the most appropriate experts get into higher education, then to the field of practice. Consequently, the committed professionals have little free space for only doing their high quality professional work (Gerevich 1987).

The features of the caring professions mentioned above are true for national child protection as well. It would be very important to find a common ideological basis and to work out a standardized conceptual apparatus of child protection. The methodological protocols which would lay the foundations for professionalism in the field of child protection are imperfect. In order to do and maintain quality work there is a need for laying rules built upon professional and ethical approach, creating a separate code of child protection ethics, and elaborating a separate quality-assured system in order to guarantee the right standard of professional operations. As the majority of child protection experts are not in possession of special knowledge in the subject of child protection, trainings at different levels should be started which would give special knowledge and competence (Herczog 2001, Szikulai 2006b). It would also be important to introduce an aptitude test in child protection so that the professional prestige could be increased, or rather conceptualized professional work could be ensured (Rácz 2006a).

On the basis of the Kadushin-model, the following knowledge and skills should be possessed by child protection professionals according to Domszky (1999): 1) general knowledge of critical situations in child protection and the child protection system; 2) knowledge of own special area; 3) knowledge of the operation of the given institution; 4) knowledge of demands and individual needs of own clients; 5) job competence related specifically to own qualification.

The system and the professional basis of after-care are insufficiently well-developed (that is why the required knowledge and skills of 4 and 5 above are questionable) whereas one of the indicators for professional efficiency is how the young adults being released are able to live independently, how their success or failures explain the system's efficiency or inefficiency. In case the child protection is lacking the tools for regarding the primary target group (aged 0-18), then it is almost evident that due to the child protection background there are even less tools for co-operating with the young adults staying in the system unless professionals use the well-, or badly-run caring and educational methods which many times seem to be inadequate in case of this target group. The provisional system is not unified either in terms of the goals and degree of the provision; and not even standardized in applying professional tools and in defining after-care roles.

In the words of Donáth et al. (1999), *"there is no accounting for tastes"*. According to professionals, one of the biggest problems is that there is no professional consensus concerning what child protection provision means. *"The child protection law's word-bound definition is interpreted and filled with contents according to personal needs and requirements, individually."* (Donáth et al. 1999: 26). In case of supporting young adults the questions rises whether the provided support is really one to give real help in order to establish successful future independency or just a prolongation of pre-adult child protection provision (Szikulai 2004a, 2006a, Józsa 2007). This practice is in absolute disaccord with the essential aims of provision, according to which in this provision of social work, the legally young adult could get professional support in looking after himself. In the practice of after-care provision the dominant caring work is a supervisory or controlling kind, where the primary aim is to avoid problems and maintain the safe operation of institutions (Donáth et al. 1999). In my opinion, if the profession is having an identity crisis, being ground down between the roles of scholastic and social work, it is obvious which of them should be chosen; it is clearly seen which role should be chosen.

Respondent professionals in my research indicated that they are not in possession of knowledge or tools which are adapted to supporting young adults. Professionals are uncertain about the definition of supporting independent life. The profession is unable to avoid asking this question as the law, having reformed the child protection system in structure, introduced after-care provisional system in order to prepare young adults for self-reliance and successful social integration. In many cases the young adults' socialization is not adequate; they have difficulties in making friendships and partnerships, they can hardly stand failures which raise difficulties in integration at the school and at work (Szikulai 2004b). They are not capable of spending their free time usefully, their personal interests are narrow. In the case of professionals occupied with the supported adults it would be important for them to apply proper methods in after-care in order to solve problems of those in after-care, and to become prepared in giving advice on directing life and partnerships. In order to enable young adults to obtain marketable trades, they should be aware of possibilities of professional training, and network of labour market and housing situations, social and health institutions, and support centres (Szikulai 2004a). Lacking these, the child protection keeps its

specific characteristics in the sense of Gerevich, such as the so-called Potemkin-effect. In the child protection provision it depends totally on the expert what things are expected and what values are conveyed. Concerning the education of those under age and supported in child protection, there are principles which show a lack of a professional way of thinking: *“a child must not be beaten, must be talked to nicely, must be counted as a human being, must be involved in making decisions considering age because these situations make them become decisive adults”* (Rácz 2006b: 59). During the support of those who have come of age, dominance of educator-type caring must be de-emphasized in the favour of support of social work type, where within the framework of the contracted system the aims and duties are determined collectively according to the young adults needs and opportunities (Szikulai 2004a).

From Heron's (1992) perspective, the interpersonal situation is called a supporting relation which is based upon the voluntary contract between the supporter and the client in order to realize the collectively accepted aims. The purpose of the intervention is to make the client (supported have come of age) capable of making decisions independently, and taking responsibility. The work of the professional is directed towards listening to and supporting the client, and assisting his welfare.

Heron distinguishes six different types of supporting intentions, grouped into two. In the so-called *Dictatorial form* there are 1) *ordering* (directing the client's behaviour), 2) *informative* (conveying knowledge and information), 3) *confronting* (making the client realize attitudes which were not paid attention to earlier) forms. In the so-called *Supporting form* there are 1) *backing* (strengthening the importance of the client's personal characteristics and acts), 2) *cathartic* (making the client able to solve problems) and 3) *catalyzing* (mobilizing the inner power of the client, assisting individual development, increasing the client's autonomy) forms to be distinguished. There is no hierarchy in values among the supporting intentions. All of them turn to the client's individual development; it depends on the situation which form is to be used by the professional. The requirements of the professional is to use each intervention consciously and to be aware of the factors when, why and which method is applied. In many cases during co-operation with the adult supported, the ordering method (in Heron's words) is used by the experts, which set aims at directing those in after-care. Cathartic and catalyzing forms are missing from the child protection professionals' methods. As the informative form of supporting intentions also gets de-emphasized in lots of cases, the young adults do not own satisfactory information about claimable kinds of supports. Consequently, the social kind of work should be dominating in supporting those have come of age, when the two parties are equals, so no asymmetrical dependence is in existence. In the social kind of support *“considering and respecting the client's autonomy is laid down as essential norm of ethics, an essential value”* (Riegler 2000: 8). Young adults I interviewed indicated that they are not treated as equals in many cases. Professionals prefer obedience, manageability, and decisions made according to apparent consensus; they do not consider the supported that have come of age to be adults. This means that one of the main features of the system, serving adults' support, is oligarchy. It means that those in the service are exposed; the communication between professionals and the

supported is inefficient; furthermore, the information about the possible supports is not satisfactory in quality and quantity for those that have come of age. Child protection institutions prefer the educator-type operation instead of service-type ones, whereas the clients' age and autonomy would not inhibit establishing symmetrical relations (Riegler 2000).

A clean-cut sign for the existence of hierarchy is the so-called three-S mentality, as I call it: those in care get support by their performance (they deserve it) and not by their individual needs. Following Szöllősi's typology (2003) related to interventions in child protection, I am distinguishing the after-care provision on voluntary basis and putting it into the necessity-oriented field. Here the necessity-oriented feature means that the supported get professional help in order to acquire adult roles in social context. However, it seems in practice that professionals consider after-care provision as an exceptional problem-oriented intervention in most cases of young adults. Instead of self-reliance, caring methods based on conventional child protection methods are in use with which the responding young adults would not agree.

All in all we could conclude that to make child protection a real profession there is a need for manifold reflexivity and activity. That is a kind of concept which means *"(...) sensitivity for problems in everyday life and looking for new solutions both on the respondent level of individual cases and the social side; analysing historical experiences of problem areas in respect of the profession; taking knowledge and methods from other professional fields and occupations; shaping the corporate system of training and profession; working out a kind of self-evaluation and conscious improvement of the profession* (Domszky 2006b: 11).

According to Domszky (2006a), all types of interventions, institutional solutions have life-cycles specified by the social environment, like *problem recognition; identifying method; application trials; institutionalized practice; getting beyond solutions; and finally closing institutions*. In my opinion, after-care provision is basically at the second life-cycle: professionals are still searching for methods. There are some places of course where some application trials have been made, but no institutionalized practice occurs. This means that young adults' preparation for self-reliance is emphasized in only a few committed experts' work; professional foundations of the support is accidental; its consensual feature is imperfect. The right of the young adult for quality provision and service is consequently fundamentally infringed. Child protection system does not function properly, and it is shown by the fact that in the care and educational process preparation for self-reliance is not really emphasized after getting into child protection provision. Furthermore, it is not changed either in after-care period as there is no proper preparation for self-reliance. With no assistance in acquiring the skills needed for independence, obtaining proper qualifications, getting employment, solving long-term housing, successful integration into society is made even more difficult for the young adult.

## CONCLUSIONS

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The economic and social changes of the past few decades gave rise to a dual process with an effect on the definition of “life sequences”: biological maturation occurs earlier, while social maturation is postponed. The response of the child protection system to the issue of “extending post-adolescence” is a provision and service for young adults till the ages of 18-24 (25 in exceptional cases) that can be used on a voluntary basis.

The possibility of staying in the child protection system after coming of age has arisen since 1997, namely that those being brought up in care need further support during the time of emerging adulthood. It is especially important in acquiring the roles of adulthood. On another level, aftercare provision and aftercare services are currently parts of a system that is based on protecting children’s rights. It is important to note that those who reach their majority in care undoubtedly need specific support and professional assistance, but as young adults, and not as children. More specifically, they do not need to be provided special rights; they are able to assert their rights and protect their interests by themselves, in contrast to children. In this respect, raising and care are not of crucial importance for them anymore. Instead, most importantly, they need help in acquiring skills which are crucial in dealing with everyday matters, and which help them to identify with adult roles.

Following the trends of Western-European child protection, significant changes took place in the child protection systems in Eastern and Central Europe, including Hungary (though somewhat belatedly). Although the changes are visible in the structure of the system and in ensuring children’s rights, the principles do not seem to be successfully put into practice. If we reconsider the fact already mentioned that Hungarian child protection is stuck in the period of ontology, we have to assume that even after the birth of the Child Protection Law, it is not enough to interpret the concepts, if some of terms of child protection have still not been defined properly, and the genuine content is missing. It is important to note, however, that there is an ongoing debate about the nature of support. More specifically, according to some professionals, the type of support needed by children or young adults in care should be determined by their current needs. Basically, child protection has been trying to define itself, to find its place in the system of social policy, more specifically, in the sub-system of welfare policy.

It appears clear in international practice that the type of child protection, which concentrates exclusively on crisis, does not seem to give an effective solution to the problems of families and children. The importance of investing in primary-, and intermediate-level support systems became a key issue in international child protection during the last decade. It has to be stressed that without preventive programs and intermediate-level support systems, it is impossible to prevent the tendency that children are taken out of their families, and then, in a short time, they are placed back. Similarly, international professional dialogue also highlights the necessity of a practice that rests on evidence rather than collective wisdom, since the latter does not serve the best interest of the child.



From this point of view, as long as the system lacks a methodology based on well-founded knowledge, it is not possible to prevent children's problem either within or outside the family.

In international professional practice, aftercare support is based on a supportive method, which has social, public elements, and ones that are related to mental health. In particular, the above-mentioned method aims at developing those skills of care leavers which are essential for success in the labour market, as well as in everyday life. Similarly, supportive systems available after leaving care are helpful in finding appropriate accommodation and employment.

In Hungary, there has not been much research that deals with children who were brought up in care. Consequently, we do not know much, for instance, about the school career, employment progress, or the founding of a family of those who were in care. It is also largely unknown how effective the system was in preparing these young adults for the challenges of everyday life, and how successfully they could be integrated into society. Interestingly, however, many international studies point out that those who were in care tend to suffer from social discrimination and fail to cope with their disadvantageous situation. It seems that care leavers do not get sufficient help from the system; thus, are unable to develop the skills that are indispensable in everyday life.

The results of the qualitative research, focusing on the life courses of care leavers, show that young adults with experience of care expressed negative views about the system. More specifically, they pointed out that the child protection system does not prepare them appropriately for adult life; the way the system gives assistance does not adjust to their personal needs. Such reflection on the inadequate functioning of the system brings into consideration the fact that the above-mentioned young adults, contrary to the opinion of the experts, experience adult roles as adults, thus, they need support as adults.

A successful career is hardly ever provided for young adults in care, as child protection professionals give them a limited chance for that. In other words, child protection professionals want young adults to acquire secondary school-leaving qualifications or to learn a vocation, similarly, they intend young adults' life to be sequential, but the solutions the system offers for housing or employment problems are, regrettably, far from being effective (figure of "*dressmaker living on small farm*").

Regarding the upper age limit of aftercare, there is a significant difference between the opinion of professionals and young adults. As far as child protection professionals are concerned, they would extend the time young adults spend in aftercare provision, and then, after the young adults have left, they would provide a support system that is adjusted to the personal needs of the young adults. However, as the present system is in want of adequate professional content, the above-mentioned idea cannot be carried out properly. In that light, prolonged time in care would not help young adults to integrate into society. To achieve the above-mentioned aim, *there is a need for*



*developing a system which would provide intensive support for young adults to integrate successfully into society.*

The phenomenon of *implicit selection* – according to which young adults are not informed about the types of support they can take advantage of –, that is characteristic of the system of aftercare, also shows the inadequateness of the child protection system. In theory, using the support is voluntary, however, in practice, not all who are entitled to receive support actually get it (*dispositive practice*). The type of professional support young adults receive actually depends on the opinion of the child protection professional (*discretionary support*). On the basis of the decision of the professional, the young adult, at best, can receive additional support, or, at worst, is only tolerated, but not especially supported or motivated by the system. (*“three-S mentality”*) Consequently, the successful outcome considerably depends on the attitude of the professionals, and similarly, indicates the failure of the system.

In practice, however, the system is fairly *asymmetrical*. The currently used child protection practice based on traditional methods resulted in the tendency that the system of child protection has been drifting from a necessity-oriented approach towards a problem-oriented one. Supporting those who have come of age, theoretically, is based on tertiary prevention, in which correctional mechanisms are dominated. Regrettably, because the system is in want of adequate professional content, not only the practical efforts fail to be realized, but the ideological ones as well.

All in all, child protection can only become a well-established profession if certain factors are realized in practice. To take the issues separately, the most important ones include: a good theoretical basis, consistent terminology, methodological protocol, independent ethical codex, a system of quality assurance, and finally, the development of training and further training. After the structural transformation of the system, professional mentality would, hopefully, also change. If the child protection system reconsidered itself, regarded its activity as relating to child- and adolescent protection, the support of those who remain in aftercare provision or make use of aftercare service would be part of the adolescent protection. It is crucial to find a solution within the system itself for support and assistance in housing and job matters, and social integration. To achieve this goal, professional and methodological awareness are needed. Without these, the child protection system is going to stay on the ontological level, thus, it will continue to function inadequately. In this respect, the successful social integration of young adults in care will fail to take place; consequently, the problem reproduces itself, and the effectiveness of the system becomes doubtful. Maintaining the child protection system is, on the one hand, social solidarity, on the other hand, an expression of self-interest. However, it is important to note, that there is an urgent need to reform the current conditions of the system, in order to provide successful outcomes for those who are or were once in care.

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