

Leisure Time

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Regular large scale youth researches have been conducted in Hungary since 2000 (Bauer & Szabó, 2001, 2005, 2009; Székely, 2012). However, on the basis of youth researches the development of youth policy resulted in the change of the concept of youth (Nagy & Trencsényi, 2012). With the help of the Hungarian Youth 2012 survey we provide a comprehensive analysis and, in spite of the limited comparability, an analysis of the temporal changes in youth's leisure time balance, structure, and social activity¹.

I. Theoretical Approaches

Trying to find the best narrative describing social groups and processes, today's society is often called leisure society as the result of the increased importance and society-shaping effect of leisure time. According to these interpretations leisure society has the following characteristics: blurring boundaries between different aspects of time, demanding conversion from quantity time to quality time, and the growing importance and social prestige of leisure time (Tibori, 2003; Kiss, 2013). One of the main directions of this changing lifestyle is the increasing importance of gaining experience, which transforms society².

Examining trends of past centuries, leisure time is an increasing amount of time; thus, it naturally raises questions about the physical, mental, and social health of individuals. It is true even if there are counter examples, such as exploitative second or even third shifts seared into older generations' customs in the late Kádár era in Hungary, or the 12-16-hour-long child labour in some parts of the world. In addition, this leisure time also varies in terms of content and structure: there are groups whose income and profit cannot be high enough to fulfil their leisure spending, and there are also groups whose time is always "free" as they do not have any jobs.

In leisure time "leisure" does its job. So it contains activities and effects that might be connected to the virtues and deficits of the family, the primary socialization field, or to the institutional secondary field, but mainly the selecting individual's actions (alone or

¹ The article is based on the Hungarian Youth 2012 research, which is a national representative survey of Hungarian young people by age, gender, type of settlement, and region. The research sample consisted of 8,000 residents of Hungary aged 15-29. Data was collected through computer assisted personal interviews (CAPI) lasting about 70 minutes per respondent. The sample design was a multistage probability sample based on the Personal Data and Address Register of the Hungarian Central Office for Administrative and Electronic Public Services using 32,000 representative addresses for the research (8,000 core addresses and three times 8,000 additional addresses).

² While traditional European civilization defines the following standards: "Love your neighbour," "Sacrifice yourself", "Limit your desires," and "Work"; consumer society emphasizes the following: "Love yourself", "Discover yourself", "Express your desires freely," and "Enjoy life" (Hankiss as cited in Éber, 2008).

in a group, even in several referential groups) are crucial starting with the decision making itself. The complex world of values, skills, needs, and challenges belong to this universe in their infinite diversity. In a democratic society only the “lowest common denominator” of operating morals and law impose limits.

Even everyday experience suggests that experiencing and structuring time have been transformed (Pikó, 2005). Making a difference between leisure time and working time is getting more and more difficult. For some people excessive work, for others unemployment, and for some the blurring of labour and leisure (“my work is my hobby” attitude) make it impossible to define leisure time as remaining time. Moreover, leisure time is subjective as it is constructed in the individual’s mind as events independent of any external force and controlled by the individual only. Thus, leisure time does not exist in time nor in actions but in the subjective actor, being a personal commitment rather than an opportunity offered by external factors³.

In Hungarian there is only one word to express any kind of time spent with freely chosen activities, while in English there are two expressions: free time defining any time not spent with work, school, family, or any obligations (remaining time approach) and leisure time defining consciously planned activities (activity based approach) (T.Kiss & Tibori, 2013). This distinction in other words:

- Free time is any time that is not spent with work. For example, the everyday man has some free time and does anything that the actual circumstances and preferences allow.
- Leisure time is planned quality time. It provides the opportunity for self-discovery. The individual experiences the sense and possibility of freedom.

Although spending the increased amount of free time and leisure time in a meaningful, useful, and enjoyable way is a central issue, we are not prepared to spend the quantity of time (free) in a quality way (leisure).

Thus, we have to make a difference between quantity and quality time, and realize that the quality of the time spent in an activity is more valuable than the number of free hours. For example, in a family – despite the fact that the quantity of time spent together is a very important indicator – what really matters is not the fact that the family is physically together “dad is having a shower, mom is cooking dinner, kids are watching TV, dog is using the internet”, but the time spent with shared activities (going on excursions, playing cards, watching TV together) meaning quality time together. At the same time researches can only measure the quantity of time. Thus, we have plenty of data on time balance as a result of questionnaire surveys using a quantitative approach (such as KSH, 2010) while qualitative differences can only be measured in a very limited way by questionnaire surveys (Diósi & Székely, 2009). Other factors limiting timescale approaches are anomalies of the linear approach of time, differences between the time spent on an actual task and the perception of it, and activities happening simultaneously.

³ Veblen (1899) used the distinction of labour first to define the upper class of society as “leisure class” having endless leisure time, and through this he also showed the existence and importance of leisure time throughout history.

Free time and time balance researches

International time balance researches usually define four categories (clusters) in terms of spending free time. They all use different terminology, but there are general characteristics (studies were conducted in several countries such as the U.S.A, France, Germany, and Hungary in different times but having similar results in terms of social groups and activities; Peterson, 1981; Girard as cited in Vitányi, 2006; Wiesand, 2000). These groups are the following:

- Passive (low-brow [Peterson], walker [Girard]): They do not spend their free time in an active way. Their only activities are walking or making home improvements (Girard as cited in Vitányi, 2006). They are usually marginalized workers.
- Recreational (middle-brow [Peterson], entertainment consumer [Wiesand], beneficiary): Their free time activities are family and sport centred (Peterson, 1981). Their cultural activities are characterized by popular culture such as watching TV. They are mainly employees, and they account for almost half of the population. They are basically introverted and enjoy the fruits of consumer society.
- Educated (omnivore [Peterson], active, accumulating [Vitányi], educated consumer [Girard], casual visitor [Wiesand]): They primarily choose from culture but not from high culture. They are interested in public life and live an active political and civil social life.
- Privileged (autonomous [Vitányi], high-brow [Peterson], art enthusiast [Wiesand]): They are consumers of high culture, freelancers, intellectuals, leaders, politicians, and bureaucrats (Vitányi, 2006).

Using the above mentioned model Vitányi distinguishes four types of free time behaviour:

- Passive free time: in this segment of free time we are doing nothing (maybe watching TV, doing chores, or going to a pub).
- Recreational free time: we use this time to revitalize, preferring popular genres.
- Accumulative free time: this segment is characterized by wide interest, general character, experimenting attitude, and open behaviour.
- Inspiring free time: this time is spent with high culture (constructive, valuable period) (Vitányi, 1993).

A special result of Hungarian time balance researches is that the Hungarian society, trying to achieve the chosen model of leisure societies by reaching a certain level of consumption and living standards, sacrificed its own leisure time. Just by providing daily living, men were forced to earn extra income, and women were forced to save on expenditure, which resulted in losing leisure activities. Thus, this shrinking free time

became more and more unimaginative and one-dimensional among the adult society (Tibori, 2003).

We can ask some interesting questions:

- What is the amount of free time young people have? From young people's point of view, is our society a leisure society? (It is a leisure society if it has the largest proportion of time among the fields of socialization [Nagy & Trencsényi, 2012⁴].)
- How is Hungarian young people's time structured (the aspect of free and leisure time, active and passive attitudes etc.)? Are the above mentioned four categories true for Hungarian young people's free time? Is young people's leisure time unimaginative and one-dimensional as well (if we mean diversity and multiplicity as their antitheses)?

II. Leisure areas and activities in recent years

According to the Hungarian Youth 2012 survey, 9 percent of young people have no free time at all in addition to their weekday tasks and 4 percent spend even their weekends doing only obligations. The average of the rest is three and a half hours of free time during weekdays and eight hours during weekends. Similarly to the data of 2008 that were also three and a half hours during weekdays and nearly nine hours during weekends.

During weekdays teens, men, and people living under less favourable financial conditions have free time, which is significantly more than the free time young people in their twenties, women, and affluent people have**. The situation is similar at weekends with the only exception that affluent people have more free time at a weekend than people living under less favourable financial conditions.

Table 1: Average daily free time among different groups of young people (average in hours; N_{weekday}=6856; N_{weekend}=7221)

	Weekday	Weekend
Ages 15-19	3.7	9.1
Ages 20-24	3.9	8.3
Ages 25-29	3.5	7.4
Men	3.9	8.7

⁴ Fields of socialization are the agencies of socialization fulfilling all the following aspects: scope (has a direct impact on almost everyone), time-intensity (sufficient time with sufficient intensity is spent there), and has its own specific regulations.

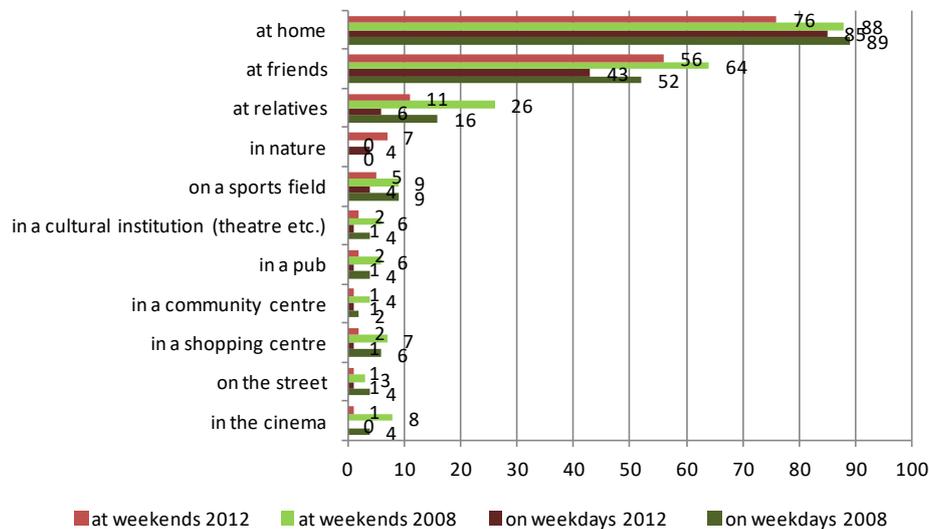
Women	3.5	7.7
Living without financial problems	3.9	9.7
Getting by with budgeting	3.4	8.2
Hardly getting by from their income	3.5	7.7
Having monthly financial problems	4.3	8.9
Living under privations	5.2	9.6

**($p \leq 0.001$)

Compared to former researches in 2012 the structure of young people's free time has only partially changed. Places of spending free time have not changed much as they are still mainly at home or at friends both during weekdays and weekends. Differently from the average, teens and men tend to spend their free time not at home or at friends⁵. (The target age group of the research was 15-29 years of age, so instead of making a difference between boys and men or girls and women, we use consequently only men and women.)

⁵ 17-26 percent of men and 13-21 percent of women have not mentioned home as the place for spending free time and it is 17-25 percent for 15-to-19-year-olds and 12-20 percent for 25-to-29-year-olds. Spending leisure time at friends has a different nature because 47-60 percent of men, but only 39-52 percent of women mentioned it as a place for leisure activities both during weekdays and weekends. There is a similarly big difference in terms of age groups as 48-63 percent of 15-to-19-year-olds and only 35-46 percent of 25-to-29-year-olds spend their free time at friends both during weekdays and weekends.

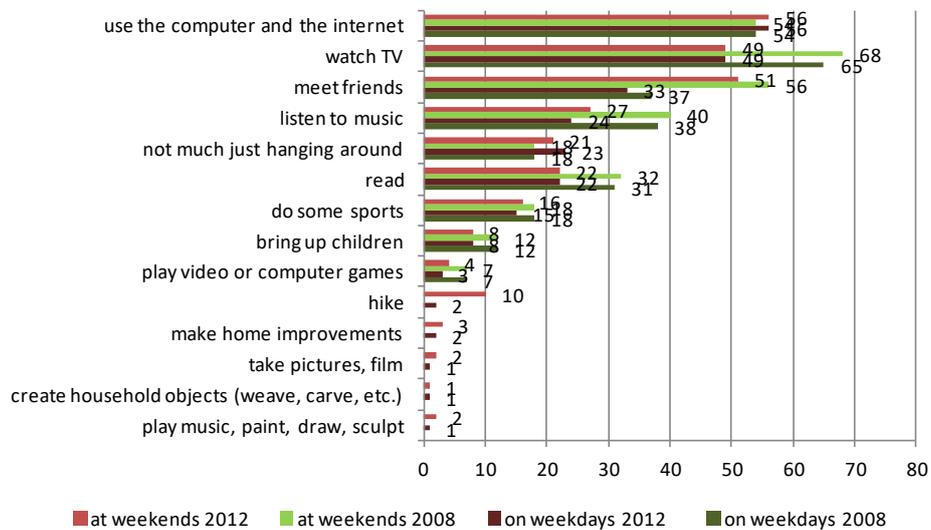
Figure 1: Places of spending free time (“Where do you usually spend your free time on an average weekday and weekend?” N₂₀₀₈=7861; N₂₀₁₂=7345; percentages)



Leisure activities show greater variety and differences from former researches. The most notable change is the most common activity. As in 2008 watching TV was the most common activity (65 percent on weekdays and 68 percent at weekends), in 2012 it is true for only half of the young people (49 percent on weekdays and 49 percent at weekends). Nowadays using the computer and the internet has become the most common activity. Not only watching TV but listening to music, playing video games, and reading have decreased, while idleness has slightly increased. Both the survey in 2012 and in 2008 show that weekends are used for cultivating friendships (33 percent on weekdays and 51 percent at weekends).

In 2012, we had the chance to ask about some progressive leisure activities, which were not included in former researches; thus, the answers show that only one out of ten young people goes on excursions or hiking, and only a few percent of 15-29 year olds are engaged in any creative or artistic activities in their free time.

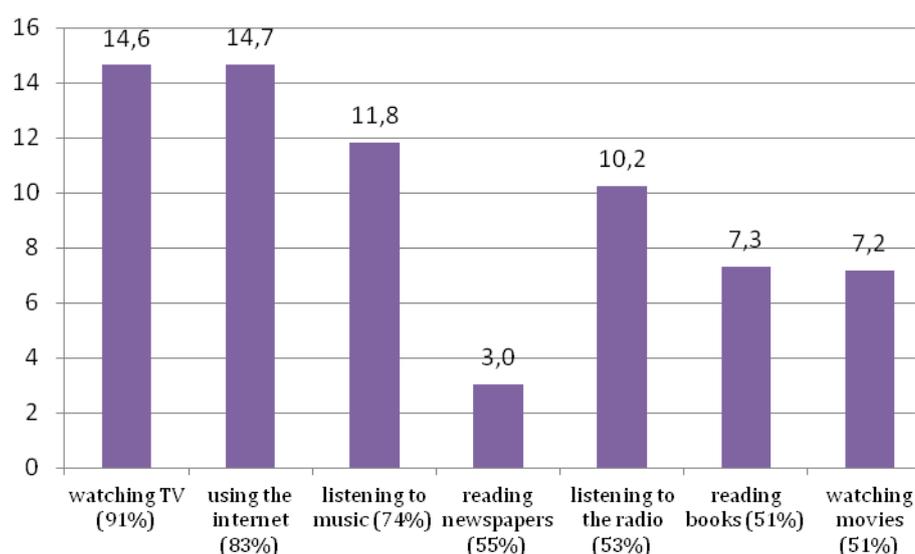
**Figure 2: Leisure activities (“What do you usually do in your free time?”
N₂₀₀₈=6396; N₂₀₁₂=7345; percentages)**



It is difficult to estimate proportions within the typology of activities as the Hungarian Youth 2012 survey is not a time use survey. However, we can provide a rough estimate on the basis of media consumption. Including simultaneous activities we can conclude that most of free time, approximately two-thirds to three-quarters, is spent in media environment. Examining averages of weekly media consumption (Figure 3) it is clear that most of the free time of the respondents is spent doing media related activities.

Referring back to the typology of Vitányi we can conclude that in 2012 the free time of Hungarian young people between the ages of 15 and 29 is dominated by popular genres, and high culture providing constructive opportunities are less common. In the 2012 data at least double as much people mentioned passive and recreational activities such as watching TV or talking to friends than accumulative and inspiring activities such as doing sports or creative work. Thus, passive and recreational activities are much more characteristic than accumulative and inspiring ones as the latter is a characteristic of only a small proportion of young people and in a small fraction of free time.

Figure 3: Media consumption (N=8000; percentages and averages)



Among leisure activities cultural activities are less common than they were few years ago. According to all categories in all age groups the number of those who never enter the places of “high culture” is increasing. 60 percent of young people have never been to a museum or theatre, and even less, eight out of ten young people have never been to a classical concert. Multiplex cinemas, bookshops, and libraries are the most visited cultural places, where about half of young people go with some frequency (Table 2).

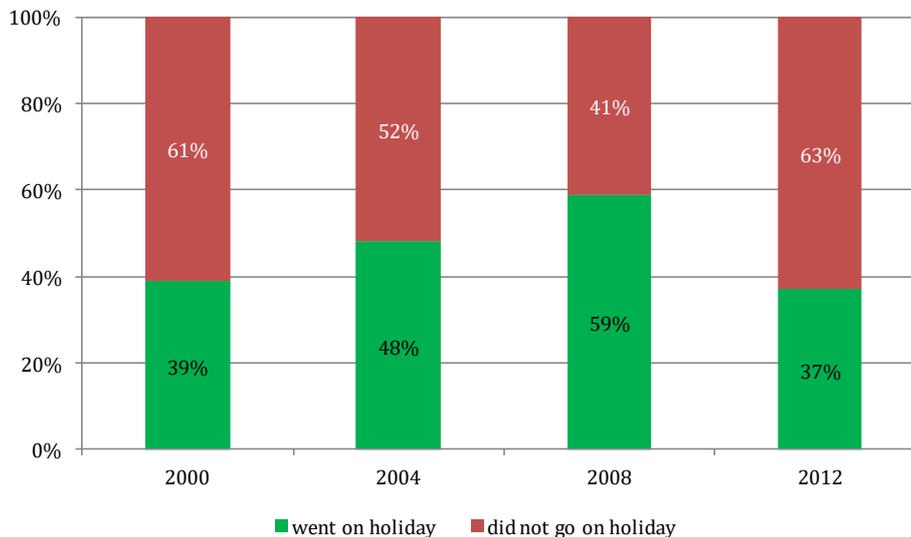
Table 2: Places never visited 2004-2012 (“How often do you visit the following places...?” ... “(hardly ever) never” N=8000; percentages)

	ages 15-19			ages 20-24			ages 25-29		
	2004	2008	2012	2004	2008	2012	2004	2008	2012
bookshop	34	38	49	33	36	51	36	38	55
library	28	30	46	42	43	55	53	43	65
multiplex cinema	21	27	37	23	29	37	33	43	45
art cinema	68	68	75	67	67	72	70	72	76
museum, exhibition	35	41	56	42	47	59	49	53	63
classical concert	76	77	81	76	80	81	81	81	83
theatre	35	40	57	45	47	60	47	51	63

opera	86	89	88	87	89	86	87	90	86
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In terms of young people's free time we can distinguish daily, weekly, and annual structures. Young people's annual free time is connected to work and school holidays, which had been rapidly growing in previous years, but it has stopped and fallen back to the level around the millennium. In 2000, 39 percent of young people claimed to be on holiday (abroad or in Hungary) in the previous year; then all the next four-year periods, show 10 percent growth, while the 2012 data is only 37 percent, which is lower than in 2000. The explanation is financial situation as only one tenth of those living under less favourable financial conditions could go on holiday while it is between 50-60 percent among those having better financial situation.

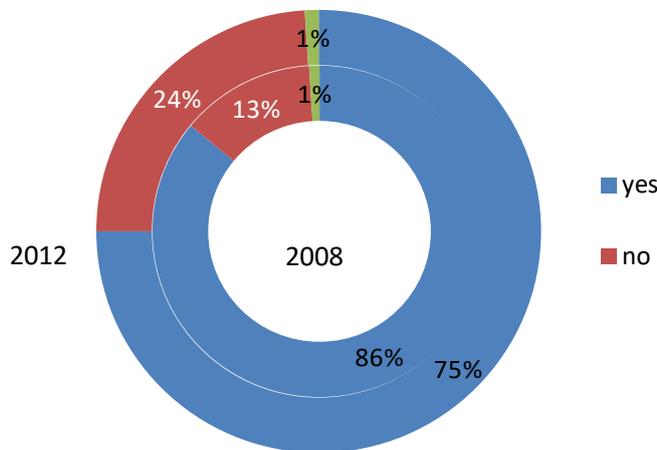
Figure 4: Holidays in the previous year (N₂₀₁₂=7672; percentages)



Free time and social life

According to the Hungarian Youth 2012 survey, a quarter of young people (24 percent) do not have a circle of friends with home they could spend their free time together. In 2008, it was only 13 percent (Figure 5). In this clearly negative tendency the following groups are overrepresented: women (28 percent), 25-to-29-year-olds (31 percent), skilled workers (30 percent), married people (43 percent), people with children (47 percent), and those who have less free time in general or live in worse conditions than the average.

Figure 5: Circle of friends – to spend free time with (“Do you have a circle of friends with whom you usually spend your free time?” N=8000; percentages)



III. Characteristics of young people’s free time

Leisure activities more characteristic of men are sports, home improvements, social life, and computer activities. Leisure activities more characteristic of women are watching TV, reading books, and bringing up children. Free time without any aims – as expected – is significantly more characteristic of people in worse financial conditions and with lower level of education** (Table 3). Among those who are just “hanging around” the number of people described themselves living in the worst financial conditions is double as much (34-35 percent) as those who described themselves having good financial situation (17-19 percent). In terms of the level of education the difference is similar as much less highly educated young people spend their leisure time aimlessly than low-skilled young people (Table 3).

Table 3: Spending free time aimlessly (“What do you usually do in your free time?” “...not much, just hanging around”) (N=7294; percentages)

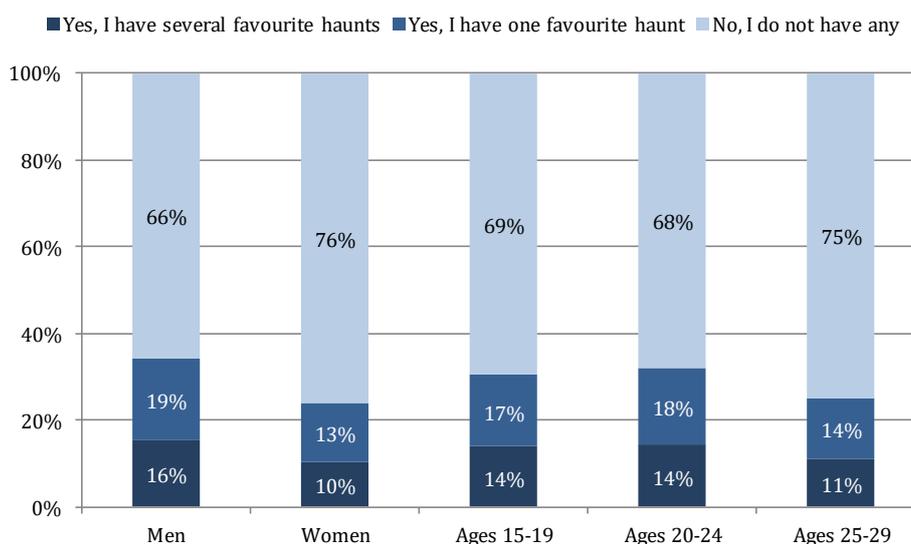
	weekday	weekend
Living without financial problems	18%	17%
Getting by with budgeting	17%	19%
Hardly getting by from their income	23%	25%

Having monthly financial problems	25%	26%
Living under privations	34%	35%
Primary school education	23%	24%
Vocational qualification	26%	30%
High school degree	18%	19%
University degree	16%	18%

Leisure opportunities

As previously mentioned young people spend their free time mostly at home where the internet and TV programs provide the primary opportunities for leisure. Although Hungarian young people tend to stay at home, nearly one-third (29 percent) of them have a favourite haunt. This permanent meeting point is significantly characteristic of men (34 percent) and 15-to-24-year-olds (31-32 percent)**.

Figure 6: Haunts (Do you have a favourite haunt, a permanent meeting point where you could find some of your friends and acquaintances even if you have not discussed the meeting before? N=7790; percentages)

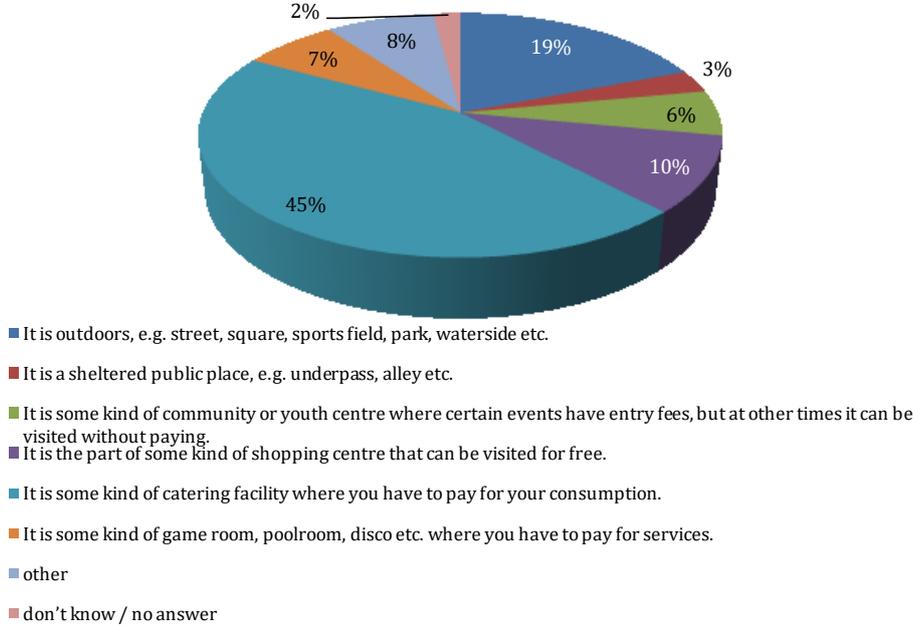


**($p \leq 0,001$)

Favourite haunts are usually in some kind of catering facility (45 percent), outdoors (19 percent), or in shopping centres (10 percent). Only 6 percent have a favourite haunt in

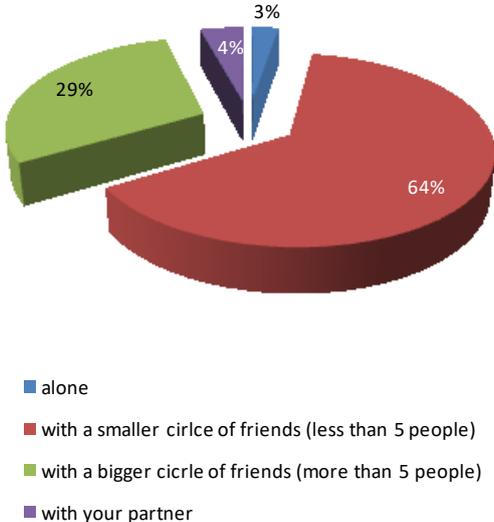
youth centres or community centres, which could be operated specifically for youth community spaces.

Figure 7: Description of haunts (Please, choose the most characteristic description of your favourite haunt from the list below. N=2277; percentages)



Those who mentioned having at least one favourite haunt mostly go there with a small company, which means less than five friends. It implies that these favourite haunts mean places of trust as it is not typical that they would go there alone or in pairs.

Figure 8: Company in haunts (“Who do you usually go to your favourite haunt with?” N=2253; percentages)

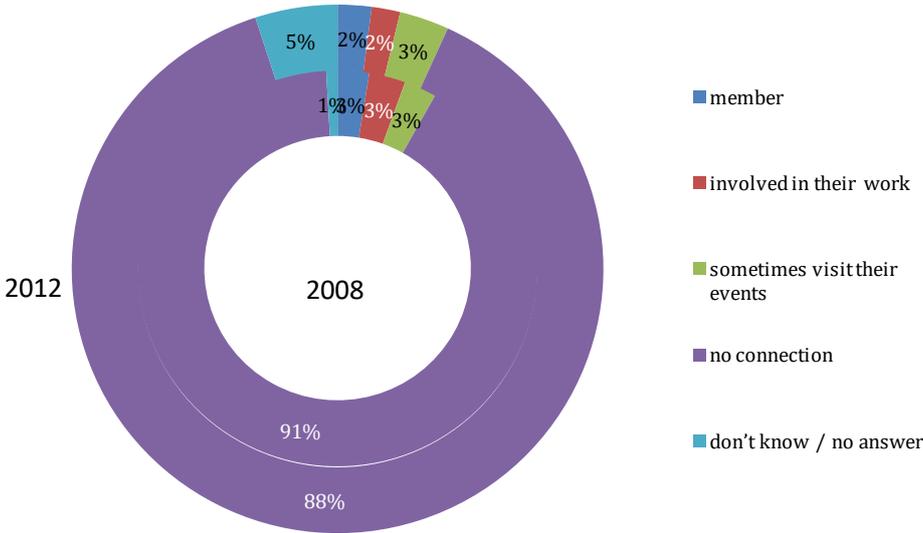


Organised leisure activities

The organization of Hungarian youth activities has changed a lot. After the regime change, (party) state organizations (such as the pioneer movement) providing organized leisure activities for young people have disappeared. New or re-established church and civic organizations (which operated before state socialism) have not been able to engage large groups of young people. In some post-socialist countries there is a tendency of strengthening of religious organizations along with weakening of political socialization in schools (Csákó, 2004). However, the Hungarian Youth 2012 survey shows the weakening of the role of religion in Hungary.

As in previous years, the number of young people who take an active part in civic organizations, thus being members of leisure organizations, youth groups etc., is really low. Less than ten percent of 15-to-29-year-olds spend their free time in an organized manner even by taking part in organised events. A possible research question can be whether the lack of organised leisure activities means the lack of need and rejection of the organized, or young people actually need organizational framework and as a result radical political groups appear offering organized experiences (Murányi, 2010; Csepli, Murányi, & Prazsák, 2011).

Figure 9: Connection to leisure organizations (Do you have any kind of connection with a leisure organization, club, or group? N=8000; percentages)



Conclusions

In summary, the remaining time approach seems to describe Hungarian young people's free time. As previous large-scale youth researches have also shown, young people consider passive activities mainly in media environment at home to be free time (and much less organized or authentic quality leisure activities).

Data on Hungarian youth lifestyle in 2012 also reinforces the conclusion that in non-institutional leisure activities electronic media becomes more and more important. Most of the free time is spent initially in front of the radio then television and nowadays the internet. Moreover, recent research shows that this new media is incorporated into activities and places that were previously dominated by family, school, or work. Updating Facebook status during dinner with the family or chatting online during a class at school are everyday activities, which often cause conflicts between the different fields of socialization (Székely, 2013).

The Hungarian Youth 2012 survey shows that music is not the most important leisure activity; moreover, quarter of Hungarian young people do not listen to music at all. This means that typologies displaying subcultures of youth cannot be primarily based on music anymore. Defining subcultures of youth by emphasizing only the determination of musical styles appears to be outdated (Szapu, 2002). In addition, the increased role of free time spent in front of the screen also indicates that we should re-think youth classification models that ignore the aspects of the digital culture when creating leisure lifestyle groups.

Data has led to the conclusion that young people defining themselves recipients of services are less interested in hidden psychological contracts of mass movements like "be my member, belong to me, and I give you identity and programme in return", but they get in contact with leisure, civic organizations only on certain events and programmes.

Instead of leisure society, screen-society (similarly to screenager; Rushkoff, 2006) defines "youth of 2012" better, as young people spend significant part of their lives in front of the screen of televisions, computers, and mobile devices overall, as much time as a typical job requires.

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