

Factors influencing integration to the political system¹

In our study, we wish to give an overview of integration mechanisms in Hungarian society. We focus on system integration, that is, on the political processes and interactions that re-establish social mechanisms of co-existence in society. We approach system integration from the dimension of action (Kiss 2015a). Three hypotheses are tested on the database of Integration and Disintegration Processes within the Hungarian Society project. We present what explanatory factors influence the electoral, traditional and direct forms of political activity. We also discuss the relationship between cohorts, life events and participation, as well as the link between clients and participation.

Keywords: electoral participation; political participation; integration; life events; client; cohort generation

1. Introduction

The aim of the present study is to provide an overview of the ways integration mechanisms work in Hungarian society from the perspective of political system integration (i.e., policy processes, interactions that create and re-create cohesive mechanisms of coexistence of people). In our study, we consider an integration mechanism as “... an ideal-typical set of actions, attitudes, ideas etc. that improves the level of co-operation of particular integration agents and / or maintains the possibility of co-operation, increases the sense of togetherness and reduces the chance of communication disturbances and conflicts” (Dupcsik and Szabari 2015: 62). During our analysis of the subject, we focus on three integration mechanisms: interpersonal integration, social integration and (political) system integration. We do not examine whole system integration, but rather a distinct area of it, namely integration into the political subsystem.

We interpret political system integration in the dimension of action: this dimension describes the way and the means of integration, the way that people are bound to, and integrated into the political subsystem. Using the data of Integration and Disintegration Processes in Hungarian Society research our paper tests system integration in three dimensions. In our study, we first examine political activity of three cohorts (grandparents, parents, and young people). Then we analyze the relationship between life cycles and political participation. Finally, we examine whether the phenomenon of welfare privatization (as described by Jürgen Habermas) obtains, and if so, we assess its impact on political activity.

System integration is defined by life-cycle events that happen during the life of an individual. Differences in life cycles determine the individual’s system integration, their perception of the political system as well as system-related behavior. Our starting point is the view that the main source of variation in individual political participation between citizens of different age groups are life events. (Frizzell, 2009: 6). In our study, we assume that it is not age in itself, but the aggregation of life events that strengthens system integration by increasing political participation.

According to Habermas, the welfare state turns citizens into clients as a result of different social policies (Habermas 2011: 519). From this starting point, it is assumed that the political participation of “clients” benefiting from public transfers is lower than the average. Following

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Martin Kohli, we can speak of the welfare generation (Arber et al., 2000). This concept is based on the varying institutionalization of different age groups. As the welfare state assigns different institutions (such as education, employment, pensions) to different age groups, generations are accordingly segregated into their particular labor market positions. (Szabó and Kiss 2013: 110). Although this institutionalized, life-centered generation approach (young people study, old people are retired) seems to be vanishing nowadays, this study looks at how the state's transfers affect the degree of system integration. We put special emphasis on characterizing young Hungarians who grew up after the regime change, who have been socialized in this "disrupted" environment. We share the view that a social image that has been experienced and consolidated at a young age may become characteristic two or three decades onward (Ságvári, 2012).

To analyze the above, our study first defines concepts. Then it looks at the results of the earlier Hungarian analyses. Next, we will briefly describe the database that we use and our methodology. In the analysis part of the study, two types of participation are interpreted by indexes among the examined welfare generations. First of all, we look at the differences between young people (socialized after the change of regime), their parents (socialized in the Kádár era) and their grandparents (socialized before the Kádár era). By using a binary logistic model we identify the most important factors that have an influence on political system integration.

2. Theoretical overview

Political system integration

Unlike the dimension of *interpersonal integration*, where we are examining the interpersonal relationships of people (Albert and David 2012: 343), or *social integration*, which includes means enabling people to influence each other in order to strengthen community ties (Kováč and Kristóf 2012: 30), *political system integration* means a multitude of policy processes and interactions that create and re-create the framework for the coexistence of people, including institutions (Kiss 2016: 17). Our study of system integration in the Habermasian sense is broken down (Kiss 2015a: 99-101) into the seven dimensions (type of community, action, ideology, objectivity and perception, mental, geographical and temporal cohesion). Among these seven dimensions, we interpret political integration from the dimension of action.

Political participation has many different forms. Beyond electoral participation, it has several other traditional forms, offered by the political system (collection of signatures, participation at political events) and initiated by parties or civic movements. In all such cases, the active acceptance of invitation can be considered as proof of an individual's integration into the system (Kiss 2015b: 99). In our study we look at active forms of system integration (Kiss 2015a: 99-100), and we want to measure and monitor the role of political participation in system integration.

Out of those three types of political participation (traditional, direct and virtual participation) defined in a previous study (Szabo and Oross 2012: 69), we examine two², taking into account traditional and direct democratic participation.

"Traditional" forms of political participation include participation in political organizations (parties, trade unions) and certain forms of attachment to these organizations (such as campaigning, participation at meetings, wearing the symbols of these organizations, etc.) These forms, which have been around since the establishment of mass parties usually require different

² The database analyzed in this study did not reveal the online forms of participation.

levels of individual involvement and achieve different results from the perspective of the collective and the individual. While Western European literature describes a tendency for younger age groups being less active in electoral participation, in our country electoral participation does not show such a clear change, therefore we pay special attention to participation at elections.

“Direct” forms of political participation comprise forms of participation that require personal involvement but do not require long-term commitment on behalf of the actor. We further distinguish between face-to-face activities that require significant resources and intensive involvement from activities that do not require these. Examples of the former subtype include direct forms of protest such as sit-ins, blockades, expressive and symbolic acts (such as hunger strikes). Direct forms of political participation that require few resources, come with low risk and require low levels of commitment include the signing of statements, petitions and initiatives.

Possession of material, mainly economic resources are at the heart of a significant part of political conflicts. In the case of a generational conflicts, for example, the distribution of welfare resources may cause a clash. (Szabó and Kiss 2013: 101). In our study, we apply the concept of cohort generation. The concept is rooted in Mannheim’s theory because it classifies people into groups, with common experiences, including historical ones. The cohort generation is similar to ethnicity, because it is based on the year of birth. But this does not lead to an organized generation in itself, therefore we consider it primarily as a structural variable. According to Martin Kohli, it is common to talk about welfare generation (Arber et al, 2000). This concept is based on the institutionalization of different ages, more precisely that the welfare state assigns different institutions to different age groups, such as education, employment, and pensions. Generations thus differ according to their presence in the labor market: whether they work or not yet; whether they are paying into, or benefiting from social provisions, etc. The latest developments have severely disrupted the application of this institutionalized, life-centered approach to generations. Today it is common for young people to work while also studying, just as elderly people are often still working after retirement. Moreover, family and welfare generations most often do not coincide: family members belonging to two different family generations can be either working or retired at the same time. As family members, therefore, they can be regarded as belonging to different generations, but in welfare terms they belong to the same generation.

Results of a study (Ságvári, 2012:79) about the generational segmentation of Hungarian society have shown that there are no consistent signs—perceivable at the level of society—that the values of the younger generation would be radically different from those of their parents. As for their views of society and value choices young people are “aging up” toward their parents in many respects—despite expectations to the contrary. For teenagers and those in their twenties during the past decade, their place in the globalized consumer culture has become one of the primary source of identity shaping. And yet under the surface, we find a nostalgia, based on the parental experience of socialism, (Szabó and Oross, 2013) for the (partly false) sense of security and the slow but steady growth of the Kádár era. This contradicts the collective social expectations of youth, prescribed primarily by the superficial messages of media and politics that they be innovative, willing to take risks, dynamic, competitive, and so on. This has resulted in a homogeneous, but in many ways, non-coherent society where socialization, value choices and attitudes associated with social integration of younger generations do not present any “tectonic” movement, judging by data of earlier studies.

From results of studies written about the action dimension of political system integration in Hungarian society (Kern and Szabó, 2011) it turns out that the level of political activity is still below the level of electoral participation and political activity of most western European countries and even of some Central European democracies. The positive and negative consequences of the emergence of Hungarian capitalism and democracy since the change of regime considered by age group, young people (i.e., those for whom Hungarian capitalism and democracy are the only existing reality) are reflected by the results of a four-year, large-scale series of research studies called “Youth”. According to the results of these studies (Szabó et al, 2002; Bauer and Szabó, 2005; Bauer and Szabó, 2009; Oross 2013) participation in politics represents an acceptable opportunity only for a narrow layer of Hungarian youth, especially children of highly educated parents. They are those who show a remarkably high level of activity in traditional forms of democratic participation.

Q1: Starting from this conceptual approach, we first try to find out the implications of the integration mechanisms of the welfare state on the system integration of Hungarian citizens belonging to different cohort generations.

H1. It is assumed that among the cohort-generations the political action of the Kádár era will be more marked and the young people will be less involved than the generation of their parents.

Life Cycles and Political Participation

According to the life-cycle approach, age alone does not necessarily affect political behavior. Life events with the passing of time and not the passing years in themselves are the factors that determine behavior. Variables created for tracking life cycles can bring us closer to a better understanding of the mechanisms that change political behavior as age advances. If life-cycle explanations consistently point out that life events affect behavior, they ultimately make it clear that behavior, such as participation, changes as a consequence of new life events associated with a person’s aging (Frizzell, 2009: 2).

The first research results in accordance with this approach have proved that factors such as whether or not an individual is married or has a child (Verba and Nie, 1972) within the life-cycle affects political behavior. Later, it was proved that events such as joining a particular political organization or a permanent job lead to the establishment of important community ties in a person’s life (Norpoth, 2006). There may also be life events that can temporarily interrupt participation (Plutzer, 2002). It has further been demonstrated that the individual’s life-cycle position (measured by a proxy variable of age) influences the degree of political knowledge as life experience increases both political interest and exposure to politics (Delli Carpini and Keeter, 1997). Differences in behavior between age groups, both in terms of engagement and participation, may arise from the diversity of life events in the lives of individuals.

Therefore, it is proved that life events have an impact on political participation. However, the mutual interaction of individual life events, however, has not yet been a subject of research. In our study, therefore, life events are modeled as chains of events and not as single occurrences (Frizzell, 2009: 8). By means of an index of life events, we want to point out that life events are aggregating, and this aggregation increases the level of system integration of a particular individual.

Q2: Our second research question asks whether integration is transformed due to life cycle change. Do individuals simply integrate into society because of social forces, family formation, employment, and social aging?

H2. It is assumed that, as life cycles advance, political activity is increasing, and this positively influences political system integration.

Privatization of welfare

In our analysis we test empirically whether the theory of Jürgen Habermas about the *welfare privatization* phenomenon can be justified among Hungarian citizens. Next to system integration mechanisms Habermas draws attention to the structural components of the lifeworld and mechanisms that maintain them. In addition to identifying two different spheres of society, his approach based on the division of system and lifeworld refers to two distinct forms of integration. Habermas's integration theory is based on the distinction between system- and social integration (Habermas 2011: 359). Habermas explains that there is a transfer of action co-ordination from 'language' over to 'steering media', such as money and power, which bypass consensus oriented communication with a 'symbolic generalisation of rewards and punishments'. Subsequently the lifeworld "is no longer needed for the coordination of action". "In the end, systemic mechanisms suppress forms of social integration even in those areas where a consensus dependent co-ordination of action cannot be replaced, that is, where the symbolic reproduction of the lifeworld is at stake. In these areas the mediatization of the lifeworld assumes the form of colonisation". This process affects not only social relations but also culture and personality, other two factors of the lifeworld. Habermas assigns the role of resistance to lifeworld actors (humans). Citizens can oppose the colonization of the lifeworld by giving up their readiness to co-operate or by withdrawing their supporting output from the system. However, according to Habermas, the welfare state neutralizes the civic role of citizens and transforms them into clients of the social state system. "In the end, systemic mechanisms suppress forms of social integration even in those areas where a consensus dependent co-ordination of action cannot be replaced, that is, where the symbolic reproduction of the lifeworld is at stake. In these areas the mediatization of the lifeworld assumes the form of colonisation".(Habermas, 2011: 519). In his view, while the welfare state maintains a sufficient degree of civic privatization, legitimacy problems do not turn into a crisis. The system, with its various incentives prevents citizens from resisting privatization attempts, i.e., the potential for participation and protest potential of citizens as clients will be low.

Q3: Following the theory of Habermas, our third research question examines whether welfare privatization really reduces political participation or if this effect is not detectable in the case of Hungarian society.

H3. We assume that welfare privatization reduces political participation. The more threads connect a citizen to state redistribution mechanisms (redistribution), the lower political activity and thus system integration is.

3. Data and methods

The source of data in our study is the database of the *Integration and disintegration processes in Hungarian society* project. Data was collected via a face to face interviews (2,687 successful interviews) during the spring of 2015. The target group of the research was the adult population living in Hungary with a permanent or temporary address. (Szabó and Gerő 2015, 85-86).

Input variables

In their article, Andrea Szabó and Márton Gerő (2015) have described the participation patterns in Hungarian society in more detail, therefore here we draw attention only to the most important features. Based on traditional and direct forms of participation, presented in the theoretical part of our paper, we have created a complex participatory indicator for the analysis, in which all forms of participation, including certain participation in elections,³ have been incorporated.

We call those people politically passive who do not report any willingness to participate in elections and who have not been involved in any direct and / or traditional forms of participation within the past 12 months. We considered a respondent as a committed voter if participation in a parliamentary election was assured, but no other activity was carried out. Traditional participants are those who have taken part in at least one of the four possible types of traditional participation⁴ regardless of whether they are committed voters or not. Direct participants are those who have been involved in at least one confrontational political action (e.g., protest or any symbolic action)⁵ within the past 12 months, regardless of whether they are committed voters or not. “Super active” are those respondents who claimed to have participated in more than one (or even all three) forms of political participation.

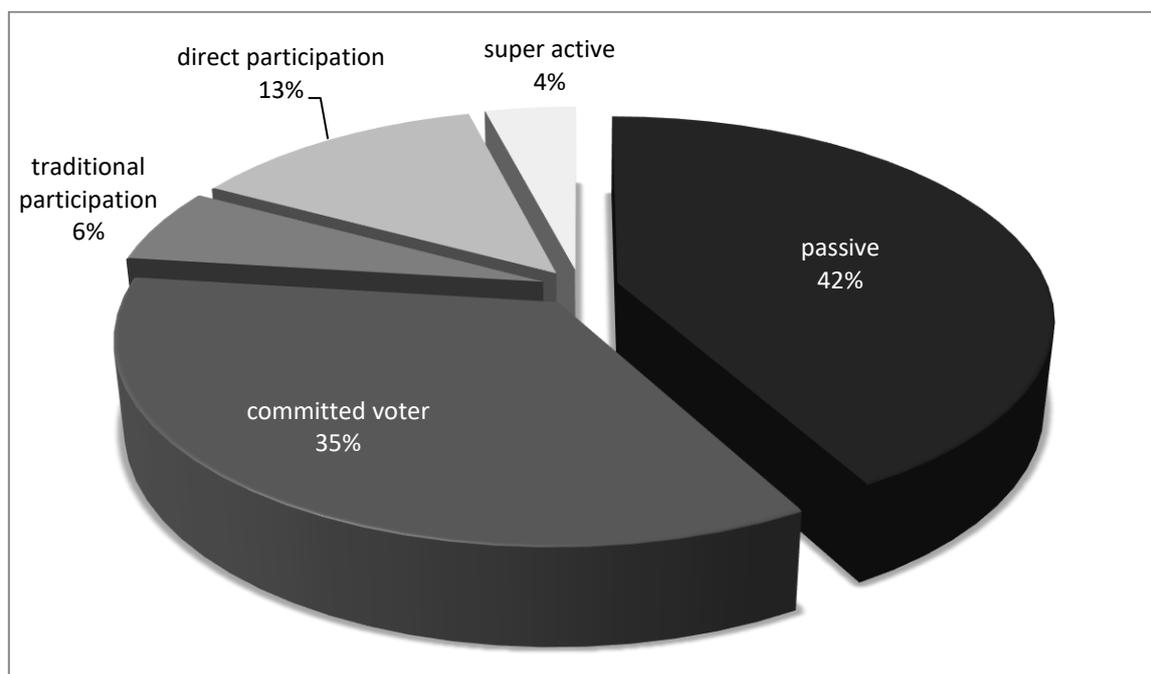
The following figure shows primary descriptive data. Based on the complex indicator, 42 percent of Hungarian society did not show any political activism in 2015, that is, they had no firm intention to participate in a parliamentary election and in their case no traditional or direct participation was registered for the past 12 months.

³ Although it is undisputed that electoral participation is one of the traditional forms of participation, the data about respondents' intentions to participate have shown huge differences compared with other forms of participation (when compiling the traditional participation index, Cronbach Alfa showed a very different value compared with the other forms of participation).

⁴ Contacted a politician; engaged in a political party; participated in the work of other political organizations or political movements; worn political badges and emblems.

⁵ The four direct forms of participation are: signed protest letters, petitions; participated in demonstrations; boycotted certain products; donated money to non-governmental organizations.

Figure 1.
General pattern of political participation, 2015
(percentage of respondents)



Source : Integration and disintegration processes in Hungarian society project

The most important segment of political activity (35 percent) is given by those with the intent of participating in elections, but due to the question it is a promise so is not known whether or not the respondent will actually participate. Respondents belonging to this category did not get involved in any further action, they did not invest energy or money: they have only expressed their future intention to participate. This is completely different from the rest of the categories where we can talk about actual participation. In terms of traditional and direct participation, the latter is more than twice as common (13 percent) in our sample as traditional participation (6 percent). Finally, based on the survey of the spring of 2015, 4 percent of the Hungarian adult population—about 300-350 000 people—can be considered as super active. They have been active in all major segments of the political action repertoire in the past 12 months and have a strong commitment to participate in elections.

In our study, we aim to demonstrate which factors influence participation via building binary logistic regression models. As the first step, the indicated complex indicator was separated into two dichotomous variables, which function as dependent variables later.

Within the first dependent variable, a certain value was recoded as 1 if the respondent indicated a willingness to participate in elections and zero if passive. This variable did not include other forms of activity (electoral participation).

In the second dependent variable, values were recoded into 1 when someone had any substantive political activity in the past 12 months and zero if a respondent was passive (political participation). This variable did not include those who only indicated their willingness to participate in parliamentary elections, but we have included those who have taken part in other forms of participation beyond voting at elections.

Dependent variables

name	description
electoral participation	0 passive – 1 committed voter
political participation	0 passive – 1 has taken part in any form of political action

Our analysis is done in three steps.

First, we analyze the relationship among cohort generations and participatory variables as described above. We assume that there is overlap between the political generations of Hungary (Róbert and Valuch 2013: 122) and welfare generations from the aspect of political system integration⁶. Three cohort generations were created for this study based on Péter Róbert's and Tibor Valuch's 2013 article (Table 1). The study's authors distinguish six historical / political generations based on socialization: the pre-socialist generation that was socialized before 1949; between 1949 and 1962: the generation of the fifties; 1963-1979: the generation of Kádár's consolidation; 1980-1989: the generation of the crisis of the Kádár era; 1990-1995: the crisis generation of the regime change and the post-socialist generation after 1996. We suppose that there may be a seventh cohort generation that consists of young people born after the change of regime and whose political socialization falls in the mid-2000s (Szabó and Kern 2011; Szabó, 2012; Szabó, 2014). In the latter case, we can talk about a fluid generation, about the age groups whose political socialization might have been influenced by the violent riots of 2006, the economic crisis of 2008 and the landslide Fidesz-KDNP victory in 2010. We have aggregated data of the six cohorts listed by Róbert and Valuch (2013) and our assumed seventh cohort generation as follows:

Table 1.
Cohort generations based on the article of Róbert and Valuch (2013)

Name	Birth	Cohort generations of the Róbert – Valuch article
young people	born after 1976 political socialization during the regime change of after that	crisis of the regime change (1990–1995), post-socialist period (1996–2005), period of democratic deficit (2006–)*
cohort generation of the parents	born between 1949 and 1975 political socialization between 1963 and 1989	consolidation of the Kádár era (1963– 1979), crisis of the Kádár era (1980–1989)
cohort generation of the grandparents	born before 1948 political socialization before 1962/63	pre-socialist period (–1948), long 50's (1949–1962)

*own classification.

If someone belonged to a cohort generation based on date of birth, the value is 1, if not then zero. This way, three dichotomous (0, 1) variables were created.

⁶ That is, they have common historical experiences, about the 1956 Revolution and war of Independence, about the Kádár regime or about the regime change, which can be taken into account as a structural variable to demarcate each cohort.

Life events

As a second step, we created cumulative life-course index based the article of Craig Frizzell (2009), Gábor Kálmán (2012) and Kabai et al., (2016). We identified five life events based on 4 dimensions.

Table 2.
Life events,
Based on Frizzell (2009) and Gábor (2012)

Education	Family	Autonomy	Activity
Finished studies (is no longer in education)	Marriage / registered partnership	Has left family home	Pensioner
–	Parenthood	–	–

All life events were coded into binary variables. The value was 1 if the respondent completed studies, was married / had a partner, had a child, had left the parental home, or was retired, otherwise it was zero. According to Frizzell, individual life events were organized into an index with a minimum value of zero and a maximum of five. The value was 0 if no such life event had yet occurred in a respondent's life, and five when all life events had taken place (cumulated index). Tables in the Appendix show the distribution of life events and the average age, as well as the average number of life events per cohort generation. Based on Craig Frizzell, we expect that the higher a cumulative life-cycle index, the more likely a respondent will be an active citizen.

Becoming a client

At the third step of analysis, the theoretical approach of Jürgen Habermas's client had to be operationalized. We have sought redistribution mechanisms that link citizens to the political system / state. Here there is a special attachment, as the client expects and the political system provides some material or non-financial support, that is, there is a kind of mutual interdependence. We identified four areas and six forms where the system and the individual are interconnected⁷. These are summarized in the table below.

Table 3.
Segments of becoming a client

Education	Health care system	Social benefits	Employment
Attends School	Has an illness / is disabled	Receives social benefit (family allowance, financial aid)	Employment in the public sector
–	–	–	Benefit that substitutes employment (public work program, unemployment support)
–	–	Receives Pension	

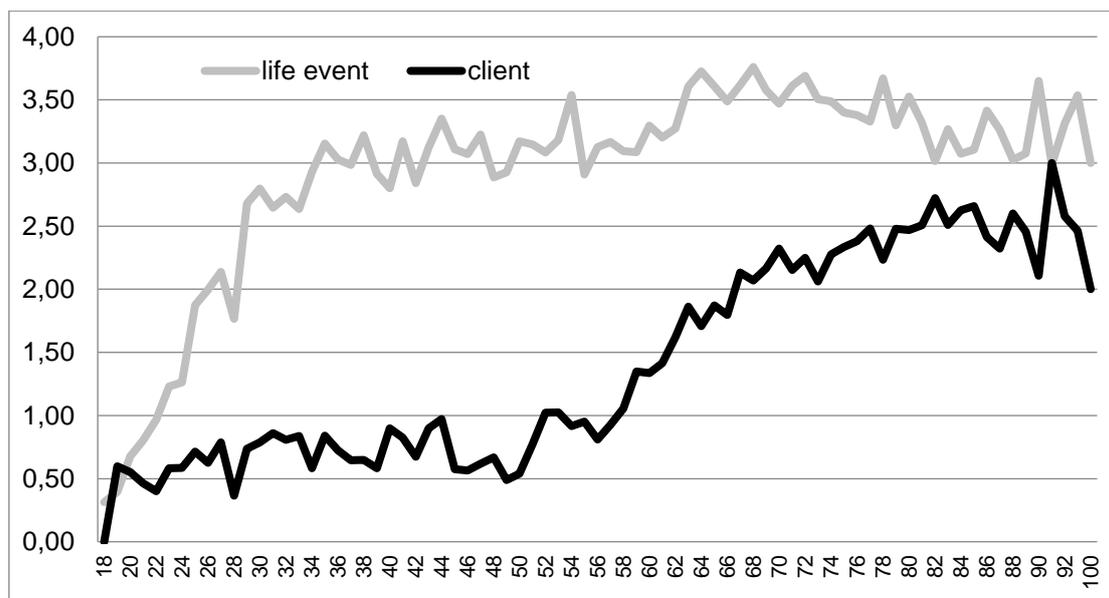
Similarly, to the cumulative index of life events, we also created dichotomous variables based on the above explained segments. The variable was 1 if the respondent studied, had some serious illness, received state / municipal benefits, was employed in the public sphere, or received any benefits such as employment substitution. Then individual dichotomous variables

⁷ It should be noted that a client defined on the basis of redistribution mechanisms can also be understood as a social phenomenon of system integration.

were aggregated, resulting in a zero-to-six index, where the sixth value means that the respondent is entirely dependent on the state, and 0 means no dependence at all, that is, the respondent is not a client. During the analysis, we expect the cumulative client index to have a negative impact on the participation. The higher the average value of someone in the client index, the lower the level of participation.

Regarding the impact of the difference between the two indexes on political activity, based on the literature we expect that since the elderly are the most tied to the redistribution system, those tendencies that cause political passivity are strongest within the oldest cohort generation. Due to the accumulation of life events, the highest activity is expected from the members of the middle cohort generation, while the youngest are supposed to be more active than the eldest because of their greater independence from the redistribution system. The correlation between the cumulative life-course index and the cumulative client index is 0.315, that is, although there is a correlation between the two, it is rather moderate than strong. While life events grow almost linearly between 18 and 35, the client index grows significantly over the age of 50.

Figure 2.
Means of aggregated life event index and client index by age



Control variables

During the linear regression analyses, based on the article of Frizzell (2009: 13), the following socio-demographic dichotomous control variables were used.⁸

⁸ During the analysis, we included values and ideological control variables (such as variables that mediate the effects of structural variables), but we thought these would hinder understanding. We wanted to demonstrate the “pure” effects of our (structural) variables.

Table 4.
Description of control variables

Name	Description
Gender	0 women, 1 men
Budapest	1 if respondent lives in the capital city and 0 if not. The aim of the variable is to present regional differences. Frizzell used the distinction “South non South”.
Education	0 if respondent has no high school diploma 1 if yes. The aim of the variable is to present differences in education level. Frizzell used the distinction “grade school-level – non grade school-level”.
Roma	0 if respondent does not belong to the Roma minority 1 if yes. The aim of the variable is to present ethnic differences. Frizzell used the distinction “white – nonwhite”.
Income	Equivalent based on income quintiles 1= top fifth, 5= lowest fifth. Frizzell also uses 5 income categories.

The correlation between the control variables is given in the appendix.

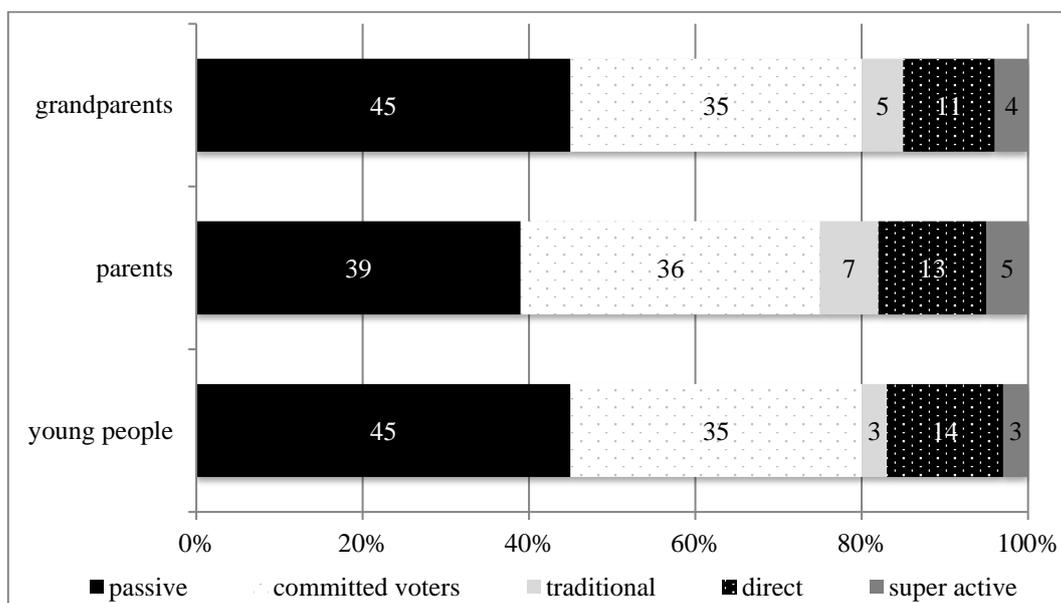
In summary, first we analyzed the effect of cohort generation and control variables on the two dependent variables. Second, the indexes of cumulative life events were included into the analysis. Finally, the effects of the client index were examined. In each step, we first present the relationship between the index and the dependent variable, then the result of the binary logistic regression model is given. At the end of the analysis we summarize our results.

4. Results

4.1. Cohort Generations and Political Participation

First, we examine the political system integration of different cohort generations. In the course of the study, first the relationship between the complex participatory index and three cohort generations is studied. We therefore want to briefly indicate the difference between the patterns of political participation of the parental and the grandparental generations.

Figure 3.
Pattern of participation among the cohort generations
 (in percentage of respondents)



Source : Integration and disintegration processes in Hungarian society project

According to the descriptive statistics, there is a minimal⁹ difference between the participation patterns of the young cohort generation, their parents and their grandparents. The activity of the young and the grandparent generations are very similar, whereas that of the middle, parental cohort generation is somewhat different. The relative majority of young people and their grandparents (45-45 percent) are “passive”, i.e., they have no participatory activity, while this value is 39 percent for the parent cohort generation. 35-35 percent of young people and grandparents are “committed voters” who have not participated in any other form of political participation within the preceding 12 months. “Traditional” forms of participation (electoral campaigns and activities directly linked to parties / political movements) appear to be devaluating among younger generations, as they have a slightly lower participation activity than parental and grandparental age cohorts (see Szabó and Oross, 2012; Oross and Szabó, 2014). But for the so-called “direct” participation young people's activity appears to be higher than that of their parents or grandparents. The proportion of young people is a little (1-2 per cent) higher when it comes to participation in demonstrations, boycotts or activities in NGOs.

Finally, the within the generational cohort of young people we have found three percent of super active citizens, this value is four percent within the grandparents generation and five percent within the parents cohort generation. Overall, one-fifth of young people and grandparents, and one-quarter of parents showed real political activity during the past 12 months.

⁹ N=2455; Pearson $\chi^2=31.661$, sig=0.000. Cramer V=0.080.

Table 5.
The binary logistic model of political participation and political cohort generations

	Electoral participation		Political participation	
	B	Exp(B)	B	Exp(B)
Parents	-.040	.961	.129	1.138
Young people	-.117	.890	-.363	.696
Education	.482	1.619***	.856	2.354***
Income quintiles	-.075	.928	-.198	.821***
Roma	-.080	.923	.415	1.514
Gender	-.48	.863	-.323	.724*
Budapest	-.350	.705*	-.512	.599**
Constant	-.011	.989	-.145	.865

electoral participation: -2 Log likelihood=1915.448; Cox & Snell R Square=0.021; Nagelkerke R Square=0.029.
political participation: -2 Log likelihood=1485.669; Cox & Snell R Square=0.075; Nagelkerke R Square=0.103.

At first glance, the pattern of participation of the cohorts generated on the basis of socialization shows similarity, i.e., the political system integration level is not significantly different. This assumption is also confirmed by the binary regression model. Table 5 shows the result of a regression model that included control variables and that was used to study the participation of young people and parents compared with that of the generation of grandparents. As indicated in Table 5 in the case of electoral participation only education as the control variable had a positive, significant effect, i.e., high school diploma or higher educational level increases the willingness to participate. Generational variables do not have significant effect on electoral participation. In the case of the second dependent variable created from direct and traditional political participation, several significant variable effects can be recorded, but none of them are related to cohort generations.

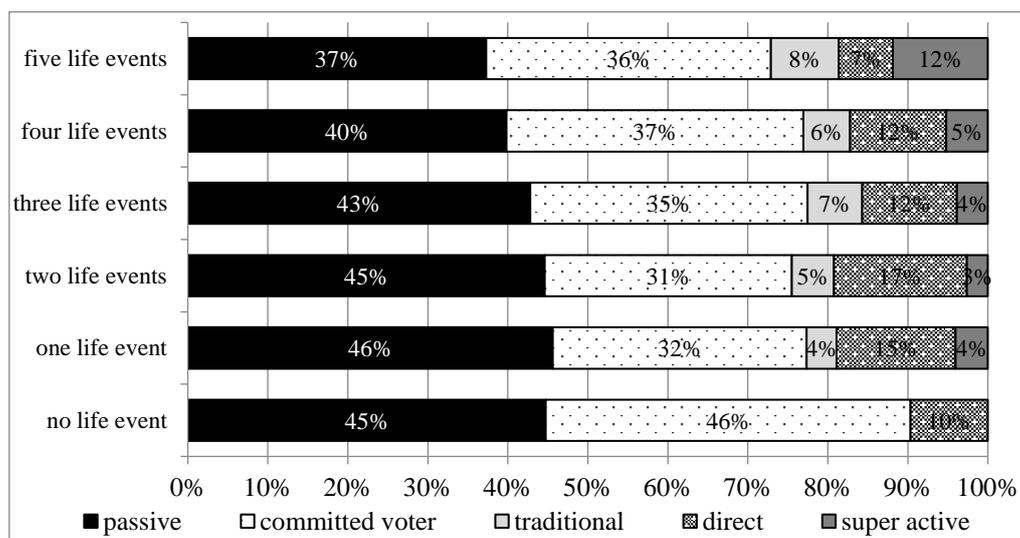
The answer to the first question is that the pattern of participation of cohort generations (created on the basis of socialization) is similar. Cohort generations do not have any influence on electoral participation and political activity, in this sense, none of the cohort generations is more integrated than any of the others.

4.2. Live events and political participation

As a second step we examined the relationship between life events and participation. As we have mentioned in the theoretical part of the paper, the cumulative index of life events influences political participation and, thus, system integration. This effect was expected in our analysis. We expected that life events will have greater explanatory power compared to cohort generations and will have a positive impact on participation.

Following the previous method, we first present results of descriptive statistics and then the two binary logistic models. Figure 4 shows a substantive difference between those who do not have any life events and those who have lived through all five life events during their lives. Among those who do not have a single life event electoral participation reaches 46 percent but the level of direct participation is the lowest (10 percent). However, people with five life events are the least passive (37%) and have the highest proportion of super actives (12%). Between the two extreme categories, however, we find distributions very similar to those in Figure 1.

Figure 4.
Pattern of political participation based on life events
 (percentage of respondents)



Source : Integration and disintegration processes in Hungarian society project
 Khi²=41.18; Sig=0.001; Cramer's V: 0.071, Sig=0.000

Based on the binary regression model, there is no significant effect on life events with regard to electoral participation. Only education has a significant influence and also to a greater extent on whether someone is a committed voter or not. Therefore, we were unable to verify our hypothesis in this respect.¹⁰

The effect mechanism between the direct as well as the traditional forms of political participation and the independent (structural) variables is completely different. As can be seen from Table 7 below, the increase in number of life events and their build-up slightly (Exp (B) = 1.154) increases the likelihood that someone has participated in a political action during the last 12 months. Not surprisingly, however, higher educational level contributes to the highest degree to political participation (Exp (B) = 2.225). Based on our results, we could verify that from the dimension of action (from a participation-centered approach) system integration is enhanced by cumulative life events.¹¹

¹⁰In order to control the results, both models were run without cumulative life events index in binary regression, only with the individual elements of the index (i.e., has children, married, has own home, finished studies, retired). In this case, one element of the 5 independent (structural) variables, "completed studies" (Exp (B) = 0.561 *), had a significant but negative relationship with the dependent variables. Of the control variables, the level of education remains the same, and significantly affects electoral participation (Exp (B) = 1.706 ***). In order to control results, we run both models not including the cumulative client index to the binary regression, but individual elements of the index. Of the 6 independent (structural) variables included, at p≤0.05 level long-term disease had a significant negative relation to electoral participation (Exp (B) = 0.715 *). Persistent illness therefore reduces the willingness to participate in elections. Among the control variables, education positively influenced electoral participation whereas living in the capital city had a negative influence on electoral participation.

¹¹ In order to control results, we run both models not including the cumulative client index to the binary regression, but individual elements of the index. Of the 6 independent (structural) variables included, at p≤0.05 level long-term disease had a significant negative relation to electoral participation (Exp (B) = 0.715 *). Persistent illness therefore reduces the willingness to participate in elections. Among the control variables, education positively influenced electoral participation whereas living in the capital city had a negative influence on electoral participation.

Table 62.
Binary logistic model of political participation and life events

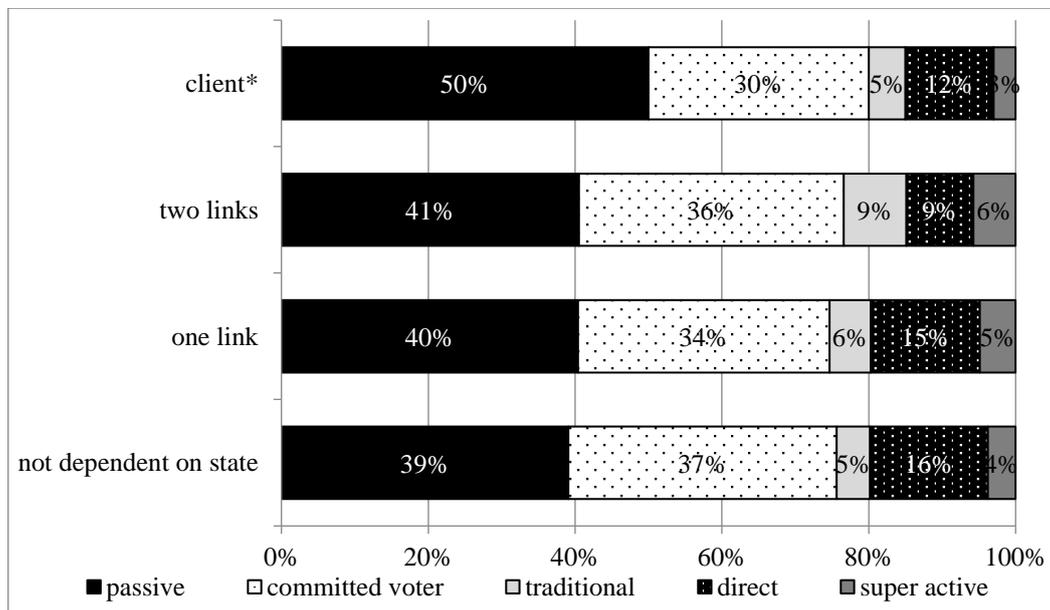
	Electoral participation		Political participation	
	B	Exp(B)	B	Exp(B)
Life events	.070	1.072	.143	1.154*
School	.526	1.692***	.800	2.225***
Income quintiles	-.056	.945	-.202	.817***
Roma	-.122	.885	.305	1.357
Gender	-.189	.828	-.325	.723*
Budapest	-.305	.737	-.580	.560**
Constant	-.329	.720	-.568*	.567

Electoral participation: -2 Log likelihood=1855.284; Cox & Snell R Square=0.024; Nagelkerke R Square=0.032.
 Political participation: -2 Log likelihood=1447.675; Cox & Snell R Square=0.072; Nagelkerke R Square=0.099.

4.3. Welfare privatization and political participation

Finally, we include in our analysis another dimension of system integration, the aspect of feedback mechanisms of the political system, and we seek to find out whether welfare privatization really reduces political participation. To answer this, the cumulative client index was inserted into the model.

Figure 5.
Pattern of political participation among clients
 (percentage of respondents)



*If respondent benefits from more than 3 public transfers and receives some form of aid.

Source : Integration and disintegration processes within the Hungarian society project

Khi²=41.705; Sig=0.000; Cramer's V: 0.069

According to Figure 5, similarly to life events, the largest differences are between the two extremes. Clients (those respondents who benefit from three or four kinds of public transfers) are the least active, while state independent respondents (those who receive nothing from state redistribution mechanisms), seem to be the least passive. With regard to political activity, the level of electoral participation is the highest among state independent citizens and their direct

participation is also the highest. The differences between the levels of political activity among the other groups is not significant.

The binary regression model of cumulative client index and electoral participation shows almost no difference from previous results. Willingness to participate in elections is influenced (at $p \leq 0.05$) only by the level of education, the client index does not.¹²

In our other model, we can register the influence of four independent variables for political participation, but unlike anticipated, the cumulative client index does not show any significant relationship in this case either. Of the control variables, the strong positive effect of education can be demonstrated, while the other variables influence participation negatively. Thus, our hypothesis cannot be considered as supported, participation-centered system integration is neither increased nor reduced by the degree of becoming a client.¹³

Table 7.
Binary logistic model of political participation and client index

	Electoral participation		Political participation	
	B	Exp(B)	B	Exp(B)
Client	.020	1.020	.054	1.056
Education	.456	1.577***	.801	2.227***
Income quintile	-.072	.930	-.181	.835***
Roma	-.085	.918	.499	1.648
Gender	-.159	.853	-.288	.750*
Budapest	-.322	.724	-.498	.608**
Constant	-.103	.902	-.254	.776

Electoral participation: -2 Log likelihood=1705.220; Cox & Snell R Square=0.019; Nagelkerke R Square=0.026.
Political participation: -2 Log likelihood=1401.433; Cox & Snell R Square=0.061; Nagelkerke R Square=0.084.

¹² In order to control results, we run both models not including the cumulative client index to the binary regression, but individual elements of the index. Of the 6 independent (structural) variables included, at $p \leq 0.05$ level long-term disease had a significant negative relation to electoral participation (Exp (B) = 0.715 *). Persistent illness therefore reduces the willingness to participate in elections. Among the control variables, education positively influenced electoral participation whereas living in the capital city had a negative influence on electoral participation.

¹³ If individual elements of the cumulative client index are individually put into the binary regression model, at $p \leq 0.05$ level no independent (structural) variable has any significant effect. At the same time, it should be noted that public employment increases participation, that is, sig = 0.053.

5. Conclusion

Based on the results of our analysis, the results for the hypotheses are summarized in Table 8.

Table 8.
Research questions and hypotheses and results based on binary logistic regression models

Hypotheses	Electoral participation	Political participation
H1. Young people are less involved than the generation of their parents.	Dependent index is not significant – not verified	Dependent index is not significant – not verified
H2. As life cycles advance, political activity is increasing, and this positively influences political system integration.	Dependent index is not significant – not verified	Verified
H3. The more threads connect a citizen to state redistribution mechanisms (redistribution), the lower political activity and thus system integration will be.	Dependent index is not significant – not verified	Dependent index is not significant – not verified

Out of six regression models we could justify only one preliminary hypothesis.

Our research data cannot support the hypothesis that young people are less involved in political participation than the parental cohort generation. In our binary regression models, generation variables have no influence on electoral participation and political activity.

Our hypothesis cannot therefore be considered as verified in this respect. Based on descriptive statistics, however, we have seen that one fifth of young people and grandparents, and a quarter of parents, have shown political activity in the past 12 months. It would be important to examine this relationship between individual cohort generations in another sample larger than ours in order to obtain a clearer view of the matter. It can be assumed that the sample size plays a role in the fact that in most of our cases we have not been able to justify our hypotheses.

Based on our research data, electoral participation is not influenced by life events. Life events have no significant impact on a citizens’ intention to participate in elections. We found that only education influences whether someone is a committed voter at parliamentary elections. However, the increase in the number of life events does increase the likelihood that someone has participated in some form of direct and/or traditional political action in the past 12 months, albeit to a small extent. The more life events a responder reported the greater the likelihood of political activity. This is shown convincingly by the descriptive statistics. Our hypothesis can therefore be considered as valid in this respect.

Finally, our results did not support the client theory of Habermas neither in terms of electoral participation nor based on the index created from traditional and direct forms of participation. The cumulative client index did not have a significant effect on the dependent variable either. However, based on descriptive statistics, it is true that the participation of highly state-dependent individuals (clients) is lower than that of those who are independent of the state.

Our data only allowed us to do cross-sectional research when testing our hypotheses. It would be important to test them on panel data that allow longitudinal research. We assume that age effects, which undoubtedly play a part either in becoming a client or in making life events happen, could become more noticeable in this case. It is worth pointing out that, for further analysis, some items in the client index and in the life event index need to be clarified. Just to

point to one element, poor health created a client from a respondent, but illness and disability can hinder political or indeed any other activity.

Summarizing our study, political system integration was interpreted in an action-based dimension: this dimension describes the ways and means of integration, i.e., how people are bound to and integrated into the political subsystem. It seems that system integration, or more simply greater participation, is influenced to a small extent and in dissimilar ways by the factors that we have primarily examined, namely cohort generation, cumulative life events and becoming a client. In addition, the willingness to participate in elections is almost exclusively influenced by the level of education. Political participation (understood as a sum of direct and traditional forms of participation) is influenced by several explanatory variables. Taking all these into account, we believe that it is worth examining the effects of cumulative life events and clientelism more closely. It can be assumed that both dimensions can have a greater influence on interpersonal relations and social inclusion than was previously supposed.

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Appendix

Appendix 1. Correlation between control variables

		Gender	Education	Budapest	Income quintiles	Roma
Gender	Pearson Correlation	1	-.060**	-.016	-.040	.023
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.002	.397	.077	.226
	N	2687	2687	2687	1984	2679
Education	Pearson Correlation	-.060**	1	.199**	-.406**	-.184**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.002		.000	.000	.000
	N	2687	2687	2687	1984	2679
Budapest	Pearson Correlation	-.016	.199**	1	-.257**	-.040*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.397	.000		.000	.037
	N	2687	2687	2687	1984	2679
Income quintiles	Pearson Correlation	-.040	-.406**	-.257**	1	.230**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.077	.000	.000		.000
	N	1984	1984	1984	1984	1982
Roma	Pearson Correlation	.023	-.184**	-.040*	.230**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.226	.000	.037	.000	
	N	2679	2679	2679	1982	2679

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Appendix 2. Life event indexes based on average age

Index value	Percentage of respondents	Average age
0	127	21.11
1	330	31.09
2	368	44.66
3	807	53.92
4	882	52.37
5	64	61.49
Summary	2578	47.71

Pearson-correlation between age and life events index: 0.493**

Appendix 3.
Averages of life event-indexes within cohort generations

Cohort generations	Respondents (N)	Average of live events	Scatter
Young	984	2.17	1.40
Parents	1139	3.18	0.95
Grandparents	455	3.48	0.68
Summary	2578	2.84	1.23

F-test=311.041. Sig=0.000, Eta²=0.195

Appendix 4.
Summary of client-index

Index value	Percentage of respondents	Average age
0	813	40.74
1	693	45.37
2	576	58.08
3	295	68.95
4	11	53.49
Summary	2387	49.81

Pearson-correlation between age and life events index: 0.551**

Appendix 5.
Averages of the client-index within cohort generations

Cohort generations	Respondents (N)	Average of live events	Scatter
Young	791	0.68	0.77
Parents	1135	1.04	0.99
Grandparents	460	2.29	0.68
Summary	2387	1.16	1.04

F-test=523.051. Sig=0.000, Eta²=0.305