



2021

**YOUTH STUDY
HUNGARY**
DISCONTENT.
POLARISATION.
PRO-EUROPEANISM.

IMPRINT

Publisher:

Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung e.V.
Godesberger Allee 149
53175 Bonn (Germany)
Email: info@fes.de

Register no.: VR2392

Bonn Register of Associations
Bonn Local Court

President: Martin Schulz

Secretary General: Dr Sabine Fandrych

Responsible:

Alexey Yusupov (International Dialogue)
Phone: +49 30 269 357 734
Email: alexey.yusupov@fes.de

Design concept: GOLDLAND MEDIA GmbH

ISBN: 978-3-98628-068-0

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1

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The most important results of the *FES Youth Study Hungary 2021* research project are summarised below. This large-scale project, which employs both qualitative and quantitative research methods, was conducted during the spring and summer of 2021 in seven countries (the Visegrád four and Baltic States) simultaneously, with the support of the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung. Our aim was to explore the values, opinions and preferences of those in the 15–29 age group, using the same methodology and questions. When analysing the results of *FES Youth Study Hungary 2021*, we specifically sought to take advantage of the exceptional opportunities for regional comparability: we analysed the Hungarian data in the context of the other Visegrád countries.

- Among V4 respondents, young Hungarians are least satisfied with their lives yet most optimistic about the future. Their fears are predominantly post-material (climate crisis, social injustice and corruption), while they are least worried about crime, immigration and terrorism.
- Young Hungarians have, by comparison with the past, become more interested in politics in recent years, but this interest still lags significantly behind that of their peers in Central Europe. Whatever form of participation we examine, our data clearly indicates that political participation and intention among Hungarian 15–29-year-olds lags far behind that of their peers in the other V4 countries.
- Fewer Hungarian young people would be disturbed by a Muslim neighbour than by a Roma family. Young people are least likely to express hostility towards homosexuals and Jews. More young Hungarians are anti-immigration (63 per cent) than are proud of their Hungarian citizenship (40 per cent). Only one-third of young people can be considered hard-line nativists (exclusionary, pro-assimilationist).
- Within the V4, the vast majority of young people would like to remain in the EU. The difference between the political groups is the largest in Hungary: only one in ten opposition and undecided voters support HUXIT, whereas among young supporters of the government, the same figure is one in five. In the minds of young Hungarians, consciousness of Hungarianness and the image of being a European citizen fit together well, perhaps even the best of the four nations. It can also be seen from the data that global, national and local identities differ significantly in type and magnitude but that narrow nationalist thinking by no means expresses the identity of 15–29-year-olds in Central Europe.
- We can observe an extreme polarisation in attitudes towards the functioning of democracy in Hungary and the political system. Whereas nearly 60 per cent of young Hungarians who support the government say elections are free and fair in Hungary, the proportion of opposition supporters who share the same view is only 10 per cent. According to one-third of young Hungarians (33 per cent), and over half of opposition voters, Fidesz can be removed from power only by force. In terms of the public availability of reliable information and the system of checks and balances, we likewise have a picture of young Hungarians as extremely politically polarised.
- In terms of ideological values, there is a great deal of fragmentation among young Hungarians. The label with the highest relative rate of acceptance is ‘liberalism’, which 17 per cent of young Hungarians felt most closely aligned with. The second most commonly chosen value label was green/environmentalist, which was chosen by every tenth 15–29-year-old.

- In comparison with other V4 states, the subjective income perception of young Hungarians is the least favourable. Here, the proportion of people living in a particularly disadvantageous financial situation is the highest, while the proportion of those who report living in very good conditions is just one-half or even one-third of the rates among young people in the Czech Republic, Poland or Slovakia. In spite of this, a relative majority (four-tenths) of young Hungarians say that there are no serious financial problems in the household in which they live, and most can afford all necessities, though they cannot generally afford more expensive purchases such as a new car or flat.
- Young Hungarians are critical of the quality of the education system. Ideological and political attitudes inform these views. One result of political polarisation is that opposition and pro-government young people have very different opinions regarding the standard of education.
- In terms of young people's attitudes in the V4 countries, including Hungary, there is no empirical evidence of rebellion or open opposition to the views of parents or even of conflicted coexistence. Some 12 per cent of young Hungarians strongly agree with their parents, and a further 29 per cent share broadly the same political views. Young Hungarians agree with their parents to the greatest extent among the V4 countries. What is more, only a total of 18 per cent said they either somewhat or totally disagreed with their parents. Thus, we can speak not only of personal conformism but of political conformism as well.
- In all V4 countries, young people consider the following three factors most important when looking for a job: expertise, level of education and contacts. However, only in Hungary are contacts with influential people considered more important than experience abroad. In almost all V4 countries, more women than men drop out of their careers or are over-qualified for the work they do, however, the gender gap is largest in Hungary.
- In Hungary, the effect of political ideology on emigration is huge: three times as many opposition supporters (36 per cent) and twice as many undecided voters (24 per cent) want to leave the country as do young supporters of the government (12 per cent). It is also true in the other V4 countries that opposition supporters and undecided voters show a greater willingness to emigrate, however, the differences between the political groups are much smaller.

2

FOREWORD

The FES Youth Study Hungary 2021 came about as part of a large-scale international youth research project. The study was conducted during the spring and summer of 2021 in seven countries (the Visegrád four and Baltic States) simultaneously, with the support of the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung. Our aim was to explore the values, opinions and preferences of those in the 15–29 age group, using the same methodology and questions. When analysing the results of the FES Youth Study Hungary 2021, we specifically sought to take advantage of the exceptional opportunities for regional comparability: we analysed the Hungarian data in the context of the other Visegrád countries. Our goal was also, wherever possible, to interpret the situation in 2021 in light of Hungarian youth research results from previous decades.

What makes the Hungarian situation unique is that the political socialisation of the age group in question took place largely or entirely under the post-2010 Orbán governments. The public awareness of the younger 15–29-year-olds developed entirely under the regime still in power in 2021, whereas those in the second half of their twenties also said that they spent their entire adulthoods under Fidesz governments. In light of this, we considered it particularly important to supplement the shared regional questionnaire with additional, specifically Hungarian questions about the Orbán regime, in order to learn the opinions of young Hungarians concerning the domestic version of democracy.

The data in FES Youth Study Hungary 2021 was collected online, due to the uncertainties surrounding in-person data collection across Europe during the Covid-19 pandemic. However, this is not a significant problem, given the remarkably active Internet presence of the youngest age groups: according to the National Media and Infocommunications Authority, the proportion of internet users among 15–24-year-olds in 2021 is 93.5 per cent, whilst among 25–40-year-olds it is 92.4 per cent.¹ In addition to the questionnaire survey, we sought to further refine the results of our quantitative research with qualitative tools (focus groups and individual in-depth interviews involving the participation of disadvantaged young people in crisis regions of Hungary).

All in all, our research not only allows us to drill deep into the thinking of young Hungarians (be it regarding education, employment, emigration, starting a family or public life), yet it also helps the reader to place Hungarian processes within regional trends, thus making it clearer than ever where young Hungarians are unique, and where they share commonalities with their regional peers.

Budapest, November 2021
András Biró-Nagy, Andrea Szabó

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METHODOLOGY DESIGN

QUANTITATIVE FIELDWORK

The target population for Hungary were all citizens of Hungary aged 15 to 29 who have access to the Internet and are able to speak Hungarian. The sample of 1,500 respondents was drawn from the Ipsos Online Access Panel. It was quota-sampled according to age, gender and region in order to achieve a sample that reflects the target population in regard to these characteristics. These central socio-demographics had been pre-defined so the respondents could be targeted directly via email.

Data were collected between 10 June and 20 July 2021. The interviews were conducted online by Ipsos. The questionnaire was provided by the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung in English and translated into Hungarian by Ipsos. The survey had a final median length of 17 minutes.

Although the sample was carefully constructed to match the population strata of age, gender and region, some minor discrepancies from the optimal structure nevertheless occurred. By weighting, the structure of the unweighted sample was adjusted to the official data regarding age, gender and region.

QUALITATIVE FIELDWORK

The qualitative fieldwork consisted of $n=10$ in-depth interviews and $n=3$ focus groups. For the focus groups, we conducted an age split to best display the relevant life circumstances:

- 14–18 years of age: school education, graduation and first decision-making processes regarding choice of future education and profession
- 19–24 years of age: voting age, first steps to become more independent by moving out of the parents' home
- 25–29 years of age: university graduation, entering the job market and start of family planning

Throughout the sample we recruited a mix of gender, living situation and education/working status.

In addition to the capital city Budapest, two more sample points (Miskolc, Pécs and their surrounding areas) were included in order to represent different regions of the country, as well as poorer districts.

Fieldwork took place between 12 April and 22 April 2021. All interviews and focus groups were conducted online via the platform MS Teams. The average duration of interviews was 60 minutes, and the average duration of focus groups was 90 minutes. All participants signed a consent form concerning their participation and data protection. Each interview and each focus group was recorded and a transcript was produced.

4

BASIC DEMOGRAPHICS AND TRENDS

THE DEMOGRAPHIC SITUATION IN HUNGARY

Since 1980, thus for more than 40 years, Hungary has experienced one of the world's steepest declines in population. According to the Hungarian Central Statistical Office (CSO), whereas in 1980 the country had a population of more than 10,700,000, on 1 January 2021 it was significantly under 9,730,000.² This population decline is down to the fact that there are fewer annual births than deaths. Whereas in the 1980s an average of 130,000 children were born each year, by the 2010s, this had dropped to barely 90,000.³ These dry statistics – and the social processes underlying them – have extremely serious consequences for Hungarian politics, and for Hungarian society as a whole.

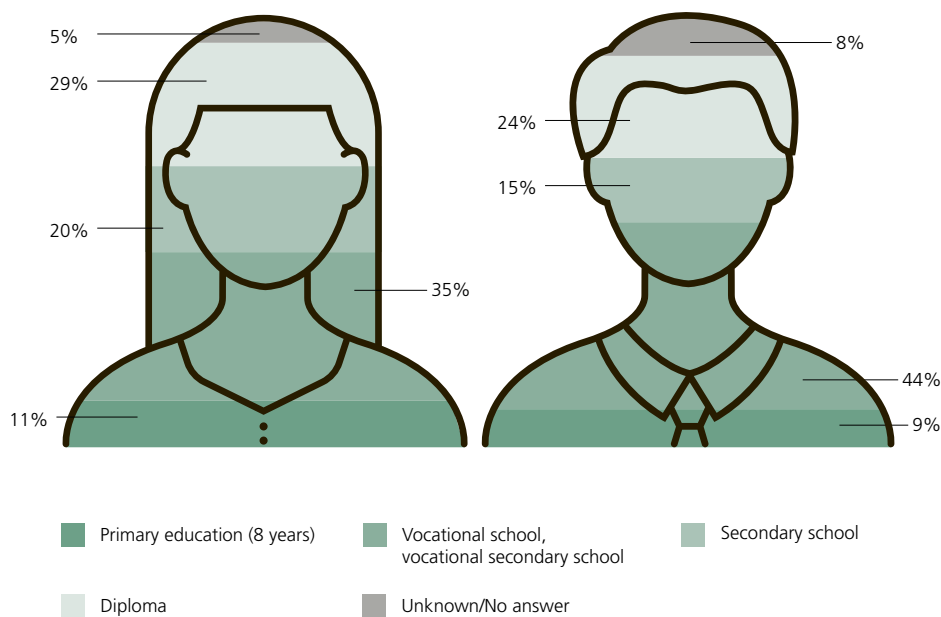
Among these social consequences, we shall highlight two. Firstly, both the proportional size and the relative weight of younger age groups within Hungarian society have decreased,⁴ whilst the proportion of those over 60 has steadily increased.⁵ Thus, in political terms, addressing the concerns and meeting the needs of the over-60s results in more votes and greater electoral benefits than could be gained by addressing those of the under-30s. Secondly, declining numbers of young people have led to a diminished pool of skilled workers, and these labour market shortages have brought previously unknown demographic dilemmas into the wider political discourse, including whether family policy should be based on 'increased rates of childbirth' or on 'immigration'. The social benefits of increasing childbirth rates have become one of the most frequently used political tropes on which governments, especially the Orbán governments since 2010, have built their main political campaigns. Thus, demographics, especially the number of children and the willingness of young people to have them, have been instrumentalised in everyday political communication. It is advisable to interpret the following empirical research findings, which are generally descriptive in nature, as well as the results of the chapter on family relationships, in light of the social and political situation outlined here.

THE DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF YOUNG HUNGARIANS

Of the 1,500 Hungarian young people in the sample, 23 per cent are aged 15–18,⁶ 39 per cent are aged between 19 and 24, and 38 per cent are aged 25–29. Most of them, almost one-third, describe their living environment as urban, and a further quarter describe their environment as more urban than rural. The proportion of people living in small settlements and villages is 22 per cent, and a further 9 per cent live in an environment they describe as rural. There is a correlation between the two factors (Pearson $R^2 = 27,044$, sig = 0.001): compared to the average distribution, the younger age groups within the sample tend to come from rural areas, whilst the older ones tend to come from more metropolitan areas. In Hungary, there is a surplus of men up to the age of 50, and the younger the age group, the more true this is.⁷ Of the 15–29-year-olds in the sample, 51 per cent were boys/men and 49 per cent were girls/women.

During the 40 years of state socialism, the institutionalised cultural capital of Hungarian society increased significantly (Bourdieu 1978). Before the Second World War, the expected level of education was four years of primary schooling. This rose to eight years after the war, then from the 1960s vocational schooling, and from the 1980s secondary school graduation became the socially accepted and indeed expected level of education. From 1989 until the mid 2000s, there was a social and political consensus on encouraging as many people as possible to enter higher education, and to increase the proportion of graduates from 10 per cent in 1990 to at least 25 per cent, in line with Hungary's EU commitments. These aspirations are clearly evident when examining the institutionalised cultural capital of respondents' families (Figure 1).

FIGURE 1. HIGHEST EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT OF PARENTS, IN %



Source: FES Youth Study Central and Eastern Europe 2021.

In the vast majority of families, at least one parent has graduated from secondary school, and as many as 39 per cent of 15–29-year-olds live in a family in which at least one parent is a university graduate. In 18 per cent of respondents' families, both parents have completed tertiary education.

39 per cent of young Hungarians in the sample live in a family in which at least one parent is a graduate.

There is a substantial sociological correlation between the type of environment in which a young person currently lives and the mother's education, demonstrating a socio-cultural faultline within society (Pearson $R^2 = 63.985$, sig = 0.000, Cramer 'V' = 0.123). The smaller the settlement the respondent lives in, the more likely it is that the mother's education will be lower than average. One-fifth of 15–29-year-olds living in villages said that their mothers

had only primary education, while only 18 per cent had mothers with a university degree. For those who describe themselves as living in an urban environment, these rates differ significantly. The proportion of those with only primary education is just 8 per cent, whilst almost 40 per cent (37 per cent) are university graduates. That is, the more urban the environment, the greater the family's cultural capital is likely to be and vice versa. The settlement scale is closely correlated with the cultural scale in Hungary. The data also indicates that the youngest age group (15–18 years) had parents with a higher educational level than older age groups.

The settlement-size axis is closely correlated with the cultural axis in Hungary: the more urban the environment the young person comes from, the more likely it is that the issuing family will have a higher level of cultural capital and vice versa.

ASSESSING THE FINANCIAL SITUATION: THE HUNGARIAN PARADOX

Finally, it is worth examining respondents' subjective assessment of their financial situation. Within the framework of the research, young people could characterise the financial situation of their household on a verbal scale, with five categories:

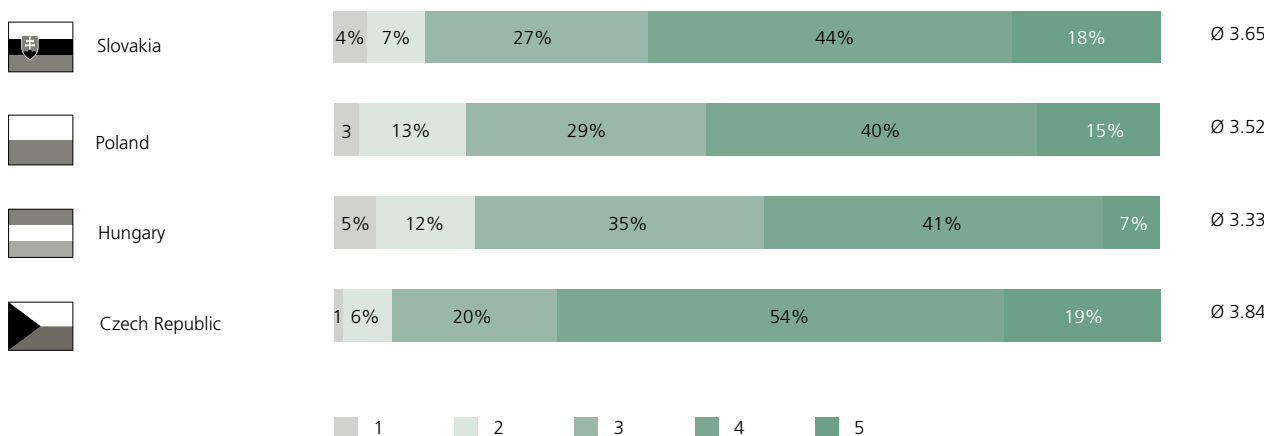
- We don't have enough money for basic utilities (electricity, heating, etc.) and food
- We have enough money for basic utilities and food but not for clothing and shoes
- We have enough money for food, clothing, and shoes, but not for more expensive things (a refrigerator, a television, etc.)
- We can afford to buy more expensive things but not so expensive as, for instance, a car or a flat
- We can afford to buy whatever we need for a good standard of living

As Figure 2 shows, a relative majority of the young Hungarians in the sample, or about 40 per cent, say that the household in which they live is not experiencing major financial problems. Most have enough for all essentials, although their income does not stretch to such larger purchases as a new car or flat. The proportion of those in a particularly good financial situation is 7 per cent, which means that, overall, the proportion of those who chose categories four and five is 48 per cent.⁸

A relative majority of the young Hungarians in the sample, or about 40 per cent, say that the household in which they live is not experiencing major financial problems. Most have enough for all essentials, although their income does not stretch to such larger purchases as a new car or flat.

These results are in line with the trends reported by the large-sample Hungarian Youth Research study conducted in autumn 2020. In interviews with 8,000 young people in Hungary, researchers found that subjects' subjective assessment of their financial situation had improved markedly in four years, with 9 per cent of 15–29-year-olds living without financial problems, and 57 per cent able to cover all household needs (Székely et al. 2021).

FIGURE 2. ASSESSING HOUSEHOLDS' FINANCIAL SITUATION IN THE V4 COUNTRIES STUDIED (WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING BEST DESCRIBES YOUR HOUSEHOLD'S FINANCIAL SITUATION?) (DISTRIBUTIONS AND AVERAGES ON A SCALE OF 1 TO 5), IN %



Source: FES Youth Study Central and Eastern Europe 2021.

Any differences in the presentation result from the decimal not being shown.

According to our research, 5 per cent of Hungarians aged 15–29 live in a household that struggles to cover everyday necessities, whilst another 12 per cent can pay their utility bills and buy basic foodstuffs yet cannot afford clothing, entertainment or cultural expenses. The proportion of those in unfavourable financial situations is particularly acute among those living in villages as more than one-tenth of whom indicated that even the most basic expenditures are difficult to afford on the family budget. By contrast, young people who claimed to be able to afford any financial expenditure are more likely than average to live in an urban setting (39 per cent).

The other important factor that may be related to the assessment of a household's financial situation is the mother's education (Pearson $R^2 = 88.457$, $\text{sig} = 0.000$, Cramer $V = 0.144$). The financial situation of the children of more highly educated mothers is significantly more favourable than is the case for children of mothers with a lower level of education. Among those whose mothers have only primary-level education, one-third can afford no more than basic expenses, whereas one-seventh cannot even afford that. Among the children of mothers with a university degree, only one-tenth are in categories one and two. In contrast, one-eighth of young people whose mother or foster mother has a tertiary education are in the most well-off category, and a further 46 per cent suffer from no material want (selecting a value of 4). It is interesting to note that these results do not compare at all favourably with those of young people in the Czech Republic or even Slovakia.

If we do not evaluate the Hungarian data in isolation but also compare the opinions of young people in other V4 countries, we note some very unfavourable tendencies.

In comparison with other V4 states, the subjective income perception of young Hungarians is the least favourable. Here, the proportion of people living in a particularly disadvantageous financial situation is the highest, whereas the proportion of those who report living in very good conditions is just half or even one-third of the rates among young people in the Czech Republic, Poland or Slovakia.

Among Hungarians aged 15–29, the proportion of those who placed themselves in either category one or two is the highest, while the country also has by far the fewest (half or a third the rate in the other V4 countries) who say their financial circumstances are very good. This difference in responses is also supported by a comparison of the averages of this 1–5 scale. The highest average subjective estimation of financial circumstances can be found among young Czechs (3.84, on average), followed by Slovaks (3.64). Meanwhile, the average rate among Hungarians aged 15–29 is 3.33. This is 0.3 points lower than the average of young people in the other three countries (3.67). Based on the data, it appears that young Hungarians live in much more disadvantageous financial circumstances or at least rate them much more unfavourably, than do their Czech, Polish and Slovak peers.

MAIN FINDINGS

- Of the young Hungarians in the sample, 39 per cent live in a family in which at least one parent is a graduate.
- The settlement-size axis correlates with the cultural axis in Hungary: the more urban the environment a young person comes from, the more likely it is that their family will have a higher level of cultural capital and vice versa.
- A plurality (40 per cent) of young Hungarians say that there are no serious financial problems in the household in which they live, and most can afford all necessities. At the same time, they cannot generally afford more expensive purchases, such as a new car or flat.
- In comparison with other V4 countries, young Hungarians subjectively perceive their financial situation most unfavourably. Hungary has the largest proportion of young people living in the most disadvantageous financial circumstances, whereas the proportion of those in a very good financial situation is only one-half or one-third of the levels among young people in Poland, Slovakia or the Czech Republic.

5

YOUNG PEOPLE AND EDUCATION

In the European Union (EU), education policy is essentially based on decisions at the Member State level, yet there are also commonalities in this area. During accession to the Education and Training 2020 work programme, individual national commitments were made in relation to education (Szegedi 2016), undertaking, among other things, to reduce the proportion of low-achieving 15-year-olds in reading, mathematics and science to below 15 per cent by 2020, and to increase the proportion of people aged 30–34 with a tertiary education to at least 40 per cent. By 2020, the rate of those leaving school prematurely was to be reduced to below 10 per cent.⁹ These goals clearly indicate that EU Member States are committed to quality education and support the goal of ensuring that the highest possible proportion of young people leave formal education with some degree or qualification.

SECONDARY-LEVEL EDUCATION MOST COMMON AMONG YOUNG HUNGARIANS

About one-fifth of Hungarian 15–29-year-olds in the sample have completed only the eight grades of primary education. According to the ISCED classification system,¹⁰ this is categorised as ISCED-2. Because of their different education systems, it is difficult to compare young people's educational attainment across the V4 countries. The ISCED classification system provides a basis for this. The study classified the educational qualifications of each country into three simple categories: low, medium and high. Using this very broad rubric, the attained educational qualifications of young Hungarians in no way differ from those of their Central European peers.

The proportion of those with low levels of education is very different in the three age categories examined (15–18, 19–24 and 25–29). Naturally, among young Hungarians up to the age of 18, most (63 per cent) have not graduated from secondary school, meaning that primary school is still their highest completed level of education. However, the proportion decreases to 5–10 per cent among older groups. Among the 5 per cent of those over 25 who still have a low level of education, the likelihood is very high that this situation, with all its negative consequences, will persist.

Among young Hungarians, the proportion of people with a primary education (ISCED 0–ISCED 2) decreases with age, but even so, 10 per cent of 19–24-year-olds and 5 per cent of 25–29-year-olds are still in this disadvantaged category.

Among young Hungarians, 54 per cent have some kind of secondary school diploma. Because of the complexities of the Hungarian school system, this 54 per cent attain their qualifications through five or six different education systems. More than seven-tenths of those aged 19–24 and about half of those aged 25 and over are between ISCED values 3 and 4.

Finally, a quarter of Hungarians aged 15–29 have a tertiary education qualification, that is, from at least a tertiary technical school or an accredited tertiary vocational school. However, the proportion of those with a university degree is lower, at 20 per cent.

Some 19 per cent of 19–24-year-olds and 43 per cent of 25–29-year-olds are in ISCED 5–8. However, if we consider only university graduates (ISCED 6–8), the rate is 14 per cent among 19–24-year-olds and 34 per cent among 25–29-year-olds.

It is also important to observe the strong positive correlation in all V4 countries between the educational level of the respondent's family, including the mother's highest educational qualification and the respondent's highest educational qualification. In Hungary, if the mother completed only primary school, the likelihood that her child will also leave education with only a primary school qualification is much higher than average (35 per cent), and this effect increases with higher qualifications. In the Hungarian school system, having a mother with a vocational training qualification is associated most closely (65 per cent) with attaining a vocational qualification oneself, whereas the children of mothers who graduated from secondary education tend either to do the same or to go on to attain a university degree. Finally, the results of the study show that children of mothers who are university graduates are comparatively more likely to go on to tertiary education (35 per cent) than are the children of mothers with a lower level of education.

As previously indicated, there is a very similar pattern of correlation in all V4 countries. Taking into account the differences between school systems, the data suggest that in Central European countries, if the mother's educational qualification is lower than the secondary level, the likelihood that this will be passed on is relatively high, just as it is relatively likely that a mother with a university degree will have children who follow the same path.

HUNGARIANS AGED 15–29 ARE CRITICAL OF THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION

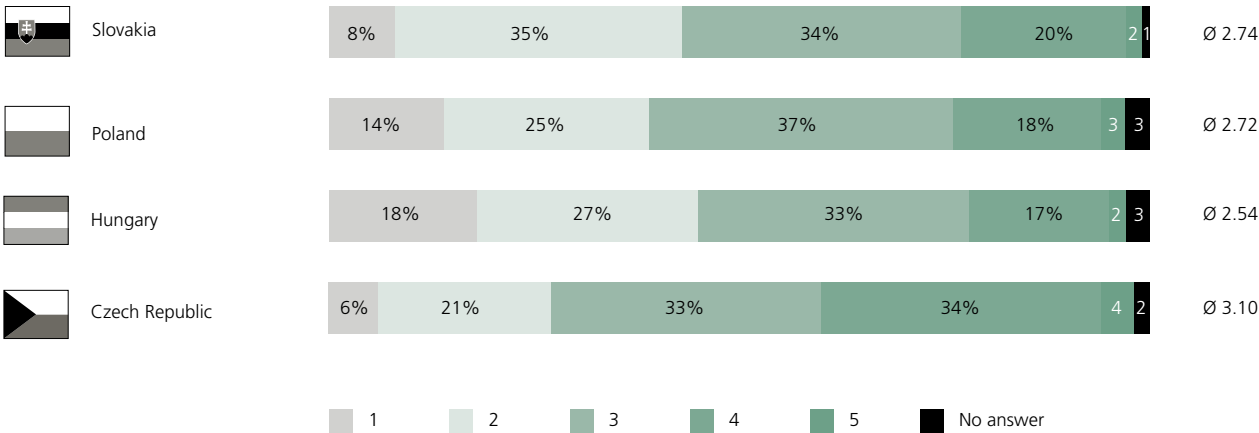
The theoretical, state-level commitment to the school system, and the increase in educational levels, do not seem to be fully in line with the everyday educational experience of young Hungarians. Respondents were asked to rate the overall standard of education from one to five (the same way students themselves are graded). Only 2 per cent were entirely satisfied with the quality of the Hungarian school system, and 17 per cent gave a ‘good’ rating, meaning four out of five. On the other hand, 45 per cent rated the general quality of the Hungarian education system as either a one or a two (The average of the 1–5 scale was 2.54). It is noteworthy that whether or not someone is still a student or has already left the education system has no statistical influence on their opinion about

the quality of education (though MA and PhD students have the highest opinion of the system, giving an average score of 2.79). Similar results are obtained regardless of age, gender, urban or rural environment and mother's education level. Thus, regardless of their social affiliation, young people aged 15–29 have a broadly uniform assessment of the Hungarian education system. A person's assessment of the quality of Hungarian education is more accurately predicted by ideology and political affiliation.

Young Hungarians are critical of the quality of the education system. Ideological and political attitudes inform these views. One result of political polarisation is that opposition and pro-government young people have very different opinions regarding the standard of education.

Based on a linear regression model,¹¹ the more conservative and/or right-wing the respondent, the more positively they are likely to evaluate the standard of education, whereas the more moderate the respondent, the more unfavourable their opinion is likely to be. Political affiliation is even more strongly predictive: pro-government voters rate the quality of Hungarian education significantly better (2.98 average points) and opposition supporters significantly worse¹² (2.33 points) than the average of 15–29-year-olds in general. Thus, partisan polarisation strongly divides opinions even in the 15–29 age group (Patkós 2019; Bíró-Nagy 2019).

FIGURE 3. ASSESSING THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN THE V4 COUNTRIES STUDIED (IN GENERAL, HOW SATISFIED ARE YOU WITH THE STANDARD OF EDUCATION?) (DISTRIBUTIONS AND AVERAGES ON A SCALE OF 1 TO 5), IN %



Source: FES Youth Study Central and Eastern Europe 2021.
 The data is presented in accordance with the relevant rounding rules. In some cases original values would not add up to 100% without arbitrary determination, so that original values were kept instead. This explains eventual deviations in the graph.

The opinions of young Hungarians are also unfavourable in comparison with the other V4 countries (Figure 3). While the proportion of those who gave a rating of 4 or 5 were not fundamentally different from those in other countries of a similar age – especially in Poland and Slovakia – proportionally more young Hungarians expressed a clearly or moderately negative opinion. It is striking that far fewer young Czechs chose values 1 and 2, whereas far more of them chose values 4 and 5.

The pattern of opinions that emerges regarding the possibility of corruption within an educational institution may contradict this picture slightly. The question was: ‘Do you agree that there are cases in which grades and exams are purchased at institutes/universities in Hungary?’ Of all the Central European countries, Hungarian respondents found it hardest to imagine that grades could be determined through an illegal manner.¹³ Some 15 per cent of Hungarians aged 15–29 found the idea completely unimaginable, a rate almost twice as high as in Slovakia (8 per cent) and almost four times higher than among young Poles and Czechs (an average of 2.94 on a scale of 1–5). The proportion of those who selected a 2 (rather disagree) is 14 per cent.

Those most critical on this issue, incidentally, are Slovaks (3.71 points), more than half of whom agreed that grades or exams can be purchased at educational institutions. By comparison, 28 per cent of Hungarian, 40 per cent of Czech and 37 per cent of Polish respondents believe that an exam or school grade can be purchased in their country.

Of all the Central European countries, young people in Hungary are the least likely to imagine that grades and exams can be purchased, thus perceptions of corruption in education are relatively low.

We may speak of the period beginning in January 2020, when Covid-19 was first detected in Europe, as a new era. In several studies, Andrea Szabó and her colleagues describe the pandemic as a generational event (Szabó 2020; Szabó 2021; Szabó/Déri 2021), an exogenous effect that, like an asteroid, changed many everyday things that had previously been considered ‘normal’. One of the obvious, tangible results of this asteroid-like effect is the change from in-person, face-to-face lessons to online

instruction. In other words, the spread and normalisation of digital education in Hungary in the second half of the 2019/2020 school year and for almost the entire duration of the 2020/2021 school year.

Fewer than one in ten young Hungarians lacked the tools needed for digital education

Social scientists are currently trying to assess the consequences of remote learning. In Hungary, calculations suggest that 25 per cent of young Hungarians may have dropped out of digital education to such a degree that there is little chance of them catching up and reintegrating (Keller/Kiss Hubert 2020; Kende/Messing/Fejes 2021). At the same time, remote learning, even in countries such as the Netherlands or Germany, which have well-developed internet infrastructure, has given rise to or has exacerbated existing serious problems, and it is easy to believe that it has made differences in opportunities between social strata both final and irremediable (Grewenig et al. 2020).

According to the results of our research, the vast majority of young people were given the tools (such as a computer, good internet access) to take part in remote learning. About half had all the applicable equipment (in Hungary this proportion was 54 per cent), whilst a further quarter to one-third had, if not everything, at least the basic necessities (28 per cent in Hungary). The proportion of those with no equipment at all was 2 per cent, whereas those with very little equipment made up 5 per cent.

Rates of inequality in digital technology correlate with both age and place of residence, as the proportion of those who described themselves as somewhat lacking in terms of digital equipment was higher than average among those aged 25–29 who described their place of residence as ‘rural’. However, this effect is not especially pronounced.

The vast majority of young people living in Central Europe – 54 per cent in Hungary – had all the technical apparatus needed to participate properly in remote learning. Some 28 per cent had, if not all the requisite technology, at least the basic necessities. The proportion of those either partially or entirely lacking these necessities was 7 per cent.

However, at this point, it is essential to note a methodological issue. Precisely because of the closures due to the pandemic, data was collected through online questionnaires, so reaching truly disadvantaged 15–29-year-olds who are completely excluded from the digital world was more difficult than if the research had been conducted through personal interviews.

Based on focus group discussions, it appears that the situation is rather unfavourable. Several quotes indicate that online education causes minimal inconvenience to young people, but many find themselves in a more vulnerable position:

Because you can't just prepare in online education. Anyone can say anything, you can't prepare.

(Girl, 18, Miskolc)

I think the whole thing is much worse in terms of learning. At least, I find it much harder to get the information.

(Boy, 17, Budapest)

ONLINE OR CLASSROOM LEARNING: NO DEFINITE PREFERENCE

For precisely this reason it is worth looking at which form of learning is preferred by 15–29-year-olds: in-person lessons or online education? Respondents were able to indicate their preference on a scale of 1 to 10, where 1 was fully classroom and 10 was fully digital education. The opinions of the young people in the V4 countries do not differ in this respect. Some 16 per cent of Hungarian respondents want only in-person teaching, whereas one-tenth indicated a preference for exclusively online learning. Incidentally, the country with the highest percentage (22 per cent) of those who preferred exclusively in-person teaching was Slovakia, while Poland had the lowest (13 per cent). Interestingly, the maximum number of those who would opt for entirely online learning (those who chose 10 on the scale) is almost the same (9–12 per cent) in all four countries. One consequence of this is that the averages of the 1–10 scale are similar, varying between 4.70 and 5.47 points, making the opinion of young Hungarians, at 5.14 points, squarely average. There is thus no clear preference for either form of teaching.

The views of young people in the V4 countries do not differ significantly in their preferences between classroom and online education. On a scale of 1 to 10, almost one-third of young Hungarians prefer to learn in the classroom (values 1–3), whereas about a quarter prefer online learning.

Of course, in such instances, it is vital to examine those who are actually affected, that is, those who are currently in the education system at some level. In all four countries, there are statistically significant differences of opinion between students and non-students. In Hungary, as in the other V4 countries, non-students show somewhat higher support for classroom and contact hours (average score of 4.73 on a 1–10 scale) than those who are most affected, that is, those enrolled at an educational institution (5.50 points).¹⁴ In the case of young Hungarians, those living in villages showed a somewhat greater preference for classroom learning (4.88). Somewhat surprisingly, they are followed by those living in urban environments (4.99), while those living in suburban and small-town communities show the greatest preference for online learning (5.60 mean points). What is particularly interesting, however, is that a subjective assessment of one's financial situation does not influence average preferences between classroom and online learning in Hungary.¹⁵ We cannot, therefore, say that those in a poorer financial position are clearly voting in favour of classroom education.

ONE-THIRD OF HUNGARIANS AGED 15–29 HAVE PARTICIPATED IN AN APPRENTICESHIP OR TRAINING PROGRAMME

One of the long-standing and recurring objections to the Hungarian school system is that it does not 'prepare you for life': it is said to be too theoretical, providing a great deal of unnecessary general knowledge, while at the same time the skills and practical knowledge that could be used in real life are neglected. According to the results of our study, there may be some basis for this complaint, as among the V4 countries Hungary has by far the smallest proportion of young people who have participated in some kind of apprenticeship or training programme (34 per cent). However, it should be pointed out that apprenticeships and training programmes are not universally

available in Hungary. Essentially, a range of courses are available for secondary school pupils and adult learners, whereas those in the final years of university also typically have access to such opportunities. In the other V4 countries, the proportion of those who answered 'yes' is close to 60 per cent.

TIME SPENT STUDYING

One clear consequence of the Covid-19 pandemic has been the increase in time spent studying at home. The traditional attendance system has the rhythm of an average workday: school hours, with possible extra hours and optional lessons (including sports and cultural courses), outside learning (homework), and preparation for the next day. This routine gives order to everyday life. Digital learning imposed as a result of the pandemic may have eclipsed and transformed this rhythm.

According to our research, an average Hungarian in the education system – all the way from primary school to PhD level – spends an average of 2.5 hours a day studying after school/university hours. In terms of the average duration of after-school learning, young Hungarians are no different from young people in other Central European countries. In statistical terms, there is no significant difference in the time spent by students at any of the various levels of education, whether at primary school or secondary school, in undergraduate or in postgraduate studies. This is also interesting because it is not the case for young people in the Czech Republic, Poland and Slovakia: data from those countries shows an increase in time spent studying from primary and secondary education to the postgraduate and doctoral level.

An average Hungarian learner, according to self-reported data, spends an average of 2.5 hours a day studying after school/university hours. In this respect, young Hungarians are not significantly different from young people in other Central European countries.

AMONG ONLINE ACTIVITIES, SOCIAL MEDIA PREDOMINATES

We examined the amount of time spent in four types of online activity:

- I do things related to my studies
- I do things related to my job (paid activities)
- I read online newspapers and information sites
- I spend time on social media sites such as Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, Snapchat, etc.

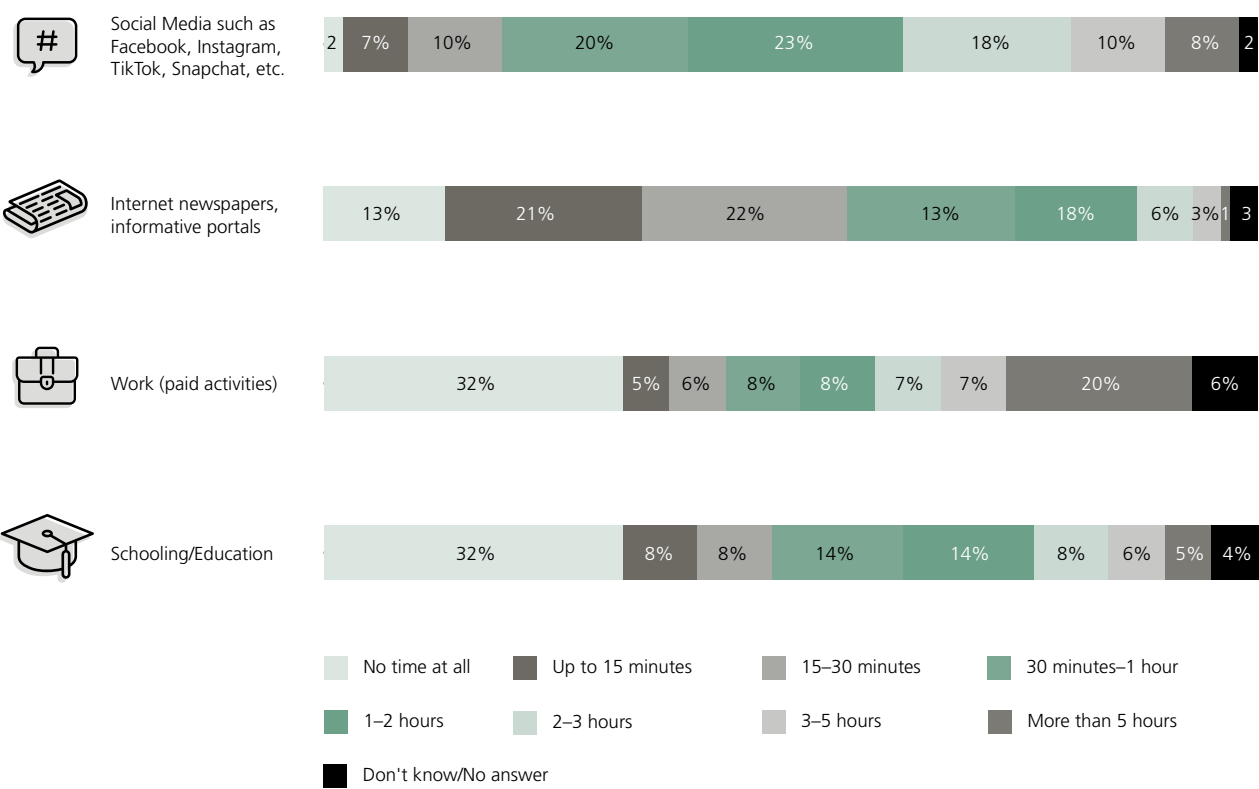
Respondents were not asked to determine the precise amount of time they spent on these activities but could choose between time periods (for example, 1–2 hours or 3–5 hours). According to Figure 4, time spent on social media is by far the longest of the four options: 8 per cent of young Hungarians spend extremely long periods – in excess of five hours – on Facebook, TikTok or Instagram on an average weekday. By contrast, only 2 per cent do not spend a single minute on social media. Every second young person uses social media platforms for a minimum of one hour and a maximum of 3–5 hours per day.

By contrast, about one-third of respondents do not use the Internet at all for work or study. Consistent with the previous question, 28 per cent of those learning online spend between 30 minutes and two hours on an average workday with this activity. The time spent on social media is otherwise quite similar in the countries studied. It is overwhelmingly the most popular pastime in all the V4 states, with just 2–3 per cent of young people in each country not using social media sites at all.

Some 8 per cent of young Hungarians spend more than five hours on Facebook, TikTok or Instagram during an average working day, and just 2 per cent do not spend any time at all on social media.

Finally, 13 per cent of respondents do not read Internet news portals at all, and a further 43 per cent spend a maximum of half an hour browsing news or information sites. The proportion of extreme Internet news consumers, those who, according to their self-reported estimates, browse Internet news portals for at least three hours a day, is approximately 4 per cent. However, another 20 per cent of young Hungarians spend an average of at least one hour a day consuming news. Online time spent on news is broadly similar among Slovak 15–29-year-olds, slightly higher among Poles of the same age, and highest of all among young Czechs.

FIGURE 4. **YOUNG HUNGARIANS’ TIME SPENT ONLINE (ROUGHLY HOW MUCH TIME DO YOU SPEND ON THESE ACTIVITIES DURING AN AVERAGE WEEKDAY?), IN %**



Source: FES Youth Study Central and Eastern Europe 2021.
 The data is presented in accordance with the relevant rounding rules. In some cases original values would not add up to 100% without arbitrary determination, so that original values were kept instead. This explains eventual deviations in the graph.

MAIN FINDINGS

- Among young Hungarians, the proportion of those with only primary education (ISCED 0 – ISCED 2) decreases with age. Nevertheless, 10 per cent of 19–24-year-olds and 5 per cent of 25–29-year-olds belong to this disadvantaged category.
- Young Hungarians are critical of the quality of the school system. This correlates with ideological and political attitudes. As a result of political polarisation, young people see the standard of education very differently, depending on whether they support or oppose the government.
- Of all the V4 countries, young people in Hungary are least able to imagine that grades and exams can be purchased, thus the perception of corruption in schools is relatively low.
- The majority of young people living in Central Europe – 54 per cent in Hungary – had all the technical equipment needed to participate properly in distance education. Some 28 per cent had, if not everything, at least the basic necessities. The proportion of those either partly or entirely lacking such necessities was 7 per cent.
- Young people in the V4 countries do not differ significantly in their preferences for classroom or digital education. On a scale of 1 to 10, almost one-third of young Hungarians prefer classroom learning (values 1–3), whereas around one quarter prefer remote learning.
- Based on self-reporting, young Hungarians in education spend an average of 2.5 hours a day in study after school/university hours. In this respect, young Hungarians are not significantly different from young people in other V4 countries.
- Some 8 per cent of young Hungarians spend more than five hours on Facebook, TikTok or Instagram during an average working day, whereas just 2 per cent do not spend any time at all on social media.

6

EMPLOYMENT AND MOBILITY



HALF OF HUNGARIAN YOUNG PEOPLE ARE IN REGULAR WORK

Over the past decade, Hungarian youth unemployment rates have moved in parallel with European economic and labour market trends. According to Eurostat data, youth unemployment in Hungary exceeded 25 per cent between 2009 and 2013, and peaked in 2012 at 28 per cent.¹⁶ The first year when youth unemployment fell below 20 per cent after the financial and economic crisis was 2015, the fifth year of post-2010 Orbán government. The situation in this area improved greatly during the 2014–2018 cycle: in 2018 the youth unemployment rate reached its lowest level to date, at 10.2 per cent. The Covid-19 crisis of 2020–2021 has also caused obvious problems in terms of young people's employment opportunities: at the time of our research, in the summer of 2021, youth unemployment in Hungary stood at 15 per cent.

According to our questionnaire-based study, youth employment and the distribution of forms of employment show a similar pattern across the V4 countries. In all countries, the majority are in full-time employment (32–38 per cent), while 19–27 per cent are unemployed. In Hungary, there is a similar proportion of part-time workers (11 per cent) and those engaged in casual work (8 per cent). Of the latter, Hungary has the lowest proportion in the region, although the rate of casual employment is similar in Poland (10 per cent). Rates are higher in the Czech Republic (14 per cent) and highest of all in Slovakia (21 per cent). In all the countries surveyed, the rarest form of work is self-employment (3–4 per cent).

Of the V4 countries, Hungary has the highest proportion of those in full-time work with open-ended (permanent) employment contracts (32 per cent), and also the lowest number of those in part-time work (8 per cent). The other V4 countries have 6–12 per cent fewer employees on open-ended contracts, whilst 3–8 per cent more are employed on fixed-term (temporary) contracts.

More than half of young Hungarians (52 per cent) are in some form of regular employment, whereas more than one quarter (27 per cent) have no job at all. Of the four countries, Hungary has the lowest proportion of casual workers (8 per cent) and the highest

proportion of workers with permanent contracts (40 per cent) in the region.

As one would expect, the proportion of those in work increases with age. Whereas just 30 per cent of 15–18-year-olds are in some kind of employment, this proportion rises to 59 per cent among 19–24-year-olds, and to 78 per cent among 25–29-year-olds. The proportion of full-time employees is 15 per cent in the youngest group, 32 per cent in the middle group and 58 per cent among the oldest.

Every third Hungarian of secondary school age (15–18 years old) is employed (30 per cent) and every sixth works full-time (15 per cent). The proportion of those employed increases significantly with age.

Research participants were also asked how many hours per week they work, on average. Based on this, full-time employment in all V4 countries generally means 40 hours. In Hungary, the average number of hours worked per week among full-time employees was 40.5, in Slovakia 39.3, in the Czech Republic 39.2, and in Poland 38.8. However, there are notable differences in terms of part-time work. Young people in part-time employment work an average of 26 hours in Hungary, which is significantly more than in the Czech Republic (22 hours) and significantly less than in Slovakia (30 hours) and Poland (33 hours).

THE PROPORTION OF CAREER DROPOUTS AND THOSE OVER- QUALIFIED FOR THEIR WORK IS SIGNIFICANTLY HIGHER AMONG WOMEN

Among those who have a job, the proportion of career dropouts among young Hungarians is the lowest in the region (35 per cent), but the rate is similar in Poland (38 per cent). It is also important to note that, among the V4 countries, only in Hungary was there an absolute majority (54 per cent) who could find work in their chosen field or a closely related one. The number of young people who could say the same was 5 per cent lower in Poland and 10–11 per cent lower in the Czech Republic and Slovakia (Figure 5).

One-third of young Hungarians felt that they were overqualified for their current job (32 per cent), a proportion similar to the other V4 countries (but in the Czech Republic and Slovakia there were significant numbers of career dropouts (43 per cent and 47 per cent). By contrast, the number of respondents who declared themselves underqualified for their job was significantly lower (generally around 10 per cent) in all four countries.

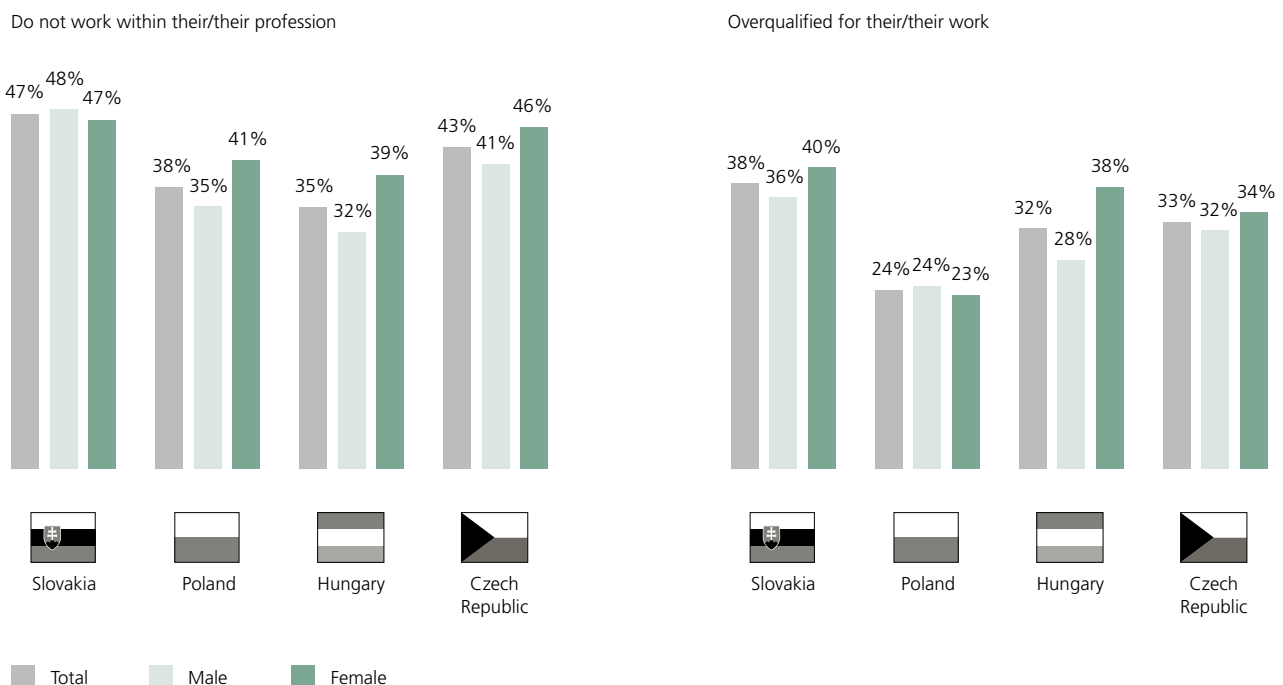
In almost all V4 countries, the numbers of those who abandon their careers or are overqualified for their jobs are higher among women, but the gender gap is widest in Hungary.

Among young Hungarians, 7 per cent more women than men said their job lay outside their professional field (39 vs 32 per cent), and 10 per cent more said they were overqualified for their job (38 vs 28 per cent).

The proportion of those working in their chosen field or a closely related one increases with age: only 45 per cent of Hungarian young people aged 14–18 and 62 per cent of those aged 25–29 said they were working in their chosen field. This is not explained by a change in the career dropout rate but by the fact that there are more young people who have not yet been trained in any profession (23 per cent of 15–18-year-olds), whilst the proportion of entirely unskilled workers is already negligible among those over 24 (4 per cent).

One-third of young Hungarians (32 per cent) work in the private sector. Nearly one-fifth (17 per cent) of young people work in the public sector and slightly more than one-tenth in the civil sector (12 per cent). Very few (3 per cent) work in an international organisation. Approximately one quarter (27 per cent) work for some other form of organisation.

FIGURE 5. PROPORTION OF CAREER DROPOUTS AND THE OVERQUALIFIED (AS A PERCENTAGE OF THOSE IN EMPLOYMENT)



Source: FES Youth Study Central and Eastern Europe 2021.
Any differences in the presentation result from the decimal not being shown.

We also asked research participants which sector they would most like to work in, in future. Among young Hungarians, those working in the private sector were least likely (27 per cent) to want to work in another sector. Some 43 per cent of those working in the public sector and 56 per cent those in the civil sector reported that, when it came to looking for a new job, they would seek one in a different sector.

YOUNG PEOPLE ARE PRESENTLY DIVIDED ON WORKING FROM HOME

In all V4 countries, the issue of remote working is divisive, and currently about half of young people prefer the workplace, whereas the other half prefer to work from home. Slovakia is somewhat of an exception in this regard, as a clear majority of young people (59 vs 41 per cent) prefer the workplace.

Young Hungarians are roughly evenly split between those who prefer to work from home and those who prefer to work in the office. Working from home is most popular among high-school students, while it is least popular among both the lowest and the highest wealth brackets. Fewer Fidesz voters (supporters of the current government) have a strong preference for working from home.

A sociodemographic breakdown of the home office question reveals interesting patterns among Hungarian respondents. Working from home is least popular among the poorest and the richest.¹⁷ In the former group, a clear majority express a stable preference (39 per cent) for the workplace. There are also fewer respondents in the very deprived and the deprived categories who would expressly choose to work from home (21 and 22 per cent) than among the wealthiest (27 and 30 per cent). This is not surprising, given that presumably these groups' housing conditions are not suitable for working from home. It is believed that there are fewer young people among these groups whose jobs can easily be done from home (as is the case, for instance, among those who principally work at a computer).

Working from home is most popular among the youngest age groups: 15–18-year-olds are 8–10 per cent more likely to prefer working from home (59 per cent) than are members of older age groups. There are also moderate differences between political groups. Opposition voters make up the largest number of respondents who prefer to work from home (54 per cent), however, supporters of the government (51 per cent) and undecided voters (47 per cent) are not far behind. If we look at those who express strong, clear preferences, government supporters are 8 per cent less likely (22 per cent) to expressly prefer working from home, whilst rates are very similar among opposition and undecided voters (30 and 30 per cent, respectively). In addition to the above, we can also observe moderate gender differences. Whereas office work is somewhat more popular among women (53 vs 47 per cent), more men prefer working from home (46 vs 54 per cent).

In our research, almost eight out of ten young Hungarians (78 per cent) reported that they had everything they needed to work from home, or at least all the bare necessities. Due to the online nature of our sampling, this does not give a completely reliable picture of the technology available to young Hungarians. On the other hand, we can conclude from this that whether young people prefer working in an office or working from home is not determined by the availability of the necessary technology. We know this from the fact that the preferences of young people with all the relevant devices and of those either completely or partly lacking in the necessary equipment showed no significant differences in terms of working from home or in the workplace.

This is also supported by multivariate analysis, in which, in addition to access to technology, we also examined the effects of wealth status, political preference, age group, and gender on job location preferences.¹⁸ However, based on the analysis, only gender showed a significant effect: on average, women gave answers 0.37 points lower in response to the above scaled-response question ($p < 0.05$).

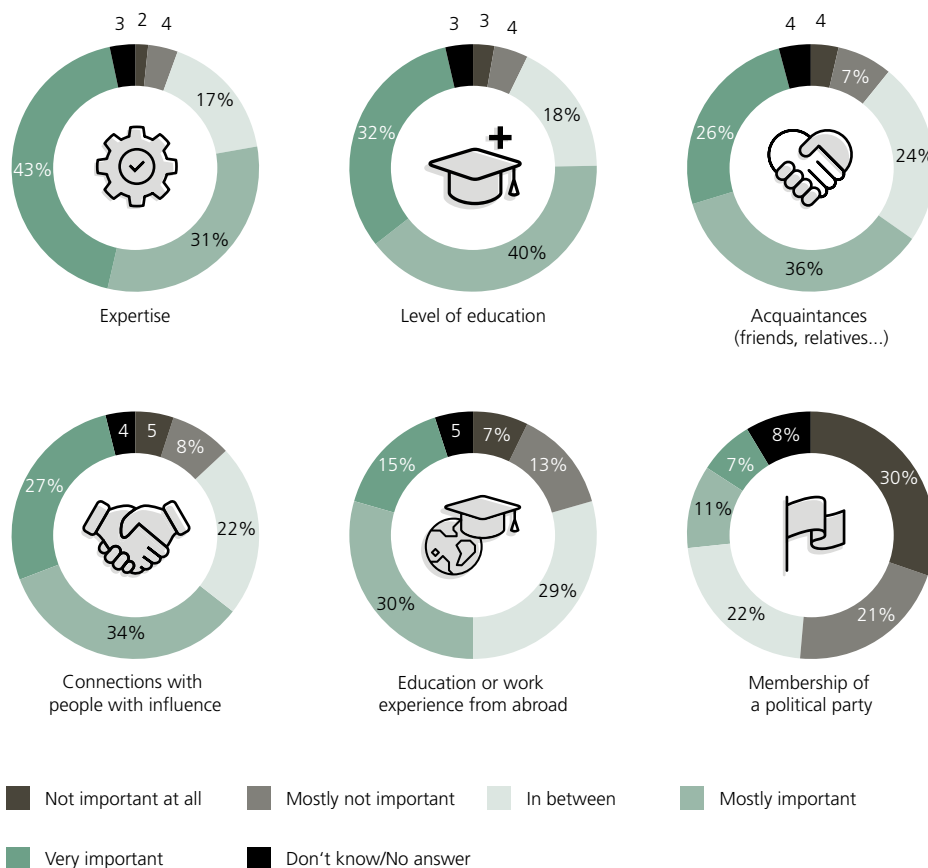
YOUNG PEOPLE CONSIDER EXPERTISE AND EDUCATION THE MOST IMPORTANT THINGS WHEN LOOKING FOR A JOB

We also asked participants in our research what factors they thought were important when searching for a job in their country. The order of the first three elements was the same in all four countries. In the V4 region, young people considered expertise to be most important. Three-quarters of Hungarians (74 per cent) cited this as the most important, or at least a very important, factor when looking for a job (Figure 6). The proportions were similar in

Slovakia (75 per cent) and Poland (78 per cent), while in the Czech Republic even more people emphasised the role of expertise (81 per cent).

One's highest level of education came second: in Hungary and Poland, almost three-quarters of young people listed education as an important factor (72 and 72 per cent), while the proportions in Slovakia and Poland were slightly lower (69 and 66 per cent, respectively). Third, the role of contacts (relatives, friends) was highlighted: 62 per cent of young Hungarians thought that contacts played an important role when searching for a job. This proportion did not differ significantly (by only 1–3 per cent) in the other V4 countries.

FIGURE 6. **IMPORTANT FACTORS WHEN LOOKING FOR A JOB, ACCORDING TO YOUNG PEOPLE (IN YOUR OPINION, HOW IMPORTANT ARE THE FOLLOWING FACTORS, WHEN IT COMES TO FINDING A JOB FOR A YOUNG PERSON IN YOUR COUNTRY?), IN %**



Source: FES Youth Study Central and Eastern Europe 2021.
Any differences in the presentation result from the decimal not being shown.

Six out of ten young Hungarians consider networking with influential people important when looking for a job (61 per cent). This is a very high proportion by regional standards: the equivalent figures are 49 per cent in the Czech Republic, 47 per cent in Slovakia, and 42 per cent in Poland. In these countries, foreign school or work experience was considered more important than good contacts (49–56 per cent). In Hungary, on the other hand, only a minority say that foreign experience is an advantage (45 per cent). It is also important that young Hungarians have the same beliefs about the importance of relationships with influential people whether they are employed or unemployed. At the same time, the number of those who consider help from contacts important is 3.5 per cent higher among those who have already found work in the labour market.

It's a who-you-know-not-what-you-know country. If you want to get ahead without constantly hitting roadblocks, you have to know someone higher up or at least that's my impression.

(Girl, 18, Miskolc)

In all V4 countries, young people consider the following three factors most important when looking for a job: expertise, level of education and contacts. However, only in Hungary are contacts with influential people considered more important than experience abroad.

As in Hungary, only about one-fifth of young people in Poland (18 per cent) consider membership of a political party important for finding a job. The percentages are even lower in Slovakia and the Czech Republic (11 and 8 per cent, respectively). However, there is a significant difference in this regard between young Hungarians who are already working and those who do not have a job. Some 21 per cent of those in work say a political alignment is useful for finding a job, whilst only 14 per cent of those not employed believe this to be true.

LOW LEVELS OF CIVIC PARTICIPATION

The declining rates of citizens' political participation worldwide is considered by many social scientists to be part of a more general negative trend, in which traditional forms of civic engagement (church attendance, trade union membership, integration into traditional communities) are increasingly being marginalised (Dalton – Klingermann 2011). In Hungary, on the other hand, political and civic activities are markedly divergent: whilst electoral turnout is traditionally high, civic activity is low by regional standards (Mikecz 2020).

This statement is to some extent contradicted by the comparison of youth volunteer activity across the V4 countries: the Hungarian data does not stand out from the other V4 countries. The proportion of respondents who participate in volunteering is low in all four states: 28 per cent in Hungary, 30 per cent in Poland, 32 per cent in the Czech Republic, and only 23 per cent in Slovakia. Furthermore, rates of volunteering decrease significantly with age: whereas 38 per cent of Hungarians aged 15–18 volunteered during the last year, only 29 per cent of those aged 19–24 and 21 per cent of those aged 25–29 did so. This represents a difference of 17 per cent between the youngest and oldest age groups, while the difference is even larger in Poland (23 per cent) and slightly smaller in the Czech Republic and Slovakia (9 and 6 per cent, respectively). It should be emphasised here that since 1 January 2016, only those who have completed at least 50 hours of community work during their high school years can graduate in Hungary. This rule has remained in force throughout the Covid-19 pandemic.

According to Robert Putnam (2000), reasons for declining civic activity include the weakening of traditional social institutions, urbanisation, increasing television watching and the integration of women into the labour market. However, based on the age trend presented in our research above, we may conclude that communities based around educational institutions, as well as compulsory secondary-school volunteer work, can somewhat counterbalance this trend – at least so long as participation in education continues. This is also confirmed by the fact that young Hungarians generally volunteered in some form of school or university organisation (29 per cent of volunteers).

In addition, many also took part in some form of civic initiative (28 per cent) or association (for example, sports club or band – 19 per cent). Less common forms of volunteering include participation in the work of an ambulance or fire brigade service (9 per cent), youth organisation (9 per cent), NGO (6 per cent), political party (3 per cent) or trade union (3 per cent).

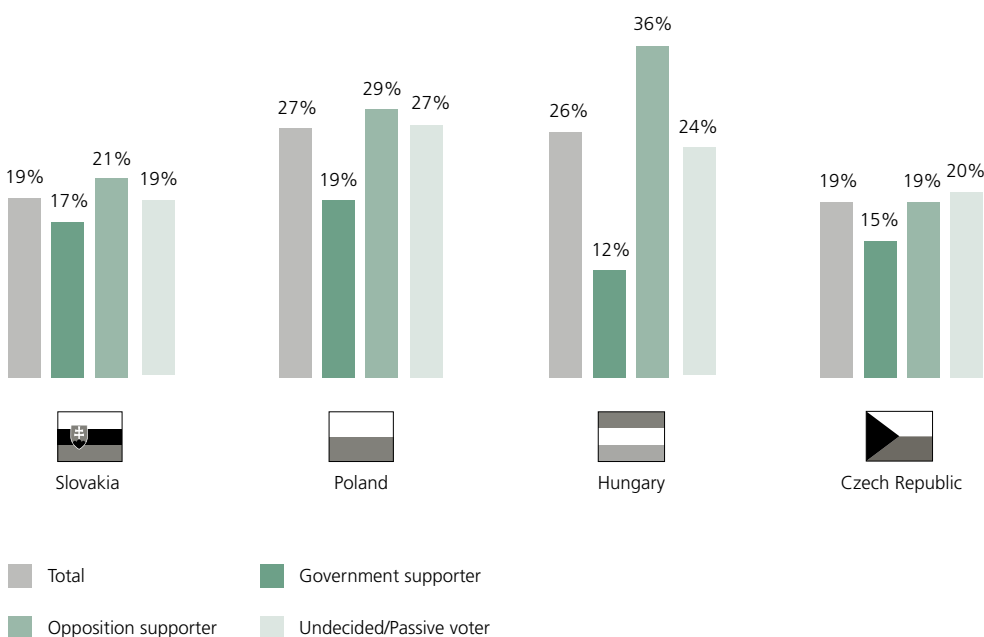
IN THE ENTIRE V4 REGION, THE DESIRE TO EMIGRATE IS HIGHEST AMONG YOUNG HUNGARIANS WHO SUPPORT THE POLITICAL OPPOSITION

According to Eurobarometer data, mobility decreases significantly with age, and in general an absolute majority who would consider working abroad (56 per cent) is found only in the 15–24 age group (Lulle – Janta – Emils-son 2019). One quarter of young Hungarians (26 per cent) have a strong or very strong desire to leave the country for a period of at least six months (Figure 7).

Nearly half of young people have a weak-to-moderate desire to emigrate (45 per cent), whereas one-third (33 per cent) are sure they don't want to move abroad. With age, the proportion of those who are sure they want to emigrate decreases: 32 per cent of 15–18-year-olds, 26 per cent of 19–24-year-olds, and just 23 per cent of 25–29-year-olds. Among those in the wealthiest economic category, a remarkable number said they would almost certainly leave the country (34 per cent, or 5–11 per cent higher than in the other groups).

Among young Hungarians, just 15 per cent have already been abroad for educational purposes. Studying abroad is even less common among high school students (7 per cent), but it is much more common among those over the age of 18 (17–18 per cent), partly due to Erasmus scholarships. It is interesting that among young Hungarians, twice as many men (20 per cent) as women (9 per cent) have studied abroad. The proportion of people with educational experience abroad is similar in Slovakia and the Czech Republic (18 and 19 per cent, respectively), whereas the proportion of young Poles who have studied abroad is almost twice as high (28 per cent) as among Hungarians.

FIGURE 7.19 WILLINGNESS AMONG CITIZENS OF THE V4 COUNTRIES TO EMIGRATE (SHARE OF THOSE, WHO HAVE A STRONG OR VERY STRONG DESIRE TO MOVE TO ANOTHER COUNTRY FOR MORE THAN 6 MONTHS/ EMIGRATE), IN %



Source: FES Youth Study Central and Eastern Europe 2021.

In Hungary, the most significant differences in willingness to emigrate are found between political groups. Just 12 per cent of Fidesz supporters expressed a strong or very strong desire to emigrate, while more (37 per cent) declared a clear preference to stay in Hungary. This ratio is reversed (36 and 17 per cent) among opposition supporters and is evenly balanced (24 and 27 per cent) among the undecided. In all V4 countries, opposition supporters express a greater willingness to leave the country permanently than do government supporters, but in the entire region, willingness to emigrate is highest among young Hungarian opposition supporters.

In Hungary, the effect of political affiliation on emigration is huge: three times as many opposition supporters (36 per cent) and twice as many undecided voters (24 per cent) want to leave the country as do young supporters of the government (12 per cent). It is also true in the other V4 countries that opposition supporters and undecided voters show a greater willingness to emigrate, but the differences between the political groups are much smaller.

Of young Hungarians with at least a weak intention to emigrate, 4 per cent plan to leave Hungary within six months, 10 per cent within two years, 21 per cent within five years, and 27 per cent later. Some 38 per cent could not say within what time period they planned to emigrate. One-third (31 per cent) of young people thinking of emigrating plan to live abroad for more than five years. This proportion is similar in the other V4 countries (29–37 per cent).

The primary destination for young Hungarians is Germany (21 per cent of those intending to emigrate), followed by Austria (15 per cent), the United Kingdom (9 per cent), the USA (8 per cent) and Spain (7 per cent). In terms of destination countries, there was considerable overlap with the top-five lists of young people in the other V4 countries. Germany and the United States were among the top destinations in all four countries. The UK and Spain were still at the top of the Czech and Polish lists, and Austria was on the list of young Slovaks.

MAIN FINDINGS

- More than half of young Hungarians (52 per cent) are in some form of regular employment, whereas one quarter have no job at all (27 per cent). Among V4 countries, the proportion of casual workers is lowest among young Hungarians (8 per cent) and Hungary also has the largest number of workers with open-ended (permanent) contracts (40 per cent).
- One-third of young people of secondary school age (15–18 years old) are employed (30 per cent) and one-sixth (15 per cent) are employed full time. The proportion of those in work increases significantly with age.
- In almost all V4 countries, more women than men drop out of their careers or are overqualified for the work they do, but the gender gap is largest in Hungary.
- Young Hungarians are more or less evenly split in terms of preferences for working in the workplace or from home. Working from home is most popular among secondary school students, and least popular among the lowest and highest wealth categories. Fewer Fidesz voters have a strong preference for working from home.
- In all V4 countries, young people consider the following three factors the most important for finding a job: expertise, education level and contacts. At the same time, in Hungary alone, contact with influential people is considered more important than work experience abroad.
- In Hungary, the effect of political affiliation on emigration is huge: three times as many opposition supporters (36 per cent) and twice as many undecided voters (24 per cent) want to leave the country as do young supporters of the government (12 per cent). It is also true in the other V4 countries that opposition supporters and undecided voters show a greater willingness to emigrate, but the differences between the political groups are much smaller.

7

FAMILY AND FRIENDS

'SINGLE' AND 'IN A RELATIONSHIP' ARE THE MOST COMMON RELATIONSHIP STATUSES

The data from our study shows that by far the most common marital status among young people in all V4 countries is 'single', but the proportions differ considerably from country to country. The proportion of single people in this age group is lowest among Hungarians (41 per cent), and highest among Czech 15–29-year-olds (51 per cent). The second most common status is 'unmarried relationship'.²⁰ Throughout the whole region, Hungary has the highest proportion of young people living together in an unmarried relationship (25 per cent). Such a relationship does not necessarily imply cohabitation. In Hungary, every sixth young respondent cohabits, as does every fifth in Slovakia.

Married cohabitation is less common in all four countries compared with the two abovementioned statuses. Among young people in this age group, just 9 per cent of Czechs, 12 per cent of Slovaks and 13 per cent of Hungarians live in a relationship legitimised by the state, and even among Poles, the proportion is less than one in seven. As may be expected, as people age, the proportion of those who are either married or cohabiting with a partner increases, whereas the proportion of singles decreases. In the case of young Hungarians, this means that while 90 per cent of 15-year-olds describe themselves as single, just 37 per cent of 20-year-olds and 29 per cent of 29-year-olds are not in any form of relationship, whereas the dynamics of marriage are reversed.

Among the oldest age group, approximately one-third are married, but this is true of only 7 per cent of 20-year-olds, and at the age of 15–16 the proportion of those who are married is below the margin of error. However, the

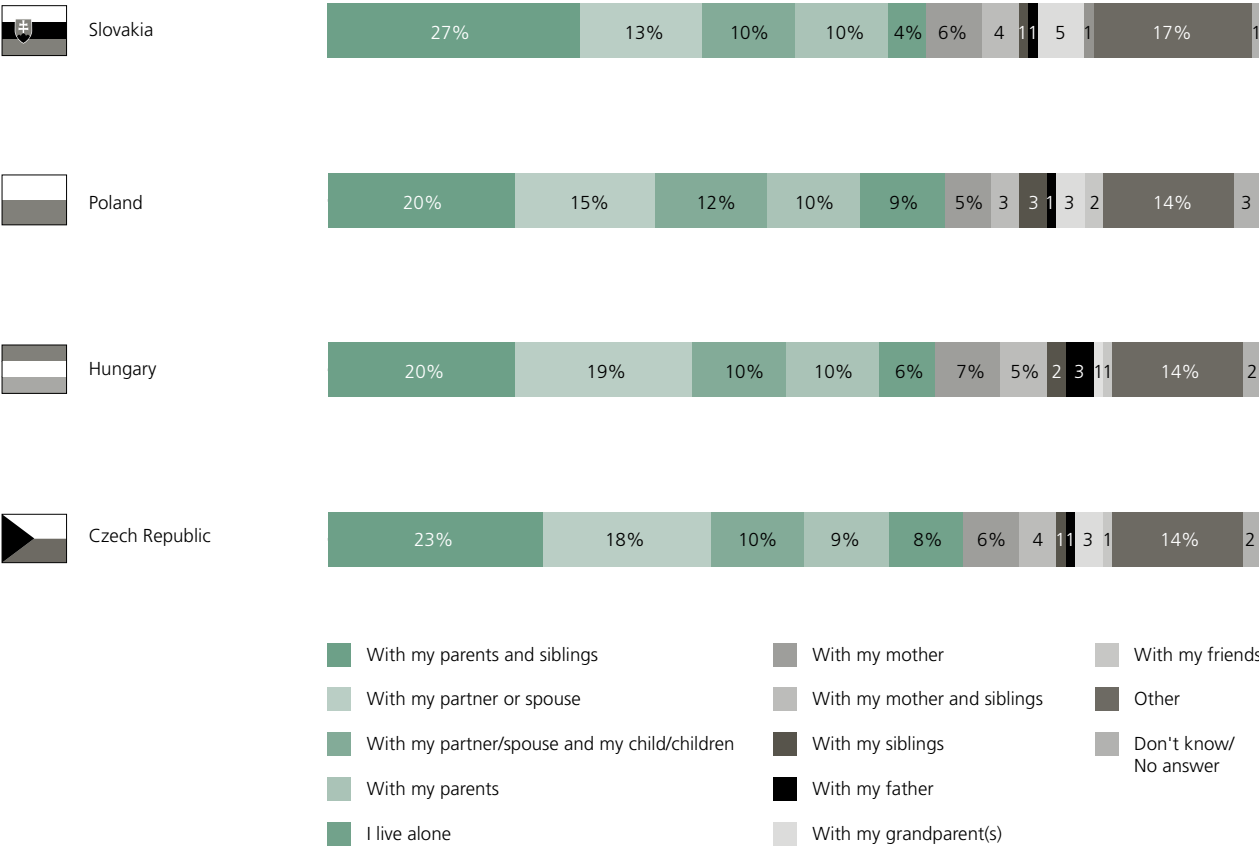
data also clearly indicates that the traditional, conservative family model does not predominate even among 28–29-year-olds, as the most common status among them is cohabitation, at 35 per cent. All this is interesting in light of the fact that, especially in Hungary and Poland, conservative and right-wing governments strongly prefer and openly support the institution of marriage and the birth of children within marriage.²¹

Marriage is not the most popular form of relationship among young Hungarians. Even among those over 25, most live in a cohabiting relationship.

IN ADDITION TO TRADITIONAL FORMS, YOUNG PEOPLE ARE CHARACTERISED BY A MULTITUDE OF ALTERNATIVE RELATIONSHIP TYPES

Consistent with the above data, young people in the V4 countries live in an extremely diverse range of relationship types (Figure 8). Our research recorded nearly 70 different living arrangements in each country, going far beyond the traditional mother-father-children model.²² In Slovakia, 17 per cent of 15–29-year-olds live according to alternative arrangements, whilst the figures in other Central European countries are around 14 per cent. However, there are typical modes of cohabitation that are very similar in all the V4 countries. This is because a relative majority of young people live in the 'issuing' family, in other words, in the nuclear family in which the respondent was raised by their parents, generally with at least one sibling. This model is most common in Slovakia (27 per cent) and is true of around 20 per cent in Poland and Hungary. Another 9–10 per cent of 15–29-year-olds also live within a nuclear family but have no siblings.

FIGURE 8. TYPICAL FAMILY LIVING CONDITIONS OF YOUNG PEOPLE IN V4 COUNTRIES (WHO DO YOU LIVE WITH IN A HOUSEHOLD?) (AT LEAST 2% CITATION IN SEVERAL COUNTRIES), IN %



Source: FES Youth Study Central and Eastern Europe 2021, author's calculations.
Any differences in the presentation result from the decimal not being shown.

The second most common form of household is when the young person no longer lives with their issuing family, but with their chosen partner, without a child. This is least common in Slovakia (13 per cent) and most common in Hungary (19 per cent). Closely related to this, at least one in ten young people in Central Europe already have both a partner and a child.

Two other common household models are worth noting. Of those aged 15–29, 4 per cent of Slovaks, 6 per cent of Hungarians and 9 per cent of Poles live alone, individually covering all household expenses.

Finally, the most common type of the so-called truncated family is the single-parent household, in which the respondent lives together with their mother and sibling(s).

Such family arrangements, which entail serious sociological disadvantages,²³ are most common in Hungary (12 per cent) and least common in Poland (8 per cent). In Hungary, almost half of respondents indicated that in some form or another they live with their mother, but the proportion of those who (also) live with their father is more than 10 per cent lower (38 per cent). The data also points to an important phenomenon in the Hungarian demographic situation: the number of divorces in the country has been high in recent decades. According to the CSO, there were 591 divorces for every 1,000 marriages in the 2000s.²⁴ Between divorced parents, Hungarian judicial practice is much more likely to award custody of children to the mother. As a result, the majority of single-parent households in Hungary consist of a mother and child(ren).

Among the V4 countries, the truncated, single-parent household model, in which a young person lives with their mother and perhaps siblings, is most common in Hungary (12 per cent).

As one would expect, the younger the respondent, the more likely they are to live in the issuing family, thus generally with their parents. Some 43 per cent of Hungarians aged 15–18 live with their parents and siblings, and another 13 per cent with just their parents. Over the age of 25, however, these proportions are vastly lower: just 8 per cent of those in the oldest age group live with their parents and siblings, whereas 6 per cent live with just their parents. More than one quarter of those aged 25 and over cohabit with a partner, and a further fifth live in a household with their partner and child(ren).

HOTEL MUM AND DAD IS IN OPERATION

The fact that, ultimately, a relative majority of young people live with their parents is considered acceptable by 45 per cent of Hungarians aged 15–29 as this is the simplest and most convenient solution for them. However, more than one-third would like to move out of ‘hotel mum and dad’ if their financial circumstances allowed. About 5 per cent of 15–29-year-olds cannot live alone because their parents would not allow it.

The relationship between young people and their parents in the V4 countries can be described as, if not harmonious, at least free from fundamental, open conflicts. Among respondents, 80 per cent or in some cases 90 per cent either get along very well with their parents, or, even if there are minor conflicts, these do not fundamentally endanger the parent–child relationship. Among 15–29-year-olds, however, 7 per cent of Slovaks, 8 per cent of Czechs, one in eight Hungarians, and 15 per cent of Poles have a problematic or even highly problematic relationship with their parents. Nevertheless, there are no major signs of outright revolt. Based on the data, the older age groups get along best with their parents, whereas the younger groups report more conflicts. It is important to point out, though, that these are the groups who are proportionally most likely to live with their parents’ generation, and the proportion of people who leave the issuing family increases with age.

In terms of young people’s attitudes in the V4 countries, including young Hungarians, there is no empirical evidence of outright revolt or open opposition to the views of their parents, or of household conflict. According to the data, household cohabitation between 15–29-year-olds and their parents is relatively harmonious.

One source of conflict may be when parents want to be involved in all important matters affecting their children, to limit their decisions or at least to have a strong influence. However, young people in the V4 countries do not seem to perceive serious contradictions in this area. Indeed, every second 15–29-year-old living in a V4 country reports that they decide on important issues that affect their life entirely independently, and another four-tenths – although there are some divergences in this area – report that they make decisions together with their parents. Only 4–5 per cent say that their parents decide on all substantive issues that affect them. The correlation between harmonious or conflicting coexistence with parents and decision-making competences on important issues can best be seen in the fact that the proportion of young people who report having a very good relationship with their parents is well above average among those who say they make joint decisions, that they communicate with one another, and that the level of inter-family communication is high. At the same time, in a parent–child relationship where conflict is reported, it is more likely that either the 15–29-year-old respondent or the parents make all the decisions. The source of the harmonious relationship is thus communication, and conflict results from the lack of it.

The source of a harmonious relationship is thus communication, and conflict results from the lack of it. Among young people who have a very good relationship with their parents, the proportion of those who make important decisions together is well above average.

Independent decision-making power gradually comes to predominate in all V4 countries from about the age of 20.²⁵ Based on the polynomial trend line – which compensates for any unevenness caused by the low number of data points – in Poland it is around the age of 20 that the majority – that is, above 50 per cent – decide on important issues independently, followed by young Hungarians and Slovaks, who reach this point between the ages of 20 and 21.

Young Czechs are the last to make decisions entirely independently, at around the age of 22. There is a gap of at least two, and generally closer to three or four years between legal adulthood and independent decision-making competence.

Young people in the V4 countries gradually develop their own decision-making powers from the age of 20. There is therefore a gap of at least two and generally closer to three or four years between legal adulthood and independent decision-making competence. Young Hungarians are no different from their Central European counterparts in this regard.

A VISION OF ONE'S OWN FAMILY: PREFERABLY MARRIED AND WITH CHILDREN YET NOT AT ANY COST

It emerged from the above subchapter that the majority of young people in Central European countries still live in the issuing family, with the proportion of those in charge of their own household not reaching one-third in any country. It is important, however, to ask what 15–29-year-olds envision for their future family life. Are they planning their own family, and, if so, would it be based on marriage or cohabitation? Do they want children and, if so, at what age do they think it would be ideal to have them?

The majority of young people in the V4 countries, including 57 per cent of Hungarians, envision their future as married with children. This is also true of 62 per cent of Czech and Slovak 15–29-year-olds, whereas 52 per cent of Polish people of a similar age have the same ambition. Some 6–8 per cent would prefer marriage without a child, with the exception of Slovaks, where just 4 per cent hope to marry but not have children. Cohabitation (with a partner but not married), with or without a child, appeals to around 8–9 per cent of respondents, whereas the option of having a child alone is not very popular, chosen by just 6–9 per cent, depending on the country. The opinions of Hungarians aged 15–29 do not diverge much from the norm in any of these questions and are in line with the Central European average. This is particularly interesting given the fact that the country's political leadership,

which has been presenting itself as a conservative-Christian-right-wing government since 2010, is uniquely generous in Europe in supporting the highest possible number of children in marriage.

The majority of young people in the V4 countries, including 57 per cent of Hungarians, envision their future as married with children.

It is therefore worth examining this highly politicised issue in terms of ideological orientation (left–right, liberal–conservative, and moderate–radical), as well as pro-government vs opposition.²⁶ Perhaps surprisingly, at the $p \leq 0.05$ level, visions for a future family can be correlated only with the first of these three ideological scales. Nearly three-quarters of young Hungarians with a strongly right-wing position (choosing a value of 9–10) would like to get married and have children, whereas among strongly left-wing young people (a value of 1–2) this proportion is 57 per cent. Although left and centre-left 15–29-year-olds are more likely than average to want marriage or cohabitation without children, it can by no means be said that young people on the left reject either the institution of marriage or having children.

There is unquestionably a difference in the family plans of pro-government and opposition-supporting voters (Pearson $R^2 = 9.635$, $\text{sig} = 0.047$, Cramer $V = 0.107$). Among pro-government voters, more than seven out of ten support the traditional family model, whilst support for this among opposition voters is 11 per cent lower.²⁷ On the other hand, the acceptance of alternative family models is consistently higher among opposition supporters than among supporters of the government. However, when running a binary logistical regression model to examine the factors influencing the choice of the classic 'conservative' family model, it was found that of the nine sociodemographic, sociocultural, ideological, and political variables involved, gender and left-right orientation had a significant effect.²⁸ In this instance, pro- or anti-government positions no longer affected views on the traditional family model, presumably as the left–right axis cancels the effect of the choice between political groupings.

In Hungary, there is an important difference in the family plans of young left-wing and right-wing people. The more right-wing 15–29-year-olds are, the more likely they are to want to get married.

THE WILLINGNESS OF YOUNG HUNGARIANS TO HAVE CHILDREN IS NOT EXCEPTIONAL IN CENTRAL EUROPE

Another aspect of family plans is having children. Young people in all V4 countries have very similar hopes in this regard. In effect, 15–29-year-olds in all four nations, if they answer the question, want an average of 2.1–2.2 children, so there is no significant difference between their responses. Still, it is worth examining the data in a little more depth, as there are some differences in their internal distribution. There are two questions regarding intentions to have children: firstly, whether one wants to have children in the future, and, if so, how many. About one quarter of young Poles and slightly more than one-fifth of young Hungarians reported that they did not want children, whereas among Czechs and Slovaks these proportions were under 20 per cent. It is also interesting that the views of young Hungarians are quite polarised in this area: 16 per cent want one child – this is the highest proportion among the four countries – but 24 per cent want three or more (the second highest after Poland). That is, although on average Hungarian 15–29-year-olds also envision an average of 2.12 children, compared with young people of a similar age from other Central European countries, there are both more who want no children or at most one child, and more who want a large family.

As with the question regarding hopes for a future family, we also examined respondents' desire to have children in terms of ideological and political affiliation. As we have pointed out several times, the scientific issues of demography in Hungary have become important topics of everyday political communication over the past decade, and the question of childbearing has become highly politicised.

Of left-to-right, liberal–conservative, and moderate–radical axes, the liberal vs conservative axis correlates most closely with the number of children a respondent wants (Pearson $R^2 = 35.845$, sig = 0.000, Cramer 'V' = 0.114).²⁹ Those who consider themselves very conservative want more children than those who are very liberal, among whom a remarkably high proportion do not want children (Figure 8).

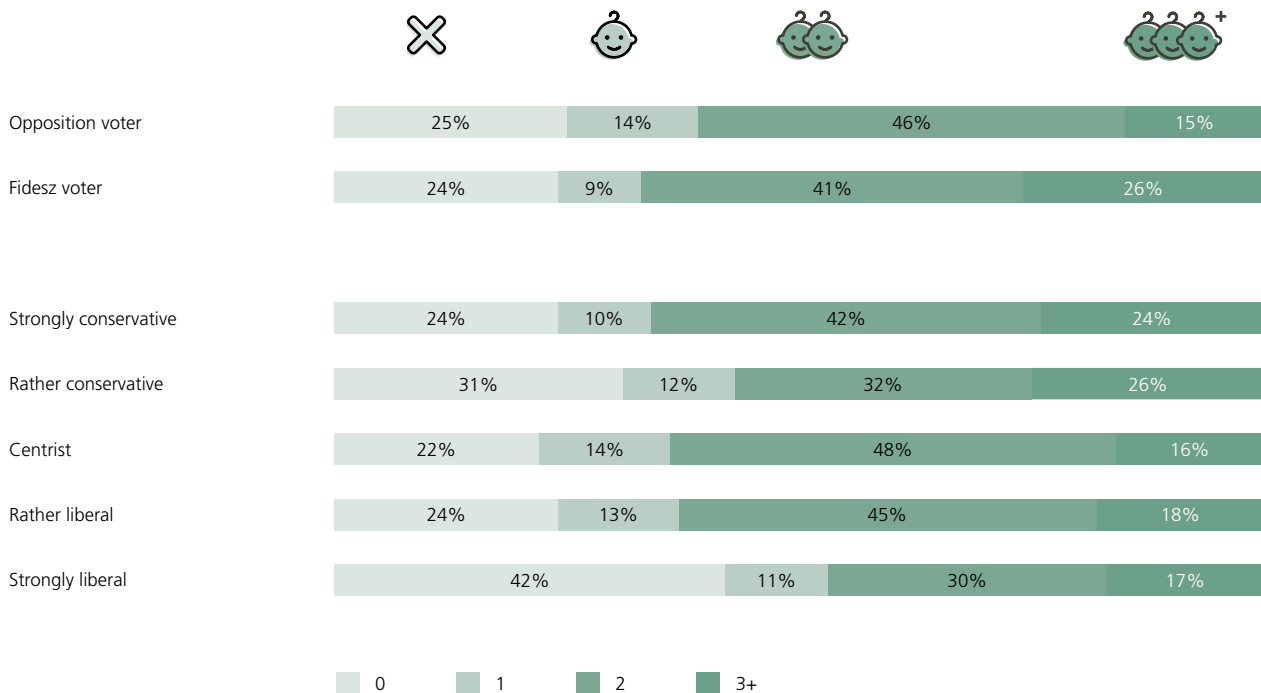
Thus, on a scale ranging from liberal to conservative, there is an increase in the number of children envisioned.

Similar differences can be seen between government and opposition supporters. More than one quarter of pro-government voters want three or more children, compared with only 15 per cent of opposition voters. Some 46 per cent of them want two children, compared with 41 per cent among Fidesz supporters.

The more conservative the young Hungarian, the more likely they are to want three or more children. Among those with liberal views, however, a higher proportion do not want children.

The regression model of the factors influencing childbearing nuances the descriptive statistical results given above as three separate explanatory variables significantly influence the desired number of children: frequency of church attendance, liberal or conservative attitude, and gender.³⁰ The more frequently one attends church, the more likely one is to want more children; Similarly, the more conservative one is, the more children one plans to have, and finally, women/girls tend to want a larger number of children. Two additional factors are worth noting. On one hand, the effect of age on childbearing is not significant, in other words, we cannot state unequivocally that the older the respondent, the more likely they are to want more children, and from a political point of view, the effect of the dichotomous pro-government versus pro-opposition variable disappears in the regression model. Party preference, therefore, when controlled by other variables, does not affect the intention either to marry or to have children.

FIGURE 9. **PLANNED NUMBER OF CHILDREN IN RELATION TO LIBERAL–CONSERVATIVE ORIENTATION AND GOVERNMENT–OPPOSITION, IN %**



Source: FES Youth Study Central and Eastern Europe 2021, author's calculation.

The data is presented in accordance with the relevant rounding rules. In some cases original values would not add up to 100% without arbitrary determination, so that original values were kept instead. This explains eventual deviations in the graph.

Finally, to conclude the chapter, it is worth noting that among the V4 countries, young Hungarians plan to have children at the oldest age (28.31) and Poles at the youngest (27.63). It should be emphasised, however, that in terms of young people's hopes in this regard, the similarities are in fact greater than the differences, as the discrepancy between the lowest and the highest value is less than one year. It is important to point out that the expected year of childbearing indicated by young Hungarians is very close to the official data of the Central Statistical Office. In Hungary, women give birth to their first child at an average age of 28.9.³¹ According to our data, the age at which the first children are born, in spite of all political efforts, is unlikely to decrease significantly.

There is no significant difference between young people in Central European countries in terms of the planned date for having their first child. This average age is about 28 years: 15–29-year-old Hungarians plan to have their first child a little later than the average, whilst Poles of the same age a little earlier than the average.

MAIN FINDINGS

- Marriage is not the most popular form of cohabitation among young Hungarians. Even among those over 25, most live in a cohabiting relationship.
- Among the V4 countries, it is most common in Hungary (12 per cent) that a young person lives with their mother and possible sibling(s) in a truncated family, that is, a single-parent household model.
- There is no empirical evidence in the attitudes of young people in V4 countries, including Hungary, of outright revolt or open opposition to the views of their parents, or of conflict-ridden cohabitation. According to the data, coexistence between 15–29-year-olds and their parents is relatively harmonious.
- The source of harmonious coexistence with parents is communication, while this is lacking in parent-child relationships characterised by conflict. Among young people who have a very good relationship with their parents, the proportion of those who make important decisions together is considerably higher than average.
- From the age of about 20, young people in V4 countries gradually develop independent decision-making powers. There is therefore a gap of at least two and generally closer to three or four years between legal adulthood and independent decision-making competence. Hungarian young people are no different from their Central European counterparts in this regard.
- The majority of young people in the V4 countries, including 57 per cent of Hungarians, envision their future as married with children.
- In Hungary, there is an important difference in the family plans of young left-wing and right-wing people. The more right-wing 15–29-year-olds are, the more likely they are to want to get married.
- The more conservative the young Hungarian, the more likely they are to want to have three or more children. Among those with liberal views, however, a higher proportion do not want children.
- There is no significant difference between young people in Central European countries in terms of the planned date for having their first child. This average age is about 28 years: 15–29-year-old Hungarians plan to have their first child a little later than the average, whilst Poles of the same age a little earlier than the average.

8

GENERAL VALUES, ATTITUDES AND PERCEPTIONS

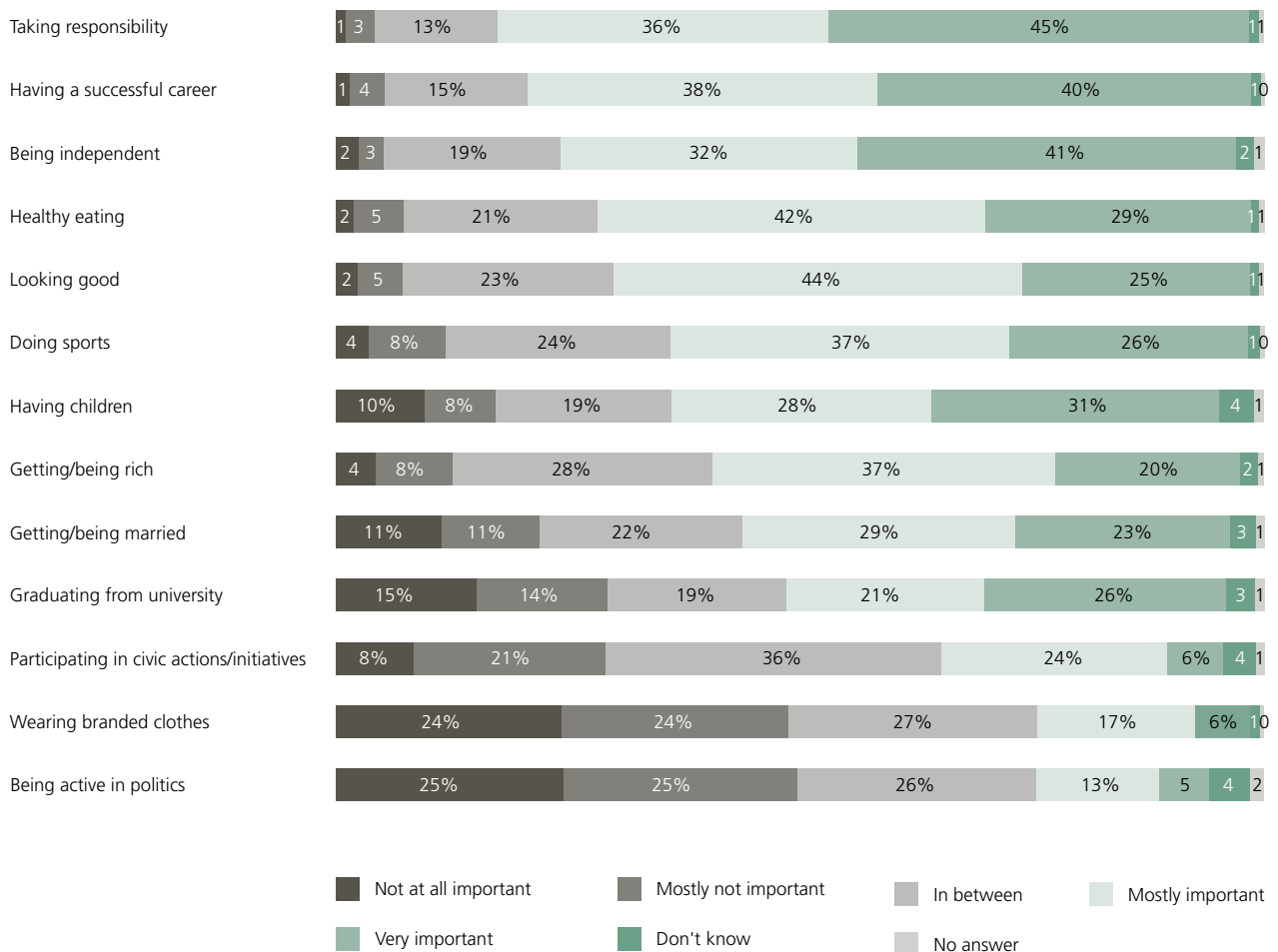
INDIVIDUALISM, HEALTH AWARENESS AND OPTIMISTIC PERSONAL EXPECTATIONS

As the data in Figure 10 shows, the value preferences of young Hungarians are primarily focused on personal empowerment (responsibility, career and independence are at the forefront).

As in the other V4 countries, alongside individual empowerment, health awareness and appearance are also of preeminent importance for young Hungarians.

By contrast, forms of collective action (political and civic activity) and the wearing of brand label clothing are least important to young Hungarians. The most and least important values were the same in the other V4 countries. Individualism and low rates of political activity among young people reflect global trends. According to some studies, young people's disengagement from politics does not stem from their personal value choices but from the fact that they consider the existing political system inadequate (Cammers et al. 2014). This is supported by other studies, based on Eurobarometer data, which show that young people show higher levels of political and civic participation in more mature, well-established democracies (Kitanova 2019). In light of these findings, it is not surprising that public engagement is less important to young people of the region, whereas according to our data, this is accompanied by an emphasis on individual, self-centred goals.

FIGURE 10. IMPORTANT VALUES AMONG YOUNG HUNGARIANS
(HOW MUCH ARE THE FOLLOWING ITEMS IMPORTANT TO YOU?), IN %



Source: FES Youth Study Central and Eastern Europe 2021.

The data is presented in accordance with the relevant rounding rules. In some cases original values would not add up to 100% without arbitrary determination, so that original values were kept instead. This explains eventual deviations in the graph.

One commonality among young people in all V4 countries is that a healthy lifestyle (healthy eating and exercise) is of paramount importance. At the same time, it is noteworthy that one's personal appearance and financial situation are important for the majority of young Hungarians and Poles, while this is true of far fewer young Czechs and Slovaks. Attitudes towards marriage and childbearing are similar across the region, with a majority of young people in all V4 countries considering these life events important. At the same time, university graduation has a subordinate position among the priorities of young Hungarians, and Hungary has the lowest higher education rates in the region, though the relative majority of Hungarian young people (49 per cent) do consider graduation important.

Responsibility and starting a family are more important for women and those over 25.

In terms of perceptions of responsibility and marriage, the difference between women and men was similar to that between 15–18-year-olds and 25–29-year-olds. However, with regard to childbearing, the age gap was significantly larger than the gender gap: whereas having children is, on average, 14 per cent more important for women than for men, those aged 25–29 rate it as 20 per cent more important than do those aged 15–18. In contrast, however, political participation, branded clothing and sports are less important to women than to men. For 25–29-year-olds, university graduation, sports, branded clothing and appearance are all less important than among 15–18-year-olds.

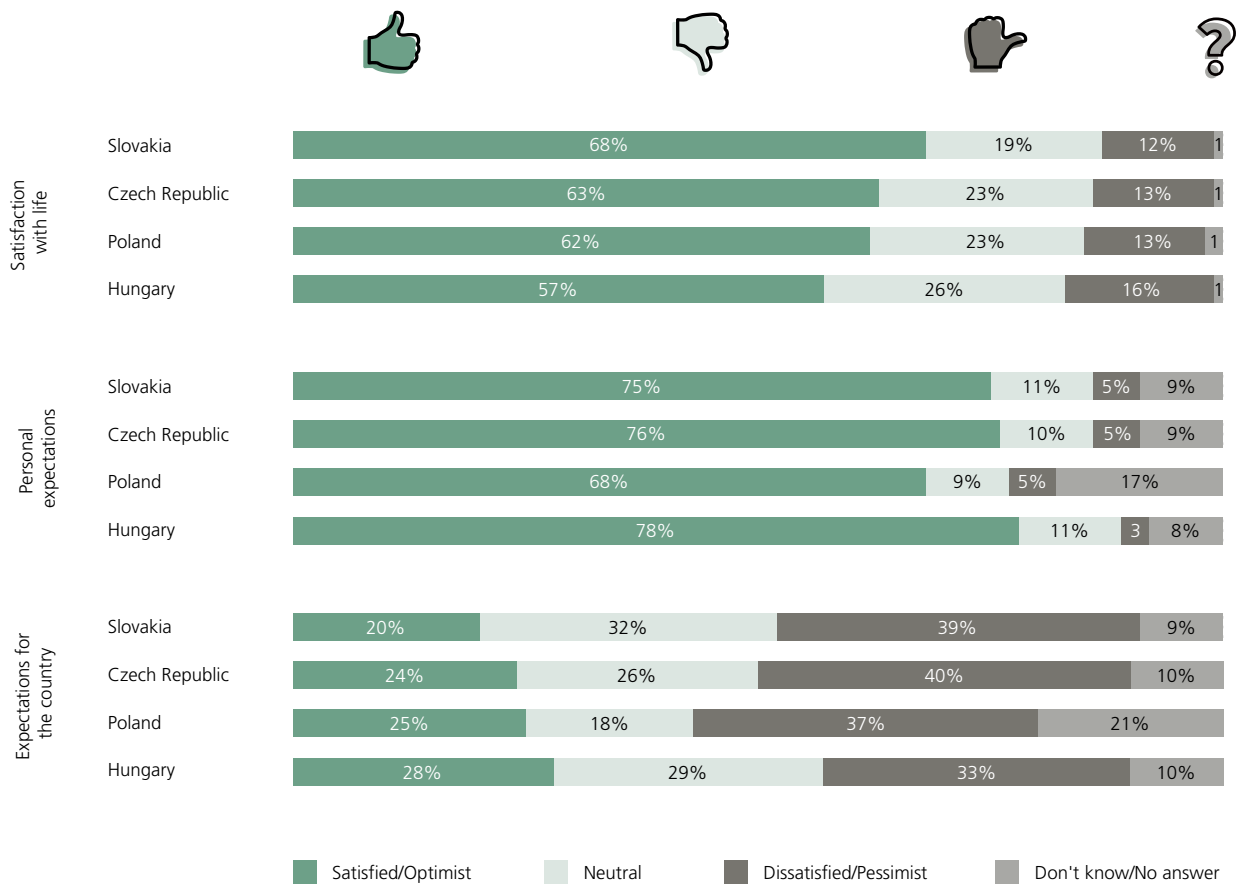
Among young people in V4 countries, Hungarians are least satisfied with their lives yet most optimistic about the future.

Although the majority of young Hungarians are mostly or very satisfied with their lives (57 per cent), this proportion lags behind the other V4 countries (Figure 11). However, four-fifths of young Hungarians are optimistic in terms of personal expectations, which is the highest rate within the V4. It is a regional trend that the proportion of young people optimistic about the future of the country lags significantly behind positive personal expectations. The majority of young Hungarians are pessimistic about the country's future, however, rates of pessimism regarding the nation's future are even higher in the other V4 countries.

The differences between the various age subcategories of young Hungarians are moderate but do surpass the margin of error: personal dissatisfaction and pessimism about the country both increase with age. Those aged 15–18 are more satisfied with their lives (61 per cent) than 25–29-year-olds (54 per cent). They are also more optimistic about the future of the country (33 per cent) than those aged 19–24 or 25–29 (26 per cent–26 per cent). The majority of young Hungarians have similar rates of satisfaction with their family life (62 per cent), their circle of friends (59 per cent) and their education (55 per cent), as with life in general.

According to data from the European Social Survey, it is generally the case in most European countries that supporters of the government are happier than opponents (Patkós–Farkas 2020). The Hungarian data from our research, when broken down along political lines, also supports this conclusion. Among young people who support the government, significantly more are satisfied with their lives (65 per cent) than among opposition supporters (56 per cent) or undecided voters (54 per cent). The difference is somewhat smaller as regards personal expectations, as optimism predominates among all political persuasions (pro-government 82 per cent, opposition 79 per cent, undecided 76 per cent). In contrast, pessimism about the future of Hungarian society is characteristic mainly of young people who support the opposition (43 per cent) or are undecided (31 per cent) but is much less evident among young supporters of the government (17 per cent).

FIGURE 11. LIFE SATISFACTION AND EXPECTATIONS FOR THE FUTURE IN V4 COUNTRIES, IN %



Source: FES Youth Study Central and Eastern Europe 2021.

The data is presented in accordance with the relevant rounding rules. In some cases original values would not add up to 100% without arbitrary determination, so that original values were kept instead. This explains eventual deviations in the graph.

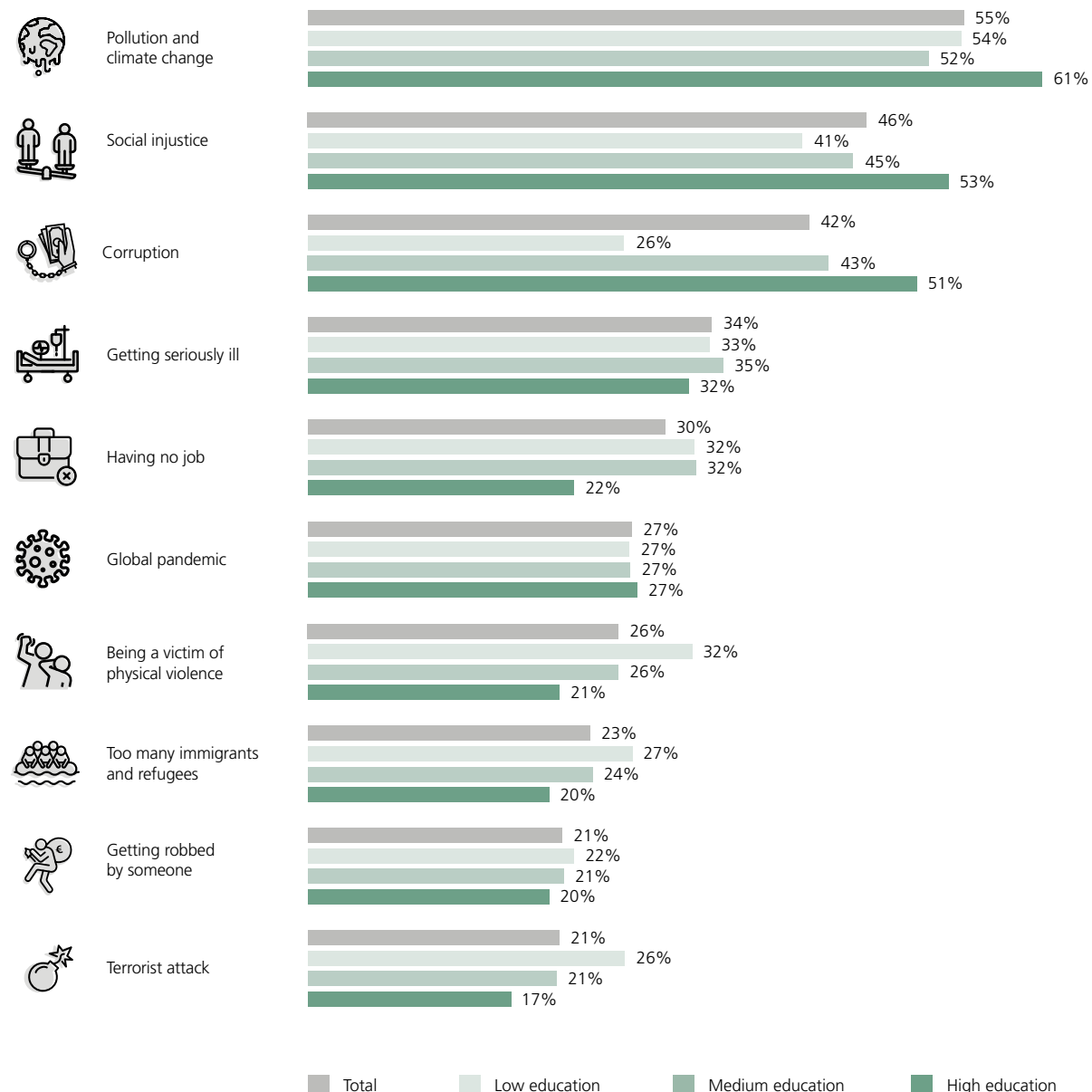
THE FEARS OF YOUNG HUNGARIANS ARE PRE-DOMINANTLY POST-MATERIAL

As in the other countries of the region, climate change is the overriding fear among young people in Hungary (only in Poland has climate change been pushed into second place). Though it is considered a serious threat by a majority in all education categories (Figure 12), this fear is even more prevalent among those with higher levels of education.

Young people with higher levels of education are also more concerned about problems of social justice and corruption. The former was one of the key issues in all V4 countries, but corruption is of concern to significantly more young people in Hungary (12–17 per cent) than in the other V4 countries.

The fears of young Hungarians are predominantly post-material (climate crisis, social injustice, and corruption) and are least afraid of crime, immigration and terrorism.

FIGURE 12. FEARS AMONG YOUNG HUNGARIANS (ISSUES FRIGHTENING HUNGARIAN RESPONDENTS 'A LOT'), IN %



Source: FES Youth Study Central and Eastern Europe 2021.

Any differences in the presentation result from the decimal not being shown.

Among those with lower education levels, somewhat more are worried about unemployment and physical threats, whilst a striking proportion of graduates are worried about climate change, inequality and corruption.

By mid 2021, the public health and economic crisis caused by the pandemic had no more than a moderate impact on the fears of young Hungarians. Only approximately one-third of respondents feared serious illness, pandemic or unemployment, which correlated with results across the region, though significantly more respondents specifically feared serious illness in Poland and Slovakia. At the same time, it is important to note that unemployment is of less concern to young Hungarian graduates. This is in line with the fact that the economic crisis caused by the coronavirus pandemic has had a less severe impact on young Hungarians with high levels of education (Köllő – Reizer 2021, Bíró-Nagy – Szászi 2021).

The issue of immigration dominated the Hungarian political agenda until 2018, when the government, through an intensive anti-migration electoral campaign, decisively turned public opinion against immigration. Among other factors, this was one of the reasons for its success in the 2018 election (Bíró-Nagy 2021). However, the impact of this seems to have diminished significantly by 2021. In all countries in the region, only one-fifth of young people report particular concern about immigration or terrorism. Worries related to other physical threats (violent assault, falling victim to robbery) are also among the least commonly reported in Hungary, as they are in the Czech Republic and Slovakia. At the same time, these fears related to feelings of physical security are more common among young Hungarians with lower levels of education.

STRONG ANTI-ROMA SENTIMENTS BUT MODERATE TOLERANCE OF RELIGIOUS AND SEXUAL MINORITIES

In all the V4 countries, the order of young people's hostility towards different groups is the same. The vast majority of young Hungarians (82 per cent) would be disturbed if drug addicts moved to their neighbourhood (Figure 12). Nearly half (45 per cent) would be unhappy if a Roma family moved into their neighbourhood, which is similar to attitudes among Czechs and Slovaks but twice as high as among Poles.

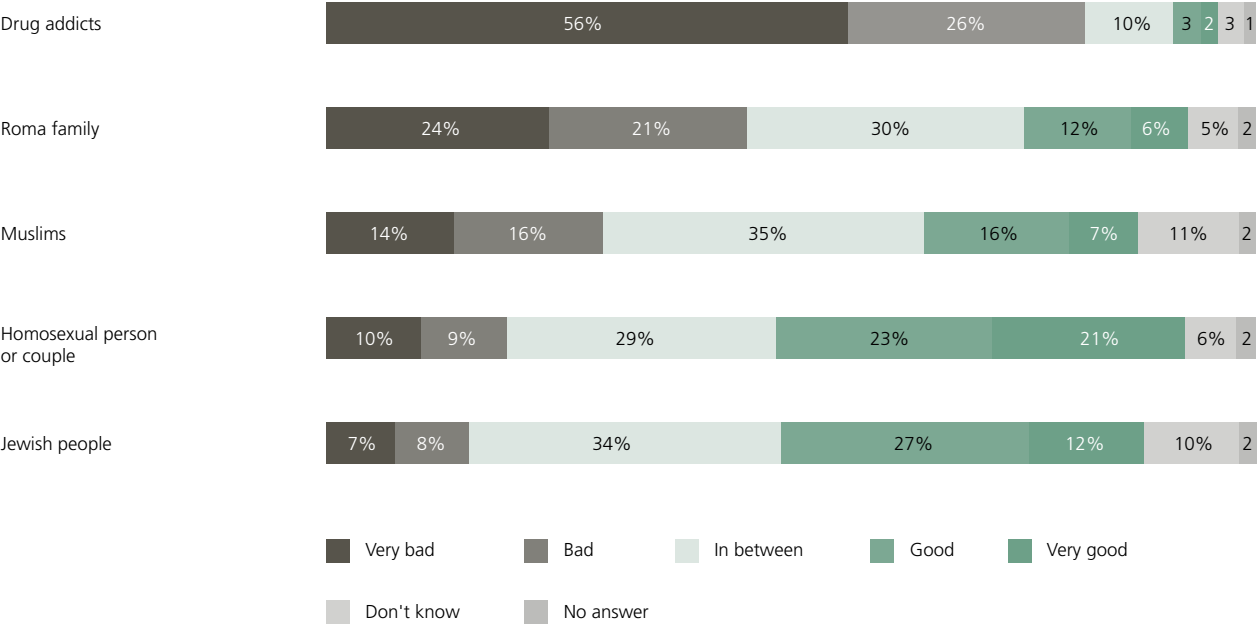
I've been to a couple of gypsy villages already. Now the law is, if you have three children you don't pay tax. They're definitely going to abuse that, I don't even see the point. Here's an example: they got a playground from some grant or other, but two months later the playground equipment is at the scrapyard. I don't get what that's about. There are gypsies and blacks you can trust but for sure not 100 per cent of them.

(Boy, 16, Nyékládháza)

Fewer young Hungarians would be disturbed by a Muslim neighbour than by a Roma family.

Hostility towards Muslims in Hungary is the same as in Slovakia (30 per cent), higher than in Poland (23 per cent) but lower than among young people in the Czech Republic (37 per cent). Young people are least likely to express hostility towards homosexuals and Jews. At the same time, it is striking that of the V4 countries, Hungary has the highest rate who said they would be disturbed by the presence of a gay (19 per cent) or Jewish (15 per cent) neighbour, though levels of hostility towards homosexuals are similar in Slovakia.

FIGURE 13. HOW WOULD YOU FEEL IF THE FOLLOWING FAMILIES OR INDIVIDUALS MOVED INTO YOUR NEIGHBOURHOOD?, IN %



Source: FES Youth Study Central and Eastern Europe 2021.
Any differences in the presentation result from the decimal not being shown.

There are marked differences in hostility between different age subgroups. Those aged 25–29 are most likely to have negative feelings towards Roma (51 per cent), Muslims (34 per cent) and Jews (17 per cent). It is striking, however, that 15–18-year-olds express the greatest hostility towards homosexuals (24 per cent). The middle age group of 19–24 is the most accepting of Muslims.

The most striking pattern in the values of young Hungarians is that women, the opposition and the more prosperous are significantly more accepting of homosexuality, the more prosperous are less tolerant of tax evasion, and opposition supporters are more accepting of abortion

When asked how acceptable different forms of behaviour are, we found that the issues of abortion and homosexuality divide young Hungarians: they are rejected and accepted in roughly equal measure, similarly to the use of contacts when taking care of administrative business. Using contacts in a job search, on the other hand, is more widely accepted, whilst bribery and tax evasion are clearly rejected by the majority of young Hungarians.

The mentality of Hungarians in this regard is unacceptable, when you compare it to the situation elsewhere. Here I’m pretty sure I know quite a few people from my immediate social environment who would be outraged if they saw a gay couple holding hands on the street, though it’s completely natural and unobtrusive. I think we should accept this as with any other couple.

(Girl, 21, Budapest)

A multivariate analysis of the above cases³² shows that among young people in Hungary, women are somewhat more accepting of abortion (0.3 points on a 10-point scale, $p < 0.05$), homosexuality (1.3 points, $p < 0.01$), and more unaccepting of tax evasion (0.6 points, $p < 0.01$). Those with moderate and high levels of education are more likely to reject tax evasion than those with low levels of education (0.4 points, $p < 0.05$). At the same time, those with higher levels of education consider the use of contacts more acceptable when searching for a job (0.6 points, $p < 0.05$). Compared with undecided voters, young

people who support the government are significantly more hostile towards homosexuals (1 point, $p < 0.01$), whereas opposition supporters are more accepting (1.5 points, $p < 0.01$). Opposition supporters are also more accepting of abortion (1.2 points, $p < 0.01$), and the use of contacts both when searching for a job (0.6 points, $p < 0.01$) and for 'taking care of business' (0.3 points, $p < 0.01$).

Compared with those who live in villages, urban residents are more accepting of abortion (0.5 points, $p < 0.05$) and the use of contacts for settling administrative issues (0.4 points, $p < 0.05$). There are also striking differences between wealth categories in terms of values. Compared with the severely deprived, members of both the financially stable and most affluent groups are much more accepting of homosexuality and much more opposed to tax fraud.³³

THE ROLE OF CHURCHES AMONG YOUNG HUNGARIANS IS WEAK

Whereas the role of religion in people's lives increased between 1981 and 2007 in most of the countries surveyed, according to the World Values Survey, this trend was reversed between 2007 and 2019.

A relative majority of Hungarian young people are not religious, and only one in ten attends church regularly.

Four out of ten young Hungarians do not belong to any denomination (40 per cent). Most young Hungarians who are religious profess Catholicism (34 per cent), followed by one of the Protestant denominations (14 per cent). The proportions of Orthodox Christians (2 per cent), Muslims (1 per cent), Jews (0.2 per cent) and other church affiliations (2 per cent) are all very low. However, differences by settlement type are important: the proportion those with no religious affiliation is much higher in cities (45 per cent) and small towns (42 per cent) than among young people in villages (29 per cent).

Nearly half of young Hungarians never or almost never attend church (46 per cent), most attend less than once a month (39 per cent), whereas relatively few attend

religious events once a month or more (11 per cent). The role of religion is much more important in Poland and Slovakia: in these two countries, the proportion of young people attending church at least once a month is three times higher than among Hungarians (30 per cent–30 per cent). However, the role of churches is of even less importance among young Czechs than among young Hungarians: two-thirds (67 per cent) almost never go to church.

Slightly fewer young Hungarians who live in villages never or almost never go to church (41 per cent) than is the case in larger towns and cities (45–53 per cent). Frequency of attendance at religious services declines with age: while 14 per cent of 15–18-year-olds attend church at least once a month, that figure drops to just half that (7 per cent) among those aged 25–29.

MAIN FINDINGS

- As in the other V4 countries, in addition to individual empowerment, health consciousness and appearance are the most important factors for young Hungarians.
- Responsibility and starting a family are more important for women and for those over 25 years of age.
- Among V4 respondents, young Hungarians are least satisfied with their lives yet most optimistic about the future.
- The fears of young Hungarians are predominantly post-material (climate crisis, social injustice and corruption), whereas they are least worried about crime, immigration and terrorism.
- Somewhat more people with low levels of education are concerned about unemployment and physical threats, while a significant number of graduates are worried about climate change, inequality and corruption.
- Fewer Hungarian young people would be disturbed by a Muslim neighbour than by a Roma family.
- The most striking pattern in the values of young Hungarians is that women, opposition supporters and the better-off are significantly more accepting of homosexuality, the better-off are less accepting of tax evasion, and opposition supporters are more accepting of abortion.
- A relative majority of young Hungarians are not religious, and only one in ten attends church regularly.

POLITICAL ATTITUDES AND PARTICIPATION

EVERY FIFTH YOUNG HUNGARIAN IS INTERESTED IN POLITICS

In the decades since the democratic transition of 1989/90, many studies have examined the political disillusionment and apolitical attitudes of young Hungarians and the possible consequences of this for democracy (see Gazsó – Laki 2003; Szabó – Kern 2011, Oross – Szabó 2019). However, the most recent large-scale youth survey conducted in the autumn of 2020 (Magyar Ifjúság Kutatás 2020 or Hungarian Youth Research 2020), indicated a shift: political interest among 15–29-year-olds was beginning to increase slightly, as though the Covid-19 pandemic had pushed young people out of political apathy (Székely et al 2021; Szabó – Oross 2021). That is why it is interesting to examine the results of the present research in comparison with both previous Hungarian results and the other nations of Central Europe.

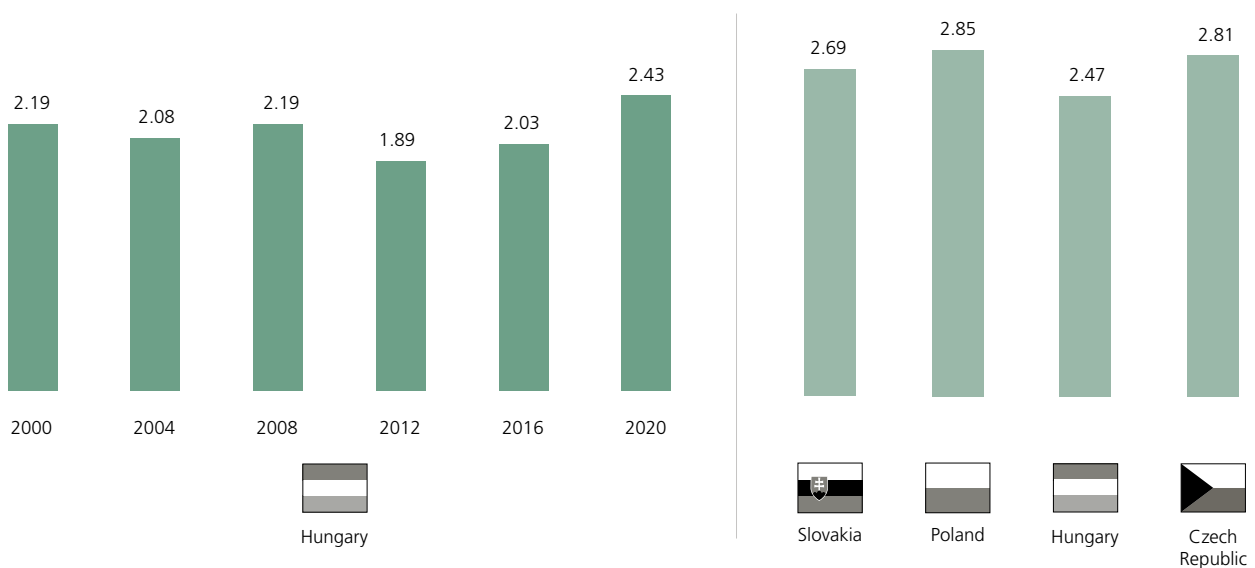
A relative majority of young people in Central European countries – ranging from 36 to 50 per cent – have little or no interest in politics. Of the four countries surveyed, those with the greatest political interest are the Poles,

of whom 36 per cent are not interested (values 1 and 2 on a scale of 1 to 5) compared with 30 per cent who are interested (values 4 and 5). Young Hungarians aged 15–29 are the least interested in politics, as exactly half of them chose values 1 and 2, whereas only one-fifth are interested. Averages of political interest confirm this difference: young Hungarians have an average of 2.47 points, which is lower than the average results of young Slovaks (2.69), Czechs (2.81), and Poles (2.85).

Thus, by comparison with other Central European countries, indications of political interest among young Hungarians appear to show a rather negative result. At the same time, it is worth comparing these results with the data gathered in previous large-scale youth surveys in Hungary. These two studies – almost unique in Europe – which collect personal responses as part of a survey of 8,000 people, and the signs of political interest reported during our 2021 summer survey reveal almost exactly the same results (Figure 14).

Compared with previous results, young Hungarians have become more interested in political affairs in recent years, however, this interest still lags far behind their Central European peers.

FIGURE 14. DEVELOPMENT OF POLITICAL INTEREST BASED ON HUNGARIAN YOUTH RESEARCH AND FES YOUTH STUDIES (HOW INTERESTED ARE YOU IN POLITICS?) (AVERAGES ON A SCALE OF 1 TO 5)



Sources 2000–2020: Szabó – Oross 2021; Hungary – Slovakia: FES Youth Study Central and Eastern Europe 2021.

Levels of political interest are higher among men (2.68) than women (2.25), and significantly higher among those living in the capital than in the rest of the country (2.77). However, no such categorical statement can be made with regard to the categories of age or subjective appraisal of one's financial situation. At the same time, and in line with international research findings, we do find significant differences in levels of interest among Hungarians when they are categorised according to Bourdieu's concept of cultural capital (mother's highest educational qualification, own highest educational qualification). The higher one's mother's level of education and the more years of schooling one has completed, the greater one's level of political interest is likely to be.³⁴

ONLY ONE-SIXTH OF 15–29-YEAR-OLDS OFTEN TALK TO THEIR PARENTS OR ACQUAINTANCES ABOUT POLITICS

Various youth sociological studies conducted in recent years have shown that communication about politics within the family is quite sporadic in Hungary (Oross – Szabó 2019a; Oross – Szabó 2019b). If parents and their children do talk about political issues, these usually take the form of interactions within negative contexts, whereas politics itself is chiefly associated with exceptionally negative narratives, including lying and corruption (Szabó – Oross 2018, Szabó 2019). The Hungarian Youth Research 2020 survey also recorded some changes in this area, including a slight increase in discussions on political topics (Székely et al 2021).

Some 16 per cent of Hungarians aged 15–29 talk often or very often to their parents or direct acquaintances about political issues. By contrast, 15 per cent never talk about such topics and a further 35 per cent do so only rarely.

Overall, on the five-point scale, the average political conversation of Hungarian young people stands at 2.52 points, which is the lowest among the V4 countries. Hungary does not lag behind in terms of those who frequently

discuss politics but rather in the high proportion of people who either never or only seldom talk about such topics compared with rates among young people in the Czech Republic, Poland and Slovakia.

Mostly my parents. It's weird, we're long past that age when mum and dad are always right, and I know grown-ups can be wrong, too. But at the same time, there does come a point where you start to wonder who's really right, and you feel a kind of doubt. Reality is completely different to what we see in the media and what is shared with us, the public because that's an important part of it, too. I don't know how big the iceberg is, and how much of it lies underneath the surface. If I knew about everything, I could give you a vote and put my name to it. But I feel like I'm not 100 per cent initiated yet, I think I can be knowledgeable, can make bad decisions. Basically, I feel like I'm not ready to vote.

(Girl, 17, Cserkút)

My parents, of course. Reading an article, discussing it with our friends, sharing each other's thoughts helps a lot in this. Some people don't agree with this or that, so we always get something out of it.

(Boy, 17, Budapest)

Yes, it's about how you grew up, and what you saw at home from your parents. My dad was a miner, and I remember when they were still working the mine in Komló. We lived completely different then. But I'm still trying to live by what I saw from them.

(Girl, 29, Mindszentgodisa)

A very strong ($r=0.699$) correlation can be observed between the level of political interest and the frequency of political conversations. That is, high levels of interest are generally accompanied by frequent conversations on the topic, low levels of interest with infrequent political discussions. This correlation can be found in all Central European countries but is most pronounced in Hungary (and lowest, in relative terms, in Poland $r=0.532$).

ON POLITICAL ISSUES, YOUNG HUNGARIANS TAKE A CONFORMIST POSITION

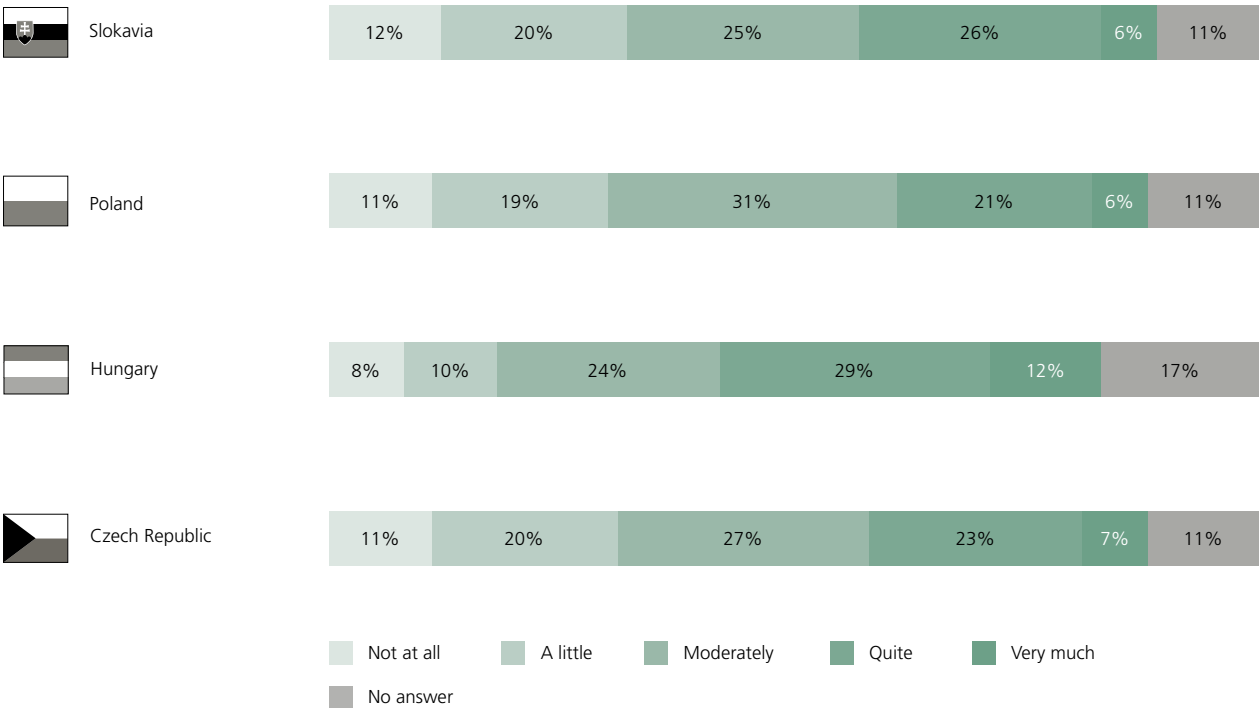
Research results from the past 20 years show that young Hungarians have consistently professed politically conformist views, and the signs of generational rebellion could be detected only within narrow sub-strata (Székely et al 2021). Our research confirms these findings.

Some 12 per cent of young Hungarians strongly agree with their parents, and a further 29 per cent share broadly the same political views. Young Hungarians agree with their parents to the greatest extent among the V4 countries.

Some 8 per cent of Hungarians aged 15-29 reported a fundamental disagreement with their parents on political issues, whilst 10 per cent somewhat disagreed with them. Compared with their Czech, Polish and Slovak peers, Hungary shows the lowest rates of nonconformity (Figure 15). Still, perhaps the most interesting statistic is how many more Hungarian young people do not know their parents' political views and beliefs (17 per cent) than young people in other countries (11-11 per cent). This is obviously related to lower political interest and lower levels of political communication.

Women, the youngest age groups, those who live in an urban environment, those who judge their financial situation more favourably, and young Hungarians with higher levels of cultural capital all show an increased tendency to agree with their parents on political issues.

FIGURE 15. POLITICAL CONFORMITY AMONG YOUNG PEOPLE IN THE V4 COUNTRIES
(TO WHAT EXTENT ARE YOUR POLICY VIEWS AND BELIEFS IN LINE WITH YOUR PARENTS' VIEWS?)
(DISTRIBUTIONS AND AVERAGES ON A SCALE OF 1 TO 5), IN %



Source: FES Youth Study Central and Eastern Europe 2021.
The data is presented in accordance with the relevant rounding rules. In some cases original values would not add up to 100% without arbitrary determination, so that original values were kept instead. This explains eventual deviations in the graph.

YOUNG HUNGARIANS ARE LEAST LIKELY TO BELIEVE THAT THEIR INTERESTS ARE REPRESENTED IN POLITICAL LIFE

The literature on the apolitical nature of young Hungarians draws attention not only to the negative connotations attached to politics but also to the fact that the exclusionary behaviour of the political elite and the lack of avenues for young people to engage politically (Oross 2013) may also be contributory factors. If they feel that their interests are left unrepresented and do not see anyone standing up for the values of the young, they will obviously take little interest in public issues. This, however, is a vicious circle, because the more apolitical they are, the less 'interest' and importance they will have for those in the political world. Perceiving this, meanwhile, young people are likely simply to withdraw still further from this sphere.

According to the results of our survey, an absolute majority of young Hungarians in the sample (51 per cent) feel that their interests are not represented in national politics, and only 14 per cent have the opposite opinion.

Comparing the opinions of Central European contemporaries with this data, it appears that in no country are respondents particularly positive about their political representation. In each country, around 1–2 per cent feel that the interests of young people are represented very well in politics, yet in none of the other countries are opinions as negative as among Hungarians. The opinions of young Czechs aged 15–29 are the least negative (2.52 points on a scale of 1–5) and, as indicated, the opinions of the Hungarians are the most negative (2.38 average points).

I think there's no point having a mass movement if there's a small counter-mass supported by big money. I think money is what really speaks here, in everything. ... I think politics could be 50 per cent about taking into account the views of the young. Maybe not 100 per cent, and I mean over 18s but at least 50 per cent.

(Boy, 16, Nyékládháza)

Assessments of representation in Hungary depend on ideological attitudes and especially on political affiliation. The more right-wing and/or conservative respondents are, and above all, the more they support the governing party, the more likely they are to have a favourable view of the representation of young people's interests in politics.³⁵ The data also indicates that extreme political polarisation processes in Hungary are beginning to take hold at an early age, and show a clear pattern: a young Fidesz supporter who is right-wing or conservative simply sees a different world to the one seen by opposition supporters, who tend to be more liberal and more left-wing in their views.

WITHIN THE V4 REGION, YOUNG HUNGARIANS REPORT THE LOWEST WILLINGNESS TO VOTE

Our research also examined different forms of political activity that require individual involvement and resources. Electoral activity (past and upcoming elections), seeking political office, and various forms of democratic civic participation, from the signing of a petition through participation in the work of parties and NGOs, to taking part in demonstrations, which are given different names by different authors (Theocharis -van Deth, 2017).

Among young Hungarians, 44 per cent cast their vote in the previous parliamentary election.³⁶ Some 18 per cent indicated they could have voted but did not, whereas 31 per cent did not then have the right to vote because they were underage. Of those aged 18 or over in 2018 – that is, those who had the right to vote in the last election – 62 per cent indicated that they had done so. However, it is worth noting that with the passage of three years, significant retrospective distortion is possible.

Comparing the turnout of young people in the V4 countries in the previous election is difficult to justify methodologically, as the elections were based on different arguments (from 2021 summer). Elections were held in Slovakia in 2020, in Poland in 2019 and in the Czech Republic in 2017. If we examine the responses of young people, we find that the highest rate of participation was among the Slovaks (60 per cent) and the lowest among the Czechs (41 per cent).

It may be both more interesting and more methodologically justified, however, to examine willingness to take part in future elections.

Young Slovaks express the greatest willingness to participate in a hypothetical parliamentary election (overall: 81 per cent), whilst Hungarians are least willing (overall: 71 per cent).

The reason for this is principally that of the four countries, Hungary has the highest proportion of those who expressly decline to vote (18 per cent), but there are also higher rates of indecision than among their peers in other V4 countries.

Among young Hungarians, the willingness to participate is lower than average among those attending secondary (and possibly primary) education institutions, as well as among those who have already left education, those aged 19–24, and the children of mothers with only eight years of primary education. Although, with the exception of Poland, in the other V4 countries there is a statistically significant difference between the mother's increasing educational attainment and an increased willingness to vote, in Hungary this variable is especially pronounced, given the very low rates of participation among those with low levels of education and high rates among those with a university degree.

Traditional forms of political participation (Theocharis-van Deth, 2017) include seeking a political function. The probability of this is low in all countries, and there is little difference between responses. Currently, 1 per cent of Hungarian young people have some form of political function, and another 9 per cent would be happy to accept such an opportunity, whilst one-third categorically reject the possibility and a further quarter reject it less vehemently. There is a clear gender gap in the acceptance and rejection of political roles in all four countries studied. This is because men are much more open to political functions than female respondents. In Hungary, 44 per cent of women and 27 per cent of men who answered the question indicated that they would not take on any political role whatsoever, whereas 7 per cent and 12 per cent, respectively, indicated a hypothetical willingness.

LEVELS OF POLITICAL ACTIVITY AMONG YOUNG HUNGARIANS ARE SIGNIFICANTLY LOWER THAN AMONG THEIR V4 PEERS

As already mentioned, a number of articles have been written in recent years about the apolitical, apathetic and passive political character of young Hungarians. These analyses, based on empirical data, have consistently indicated that young Hungarians are among the least politically active in Europe and that this characteristic has not altered substantially over time.

Our research examined participation and intention to participate in six forms of democratic activity.³⁷ These are as follows:

- signing a letter of protest, political statement/ supporting an online petition (petitions);
- participating in a demonstration (demonstrations);
- volunteering or participating in the activities of non-governmental organisations, associations, foundations (civil activism);
- active involvement in a political party or other political organization (party work);
- refusing to buy a product or service for political or environmental reasons (boycott);
- participating in an online policy initiative/group (online activity).

As a result of the pandemic, from early 2020, it was almost impossible to organise street demonstrations³⁸ or even collect signatures, so this study did not restrict the time-frame to the otherwise usual 'in the last 12 months'.

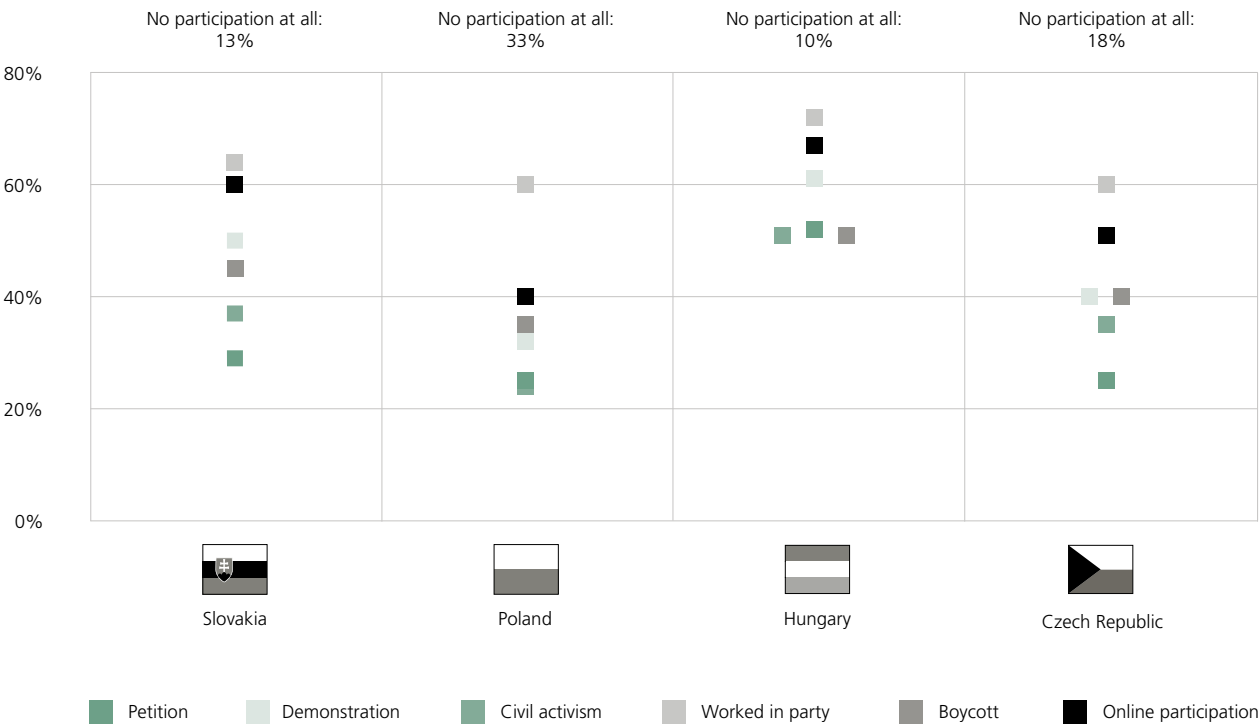
Whatever form of participation we examine, our data clearly indicates that political participation and intention to participate among Hungarian 15–29-year-olds lags far behind that of their peers in the other V4 countries.

Some 26 per cent of young Hungarians indicated that they had signed a petition, and another 13 per cent said that although they had not yet signed a political petition, they might do so in the future. Some 13 per cent had attended a demonstration, and a further 19 per cent said they planned to do something of that nature in the future. About one-fifth indicated activity in a non-governmental organisation, and about the same number would be willing to do such work in the future. 6 per cent had assisted in the work of a political party but only 6 per cent wished to do so in the future. Around 23 per cent had boycotted a product for a political or environmental reason, and the second-highest proportion (17 per cent) would consider

doing so in the future. Finally, 11 per cent participated in some form of online policy initiative, and another 14 per cent might do so in the future.

It is worth putting this data into context. There is no form of political activity in which rates of actual and potential participation would not be lowest among young Hungarians. This is shown in Figure 15, which also indicates that, if we add up all forms of participation, one-third of Hungarians aged 15–29 were not engaged in any form of political activity, whereas in other countries, rates of political passivity vary between 10 and 18 per cent.

FIGURE 16. LACK OF POLITICAL PARTICIPATION AMONG YOUNG PEOPLE IN V4 COUNTRIES (THERE ARE DIFFERENT WAYS TO GET INVOLVED IN POLITICS. HAVE YOU DONE OR WOULD YOU DO ANY OF THE FOLLOWING ACTIVITIES?) (DISTRIBUTION OF ‘NOT INVOLVED’ CATEGORY), IN %



Source: FES Youth Study Central and Eastern Europe 2021.
Any differences in the presentation result from the decimal not being shown.

INSTITUTIONAL TRUST AND ASSESSMENT OF DEMOCRACY

Institutional trust is seen by many as one of the cornerstones of effective government. According to European data, higher levels of institutional trust are associated with higher interpersonal trust at the micro level and higher economic performance at the macro level, but levels of trust are lower and more volatile in the ‘fresh democracies’ of Central and Eastern Europe (Boda – Medve-Bálint 2012).

Among young Hungarians, most trust the authorities (44 per cent and 43 per cent) and the European Union (42 per cent). Political institutions and the media are trusted least (below 20 per cent). One-third of young Hungarians trust NATO, the courts, NGOs, and local governments, whilst one quarter trust trade unions and a fifth trust religious institutions.

The trust ranking is similar in other countries of the region. In the other V4 countries, too, the army is the most trusted institution, whereas the police are also generally regarded as trustworthy (third in the Czech Republic and Slovakia, and fifth in Poland). Another similarity is that there too international organisations are among the most trusted institutions. NATO ranks third in the Czech Republic and Poland, and fourth in Slovakia, whilst the EU ranks second in Slovakia and Poland and fifth in the Czech Republic. In the other countries of the region, political institutions are likewise generally at the bottom of the list. Overall, young Hungarians have the highest average level of overall institutional trust, followed by the Czechs, whereas young Slovaks and Poles have the lowest.

Young Hungarians have most trust in the security services and the EU, the least in political institutions and the media.

We also examined the correlations between young Hungarians’ levels of trust in different institutions. Based on this, three groups were clearly outlined. Confidence in political institutions (national parliament, national government, political parties) were generally correlated. Levels of confidence in the judiciary and the security services (police, military) were likewise strongly correlated. There was also a strong correlation between trust in different international organizations (EU, NATO).

According to research examining the level of trust among Hungarians, there are more members of the ‘trust elite’ (who have a higher level of interpersonal and institutional trust) among more social people (more active in social life, more personal contacts), those who are more highly educated, and those who are wealthier and permanently employed (Grünhut-Bodor 2015). Among other things, the effect of these factors on trust was also examined in our study. The effect of various factors on the confidence level of young Hungarians was analysed using multivariate models.³⁹ To do this, we created a confidence index (ranging from 1 to 5), which is a simple average of 13 questions measuring institutional trust.

Levels of trust are significantly higher among supporters of the governing party than among undecided voters. Levels of trust among opposition supporters do not differ significantly from those among undecided voters. All other wealth groups have higher levels of trust than the severely deprived. Only those with fixed-term contracts have significantly higher levels of trust than the unemployed. Respondents who attend church also have higher levels of trust than those who do not attend religious services. However, it contradicts the above study that, based on our results, those with higher levels of education have a lower level of trust than those with lower levels of education.

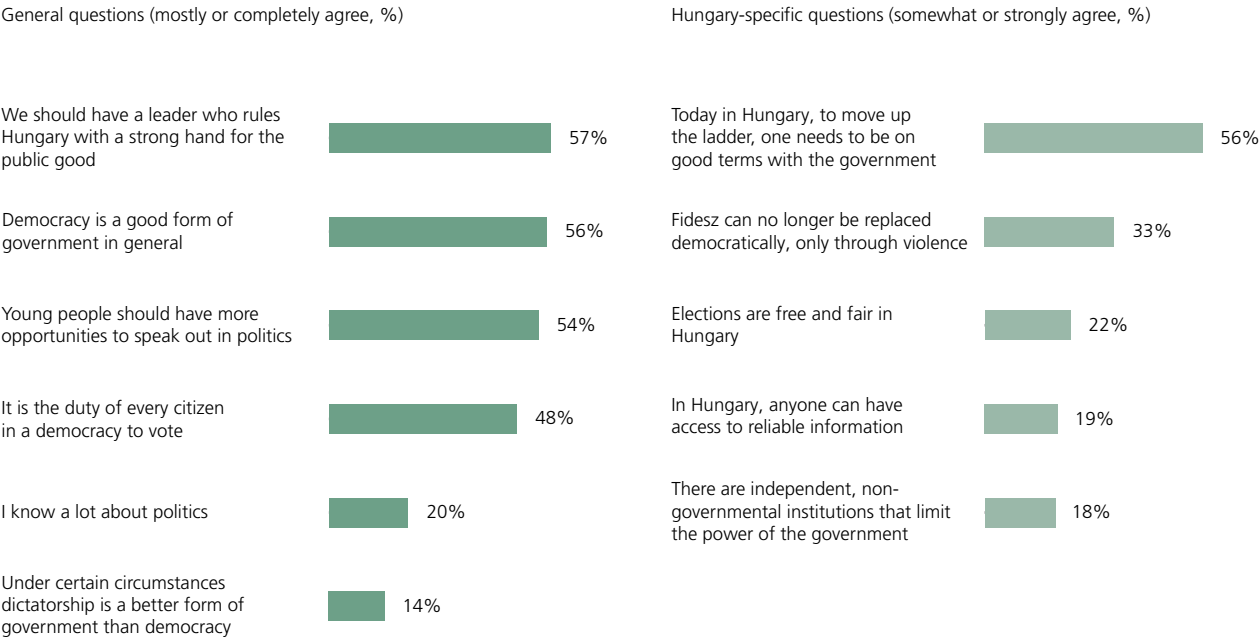
Levels of institutional trust among young Hungarians are lowest among the severely deprived and the highly educated. On the other hand, young people who support the government, who attend church, and who have temporary employment contracts have the highest levels of institutional trust.

According to a majority of young Hungarians (57 per cent), the country needs a strong leader. This is a remarkably high proportion, given that in the other countries of the region only one-third of young people (29–35 per cent) feel the same. At the same time, a majority of young Hungarians think that democracy is a good form of government (56 per cent) and that young people need more say in politics (54 per cent). Democracy is also positively assessed by the majority in the other V4 countries (53–65 per cent), yet a slightly larger proportion in the other V4 countries demand that young people should have a voice in politics than is the case among young Hungarians (63–70 per cent).

Nearly half of young people (48 per cent) believe it is a civic duty to vote. This is a median value in the region – only in Poland does a sizeable majority (63 per cent) feel that voting is a civic duty. It is important to emphasise, however, that only one-fifth of young Hungarians consider themselves politically informed, which is similar to rates in other countries (18–25 per cent). However, there are few young people in Hungary (14 per cent) or in the other V4 countries (16–21 per cent) who believe that dictatorship might be better than democracy (Figure 17).

The Hungary-specific questions in our research show that there is significant dissatisfaction and disillusionment with the current state of governance and democracy. A majority of respondents (56 per cent) believe that one needs good contacts with the government to succeed in Hungary. According to one-third of young Hungarians (33 per cent), Fidesz can only be removed from power by force. Only one in five young people think that elections are free and fair in Hungary (22 per cent), that reliable information is available to the public (19 per cent), and that the system of checks and balances works (18 per cent).

FIGURE 17. ASSESSING THE CONCEPT OF DEMOCRACY AND ITS CURRENT STATE IN HUNGARY



Source: FES Youth Study Central and Eastern Europe 2021.

MANY CONSIDER MATERIAL CONDITIONS, CORRUPTION, AND CLIMATE CHANGE TO BE THREATS

The problem map among young Hungarians is dominated by the issues of low wages and pensions: four in ten named these among the three most important long-term challenges (Figure 18). The picture then begins to fragment: poverty and corruption were each singled out by

29 per cent. Similarly, many young people are concerned about the poor quality of public services, including the education and health systems.

Most young Hungarians consider low wages and pensions to be the biggest problems of the next decade. In addition to other material issues (poverty, quality of public services, workforce emigration and unemployment), corruption and climate change are also seen by many as major problems. However, the standard topics of debate between the Hungarian opposition and government are at the bottom of the list.

FIGURE 18. THE MOST IMPORTANT CHALLENGES OF THE NEXT DECADE ACCORDING TO YOUNG HUNGARIANS (WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING DO YOU THINK WILL BE THE BIGGEST ISSUES FACING YOUR COUNTRY IN THE NEXT DECADE?), IN %



Source: FES Youth Study Central and Eastern Europe 2021.

The FES and Policy Solutions study from March 2021 shows a similar picture for the whole of Hungarian society, although the question asked was not the same as in our study (Bíró-Nagy – Laki – Szászi 2021).⁴⁰ According to the survey cited, Hungarians consider the high cost of living, low salaries and low standard of health care to be the country's most pressing problems. In other words, young people's perception of the problems, as among Hungarian society as a whole, is dominated by material issues, with the difference that, based on the present research, issues of corruption, emigration and climate change are more pressing for young people.

The topic of climate change is of more concern to young people in the United States and several European countries, though the impact of age is significantly influenced by how future-oriented people are (Geiger-Velez, 2021). In Hungary, young people under the age of 30 are almost exclusively the driving force behind political activism on this issue (Mikecz 2021).⁴¹ Despite this, one quarter of respondents listed climate change as among the three most important problems (it was fifth place overall on the list of problems). This is also a relatively low-rate compared with other V4 countries. Climate change is the most frequently cited issue in the Czech Republic (38 per cent), the second most (34 per cent) in Slovakia and third most (29 per cent) in Poland.

Young Hungarians cited work-related issues as a major threat to the country in a similar proportion to climate change: these include the emigration of skilled labour (24 per cent) and the problem of unemployment (23 per cent). With the exception of corruption, the standard topics of debate between the Hungarian opposition and the ruling party were cited by few as being among the defining problems of the next ten years. Inequality, which is a particularly important issue for the left, was considered one of the most important problems by just 16 per cent, whereas only 12 per cent cited the weakening of democracy in Hungary, which is the key driver of the opposition coalition. Immigration was mentioned by only 12 per cent and terrorism by only 5 per cent, though both young people and Hungarian society as a whole decisively reject immigration.

The positive worldview communicated by the Hungarian governing parties is based on the preservation of the country's national and Christian values and the concept of Christian democracy (Coakley 2021).

However, these are not important topics for young people, and only one in twenty cited a possible loss of national identity and the weakening of Christian and traditional values as being among the main problems. As yet, very few young people appear to consider the Fourth Industrial Revolution to be a serious threat: automation and the robotisation of workplaces were likewise listed as among the most pressing problems by only 5 per cent of respondents.

YOUNG PEOPLE WANT GREATER REDISTRIBUTION WITHOUT INCREASING THE ECONOMIC ROLE OF THE STATE

Among various possible redistributive policies, the development of the social safety net has the highest support in all V4 countries. The position with which the largely proportion of young people in all four countries agreed was that the government should take greater responsibility for ensuring that everyone is adequately cared for. In both Hungary and Slovakia 72 per cent agreed, whereas that was true of 67 per cent in Poland, but just 51 per cent in the Czech Republic. A similar proportion of young Hungarians agreed that inequalities should be reduced (70 per cent), while in other countries far fewer agreed (17–32 per cent).

Regarding an increased role for the state in the economy, however, young people in the region are much more sceptical. Only one-fifth of Hungarian young people think it would be a good idea to increase government ownership of businesses and industries. Levels of support for this are similar in the Czech Republic and Poland (22 per cent and 17 per cent, respectively), whereas in Slovakia a significant number are in favour of increasing public ownership (36 per cent). Overall, the data show that young people expect a lot from the state yet are much less confident in its ability to meet their expectations.

The vast majority of young Hungarians support a welfare state (72 per cent) and a reduction in inequality (70 per cent). However, only one-fifth of young people would approve increased state ownership of economic assets.

By regional standards, the concept of a universal basic income is supported by a very large number of young people in Hungary. Nearly half of Hungarian young people (47 per cent) agree with the introduction of an unconditional guaranteed income, and only one-fifth reject the idea (22 per cent), whilst another fifth (21 per cent) are neutral towards it. In contrast, a relative majority of young people in the other V4 countries reject a universal basic income.

Among the V4 countries, the popularity of universal basic income is exceptionally high in Hungary: half of young people support (47 per cent) and only a fifth oppose (22 per cent) its introduction.

These results are consistent with previous research, according to which a majority in Hungary support universal basic income (73 per cent) and agree (82 per cent) that the state has a responsibility to reduce inequality (Bíró-Nagy - Laki - Szászi 2020). Compared with previous research, the lower support for basic income is not thought to show a trend related to age but is due rather to methodological differences⁴² (different wording of the question), as the cited research found a large majority supportive of basic income among all age groups.

YOUNG HUNGARIANS TEND TO BE CENTRIST, LIBERAL AND MODERATE

In our study, young Hungarians could place themselves on three ideological axes or 'thermometers': left-right, liberal-conservative, and moderate-radical on a 1–10 nonverbal scale. Whereas the first of these was surveyed in each of the V4 countries, and is thus comparable, the latter two ideological thermometers were presented only to young Hungarians. To better place the ideological affiliation of young Hungarians, we supplemented the classical ideological scales with a fourth question, regarding the acceptance of individual political values (labels).

Young Hungarians do not stand out from their peers in the other V4 countries on a left-to-right scale. In fact, young people aged 15–29 in the V4 countries show more similarities than differences when it comes to left-right value orientation. A relative majority of young people in Central Europe put themselves in the middle, choosing categories

5 or 6. With the exception of Poland, 15–18 per cent place themselves on the left side of the scale (1–4), while about 18–25 per cent place themselves on the right (scale values 7–10) (averages on a scale of 1–10, the Czech Republic: 5.71; Hungary: 5.45 and Slovakia: 5.41).⁴³ In the case of Polish 15–29-year-olds, the distribution is slightly different, as one-third place themselves on the left, 29 per cent in the centre, and one-fifth on the right (average on a scale of 1 to 10 4.98).

The left and right orientations of Hungarian young people are essentially the same, at 17 per cent and 18 per cent, respectively, but more than a quarter cannot place themselves at any point on the thermometer.

Among the various Hungarian youth groups, 19–24-year-olds, women, and those living in an urban, metropolitan environment are more left-wing than the average. It is worth noting that there is a statistically significant difference in ideological affiliation between supporters of the Fidesz-KDNP government and supporters of the opposition parties.

Fidesz supporters are much more right-wing (6.18 average points) than opposition supporters (5.19), and this ideological divide is also clearly evident on the liberal-conservative axis (6.03 points vs. 4.41 points).

As already mentioned, the other two ideological scales were not presented to 15–29-year-olds in the other V4 countries, and so only Hungarian responses can be examined. On both the liberal-conservative and moderate-radical axes, 70 per cent of young people were able to position themselves, which is slightly lower than on the left-right scale (74 per cent). In this three-level ideological space, young Hungarians can be described as tending towards the liberal, moderate and centrist positions. A quarter are liberal (1–4), three-tenths are in the middle, and one-seventh are conservative (7–10) with an average of 4.98 points on the scale. On the moderate-radical axis, one-fifth lean towards moderate, 36 per cent are in the middle, and 12 per cent describe themselves as more radical, with an average of 4.97 points on the scale.

Those aged 18 and under, women, those living in an urban environment, and supporters of opposition parties are all more liberal than average. Because a left-wing orientation

was also prominent in similar youth groups, it is worth noting that there is a statistically significant, relatively close correlation between the left–right and liberal–conservative scales ($r=0.422^{**}$). Thus, the left is mostly liberal in Hungary, whilst the right is largely conservative. There is not such a close correlation between the moderate–radical scale and either the left–right or liberal–conservative scales.

HUNGARIAN IDEOLOGICAL VALUES ARE HIGHLY FRAGMENTED, AND LIBERAL IS THE MOST WIDELY ACCEPTED VALUE LABEL

Finally, it is worth examining the acceptance and placement of political value labels in the ideological space. We listed 10 value labels from which respondents had to select the one that best reflected their political beliefs.

The label with the relatively ‘highest’ rate of acceptance is ‘liberalism’, which 17 per cent of young Hungarians felt most closely aligned with. The second most commonly chosen value label was green/environmentalist, which was chosen by every tenth 15–29-year-old.

However, it is clear that even the most widely accepted value label is by no means dominant, and it is more accurate to speak of the break-up and fragmentation of young Hungarians in terms of values.

It is also worth highlighting ‘order and stability’ (chosen by 9 per cent) and ‘pro-Europe, Western-oriented politics’, which was chosen by 7 per cent. All other value labels were selected by 3–5 per cent of respondents as the most accurate expression of their views (except for Social Democrat, which was chosen by 1 per cent, so it was combined with the value label ‘left-wing’). Approximately one-third of respondents were either unable or unwilling to choose one of the value labels.

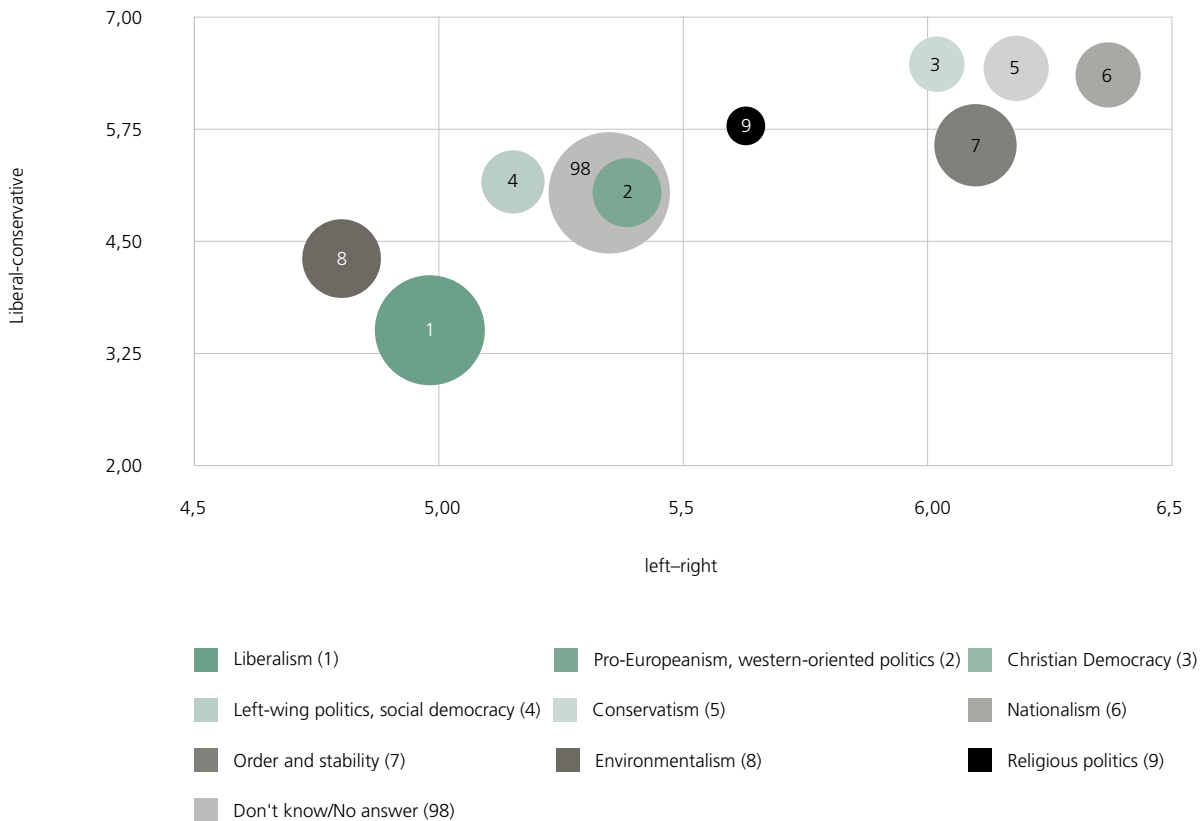
In Figure 19, we placed these value tags onto the left–right and liberal–conservative ideological axes. The X axis shows left–right, the Y axis liberal–conservative, and the size of each sphere is proportional to the number who chose that value tag (the larger the sphere, the more popular the tag). It is clear that those who are uncertain (value 98) and those who accept the pro-Europe label are in the middle. There are three labels below them and to the left, and five labels up from them and to the right.

There is clearly a convergence between four value labels on the right, four in the middle, and two on the left. Clearly “proponent of order and stability” (7), as a right-wing and more conservative label, correlates with Christian Democrat (3), which is otherwise relatively small, as well as conservatism (5) and nationalism (6), which is the political value farthest to the right.

Among the labels in the centre, it is worth highlighting religious believer (9) and left-wing/social democrat (4), the latter of which is very close to the thinking of the ‘average’ young Hungarian. In comparison, green/environmentalist (8) and especially liberal (1) are closer to each other yet are also significantly more left-wing and, of course, more liberal value labels than those in the centre.

Finally, examining the value preferences based on the government party-opposition affiliation that divides young Hungarians, it turns out that these two strata are almost completely complementary. One is strong where the other is weak and vice versa, but it also appears that there is no dominant (more than 50 per cent) value label in any political group. Some 15 per cent of government supporters are in favour of order and stability, 13 per cent are Christian Democrats, 11 per cent are conservative, and 10 per cent are nationalists. By contrast, a quarter of opposition supporters see the liberal value label as the one most descriptive of their political beliefs, with a further 12 per cent describing themselves as green/environmentalist, 11 per cent as pro-European, and 10 per cent as left-wing. Thus it is clear that supporters of the government tend to describe their political views using right-wing concepts, whilst supporters of the opposition tend rather to endorse left-wing/liberal values.

FIGURE 19. ACCEPTANCE OF VALUE LABELS AMONG YOUNG HUNGARIANS
(THE FOLLOWING ARE POLITICAL BELIEFS. PLEASE CHOOSE THE TERM MOST REFLECTIVE
OF YOUR POLITICAL BELIEFS) (%)



Source: FES Youth Study Central and Eastern Europe 2021.

YOUNG HUNGARIANS HAVE BOTH A STRONG NATIONAL AND A STRONG EUROPEAN IDENTITY

Our study examined the territorial identity patterns of young people in Central European countries using a separate question. The aim was to find out precisely to what degree they felt attached to their own country, as well as how European they felt, and how much they identified as citizens of a given settlement.

In the minds of young Hungarians, consciousness of Hungarianness and the image of being a European citizen fit together well, perhaps even the best

among the four nations. It can also be seen from the data that global, national and local identities differ significantly in type and magnitude, but that narrow nationalist thinking by no means characterises the identity of 15–29-year-olds in Central Europe.

Among the young people of the V4 countries, Czechs and Slovaks are most likely to see themselves as citizens of their own nation first and foremost (4.02 and 3.98 average points on a 1–5 scale). Their secondary identity, which may be European or municipal, lags slightly behind. Polish 15–29-year-olds are unique in that they tend to identify most strongly with their specific, local environment (3.68 points), followed by nationality (3.62 points) and then Europeanness (3.58 points). However, all three identities are very close to one another.

Hungary is the only country in the V4 in which 15–29-year-olds consider themselves to be precisely as much Hungarian as European (3.92 points), whereas local identity scores slightly lower (3.72). It is no coincidence, therefore, that the identities most closely associated with Hungarian young people are Hungarian and European ($r = 0.415$).

There is a statistically significant difference in the pattern of pro-government and opposition supporters among young Hungarians when it comes to identity. Whereas supporters of the ruling party think of themselves as belonging first to the nation and then to their locality, opposition supporters identify first as Europeans, then as Hungarians, and lastly identify with their locality. The differences between these answers show a declining tendency, however, which is lowest among those who identify with their locality

STRONG SUPPORT FOR EU MEMBERSHIP ALONGSIDE SIGNIFICANT ANTI-IMMIGRATION SENTIMENT

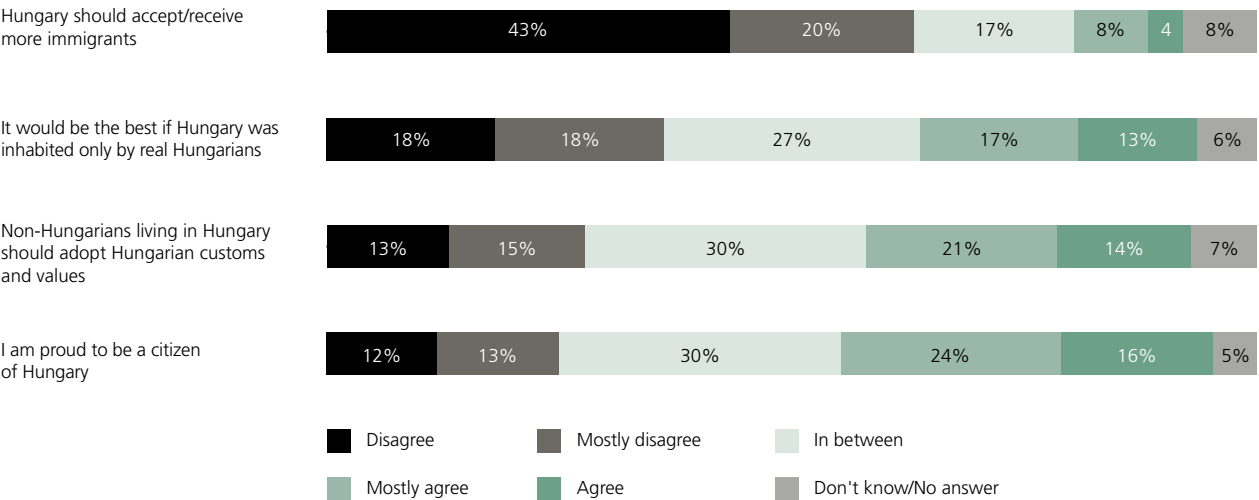
Nativist ideology, the core message of which is a preference for native-born inhabitants over immigrants within a given polity, is an increasingly dominant phenomenon in both US and European political life, with the rise of nativist forces significantly shaping party systems in West-

ern countries (Davis et al. 2019). In Hungary, it was not new political forces that brought the nativist message but rather the ruling Fidesz-KDNP alliance, which built its communication strategy on an anti-immigration narrative during the second half of the 2010s (Bíró-Nagy 2021).⁴⁴ The long-term result of the intensive campaign is that almost two-thirds of young people (63 per cent) do not agree that Hungary should accept more immigrants (Figure 19). The Czech Republic and Slovakia reject immigration at similar rates (61 per cent and 59 per cent), whereas the proportion of young people who reject immigration is significantly lower in Poland (39 per cent).

More young Hungarians are anti-immigration (63 per cent) than are proud of their Hungarian citizenship (40 per cent). Only one-third of young people can be considered hard-line nativists (exclusionary, pro-assimilationist).

Some 30 per cent of young Hungarians agreed that only real Hungarian citizens should live in Hungary; 35 per cent agreed that immigrants should adopt Hungarian traditions and values. Approximately the same number of young people was opposed (36 per cent and 28 per cent) or neutral on these issues (27 per cent and 30 per cent). A relative majority can identify with a positive national consciousness: four out of ten young people have some kind of national pride (40 per cent), one-third of young people are neutral (30 per cent) and a quarter are not proud to be a citizen of Hungary (25 per cent).

FIGURE 20. NATIONALIST AND NATIVIST ATTITUDES AMONG YOUNG HUNGARIANS



Source: FES Youth Study Central and Eastern Europe 2021.
Any differences in the presentation result from the decimal not being shown.

When we asked Hungarian research participants to evaluate the current state of different values in Hungary and in the EU, there was a very visible difference (Figure 21). On average, 22 per cent more people rated the EU as good or very good than they did Hungary in terms of the state of the values in question. Hungary's prosperity was rated

the lowest (12 per cent), and this question also marked the broadest discrepancy between the EU and Hungary (38 per cent). Most rated the domestic security situation as good (32 per cent), and this value showed the smallest difference (just 3 per cent).

FIGURE 21. **YOUNG HUNGARIANS' EVALUATION OF THE SITUATION OF VARIOUS VALUES IN HUNGARY AND IN THE EU (PROPORTION OF THOSE WHO GAVE A 'GOOD' OR 'VERY GOOD' RATING, %)**



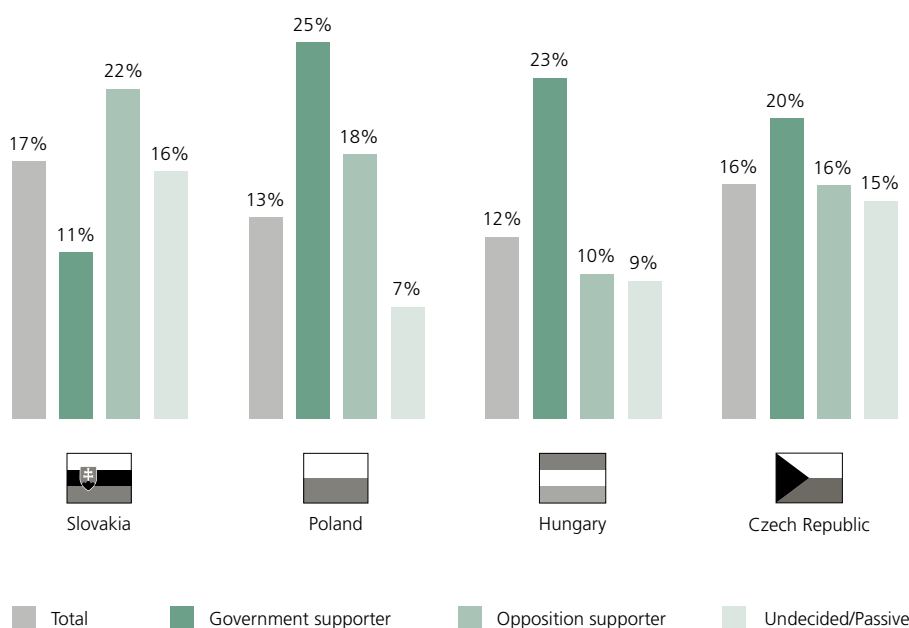
Source: FES Youth Study Central and Eastern Europe 2021.

Two-thirds of young Hungarians (66 per cent) would vote against leaving the EU in a referendum, 12 per cent would support HUXIT, and 22 per cent did not respond. Among young Fidesz supporters, the proportion of those who support leaving is 23 per cent, whereas only 10 per cent of those who support the opposition common list feel the same way and the figure among the undecided is 9 per cent (Figure 21). The proportions are similar in the other V4 countries, and although there is 4–5 per cent more support for EU exit in Slovakia and the Czech Republic (17 per cent and 16 per cent), the majority are clearly pro-EU everywhere.

Within the V4, the vast majority of young people would like to remain in the EU. The difference between political factions is largest in Hungary: only one in ten opposition and undecided voters support HUXIT, whereas among young supporters of the government the same figure is one in five.

The political breakdown of the issue shows an interesting pattern (Figure 22). The example of Western European countries shows that anti-EU sentiment is tied to conservative and populist right-wing parties, however, Euroscepticism is primarily a feature of ‘opposition politicisation’ (Kriesi, 2007). In the V4 countries, looking at the electorate, this pattern is true only for Slovakia, where twice as many opposition voters as pro-government voters would vote to leave the EU (22 per cent vs 11 per cent). In the other countries, by contrast, we can see a precisely opposite trend, which is understandable, since in Central Europe, unlike in Western Europe, the anti-EU narrative can be linked primarily to the ruling, right-wing governments. The biggest difference between political groups is in Hungary. The proportion of HUXIT supporters among young Fidesz voters is more than twice as high (23 per cent) as among supporters of the opposition (10 per cent) and the undecided (9 per cent).

FIGURE 22. PROPORTION OF THOSE WHO WOULD SUPPORT THEIR COUNTRY'S EXIT FROM THE EU (%)



Source: FES Youth Study Central and Eastern Europe 2021.

MAIN FINDINGS

- Young Hungarians have, by comparison with the past, become more interested in politics in recent years, but this interest still lags significantly behind that of their peers in Central Europe.
- 17 per cent of Hungarians aged 15–29 talk to their parents or direct acquaintances about political issues, and 4 per cent do so frequently. In contrast, 15 per cent never talk about such topics, and a further 35 per cent do so only rarely.
- 12 per cent of young Hungarians strongly agree with the views of their parents, and a further 29 per cent share broadly the same political views. Young Hungarians agree with their parents to the greatest extent among the V4 countries.
- An absolute majority of young Hungarians (51 per cent) feel that their interests are not represented in national politics, and only 14 per cent have the opposite opinion.
- Young Slovaks express the greatest willingness to take part in a hypothetical parliamentary election (overall: 81 per cent), whereas Hungarians are least willing (overall: 71 per cent).
- Whatever form of participation we examine, our data clearly indicates that political participation and intention among Hungarian 15–29-year-olds lags far behind that of their peers in the other V4 countries.
- Young Hungarians have the most trust in the security services and the EU, and the least in political institutions and the media.
- Levels of institutional trust among young Hungarians are lowest among the severely deprived and the highly educated. On the other hand, young people who support the government, who attend church, and who have temporary employment contracts have the highest levels of institutional trust.
- Most young Hungarians consider low wages and pensions to be the biggest problems of the next decade. In addition to other material issues (poverty, quality of public services, workforce emigration and unemployment), corruption and climate change are also seen by many as major problems. However, the standard topics of debate between the Hungarian opposition and government are at the bottom of the list.
- The vast majority of young Hungarians support a welfare state (72 per cent) and a reduction in inequality (70 per cent). However, only one-fifth of young people would approve of increased state ownership of economic assets.
- Among the V4 countries, the popularity of universal basic income is exceptionally high in Hungary: half of young people support (47 per cent) and only one-fifth oppose (22 per cent) its introduction.
- The left and right orientations of Hungarian young people are essentially the same, at 17 per cent and 18 per cent, respectively, yet more than one quarter cannot place themselves at any point on the thermometer.
- The label with relatively the 'highest' rate of acceptance is 'liberalism', with which 17 per cent of young Hungarians felt most closely aligned. The second most commonly chosen value label was green/environmentalist, which was chosen by every tenth 15–29-year-old.
- In the minds of young Hungarians, consciousness of Hungarianness and the image of being a European citizen fit together well, perhaps even the best of the four nations. It can also be seen from the data that global, national and local identities differ significantly in type and magnitude, yet that narrow nationalist thinking by no means expresses the identity of 15–29-year-olds in Central Europe.
- More young Hungarians are anti-immigration (63 per cent) than are proud of their Hungarian citizenship (40 per cent). Only one-third of young people can be considered hard-line nativists (exclusionary, pro-assimilationist).
- Within the V4, the vast majority of young people would like to remain in the EU. The difference between the political groups is the largest in Hungary: only one in ten opposition and undecided voters support HUXIT, whereas among young supporters of the government the same figure is one in five.

10

CONCLUSIONS



In the spring and summer of 2021, with the support of the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, a large-scale study employing a number of sociological methods was conducted among young people in Central Europe, including Hungary. We examined 15–29-year-olds in the Czech Republic, Poland, Hungary, and Slovakia using interview, focus group and survey methodologies.

If the world view and thinking of Hungarians aged 15–29 had to be described in four simple terms, the most applicable might be *dissatisfaction*, *conformity*, *passivity* and *polarisation*.

Dissatisfaction: among the young people of the V4 countries, Hungarians are the most dissatisfied with their personal relationships, as well as with their wider environment. They judge their current life circumstances, quality of life, and income situation unfavourably but are also dissatisfied when it comes to the quality of the school system and training. As for the wider political environment, it can be shown that they feel that no one represents their interests in national politics, and, presumably closely linked to this, they also strongly criticise the Hungarian version of democracy.

However, a critical attitude is not linked to political action. Whatever form of participation we examine – electoral participation or offline and online political activity – young Hungarians are by far the most passive in the region. However, it is worth noting – and this complicates the impression of passivity – that in line with the results of the previous large-scale youth survey conducted in Hungary in 2020, an increase in political interest was recorded. Compared with previous surveys, young Hungarians have become more interested in the events of the wider world, yet they remain the least interested in public affairs by Central European comparison. At the same time, however, there is a narrow segment of politically active individuals, largely comprising students or graduates from the larger cities, drawn from among the politically dissatisfied.

The third adjective that can be applied to Hungarian young people is conformism. There is no empirical evidence of general rebellion or open opposition to the views of parents in the attitudes of young people in the V4 countries, including Hungary. The continuous and unusually long period of forced coexistence sparked by the coronavirus pandemic has not negatively affected intergenerational coexistence, nor has it significantly sharpened the child–parent relationship within the family. Apart from the lack of a general revolt, the Hungarian and Central European data gives no particular indication of political revolt. The research experience of the past 20 years in Hungary is that a significant proportion of young people consistently express conformity with their families in terms of political views, regardless of the political period. Only 18 per cent say they mostly or entirely disagree with their parents. Some 12 per cent of young Hungarians strongly agree, and a further 29 per cent share broadly the same political views as their parents. Hungarian young people agree with their parents to the greatest extent among the V4 countries.

Finally, and this is perhaps one of the most important results of the research, Hungarians aged 15–29 are the most divided among young people in Central European countries. This means that polarisation begins in Hungary at an early stage of political socialisation, and partisan thinking results in strongly divergent responses to almost every question to a degree not seen in any of the other countries studied.

It is worth illustrating this strong statement with a few examples. For instance, we can see from the data that when it comes to starting a family and having children, young supporters of the government have quite different views to opposition supporters. Likewise, Fidesz supporters tend to evaluate the educational situation, income situation and personal quality of life differently from someone of a similar age who supports the opposition. It is no surprise that supporters of the government also have significantly higher levels of trust in public institutions than do supporters of the opposition.

Attitudes towards the functioning of democracy and the political system are likewise extremely polarised. The vast majority of respondents, including supporters of the opposition, believe that good government connections are a prerequisite for success in Hungary. According to one-third of young Hungarians (33 per cent) and more than half of opposition supporters, Fidesz can only be removed by force. Whereas nearly six in ten young supporters of the government say that elections are free and fair in Hungary, the proportion of young opposition supporters who say the same is only around 10 per cent. The same picture of Hungarian young people as extremely divided is found in response to questions concerning public access to reliable information and the system of checks and balances.

However, there is one common point that still unites left-wing and right-wing, liberal and conservative, opposition-supporting and pro-government young people, and that is the relationship with the European Union. As in all the V4 countries, the vast majority of young people in Hungary want to remain in the EU. However, even behind this fundamental consensus, political differences emerge: only one-tenth of opposition-supporting and undecided voters would be pro-HUXIT, however, this rises to one in five among supporters of the government. EU, national and local identities fit together well in all countries in the region. At the same time, it is extremely important for Hungary's future in the EU that, in terms of every question asked, young Hungarians felt that the various values and public policy goals were more effectively realized within the EU as a whole than specifically in Hungary.

11

FOOTNOTES



- 1 https://nmhh.hu/cikk/224565/Internetes_kozonsegmeresi_adatok_2021_III_negyedev.
- 2 Source: https://www.ksh.hu/stadat_files/hep/hu/hep0001.html.
- 3 Indeed, there were several years in which the total did not even reach 90,000. Data source: https://www.ksh.hu/stadat_files/hep/hu/hep0006.html.
- 4 One typical statistic: while in 1980, 22 per cent of the Hungarian population was between 15 and 29 years of age, by 2018 this figure had dropped to 17.3 per cent. Source: author's calculation based on CSO data.
- 5 In 2019, the figure for Hungary on the so-called aging index was 132.9 per cent, the highest among the V4 and Baltic countries. Source: https://www.ksh.hu/stadat_files/hep/hu/hep0053.html.
- 6 It is very important to stress that, in accordance with Hungarian law, interviews were conducted only with persons aged 15 and older.
- 7 <https://www.ksh.hu/docs/hun/xftp/doszaki/hepmozg/hepmozg20/index.html>.
- 8 The economic crisis of 2008–2009 was followed by an economic boom in Hungary that lasted for almost 10 years. Economic performance exceeded the preceding year every year between 2013 and 2020, and by more than 4 per cent per year between 2017 and 2019. Source: https://www.ksh.hu/docs/eng/xstadat/xstadat_eves/qpt001.html. As a result of this economic performance, the minimum wage and the guaranteed minimum wage paid to skilled workers also increased significantly between 2016 and 2020. On 1 January 2016, the universal minimum wage was HUF 116,000 (≈ €372), while by 1 January 2020 it had risen to HUF 161,000 (≈ €459); and skilled workers' guaranteed wages increased from HUF 129,000 (€413) to HUF 210,600 (€600). With the introduction of various social benefits and tax breaks, between 2017 and 2020 the financial condition of Hungarian society improved.
- 9 Hungarian commitments: share of underperforming 15-year-olds according to PISA standards: below 15 per cent; early school leavers: below 10 per cent; proportion of people aged 30–34 with tertiary education: 34 per cent.
- 10 The International Standard Classification of Education, developed by the United Nations specialized agency for education, UNESCO, aims to make education statistics comparable worldwide. [https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=International_Standard_Classification_of_Education_\(ISCED\)](https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=International_Standard_Classification_of_Education_(ISCED)).
- 11 Linear regression model $R^2 = 0.143$; $F = 13.94$; $\text{Sig} = 0.000$. β values of independent variables at each $p \leq 0.05$ level: liberal-conservative $\beta = 0.1687$; moderate-radical $\beta = -0.098$; left-right $\beta = 0.085$. The VIF value nowhere exceeds 2. It is worth noting that subjective assessment of the financial situation is also significant in the model: the better the financial situation of the respondent, the more likely they are to have a favourable impression of the quality of the Hungarian education system ($\beta = 0.093$, $\text{sig} = 0.011$).
- 12 Opposition-government $\beta = -0.237$, $\text{sig} = 0.000$.
- 13 According to our studies, neither sociodemographic factors nor ideological affiliation have a statistically significant influence on the opinion of young people in this area. All that matters is whether the respondent is pro-government or an opposition voter. Supporters of the government are less likely, supporters of the opposition more likely, to believe that grades and exam results can be purchased in Hungary.
- 14 Those studying for a master's or PhD tend to favour online learning (average 6.12 points), but this marked preference is not observed among other university students. It is important to note that due to the low number of responses, this data is merely indicative. In any case, the responding Hungarian postgraduate or doctoral students are the most committed to online education, compared with all groups of students in all four countries.
- 15 In the Czech Republic and Poland, however, this factor is statistically significant. Nevertheless, even there, the results do not indicate a linear relationship between a less favourable financial situation and a preference for classroom learning.
- 16 Source of Eurostat data: <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/tipslm80/default/table?lang=en>
- 17 The 'severely deprived' are classified as those who do not have enough money for basic utility bills and food. The 'deprived' group covers those who have enough money for these essentials, but cannot afford new clothes. Those who have money for food, essential utilities and clothing, but not for more expensive things (refrigerator, television, etc.) are considered to be in a more stable situation. The more prosperous are those who can afford these more expensive things, but not, for instance, a car or a flat. The wealthiest are those who can afford anything necessary for a good quality of life.
- 18 We ran an OLS regression in which we included the abovementioned factors as category variables. The dependent variable was the response value to the home office question. We ran two types of model specifications, in the first of which the availability of technology was expressed in six values ($R^2 = 0.046$), while in the second model, the availability of technology was measured according to three values ($R^2 = 0.027$). The models showed very similar results.
- 19 In Hungary, Slovakia and the Czech Republic, young people have been classified into political categories on the basis of a recent hypothetical parliamentary election question. In Hungary, we used a question in which respondents could choose between a joint opposition list and the Fidesz–KDNP list. There was no such question in Poland, so we ranked the respondents on the basis of which party they voted for in the 2019 elections based on self-declaration. Those categorized as undecided or passive voters in Hungary and Slovakia could not or did not want to answer the election question, while in Poland and the Czech Republic we also included those who said in their answer that they would not or did not go to the polls.
- 20 Different Central European languages express these concepts in different ways, which may impact how they are perceived and described. With the global spread of social media, however, the term 'in a relationship' has become an increasingly common catch-all term. As such, the authors of the study decided to divide the concept of 'in a relationship' into two categories: in a relationship of cohabitation with a partner, and in a relationship without cohabitation.
- 21 Amendment 9 of the Hungarian Basic Law (Constitution) states that: 'Hungary shall protect the institution of marriage as the union of one man and one woman established by voluntary decision, and the family as the basis of the survival of the nation. Family ties shall be based on marriage or the relationship between parents and children. The mother shall be a woman, the father shall be a man.'
- 22 The types were designed as follows: each respondent was able to specify individually, from the following list of relatives, who they live with: 'WHO OF THE FOLLOWING PERSONS LIVES WITH YOU IN YOUR HOUSEHOLD? I live alone; With my mother; With my father; With my sibling(s); With my partner or spouse; With my child(ren); With my grandparents; With my friends/other relatives; Other.' Then we summed up these dichotomous variables (living with one's mother or not, living with one's father or not). From this derived variable, the indicated forms of household coexistence were created.

- 23 According to the Eurostat Poverty Report, single-parent households are at increased risk of income poverty across the European Union. Source: https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Income_poverty_statistics/en&oldid=413316#Szeg.C3.A9nys.C3.A9gi_ar.C3.A1ny_.C3.A9s_k.C3.BCsz.C3.B6b.
- 24 Source: https://www.ksh.hu/stadat_files/hep/hu/hep0019.html.
- 25 To the question, 'DO YOUR PARENTS INFLUENCE IMPORTANT DECISIONS CONCERNING YOUR LIFE?' more than 50 per cent answer that they make their own decisions.
- 26 To aid interpretation, scales of 1 to 10 were transformed into scales of 1 to 5.
- 27 It is noteworthy that the views of right-wing (9-10) and pro-government voters are similar, especially when it comes to marriage.
- 28 Nagelkerke $R^2 = 0.048$, Cox and Snell $R^2 = 0.036$; -2 Log likelihood: 860,360. Significant variables included: gender (0 = ff, -1 = female) sig = 0.000, Exp (B) = 0.549, Wald = 12,162; left-right orientation (0 = left, 10 = right) sig = 0.029, Exp (B) = 1.091, Wald = 4.773. At the $p \leq 0.05$ level, non-significant variables include: age, liberal-conservative, moderate-radical, mother's education, nature of settlement and frequency of church attendance.
- 29 Interestingly, there is no significant relationship between left-right attitudes and the planned number of children at the $p \leq 0.05$ level.
- 30 $R^2 = 0.020$ for church attendance, $R^2 = 0.032$ if inclusion on the liberal-conservative axis is included, and finally $R^2 = 0.043$ for non-entry. For all three models, the F-test is significant.
- 31 Source: <https://www.ksh.hu/epolc/2019/demo2019/html/grafikonok.html>.
- 32 Based on multivariate linear regression models, in which we included gender, age subgroup, education, political affiliation, financial situation, type of settlement and regions within Hungary as explanatory variables. Robustness of the models with different dependent variables: Abortion ($r^2 = 0.075$), Homosexuality ($r^2 = 0.151$), Tax evasion ($r^2 = 0.070$), Bribery ($r^2 = 0.024$), Using contacts to find job ($r^2 = 0.034$), Using contacts to 'take care of business' ($r^2 = 0.021$).
- 33 The base value is the 'severely deprived' group, which is classified as those who do not have enough money for basic utility bills and food. None of our analyses found a significant divergence between this group and the 'deprived' group, which covers those who have enough money for these essentials, but cannot afford new clothes. Those who have money for food, essential utilities and clothing, but not for more expensive things (refrigerator, television, etc.) are referred to as being in a more stable situation. The more prosperous are those who can afford these more expensive things, but not, for instance, a car or a flat. The wealthiest are those who can afford anything necessary for a good quality of life. Those in a stable position were 1.1 points more accepting of homosexuality ($p < 0.01$), the more affluent by 1.2 points ($p < 0.01$), and the rich by 1.4 points ($p < 0.01$). In the same order, they were more hostile towards tax fraud by 0.9 points ($p < 0.01$), 1.3 points ($p < 0.01$), and 0.9 points ($p < 0.05$). The most affluent were also 0.7 points ($p < 0.05$) more reluctant to bribe.
- 34 Testing the effect of the above sociodemographic and sociocultural variables of political interest in a regression model, it appears that, in order, gender, level of education, and place of residence (in Budapest or not) have the greatest influence on levels of political interest. $R^2 = 0.058$, F-test = 14.042, sig = 0.000.
- 35 We ran a linear regression model involving 9 ideological, political, and sociodemographic, sociocultural variables. The explanatory power of the model: $R^2 = 0.119$; F-test: 9.817, sig = 0.000. Significant explanatory variables were opposition-government supporter $\beta = -0.175$; liberal-conservative $\beta = 0.127$; left-right $\beta = 0.107$; moderate-radical $\beta = -0.082$; and mother's education $\beta = 0.093$.
- 36 The last parliamentary election in Hungary took place on 8 April 2018.
- 37 The exact question was: There are different ways to get involved in politics. Have you done or would you do any of the following activities?
- 38 Moreover, in Hungary, with the introduction of the *veszélyhelyzet* or emergency legislation, the organisation of protest actions became a prohibited activity.
- 39 A linear regression model was run, $R^2 = 0.135$, $N = 1097$. In the analysis, the dependent variable was the trust index described above, while the explanatory variables included gender, age groups, level of education, political affiliation, wealth group, type of employment and frequency of church attendance. The effect of higher education is 0.17 points ($p < 0.05$), the effect of supporting the governing party is 0.37 points ($p < 0.01$). Among those with a permanent contract, the effect among full-time employees was 0.295 points ($p < 0.05$); while part-time employees have a level of trust 0.245 points ($p < 0.01$) higher than the unemployed. The effect of wealth group was 0.22-0.35 points ($p < 0.01$ or $p < 0.05$). The effect among those who rarely went to church was 0.2 points, and among those who regularly went to church was 0.3 points ($p < 0.01$).
- 40 In contrast to the Hungarian Youth Research study, in the study cited, respondents were not asked to name problems for the future. Instead, the question asked was: 'Which of these three do you consider the biggest problems in Hungary?' Most of the problems listed overlapped, but the problem lists in the two studies are not the same. Due to methodological differences, the above comparison may not be perfect, but the main points of similarity and difference are clearly outlined.
- 41 Manifestations of this include the Fridays for Future climate demonstrations held in Hungary. In addition, the demonstrations against the establishment of a private foundation managing the University of Theatre and Film Arts and the actions of Free SZFE successfully mobilized large numbers of predominantly young people in the late 2010s.
- 42 In the research cited above, support for universal basic income was measured using the following question: 'Supporters of universal basic income say the state should provide everyone with the minimum necessary to live on. Opponents of basic income say it is not the job of the state to provide the minimum necessary for everyone to live on, as individuals are ultimately responsible for making their own living. Which statement do you agree with?'
- 43 The geometric mean of the scale from 1 to 10 is 5.5 points. Thus, young Czechs are more to the right, while young Hungarians and Slovaks are very close to the mean, just a hair's breadth to the left.
- 44 The introduction of ethnonationalist nativism in Hungary can be linked to Fidesz, as the emphasis on the cultural difference of refugees and on the Muslim religion played a major role in the anti-immigration campaign. At the same time, during the 2004 referendum against dual citizenship, nativist messages were also emphasized among those who opposed the naturalization of Hungarians across the border, although the literature tends to refer to this as welfare protectionism (see Kovács 2006).

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ABOUT FES YOUTH STUDIES

This publication is a part of the FES International Youth Studies. Starting in 2009 FES has conducted numerous Youth Studies around the globe. Since 2018, Youth Studies focus specifically on Southern Eastern Europe, Russia, Central Asia, Eastern Central Europe and the Baltic States. Further studies are being planned for the Middle East and Northern Africa as well as in individual countries around the globe. The International Youth Studies are a flagship project of the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung in its endeavor to research, shape and strengthen the Democracy of the Future. It strives to contribute to the European discourse on how young generations see the development of their societies as well as their personal future in a time of national and global transformation. The representative studies combine qualitative and quantitative elements of research in close partnership with the regional teams aiming a high standard in research and a sensitive handling of juvenile attitudes and expectations.

A dedicated Advisory Board (Dr Miran Lavrič, Univ.-Prof. Dr. Marius Harring, Daniela Lamby, András Bíró-Nagy and Dr Mārtiņš Kaprāns) supports the methodological and conceptual design of the Youth Studies. The Board consists of permanent and associated members and provides essential expertise for the overall project.

ABOUT THIS STUDY

The data that form the basis of this publication were collected in the course of online individual in-depth interviews (n = 10 à 60 minutes in average) with young people aged 14–29 years. Various questioning techniques and methods were used in the interviews to specifically address the psychological consequences of Covid-19 for young people. The online interviews were conducted by experienced moderators from the polling agency and research institute Ipsos and local partners. Ipsos Germany, Janine Freudenberg and Laura Wolfs, coordinated the study both in terms of content and organisation.

AUTHORS

András Bíró-Nagy, PhD, political scientist, international relations expert. He is a Senior Research Fellow at the Institute for Political Science of the Centre for Social Sciences (TK PTI). He is also director and owner of Policy Solutions, a Hungarian think-tank, and a member of the board at the Hungarian Political Science Association. In 2013–2014, he worked at the European Commission as a political adviser to EU Commissioner László Andor. Since 2014, he has been the editor of the English-language yearbook series on Hungarian politics published by FES and Policy Solutions. Between 2018 and 2021, he held a Bolyai scholarship from the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, and since 2020, he has been the leader of the OTKA (National Scientific Research Programmes) research project on Hungary's European integration. He holds a PhD in political science from Corvinus University of Budapest and an Msc in public policy and administration from the London School of Economics. His main areas of expertise include European integration, the values of Hungarian society, radical right-wing parties, and contemporary social democracy.

Andrea Szabó, PhD, sociologist, political scientist. She obtained her degree and doctorate from Eötvös Loránd University in Budapest. Since 1994, she has worked with young people from a range of social groups. She is one of the initiators and a lead researcher in a series of large-scale studies called *Youth*. She is also head of the Active Youth Research Group. She has been the leader of several OTKA/NKFIH (National Scientific Research Programmes) and Norwegian Fund research projects. She is secretary general of the Hungarian Political Science Association, secretary of the Political Science Committee of Department IX of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, and a member of the National Statistical Council. She is a Senior Research Fellow and Deputy Director of the Institute for Political Science of the Centre for Social Sciences (TK PTI), and an assistant professor at the ELTE ÁJK (Faculty of Law) Political Science Institute. She is the editor-in-chief of the only 'anonymous double-blind peer review' scientific journal in Hungarian political science, *Politikatudományi Szemle* or Political Science Review. She has written and edited several books on the political thinking and participation of young Hungarians.

