

EAST-CENTRAL EUROPE

THE IMPACT OF CONSUMER CULTURE ON EASTERN AND CENTRAL EUROPEAN YOUTH[†]

During this time of transition in Eastern Europe, it remains empirically unknown whether or not the cultures of the region are primarily moving in the direction of individualization (increasing embourgeoisement) or statism (increasing state control). One important way of answering this question is to empirically evaluate the current direction of the youth culture. Specifically, earlier studies have shown that the cultural tastes, consumer patterns, political ideologies and lifestyles of youth have been related to current cultural changes. Moreover, it may be that the direction of the youth culture with regard to individualization or statism is the best indicator of the direction of the culture at large. This research, building on previous findings, seeks to determine the extent to which the youth culture of this region is primarily individualistic or statist with regard to cultural tastes, consumer patterns, political ideologies, and lifestyles.

Hypothesis I

Increasing embourgeoisement (individualism) is accompanied by increased autonomy among the youth culture.

The Subhypotheses:

Increasing embourgeoisement is accompanied by Western cultural tastes.

Increasing embourgeoisement is accompanied by pluralistic and free consumer decisions.

Increasing embourgeoisement is accompanied by democratic political ideologies.

Increasing embourgeoisement is accompanied by diverse and tolerant lifestyles.

Hypothesis II

Increasing state control (statism) is accompanied by decreased autonomy among the youth culture.

The Subhypotheses:

Increasing state control is accompanied by parochial cultural tastes.

Increasing state control is accompanied by a consumer elite.

Increasing state control is accompanied by communist and/ or fascist ideologies.

Increasing state control is accompanied by uniform lifestyles.

Introduction

Our starting point was that the change of the era on the part of youth has accelerated after the collapse of communism. A central issue of the change of the era of youth is youth status. The change of youth status is connected to the change of work, family and citizen status. The change of the most important dimensions of youth status, including its expansion in time and the change of institutions, control the relationship of generations, parallel with the

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marketization of cultural space (consumer industries and the mass media). This change is in connection with the fact that the status passage of work became more open and simultaneously less planned/plannable. The status passage of family becomes paradoxical by the fact that young people leave their parental family early but found their own family later and later. The status passage of citizenship is shifted from the terrain of the directly controlling infrastructure provided by state intervention to that of the indirectly controlling infrastructure of market relations, consumption and the expanding citizen rights of young people. In Eastern and Central Europe, the precondition of the acceleration of the change of the era with regard to youth was the collapse of communism.

Our Hungarian-Romanian comparative research was grounded by the fact that communism was different in these countries. Consequently, young people in these countries had different traditions, value orientations and action patterns and lived under different conditions when they had to face the new challenges emerging after the transition, especially those of the market economy and consumer culture. A basic question is raised: do values and action patterns emerge which are characteristic of both Hungarian and Romanian youth that may lead to convergence between young people in the region?

The change of era delayed by state socialism may result in conflicts owing to the explosive influx of market relations and Western culture and value orientations. What is the nature of these conflicts? What are the factors which increase or decrease the conflicts of young people with adult society and other ethnic groups?

We assume that the third-year university students in our sample reflect the caesura represented by the year 1990. Due to lack of background data, we selected our sample randomly. In Hungary we conducted our survey at the Budapest Technical University, the Loránd Eötvös University, Budapest, the Budapest University of Economics, the Janus Pannonius University, Pécs and the Attila József University, Szeged. We planned to question 100 randomly selected third-year students at each university. The final sample consisted of 470 respondents whose questionnaires we processed. We completed the Hungarian sample with an elite subsample which consisted of 100 (25-25-50) third-year university students in the István Bibó, Loránd Eötvös and László Rajk Collegium and processed 87 of the questionnaires. (We assumed that these special institutions played the role of "Oxbridge" for the emerging young elite of the 1990s which is an increasingly important positive reference group in political, cultural and economic life nowadays). In Romania, we sampled third-year students in Timisoara and Cluj. This sample does not reflect the proportion of nationalities. We sampled 175 ethnic Hungarian and 225 ethnic Romanian students and could process 164 and 216 questionnaires respectively.

Note 1: Our Romanian sample does not reflect the character of Romanian universities well. This distortion has two aspects. One is that the elite universities in this country are in Iasi and Bucharest, thus, not in Transylvania. The other is that in Romania many upper and middle class parents send their children to private universities. However, our sample characterizes Transylvanian students quite well.

Note 2: In the following chapters, we shall use the abbreviations as follows: HH = Hungarians in Hungary; RR = ethnic Romanians in Romania; RH = ethnic Hungarians in Romania.

Differences in the family background of university students

In both countries, most of our respondents' parents belong to the upper and the middle class. In Hungary, the parental background of the students reflects the country's advancement in embourgeoisement. There are many parents who work as entrepreneurs. Parents in Hungary also lay great emphasis on developing their child's individual talent.

In Romania, the inherited cultural capital of students is not weaker than in Hungary. However, the level of individualization in parental attitudes towards the child's career is lower. Thus, the family background of students reflects a growing capitalist and consumerist structure in Hungary and a still "state socialist" structure in Romania.

Among Hungarian university students, concerning parental education and occupation and in terms of both economic and cultural capital volume, the dominant background represents the upper and the middle classes (leaders and employees of research institutes, cultural and educational institutions, e.g. university teachers, free lancers: writers, journalists etc., and in general, the wide stratum of university and college graduates). Thus, the percentage of "upper class" is 24.6. As for economic capital, upper level economic managers (bank and company managers and entrepreneurs) represent 14.4% and can be found in the upper and the middle class (half of them are entrepreneurs). The proportion of lower middle class - highly qualified skilled workers (technicians, foremen and white collars) - is 14.2%. Working class parents represent less than one fifth of the sample (17.6%). It is noteworthy that there are many retired (10.6%) and few unemployed parents (two point four per cent).

So far as cultural capital volume is concerned, the family background of ethnic Hungarian and Romanian students in Romania does not differ considerably from that of their colleagues in Hungary: the figures are 36.9% and 36.2%. The upper strata, however, are much more narrow: five point four and two point five per cent. In contrast, there is a pretty marked difference in terms of economic capital volume: the proportion of managers and entrepreneurs is two point four and two point three per cent. One fourth of ethnic Hungarian and one third of ethnic Romanian respondents are of lower middle class origin. The proportion of working class parents is less than one fourth in Romania, too (15.7% and 16.1%). There are less pensioners than in Hungary (eight point five and eight point four per cent) and practically no unemployed (one point two and zero point five per cent) among the parents.

With respect to cultural capital volume, there is no significant difference between the family backgrounds of students in the two countries. However, in terms of economic capital volume, students in Hungary are much more advanced. In Hungary, parents with high and especially with medium cultural background have become entrepreneurs in great masses and this process shows well how a traditionally vertical state socialist hierarchy transformed first into a horizontal, and later into a more explicitly capitalist social structure. In contrast, in Romania the hierarchy reflecting the distribution of cultural capital represents social hierarchy as well. In terms of material and modern consumer goods, the families of Hungarian university students (except for the possession of their own flat and telephone) are much better off which indicates the clearly higher level of *embourgeoisement*. However, in terms of precious works of art which represent cultural capital, ethnic Hungarian students in Romania dominate. Travelling abroad also shows the degree of *embourgeoisement* well. Till the age of 17 (i.e. until 1989) 97.2 % of the students in Hungary (Collegium students: 93.9 %) were abroad. The figures in Romania are: 74.7 % (RH), 68.6 % (RR).

The differences in the family background can quite clearly be seen in the parental expectations towards primary school pupils. Among Hungarian students, parental plans about the child's career were first in importance (see the items "my parents expected a good deal of my future"; "my parents considered me a talented child", "my parents were ambitious/ had great plans with me as a child"). Second in importance was the active transfer of culture as a manifestation of parental ambitions ("we made music /read books/ engaged in sports together"). Third in importance was parental control of the pupil's school performance and fourth was the passive transfer of parental cultural goods (books, periodicals, discs). In general, although there is no considerable difference between parental expectations and

patterns of cultural transfer in the two countries, Hungarian parents respect much more the individuality of the child. In Romania, conformity to school expectations is stronger and individualism is weaker.

The degree of student autonomy

In terms of income resources, students in Hungary represent a higher level of individualisation. They do not depend so heavily on their parents as the respondents in Romania do. In Romania, students can defy traditional parental control over financial resources only by founding their own family, the sooner the better.

The primary source of Hungarian students' income is stipend. Family support, odd jobs and social welfare are also important. In contrast, in Romania family support is the first and stipend is the second. The role of social welfare is negligible and the same goes for odd jobs, especially among ethnic Romanian respondents. In other words, the chance of becoming independent of the parents is growing for Hungarian students, either by odd jobs or by getting better grades. This chance, however, is far less for Romanians who still have to rely on early marriages and support from the spouse (the figures are: 12% in Romania and negligible in Hungary) to defy parental control.

There is a big difference between Hungarian and Romanian students not only in possessing material and consumer goods but in travelling abroad as well. Almost nine tenth of Hungarian respondents were abroad during their university years; the figure is similar among ethnic Hungarians in Romania but it is approximately one third among ethnic Romanians. Hungarians travelled especially to Austria, Germany, France, Italy, Bohemia, Slovakia, Greece and Spain and, with respect to Collegium students, to the USA. In Romania, for ethnic Hungarian students, Hungary was the main target country (84.5%) and the same goes for ethnic Romanians (20.4%). For Hungarian students both in Romania and Hungary the circle of visited countries has widened mainly in the direction of Western Europe during the university years. Besides tourism, this can be ascribed to growing interest and possibilities in studying abroad, shopping, dark business and learning languages. The latter is a sign of competitiveness and is a much stronger motivation for Hungarian students than for (especially ethnic) Romanians.

The change of value orientations

The value orientations of students express well the differences in the individualization of Hungarian and Romanian young people. Among Hungarian students, materialistic and postmaterialist values on the one hand and collectivistic and materialistic ones on the other are clearly separate. In contrast, young people in Romania mix individualism with collectivism and connect them with religiosity; in the end, the whole mixture is embedded into a traditional value system. The value orientation of ethnic Hungarians is very similar to that of ethnic Romanians. The only exception is religiosity, which, similarly to students in Hungary, is separated from collectivistic values and family security as well. Performing factor analysis on Hungarian students, in the first factor Family Security, Peaceful World, True Love and Friendship can be found. (This factor explains 23.4% of the variance.) In the second factor, which explains 12.7% of the variance, Freedom is connected to Individual Values, Exciting and Interesting Life and Creativity. The third factor shows that although religiosity is connected with Respect for Tradition, they together become a personal case for the individual and are widened by the link to the World of Beauty, a postmaterialist value.

This demonstrates that the blend of traditional and modern values, a trait of post-modernity, begins to emerge among Hungarian students.

Performing factor analysis on Romanian students, in the first factor we identified Social Order, Politeness, National Security, Peaceful World, Respect for Tradition, Belief in God and Unity with Nature. This factor explains 25.8% of the variance. The other factors explain only a very small part of the variance.

Differences in religiosity†

We found that religiosity demonstrates differences between the two countries and between ethnic subgroups in Romania extraordinarily well. First, Hungarian students are considerably more secularized than their colleagues in Romania. Besides, interpretation of the world given by religious Hungarians is also substantially more individualized than that of students in Romania. These two components together show that the level of individualization is much higher in Hungary than in Romania. Second, religiosity is the only aspect in which the value systems of RRs and RHs markedly differ. This can be attributed to the divergence between the cultural peculiarities of Western and Eastern (i.e. Pravoslav) Christianity.

Religiosity among Hungarian (HH) youth

In this more sophisticated world view, the rejection of social determinations and the central role of the individual are the most important factors. This emphasis on the self is embedded in the secularization process in which traditional ecclesiastic religiosity has lost its strength and small communities come to the fore. Furthermore, the emphasis on the self is connected to the increasing prestige of consumer culture which implies a pragmatic interpretation of the phenomena of our world.

The consequence of these two factors is that this is a special vacuum in the field of world concepts and the formerly dominant deterministic world concepts are losing ground. At the same time there are many new phenomena and problems which have to be interpreted and this necessity increases the belief in supernatural forces and the position of the stars compared to both the deterministic and traditionally religious interpretations.

Questions on religiosity examined denominational affiliation, exercise of religious belief in God and the attitudes toward its alternatives. As to denominational affiliation, 63% of the respondents belonged to denominations; 47.5% of them were Catholics, eight point six per cent belonged to the Reformed Church, two point five per cent were Lutherans, one point seven per cent belonged to some other religions, and one per cent to small-sized denominations. Far less respondents exercised their religion actively although the figure (approx. 10%) is much higher than that of other surveys concerning this age group. Thirty-three per cent of the respondents state they are religious, 35% of them go to church, and 32% pray somewhat regularly.

Examining the impact of other non-religious ideas, the picture becomes a bit more differentiated. More people believe in after-world (44.1%; 49% without the missing cases!). Listing the possible factors influencing human life (our own will, chance, circumstances, supernatural forces, Providence, the position of the stars etc.), there were surprisingly many respondents (between 25% and 42%) who did not find the influence of these factors impossible. Among the possible answers, our own will proved to be of decisive importance

† This paragraph was co-authored by Anna Imre and Kálmán Gábor.

for 73% of the respondents; only very few of them ranked this low. Less people emphasized chance (53% attributed a certain role to it in shaping our fate; 28.5% said its importance was small). The attributed significance of circumstances is slightly higher than that of chance (12% said it was decisive and only 19% responded it was not important at all). Thirty-two per cent said Providence played some role in our fate (this is approximately the same as the proportion of those saying that they were religious or exercising religion). Besides these, there are many who think it slightly influences their life and only 38.6% refused it categorically.

Compared to this, in the following three cases there are many more negative answers. Fifty-seven point eight per cent of the respondents deny the influence of supernatural forces. In the case of the positions of the stars, the figure is 71.2% and for our previous life, it is 74.6%. In other words, the proportion of those who do not deny the formative role of these factors in life is between 25% and 42%. Of course, it does not mean that they attribute a great or considerable impact to these. In general, the respondents say these factors have a small or certain influence (supernatural forces influence 32.5%, the position of the stars influences 23%, our previous life influences 16%). That is, it can be said, that both religiosity and its alternatives are pretty influential. Performing factor analysis we found that the strongest factor is the one consisting of Supernatural Forces and Our Previous Life. Providence can also be found in this factor (this factor explains 31.5% of the variance). The second factor is called Deterministic World Concept in which students explain the future with chance and circumstances (this explains 19.4% of the variance). In the third factor, the respondents think it is their own will that shapes their future; simultaneously, they reject Providence strongly. In the case of the position of the stars and our previous life, their rejection is not so strong. This factor explains 15.3% of the variance.

Religiosity among ethnic Romanian (RR) youth

To sum up, RR young people are less secularized than HHs are. However, they also believe in their own will and in irrational forces and refuse to apply the secularized form of reducing one's self-responsibility, i.e. they strongly reject the influence of circumstances. In terms of denominational affiliation, the majority of ethnic Romanian young people are Orthodox (82%), five per cent of them are Greek Catholics, four point two per cent belong to the Reformed Church, two point two per cent are Catholics and Lutherans and two point three per cent are agnostics.

Compared to young people in Hungary, RR respondents exercise their religion much more actively. Two thirds of them go to church, one third of them actively, i.e. per week or several times a month (the figure in Hungary is 15 %). Fifty-six per cent of the respondents (in Hungary it is 31%) pray regularly. Seventy-two per cent (in Hungary it is 33%) state that they are religious.

As for factors influencing our life, the proportion of respondents mentioning our own will at the first place is similar to that of HHs (72%). The same goes for chance: it affects our fate in the opinion of 54% of RRs and 53% of HHs. As far as circumstances are concerned, there is a slight difference. Fifty per cent of RRs attribute a certain circumstance as important and 11% attribute great influence to circumstances. In the case of HH respondents, the figures are 60% and 18 %. Sixty-two per cent of RRs think that Providence is a decisive factor (HHs: 34%) and 14% assume that its role is totally negligible (HHs: 39%). They reject the influence of the alternative forms of religiosity to a lesser extent than their colleagues in Hungary do. The percentages of those denying entirely that supernatural forces, the position of the stars or their previous life have a say in their fate are 40.68% Slightly more than sixty-two per cent (62.37%) of them believe strongly or to a certain

extent in supernatural forces (HHs: 14%) while 29% believe in the position of the stars (HHs: 24%) and 20.5% believe in our previous life (HHs: 9%). Sixty per cent of them believe in an after-life (HHs: 44%).

Religiosity among ethnic Hungarian youngsters in Romania

Youngsters in Hungary are much more secularized than in Romania. It is RR respondents who lay the biggest emphasis on the alternative forms of religiosity; Hungarians in our country and in Romania are similarly lagging behind them in this. A common feature of the three groups each is that out of these factors it is to supernatural forces that they ascribe the greatest importance. With respect to the other two factors, respondents in Hungary rather tend to emphasize the position of the stars and their colleagues in Romania emphasize our previous life. In this respect, RH respondents are in a special transitional situation between the two other groups. Ninety-five per cent of them (i.e. much more than HHs but slightly less than RRs) belong to a religious community. Slightly more than nine per cent (9.4%) of them are Catholics, 38.4% are Calvinists, three per cent are Unitarians and the others are Lutherans. Similar to RRs, they are more active in exercising their religions than HHs are. Sixty-eight per cent (68.3%) of them go to church, 36% regularly and 57.1% pray regularly. Almost fifty-four per cent (53.7%) declare they are religious (a figure much lower than the RR one – 72% – but considerably higher than that of HHs: 33%). Considering the alternative forms of religiosity, RH respondents are situated between HHs and RRs in this respect, too. Compared to the former two groups, only slightly less of them mentioned our own will in the first place. Their figures concerning accident and circumstances are similar to our findings in Hungary: 53.7% and 55.7%. Among irrational factors, Providence is the strongest: many more RHs than HHs say that it has great power and only 31% of them asserts that is has none. Forty per cent of the respondents believe in the after-world. What about supernatural forces, the position of the stars and our previous life? 43.26% and 30% answered that these had a role (in most cases, a slight role) in shaping our life career and 56.7%, 73.8% and 70.1% objected.

Summing up, these three groups represent three more or less separate positions. HH young people form one pole, RRs the other and RHs are situated between them.

Emphasis on the self and consumer preferences

Visuality, motorisation, music, leisure activity, the look and the old and new form of culture differ from each other in the consumer preferences of students. It also shows that cultural and consumer tastes mediated by the mass media become dominant in the formation of the students' personality and in their leisure activities.

Almost twenty per cent (19.9%) of the university students consider it to be very important to emphasize their personality. In the opinion of 55.2% of them, this is important. In so doing, they stress behaviour and manner of speech (59.9%), leisure activities (38.8%), and clothing and hair style (36.3%). Mention should also be made of group affiliation (15.8%) and music styles (14.6%). Taking the results of factor analysis into consideration, it can be said that the emphasis on the self focuses on leisure activities, that is, it is closely connected to the growing impact of consumer patterns.

Every examined group of students emphasizes their self. However, students in Romania can be much more characterised by traditional forms of self-expression such as behaviour and manner of speech than by clothing, leisure activities and music taste.

The answers the students gave on questions tapping consumer preferences well reflect the connection between consumer culture and the emphasis on the self. Among ten consumer

goods, the students ranked books the first. (The average value on the 4-degree scale is 3.68.) In the second place we can already find toilet-ware (the average is 3.01). Audio cassettes and compact discs were ranked third (the average is 2.76), followed by colour TV, jogging suits, gym shoes and automobile (average: 2.76; 2.72; 2.68; 2.61). That is, the consumer preferences of university students are focused, following traditional cultural resources, on the look, leisure activities and resources that reflect middle class taste offered by the mass media. Performing factor analysis, we found that colour TV, video recorders and automobiles are in the first factor. The second factor consists of hi-fi systems and audio cassettes and compact discs. Toilet-ware, jogging suits and gym shoes can be found in the third factor while PCs and books are in the fourth. In harmony with what has been said above, in the consumer preferences of our respondents in Romania the alternative character of cultural consumption connected to leisure activities is less explicit. To demonstrate this, the best example is the similar rating of colour TV and books. Data on the popularity of TV channels and watching TV as a pastime show us well how important a mediator of consumer culture TV is).

The differences of student status passage

The expansion of student lifestyle in time (i.e. the postponement of finding a job immediately after graduating, founding a family, bearing a child) is a more important objective for HH (especially Collegium) students than for their colleagues in Romania. Compared to HH respondents, more students in Romania would like to emigrate.

Owing to the factors mentioned above, there are great differences among our subsamples, as far as the expansion of student lifestyle in time is concerned. Students in Hungary try to spend more years as students within and outside the given institutional framework (i.e. studying abroad) as well. Finding a job as soon as possible is not a top priority for them although they try to find a material and professional basis for their future career already during their university years. In contrast, our respondents in Romania, due to the compulsions and traditions mentioned above, want to find a job immediately after graduating. They also would like to study their profession in practice but they think it is possible only after and not before graduating. Students in Hungary are more optimistic about their future: only three point five per cent of Collegium and five point five per cent of university students would like to live abroad because they see their future hopeless at home. In contrast, the figures in Romania are 14.1% (RHs) and 15.7% (RRs). Despite the differences in student life strategies, there is a noticeable "Americanisation" in the country preferences of the respondents both in terms of studying and working. The only exception is the group of RHs for whom Hungary substitutes for the USA.

Youth group styles

Youth group styles in Hungary

Examining youth group styles, we found that although environmental protection, anti-nuclear and peace movements, which express a somewhat apocalyptic pessimism, are still pretty influential among university students, the central motivation is to be competitive in the market economy. It is observable among those who prefer "feminine" styles (i.e. aerobic, fitness training) which represent leisure activities shaping the look. Similarly, it can also be found among "masculine" yuppies who explicitly demonstrate their eagerness to "make it". Thus, market relations increased young people's faith in upward mobility. Simultaneously, new phenomena emerged among students who fear that they will lose in the competition: self-destructive escapism (drug abusers) and mysticism (occultism).

Performing factor analysis, the first factor consists of environmental protection and alternative peace and anti-nuclear movements. The proportion of supporters are 84.1%, 48.4% and approximately 33%. In the second factor new religious movements, occultist and homosexuals can be found. These are extremities in many respondents' eyes that accounts for their strong rejection. The percentages of those who are for and against these groups are 12% and 46.2% (occultists), three point two per cent and 58.1% (new religious movements), three point two per cent and 44.2% (homosexuals). In the second factor we can see aggressive and escapist groups: skinheads, narco-maniacs and Satanists. The proportion of supporters and opponents are: two point nine per cent and 85.1%, four point eight per cent and 79.9%, one point nine per cent and 92.2%. The fourth factor is made up by feminists, nudists and body building/fitness training and aerobic fans. The proportion of supporters in the case of body building/fitness training, nudists and feminists are 34.3%, 36.4% and 10.3%. As for women, 69.5% and 14.9% of them prefer aerobic and feminists. (In general, aerobic is the most popular: only one point nine per cent of the respondents reject this.) Thus, this factor represents a certain bourgeois lifestyle which is built on the growing influence of entrepreneurs and private owners and emphasizes the self and, in the case of women, emancipation. The fifth ("masculine") factor is that of yuppies and computer fans who are supported by 35.1% and 37.6% of males and 14.4% and 29.7% of female respondents. Another, popular version of consumer youth culture is observable in the sixth (disco and video fans) and the seventh factors (punks and football fans). Both are primarily masculine phenomena: 35.3%, 16.9% and 12.2% of boys and 14.2%, six per cent and six point four per cent of girls support football, video and disco fans.

Youth group styles among ethnic Romanian students

In the first factor, which explains 16.8% of the variance, there are new religious movements, occultists, Satanists and homosexuals. The Eigenvalue of the factor is 4.19 which shows how strongly RR respondents reject these groups. In the second factor, which explains 12.1% of the variance, computer fans, entrepreneurs and dark businessmen can be found. They simultaneously represent the world of modern business and black economy in contemporary Romania. Typically, respondents are indifferent towards them (Eigenvalue: 3.03). The third factor, which explains seven point two per cent of the variance, is that of aerobic fans, vegetarians and the green movement with whom the respondents sympathize very much (Eigenvalue: 1.79). There are sympathizers of punks, hard rock fans, narco-maniacs and skinheads in the fourth factor, which explains six point seven per cent of the variance. The fifth (football and disco fans), the sixth (anti-nuclear and alternative movements, feminists and small religious communities), the seventh (video and motorbike fans) and the eighth (nudists, body builders and alcoholics explain only a very small (five per cent, four point seven per cent, four point four per cent and four point two per cent) proportion of the variance.

Youth group styles among ethnic Hungarian students in Romania

The first factor consists of nudists, narco-maniacs, alcoholics, homosexuals and Satanists. This may show a conservative interpretation of deviance because in Hungary nudism is part of alternative culture. This factor explains 14.5% of the variance. In the second factor, which explains 12% of the variance, there are skinheads, aerobic fans, body builders and anti-nuclear and alternative peace movements. This heterogeneity can be explained by the fact that each of them represents the extremities of Westernization in the respondents' eyes.

The third factor, which explains nine per cent of the variance, consists of new religious movements. The fourth factor, which explains six point five per cent of the variance, is that

of aggressive culture: punks, hard rock, football and motorbike fans. The fifth factor is made up by the representatives of popular consumer culture: disco, computer and video fans.

The following factors (sixth: dark businessmen and yuppies, seventh: greens and vegetarians, eighth: feminists, ninth: grass-roots religious movements) explain only a very small (four point eight per cent, four point seven per cent, four point two per cent and four per cent) percentage of the variance.

Differences in youth group styles

Among Hungarian respondents, group styles representing alternative culture and leisure activities dominate. Revolt is mainly characterised by escapism (drugs) and aggressive work-alcoholism (yuppies). Students in Hungary are more tolerant than their colleagues in Romania. In Romania, massive traditional prejudices towards otherness are still alive among both ethnic subgroups. In Romania, besides aggressive group styles (hard rock, skinheads), passive consumption (disco) is also popular.

Performing correspondence analysis, differences already found in values, religiosity, self-identification and consumer preferences between Hungarians (RHs and RRs together) are marked in terms of youth group styles as well: we can find RRs on the one side of the horizontal axis and Hungarian (Collegium, RH and HH) respondents on the other. (See basic data in Appendix 2.) On the vertical axis, however, RH and HH students can be found on the two poles. In the center of the youth culture of RR students we can identify entrepreneurship and dark business and, related to these, consumer patterns: disco and football. In contrast, the youth culture of HH elite students is dominated by alternative culture (anti-nuclear movements) and the escapist forms of individualization (grass-roots religious movements and drugs). RH students simultaneously adhere to consumer culture, alternative values and escapism. Thus, they are in an intermediate position between RRs and the HH elite. Their sympathy towards the latter group can be traced back to the intensive informal relationships between them and Hungarian dissidents during state socialism.

Youth centrism[†]

The main difference between youth centrism in the two countries, namely, the fact that peer group organization is considerably weaker than youth revolt in Romania, is due to the heavy restrictions imposed on individualization under Ceausescu's cruel dictatorship.

[†] "In youth centrism the conflict young people experience regarding the culture and authority of the adult world comes to expression. Adults can serve as a positive reference for youth, providing guidance, direction and mobility into adult roles for the oncoming generation. But adults can also serve as a negative reference group - representing control, supervision, compromised morals and questionable political ethics, and a tired acceptance of the 'givenness' of the pragmatic, everyday world. These poles range from pragmatic and relatively positive bond with adults on the one hand, to a more idealistically inspired and negative tension toward them on the other." Research on youth centrism carried out by Zinnecker has shown an adult oriented variant connected with positive attitudes towards adults. But this form is also connected with the amount of time spent together with adult persons, and the extent to which adults are sought for advice and support. The degree of belief in adults has proved to be of the same importance in the attitude of youth. Conversely, the negative variant can serve as a specific kind of "ethnocentrism", in which the culture and politics of the youth are opposed to the world of adults. These cultural (stylistic) and political phenomena are dealt with in other studies too. Meredith Watts - Jürgen Zinnecker (1988) *Youth culture and politics among German Youth*. In: *European Contributions to Youth Research*, Eds. Jan Hazelkamp - Wim Meeus - Yolanda de Poel, Amsterdam, Free University Press.

The differences in youth centrism between the two ethnic subgroups in Romania can as well be explained by the different relationships of RRs and RHs to the institutions and repressive organizations of adult society. RH students revolt not simply against adult institutions as such; their targets are the institutions of Romania. Their loyalty to their own ethnic group is an obstacle for them in articulating conflicts with their parents. Accordingly, their adhesion to the peer group can be attributed rather to their threatened ethnic belongingness than to individualization.

Comparing the intensity of youth centrism among RH, RR and HH young people, our findings are as follows: It is RHs who agree with the item "all police are unfair with young people" (15.6%) the most, RRs are ranked second (six point three per cent) and HHs third (four point three per cent). (See in Appendix 3.) Twenty-eight per cent of RHs, 27.8% of RRs and 11.8% of HHs find that in their society there is hostility against youngsters. RHs disagree the most with the statement that "our society does a lot for young people" (91.4%); the other figures are: 96.9%(RRs) and 96.2%(HHs). Eighty per cent of RHs, 74.5% of RRs and 72.7% of HHs support the idea that "young people should put up a fuss if necessary". These findings show that it is RH young people who have the most problems with adult society; the other two groups do not oppose adult patterns so strongly.

We applied three items to measure conflict with parents. The percentages of supporters at each item are: "I owe my parents a lot": 96.1% (HHs), 92% (RHs) and 89.9% (RRs). "I try to understand my parents": 92% (RRs), 92.3% (HHs) and RRs: 71.6%. "Parents always interfere in things that are none of their business": 82.9% (HHs), 78.7% (RRs) and 74.3% (RHs). Thus, it is RR students who have relatively the most conflicts with their parents.

We measured the respondents' preferences towards their peer group also with three items. Over forty-four per cent (44.4%) of RHs, 39.9% of HHs and 30.6% of RRs say that they learn the most from their friends. Thirty-eight per cent of RHs, 36.2% of HHs and 34.5% of RRs rely rather on their own experience than on adults. Slightly over seventy-six per cent (76.3%) of RRs, 71.6% of RHs and 57.7% of HHs think that only few adults understand the problems of young people. There is a basic discrepancy here: it is RR students who feel the gap between young and adult the widest but it is also they who adhere to their peer group the least.

Differences in attitudes towards the state

Despite the fact that only a minority of respondents are statist in all three of the subsamples, it can clearly be seen that students in Romania and especially ethnic Romanians tend much more to agree with forceful state intervention into the life of society than students in Hungary do. That is, consumerism does not exclude statism. RH students in this respect stand closer to HHs. It should be noted that it is not ethnic and cultural sameness that primarily explains this. In fact, ethnic Hungarians in Romania continued to keep distance from the Romanian state even after the 1989 revolution. Besides, ethnic Romanian students could not benefit from the rapidly intensifying contacts between Hungary and Romania. Consequently, the gap between the ethnic groups did not narrow.

Performing factor analysis on the answers given by HH students on items concerning the state, we obtained three factors. In the first factor, which explains 28.7% of the variance, items suggesting that the state guarantees external and internal security can be found. The second factor, which explains 14.2% of the variance, consists of items in which the omnipotent state destroys democratic institutions, takes drastic measures and overcomes social problems. In the third factor, which explains nine point seven per cent of the variance, we can find items on the indispensable role the state plays in guaranteeing social security, economic prosperity and cultural and natural resources.

The answers our RR respondents gave also cluster into three factors. In the first factor, which explains 31.8% of the variance, we can find items emphasizing the welfare, cultural, economic and military role of the state. In the second factor, which explains 14.5 % of the variance, there are items on the forceful omnipotence of the state. Two items suggesting that the state should strengthen and fight its enemies can be found in the third factor, which explains nine point six per cent of the variance.

As for RHs, in the first factor, which explains 34% of the variance, a desire is expressed towards a strong state which safeguards cultural, economic and natural resources and life free of unrest. The second factor, which explains 11.8% of the variance, items urging the state to force the opposition back and implement order by the army can be found. The third factor consists of items on the powerfulness of the state. This factor explains nine point four per cent of the variance.

In the answers of HH respondents, three functions of the state are separated. One is defence and safeguarding the security of the citizens, the other is guaranteeing welfare, prosperity and preserving cultural and natural resources and the third is dictatorial: restoring order and fighting anarchy and chaos. In contrast to the sharp differentiation observable in Hungary between the welfare/defence and democratic/dictatorial functions of the state, in Romania the welfare function is mixed with defence among RRs and with preserving internal order among RHs. Both ethnic subgroups in Romania feel danger: RRs an external and RHs an internal one. Another marked difference between the two countries is that while in the eyes of HHs the strengthening of the state equals dictatorship, in the opinion of RRs it implies more security in welfare issues.

It is with the item "the state guarantees external and internal security" that HHs agree the most (93.4%). This item is supported by 92.5% of RRs and 81.5% of RHs. Among HH students "in the present political situation it is necessary that the state get stronger" is the second most popular (69.1%). The third is "the state is the medium of the people's spirit founded in language, customs and religion" (67.1%). These items are supported by 82.2% and 79.1% of RRs and 81% and 63% of RHs. Thus, the great majority of respondents in each subsample attribute great importance to the state so far as its role in the transition and in preserving (external and internal) security and historical continuity are concerned. However, students in Romania are more statist with respect to the task of stabilization in the transition than in Hungary. In the context of external and internal security and historical continuity, HH and RR "statism" is almost equal and higher than that of RHs who seem to feel that the Romanian state is a bit alien to them. Almost fifty-four per cent (53.6%) of HH, 75.8% (!) of RR and 59.7% of RH students agree with the statement that "every state is a guarantee of economic prosperity". The percentages in the case of "only the state is able to guarantee social security and justice" are: 54.8% (HHs), 78.2% (!) (RRs) and 60% (RHs). Equally 59.1% of HHs and RHs and 84.1% of RRs are of the opinion that the preservation of cultural and natural resources is the burden of the state.

We should avoid the interpretation that students support state intervention because they embrace the idea of social equality and justice. It seems to be a better understanding of this phenomenon that it was/is due to the state that the group of young people in question had/have their own and inherited material and symbolical privileges during state socialism and the transition alike. This privilege of the "socialist nobility" is in an excellent harmony with the preference given to consumption. University students are divided for the very reason that a new and characteristic group emerged among them who suppose that, due to their privileges (knowledge, network), they are able to make it on the market without depending on the state. With special respect to Romania, many more RR students than

HHs stick to state privileges and considerably less of them wish to make a living on the market. By contrast, RH students stand very close to HHs. This can be explained by two factors. First, after the collapse of communism, the borders between the two countries were opened up. Despite the lower living standards of RH students, in the new situation they could benefit from the financial support of state and private foundations in Hungary. Second, of course, their convergence to their colleagues can be attributed to their distrust towards the Romanian state as well.

70.2% of HHs, 81.8% RRs and 60.2% of RHs agree that the state should be firm and strong-willed in its decision-making. The great majority of students of Hungarian nationality reject dictatorial measures: five point one per cent of HHs and 11.4% RHs support the item suggesting that the army should implement order in the country; by contrast, this figure is 32.7% among RRs. As for the statement that "the activities of the oppositionist parties should be forced back" and "the state should prevent social and political riots by force" the figures are: eight point four per cent and 16.2% (HHs), eight point seven per cent (RRs) and 16.7% and 37.6% (RHs).

Youth centrism and statism

The opinion of youth centrist HH students differ from that of the others in the case of three items. Slightly more than ten per cent (10.1%) of them agree with "in our society only the army functions; it should be allowed to implement order in the country" (average: five point one per cent). As for "the activities of the oppositionist parties should be forced back", the percentages are 18.6% and eight point four per cent (average). The proportion of the supporters of the item "the state should prevent social and political riots by force" are: 20.6% and 16.2% (average). That is, compared to the end of the 1980s, we can witness a turnover in youth centrists' relationship to the state: while at the end of the last decade youth centrism meant hostility to the ruling communist party (in the case of a small group, this meant militancy against the state), nowadays a narrow minority of youth centrists supports a militant state!

The desire for a militant state is also strengthening in RR youth centrist circles. They support violent state intervention more than RR students in general do: 38.5% of them think that only the army functions and it should implement order, 17.9% of them hold the view that the opposition is to be forced back, 41% are of the opinion that riots must be prevented by force and 87.2% agree with the statement that only a strong state can preserve the natural and cultural resources of the country.

In contrast to RR youth centrists, RH youth centrists agree more than the average with every item but one. The only exception is "the state should prevent social and political riots by force", in the case of which the sympathy of youth centrists falls from the average 21.3% to six point seven per cent. If we take it into consideration that RH young people reject the Romanian state, we can understand why this mistrust towards the authorities increases and militarism decreases among youth rebels.

Post-conventional political activity

There is a marked contrast between the two politically most active groups: RR and Collegium youth centrist students. On the one hand, among the student elite in Hungary, youth revolt is accompanied by "post acquisitionist" (in this context: anti-consumerist) alternative culture, non-violent political action patterns and, as we could see above, anti-statism. On the other hand, RR youth rebels connect consumer culture with statism and aggressivity.

Accordingly, we can draw the conclusion that in this region the simultaneous presence of statism and consumer-oriented Westernization may result in the formation of aggressive post-conventional political action patterns. Compared to the theses formulated in earlier Western research literature on the dominance of alternative, post-acquisitive patterns in the orientation of post-conventional political action, this seems to be a new phenomenon.

Special attention should be paid to the in-between position of RH students in this respect. This unique situation can be explained by the fact that after the border between Hungary and Romania was opened in 1989, many Hungarian foundations and governmental agencies began to support RH students with financial aid (e.g. stipends). This resulted in a convergence between RHs and the student elite in Hungary which adopts alternative values and high culture. However, these possibilities were not offered to RR students. This neglect contributed to deepen the cultural vacuum in which they are forced to face the challenge of Western consumer culture. This makes them very vulnerable and insecure in their attempts to restructure their relations to tradition, authority and adults and also aggravates their sense of isolation. Given this, it is no wonder that they can show a tendency to understand this isolation in ethnic terms and, by so doing, may rely on aggressivity and on an omnipotent state.

Our interviews conducted with youth leaders in Transylvania showed that a minority of them did not realize that this policy can widen the gap between the two cultures. However, many of them are aware of the fact that the narrow-minded exclusion of Romanians from the benefits of Central and Western (not only consumerist!) culture may prove to have a very negative impact on themselves in the long run.

In the late seventies, Kaase and Barnes called attention to the transformation of political activity in Western democracies: conventional political activity is replaced by post-conventional political activity which results in the increasing scope and diversity of political activity. To explain this, two hypothetical scenarios were elaborated by theoretical literature.

According to the first hypothesis, increasing conflicts reduce legitimacy in Western democracies and this is the reason why the nature of political activity changes. Kaase and Barnes pointed out that this hypothesis was not verified by the survey conducted in five Western countries. The second hypothesis suggests that the need to influence and to participate in political decision-making increases in Western democracies; this results in more and more tensions in every aspects of life and, consequently, broadens the diversity of political activity forms. Kaase and Barnes emphasize that this scenario, which was first elaborated by Huntington and Bell in a theoretical article, was verified by their own research. They emphasize that post-conventional activity (signing petitions, civic initiative, strike, blocking the traffic, occupying flats) became part of political activity especially among young people which had been almost unprecedented in democratic public life even twenty years ago. Among young people, this new phenomenon is connected to the rising level of education. However, post-conventional political activity is interlinked not with young age but with the change of generation and is embedded in generational conflicts. Thus, it is most observable among young people who oppose the institutions and life career models of adult society.

Kaase and Barnes also suggest that post-conventional political activity

- a.) is integrated into post-materialist value systems;
- b.) is created by a learning process and by the need for change, and;
- c.) is influenced by the discrepancy that the mass media, which provide publicity for post-conventional politicking, are not integrated into the institutional system of democracy.

Among Hungarian university students we found that 67% of them have already participated and 61.8% of them are willing to participate or have already participated in legal political demonstrations and in signing petitions. Over forty-three per cent (43.6%) of them

would refuse to pay rent or tax, 22.3% would participate in conscious objection and 9.9% in demonstrations. Almost nine per cent (8.6%) of the respondents would take part in a wildcat strike, 4.6% in occupying factories or flats and 2.8% in damaging public or private property. Only 2.5% of the students would use violence against other persons and 2% would be a member in a terrorist group.

It can be said that in general there are no significant differences in post-conventional political action patterns between the subsamples. Here, with special respect to the importance of elites in shaping political action patterns, we shall analyze Collegium students in Hungary as well. However, we can find some exceptions. It is observable that RHs are the most interested in these forms of activity. As for RRs, it is noteworthy that they are the most willing to be on wildcat strike (18.5%); this form of protest has not been unprecedented in recent political events in Romania. So far as HHs are concerned, their peculiarity is that they (including Collegium students) would refuse to pay tax (23% and 22.3%) and (especially Collegium students) block the traffic with demonstration (34.5%). Interestingly enough, these forms of "trouble-making" are also popular among RH young people (traffic blockade: 23.2%, refusal to pay tax: 28%) who are devoted adherents of Hungarian (including political) culture.

Among youth centrists, it is interesting that the activity of HHs is less than the average in many respects. In contrast, youth centrist Collegium students are much more active than Collegium students in general are but, being the followers of alternative culture, they almost totally reject every form of violent protest. RR youth centrists are also considerably more willing to participate in post-conventional politicking than the average. However, this difference is not so marked in RH youth centrist circles; it is only refusal to pay tax (43.8%, compared to the average of 28%) and, surprisingly, violence against policemen (12.5% compared to the average of 4.3%) that shows a significant rise.

In general, students in Hungary are considerably more interested in politics than their colleagues in Romania (especially RRs) are. It is noticeable that it is among Collegium students in Hungary and RRs that the interest in politics of youth centrists rises to a great extent.

Summary

The tendencies of individualization, growing autonomy and diversification of youth styles can be observed in both countries. The more closed the world of young people and the more widespread the shortage was, the stronger the impact of consumer culture on a country and the more intensive was the youth revolt against adult society, which can result in intolerance and aggressivity.

In Hungary, the influx of Western consumer goods and partners has slowly but gradually begun from the 1960s on already. Thus, the parents of present-day Hungarian students could mediate some bourgeois, consumerist values to their children. In contrast, Romania was characterised by cruel, state-controlled restriction of consumption till 1989. Thus, Romanian young people have to elaborate bourgeois strategies and adapt to Western consumer patterns on their own too quickly in a conservative-minded adult society which is very ignorant of, if not hostile to, the Western way of life. This challenge may result in aggressive, fundamentalist responses on both sides.

As a seemingly paradoxical consequence of this, support of state omnipotence may increase because traditional authorities (e.g. the family as primary community and also a target of both identification and revolt) are still strong in Romania. Besides, there is also an important factor that explains aggressivity and statism. In the case of young people who depend on adult society, consumer culture is less diversified, its impact on youth is more

dramatic and is controlled much more by external agencies (i.e. the family, the state) than by the youngsters themselves. Thus, however strong the desire of youth in Romania is to become independent, their possibilities to fulfil this are much more restricted than are those of HHs. Although the institutions in Hungary also could not follow the orientations and mobility aspirations of young people, the gap between ambitions and reality is even much wider in Romania where the change of society and the development of economy is seriously lagging behind the expectations created by the rapid spreading of consumerism.

Here, it seems to be instrumental to summarize both (a) the findings which corroborate and (b) the results which falsify our starting hypotheses.

- | (a) | (b) |
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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Progress in embourgeoisement is accompanied by the individualization of young people and the diversification of youth culture. – The diversification of youth culture results in increased interest in politics, the widening scope of political action patterns and the rejection of aggressivity and statism. – The lower level of embourgeoisement and individualization does not exclude consumerism. On the contrary, it may lead to indiscriminate consumption accompanied by growing support for statism. Under these circumstances, consumer culture becomes dominant in youth culture and, accordingly, the mass media come to the fore. – Indiscriminate consumption does not contradict statism and aggressive post-conventional political action patterns. Rather, if interest in politics is low, it can strengthen their impact on young people. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – The two hypothetical scenarios are not separate in either countries. – Traditional value orientations and ethnic and cultural differences are still much stronger than we expected. When these remnants of the past face the challenge of modern consumer culture, the confrontation may cause serious conflicts among youth. Despite the common tendencies, they can temporarily deepen differences between ethnic groups, countries and cultures as well. – Under the difficult conditions of the transition, university students can fluctuate between the individualist and the statist scenario and their choice may depend rather on pragmatism than on a crystallized commitment to values. – Youth centrists are also divided in their reactions. Most of them support the statist scenario and only the elite is for the individualist scenario. – If the rapid influx of consumer culture is not accompanied by increased contacts between ethnic groups, cultures and countries, it may deepen their segregation. |

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