

# A.1.1. Nightlife in Hungary

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## STATE OF THE ART

### 2.1. Introduction

To escape from the routine of everyday life is everyone-who-is-living-in-the-late-modern-age's wish. Although the majority of people living in Europe enjoy more free time than ever in the last hundred years, life has become more turbulent in general and especially after the onset of the current financial crisis started in 2008. Nowadays we are facing the entrance to a new historic period that follows the decades of the post war welfare society.

Stressful life and working circumstances always force people to find opportunities for releasing tension. For this purpose special free time and leisure time experiences are regularly offered by tourist agencies for seasonal holidays, but still people like losing their social roles and obligations more frequently. Although activities people do in their leisure time, in order to have fun or celebrate, belong to their personal sphere, they do them in someone else's company, which is why they are commonly considered as community experiences. In social sciences these kinds of leisure activities are usually classified as "after work" or nightlife experiences, which refers to the timing of the activities. In this sense this report focuses on recent evolutions in nightlife in Hungary.

As a national report it does not contain comparisons with other countries, although significant differences are found in the social structures in countries on the two sides of the river Leitha. Without going into details at least two characteristics are worth mentioning. On the one hand nightlife was a signal of democratic changes in the late 1980s and early 1990s in the countries in transition. At that time –as opposed to what had been before– independent urban places could open freely and attract more and more people. Although it had a kind of gate opening effect on the Hungarian population, new venues shortly became posh and prude places, typically discotheques (playing euro disco and early acid house) without any live instrumental music. Live performing arts were drawn back to alternative festivals and smaller concert places.

On the other hand, overarching but overdue changes in cultural production and consumption (not to speak about the star system!) resulted in a western type of consumption habits by the turn of the 21st century. Major changes can be described such as the expansion of education, more precisely, the mass appearance of the youth in higher education and of the students in nightlife therefore, of course; and youth culture (music, clothes, etc.) became dominant in the media and in real life as well. This later change is often referred to as the cultural paradigm shift. Nevertheless, current late modern Hungarian culture and nightlife experience can be traced back only a decade; therefore this report highlights major changes and the formation of late modern nightlife at the same time.

Regarding the participation of the youth one might consider as the ones going out when talking about the participants of the nightlife, they mostly belong to the youth Generation Y (born between 1976 and 1995) and Z (born after 1996). It might be a special Hungarian phenomenon that Generation Y started at the peak of the last baby boom with about 170.000-190.000 new born babies yearly, but the generation suffered from a continuous decrease of babies born later on. After 1980 yearly birth giving decreased to 100.000-150.000 and has stayed below 100.000 yearly after 2000. Technically, while the potential number of the youth has decreased to its half, a cultural paradigm shift and expansion of education offset this effect. According to a 2011 census, 2.659 million young people (0-25 years old) live in Hungary, of which some 1.4 million people belong to the age group of 16-29.

Regarding cultural space, nightlife in Budapest cannot be discussed without mentioning three special types of institution:

- Ruin pubs or gardens
- Rave/acid/techno parties on streets and special places
- Contemporary arts promoter places (Young Artists' Club, Trafó House of Contemporary Arts, A38 Ship).
- Traditional discotheque playing euro-disco and techno

Generation Y has had to go through two consumption shifts in the last two decades. They grew up in the traditional euro disco of the 1980s; they joined the rave/acid parties of the 1990s and finally they started to enjoy the atmosphere of ruin bars. Today traditional discotheque venues advertise retro parties playing the music of the 1970s and the 1980s, while rave/acid parties are usually held at contemporary arts places, ruin bars and thermal spas.

The first acid party was held on Tamás Király's birthday, an underground fashion designer, on September 13th, 1989. Young Artists' Club served as a venue and the music was presented by two resident DJs from Roxy Club, Amsterdam. Tamás Király made the night memorable by UV reactive body and clothing dyes, smoke machines and strobes for his 400 guests (Kömlödi-Pánczél: 864). Later a lot of new clubs and open-air places were revealed for the purpose of rave parties in the city. The original acid/techno music had a second growth in the early 2000s but today it lives in the new trends of electro music like trance, trip hop, speed garage, happy hard-core, big beat or dub step, etc. Today popular electric music party venues are thermal spas too.



Cinetrip Bath Show (electronic music party) at Széchenyi Thermal Spa, 2012  
source: <http://www.journality.hu/Cinetrip-beszamolo-Water-Circus/133/13518/0>

Some of today's contemporary arts venues are linked to the organisers and artists of Young Artists' Club. For decades (1960-1998) Young Artists' Club did not adopt a formal artistic phenomenon. Spiritual manifestations were the introduction of the site, in addition to active club life art exhibitions, music concerts and lectures, which also characterized its profile. After 1998, House of Contemporary Arts, created by the Municipality of Budapest, became its successor. Trafó is a place where every kind of contemporary production can take place, from dance and music to exhibitions, etc. Another exceptional place was designed on a ship called A38, opened in 2003. Today it is a concert place, restaurant and exhibition hall open to different kinds of recent cultural phenomena.



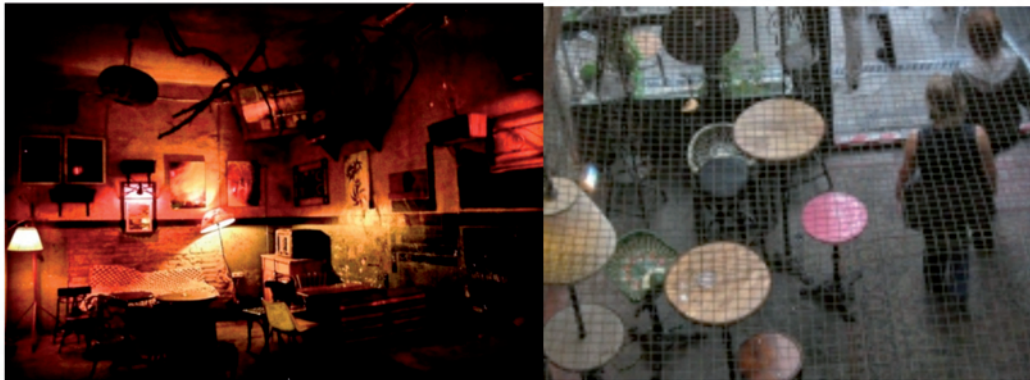
Trafó House of Contemporary Arts and A38 Ship

Although innovative new places are relatively often open in Budapest, such memorable places like Trafó, A38 or Gödör Club (meaning Pit Club, created around the 3 metro junctions at Deák Square) are very rare. Open places cannot continuously operate, but for 7-8 months yearly they are part of the business as another type of nightlife venues; Green Pardon (Zöld Pardon) was one of the first venues like this; they are open to pop-rock and electric music as well.



Green Pardon (Zöld Pardon)

In the early 2000s, ruin bars became new symbols of contemporary nightlife in Budapest. Of course ruin bars are not about the dangers of having party in a deteriorating environment, but much rather about utilizing the unused areas of the city before investors come. In this sense ruin bars are temporary and are surrounded by a historical uniqueness. This period of time will not last forever, but will not soon go away either, since the downtown itself is relatively large –compared to Prague and Vienna, Budapest’s population and geographical city size is nearly the double– and it has many undiscovered ruin places. (Török 2014)



Szimpla Ruin Bar, 2013, source: [www.szimpla.hu](http://www.szimpla.hu)

Today, due to the urban rehabilitation process recently called “New Main Street”, there are several areas where night life gets concentrated in the form of noisy walking streets and different newly designed venues mixing food, drink and electric music. The most popular areas are Rádai Street (9th district), Király and Kazinczy Streets and surroundings (7th district), and the newly rehabilitated October 6th and Zrínyi Streets, Erzsébet Square and surroundings (5th district, downtown). Newly designed party venues can be found not just in the basement and on the roof, bars are not just open to the street but new kinds of redesigned venues are using the civil inner courtyard of apartment blocks or burgher houses for party purposes.



Night shots at Rádai, Király and Zrínyi Street.

This variety of venues makes nightlife exciting and entertaining; however, physical spaces are just one dimension of nightlife researches. Nevertheless, the link between nightlife and urban design, nightlife and cultural memory and nightlife and industry creates the opportunity to research nightlife in a multi-disciplinary way. Therefore available sources for researching nightlife in Hungary reflect historical and sociological characteristics and a scientific approach as well. Youth report –known in Europe as a national survey in every fourth year– and urban studies are the two main fields that cover the field of nightlife. Besides these, the report is mainly grounded in the author’s research and background (contemporary culture and festivities), completed with secondary sources from the relevant media. In general, this document shall be considered as a pilot project, a preliminary research for a later European research on nightlife. In this context, the purpose of the report is to explore how nightlife is considered, problematized and discussed in Hungary, and it gives some perspectives for further research on consumption habits in the Night-Time Economy.

## 2.2. Academic Approaches in nightlife and the youth

Urban studies are one of the main academic fields that discuss urban infrastructure and society in a complex manner. Authors generally agree that Budapest is a city with rich and diverse cultural heritage –both in built and intangible heritage– it is quite mono cultural yet innovative. However, the development of the city is quite different from other cities in the world. Budapest took part in a worldwide process of a demographic and economic concentration in the last centuries, but the concentration has slowed down in the last 50 years –despite of the fact that other metropolises continued concentrating (Enyedi 2003). Dynamics took reasonably different direction after the Peace Treaty (1920), when this Twin-Capital of the Austro Hungarian Empire suddenly lost the majority of its regional influence and became an overdeveloped capital of a middle size country called Hungary, causing national trauma. This inorganic process has signals even today. Debrecen, the second largest city, has only 11,5% population compared to Budapest. In the last 50 years concentration has not just slowed down, but Budapest has lost approximately 10% of its population since 1990, which was a benefit for the catchment area –probably because of the non-developing circumstances in the city. Since 2007 the population has started to grow, due to the newly started development and regeneration processes, thus the city has 1.73 million inhabitants –according to the census of 2011.

Besides the alteration of demographic and economic concentration, the cultural origin of the population reasonably changed in the 20th century. More than 90 % of the population have a Hungarian cultural origin today (both for Budapest and Hungary). One can hardly imagine that Budapest was a German speaking city in the 19th century. Immigrants could enter the border in relatively large numbers after 1990, but the relative majority of the immigrants were Hungarians from the neighbouring countries and from the former 1956’s emigrant families (mostly from the USA). Therefore Budapest can hardly be nominated as a multicultural city on the basis of the current population and immigration issues; however, there are some micro-areas showing the characteristics of cultural diversity due to a population having Chinese and Roman origins (Keresztély – Szabó 2006: 102).

Housing and living conditions in urban areas are one of the central questions of urban studies. Budapest occupies a fair size of territory (with its 525 square meter territory it is five times bigger than the 105-square-meter-territory of Paris without its catchment area) and is governed by a large number of district’s authorities (23), which does not make it easy for the Lord Mayor to manage the city as one unit. This has caused a lot of problems in the last few decades, especially since the democratic development process started in 1990. Housing and living circumstances were differently managed in different districts, while urban rehabilitation plans and projects started relatively late and overdue. That is why many ruin areas could survive the second half of the 20th century and also a reason why urban development is strongly connected to cultural development. Culture based development requires slow and organic processes, where cultural players can develop new services, attract locals and visitors and also find new functions for micro areas. Creating new cultural venues and new services that bring good news and better reputation for the micro-area can be a bottom up process, but also a well-planned urban rehabilitation project (Keresztély 2007). Nevertheless, the lack of urban rehabilitation planning in the 1990s created good possibilities for bottom up processes and occupation actions in the 2000s. The rehabilitation of the downtown is already a well-developed project called “A belváros új főutcája” (The New Main Street of the Downtown) that started in 2012, but it is often discussed that urban rehabilitation in Budapest seems to be a never ending story, since there are districts (i.e. district #7) where 90% of the buildings were built before World War I.

Bottom up processes, namely the spread of ruin bars in Budapest, significantly reshaped nightlife in Hungary in the 2000s. Authors do not agree about which drinking, eating and music venue was the first or the forerunner that opened in a dilapidated area in Budapest, but Pótkulcs (meaning spare key” or lath key”, 1999) and Szimpla (meaning “single”, 2002) were among

them for sure. Nevertheless, authors agree that Szimpla was the one that created the sustainable model for future ruin bars. It was opened in the 7th district and –as many of the ruin bars– had to move into a different place few years after opening, but stayed in the same district. Today the majority of the bars are situated in the 6th, 7th and 8th district where the most dilapidated houses are, and most of them have a local uniqueness (like Anker't) provided by the infrastructure. Debates and conflicts with the neighbours and owners were quite recurrent; but pubs have proved their flexibility during the years (Lugosi et al 2010).



Anker't (left) and Szimpla (right) Ruin Garden

The temporariness atmosphere surrounds these kinds of bars but also the original cultural memory of the buildings around. Atmosphere includes special visual communication, lights, colours, music and smell, but, as a local specialty, the first light paintings have become regular in ruin bars (Agárdi 2010). This atmosphere together with the furniture, paintings and floor provides an extraordinary service environment for the youth (Bo Ho Voon, 2012). The cultural memory of built heritage is a different case, because these districts were touched by multiculturalism, despite of the fact that today they are left for being dilapidated. Originally the population was mixed German, Slovakian, Jewish and Hungarian, but today the houses and sites are empty. To connect to the cultural memory ruin gardens usually choose their names after the name or original function of the house or name of the former owner. The success of ruin bars influenced the touristic approach as well. Lonely Planet 2013 TOP 10 recommendation includes the ruin bars of Budapest. While CNN recommend Budapest as TOP 10 spots in Europe:

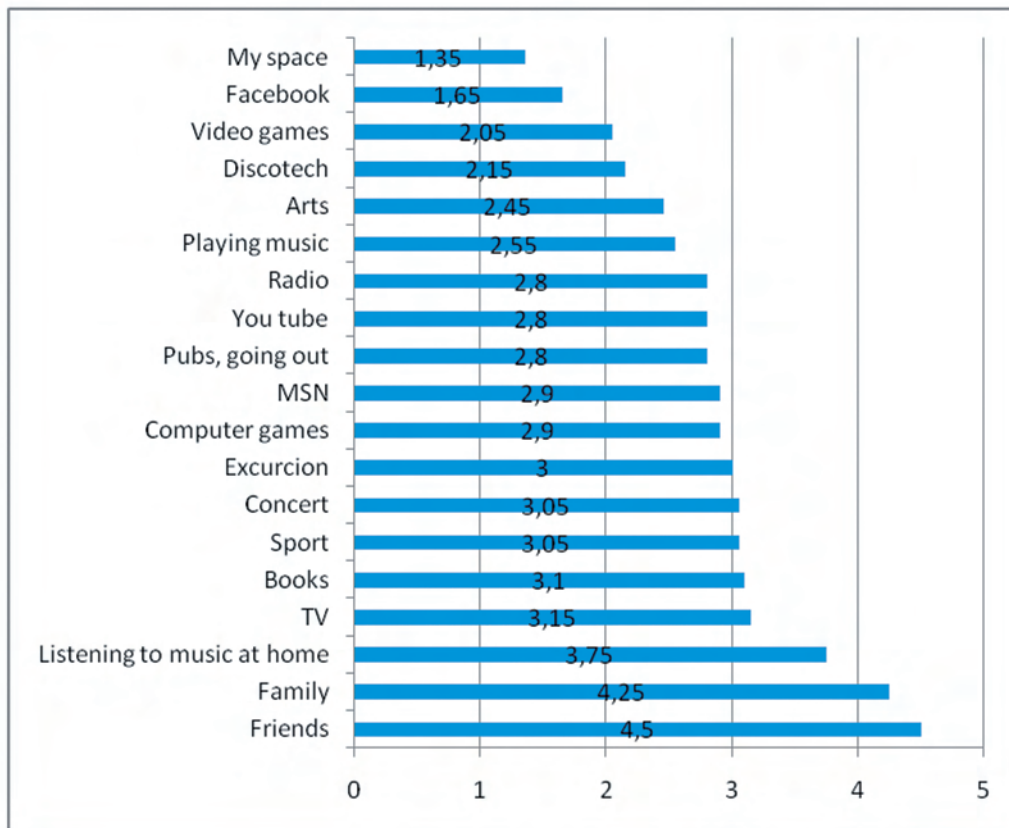
*"There are a variety of different looks to them: Some are hipster weed patches with drinks, and others are manicured gardens," he said. "It's a unique type of bar you're not going to find in most other places." These "ruin bars" are mostly open in the summer, although some are starting to winterize their locations, so they can be open for more than the May-to-September season. Although some bars often switch locations, Szimpla Kert is one of the oldest, and visitors can find other bars on the same strip." (Hetter, 2013)*

Other nightlife programmes are situated in different other districts, in the 9th district in Rádai Street, in the 7th district around Király and Kazinczy Streets, and in the downtown (5th district) around October 6 and Zrínyi Streets and Erzsébet Square. Some important places are situated around the South Buda University Campus and Margitsziget. Discotheques are concentrated in North Buda mainly. Besides ruin bars there are no important types of bars that attract the attention of academic research, however, some research focusing on contemporary arts pay attention to places taking part in night life entertainment.

A completely different field is youth research that covers the habits, thinking and consumption of the youth. The main research in this field is the Youth Report (Bauer - Szabó 2008, 2012) that covers a research on the youth's demographic, education, family, work and other expectations and satisfactions. Other reports focus on festivals, cultural institutions, and development of different genre of arts. These kinds of reports also include some data on cultural consumption.

Another recent research called Fanta Trend Report (on the sponsor's recommendation) directly focuses on the youth's free time using habits.

DIAGRAM 1. PREFERENCES OF DIFFERENT PROGRAMMES AMONG HUNGARIAN YOUNGSTERS  
(5 MOST IMPORTANT TO 1 LEAST IMPORTANT, N=500)



(Ságvári 2009:8)

In this report Ságvári (2009) finds that one third of the youngsters spend more than 3 hours with friends on the weekends, and they consider it the most important (4,5 on a 0-5 Likert scale) free time programme compared to family, listening to music, sport, computer games, TV, live music, etc. (see diagram 1). Pubs and bars, going out, received 2,8 points, which is around the average (2,85). The most frequent place to go were pubs and bars, 23% said that they went to these kinds of places more than once per week, another 23% said that several times a month, altogether 46% went to pubs and bars at least a few times a month. Only 21% said never going to pubs and bars.

Regarding conflicts linked to nightlife visitors, the most reported are ruin bars' and electric music parties' visitors and their conflicts with the secondary school generation (age 14-18), practically Generation Z, who go to party in large and loud groups. They usually sit, stand or dance separately from older young people (over 20). They use the Internet and electronic gadgets since the beginning of their life, but they read less and find Facebook already old fashioned. For them being at a party means an extraordinary community experience, therefore they behave, dress and look like extravagant millionaires or at least electric music mega stars. Other visitors are afraid of being noticed or being subject of ridicule.

Other important conflicts between locals and visitors have reached the receptors of local politicians. The regulation of noise at the most popular areas are on the problems-to-be-solved list of local politicians responsible for Rádai Street (9th district), Király and Kazinczy Streets and surroundings (7th district), and the newly rehabilitated October 6 and Zrínyi Streets, Erzsébet Square and surroundings (5th district, downtown).

### 2.2.1. Hospitality in Budapest: deregulation reregulation

Hospitality and leisure activities in Budapest are regulated by national laws. Since the beginning of the 90s, unregulated liberal legal framework has been changed thoroughly into a detailed regulation. In the beginning, nightlife had no special rules and controlling authority, but after some tragic events more and more questions were raised.

The latest turning point was the tragedy of the West Balkán on January 15th, 2011. The discotheque was situated in a former shopping centre called Skála Metró, in front of the Western Railway Station at Nyugati Square.



The building of Skála Metró, where West Balkán discoteque took place.

The problem was that mass hysteria arose and people wanted to enter and to leave the building at the same time, but there were not enough emergency doors for 3000 people (originally the venue got license for only 1800 people). Finally three women died. The mass media put the news into the headlights; the minister of home office and the prime minister argued that rules of nightlife, especially mass events, must be strengthened and controlled more efficiently.

Debates included issues covering not just safety and personal protection, security services (including financial guarantees) and fire protection, but also public policy, security in public areas, civil protection, consumer protection, health and safety, prevention, accident prevention and civilized entertainment. Within two months the government accepted the government decree 23/2011. (III. 8.) on safer operation of music and dance events. Since then, music and dance event organisers have had to apply for an event certificate from the local notary. Certificates must be issued within 20 days upon submitting a request. These public organisations are taking part in the licensing process and are in charge of controlling the event minimum once a year:

- Public Health Institute
- Building authority
- Fire authority
- Police

The application must contain the authorised description (size in square meter) of the venue, applicants' name and authorisation data, the name of the event, accompanying services, timing and frequency of the event, emergency plan and fire safety regulations. The notary must organise a site visit and coordinate further control visits. Regular events must stand two control visits (in programme time) a year. The government decree was modified two months later by 94/2011. (VI. 28.) Government Decree, which simplified the licensing process.

According to the Government Decree music and dance events must have a legal notification when:

- Regularly organised or when they have a determined date and time;
- Events are organised indoor or outdoor for attracting masses (for more than 1000 persons);
- Open to everyone, not closed;
- When presenting a selection of disc or live performance or event music service providers as a main service;
- They cannot be redeemed for participation seats (tickets).

Besides this Government Decree other relevant regulations are laid down in

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- Act 1989. III. on the right of assembly
- Act 1999. LXIX. on offences
- 218/1999. (XII. 28.) government decree on special offences
- Act 1978. IV. on the criminal code
- Act 2005. CXXXIII. on persons and property protection and the rules of private investigation activities
- Act 2004. I. on sport
- Act 54/2004. (III. 31.) government decree on the safety of sport events
- other government decrees

On the basis of the new regulation, nightlife venues can be classified as covered automatically by the new regulation or not, besides the usual conventional/ nonconformists.

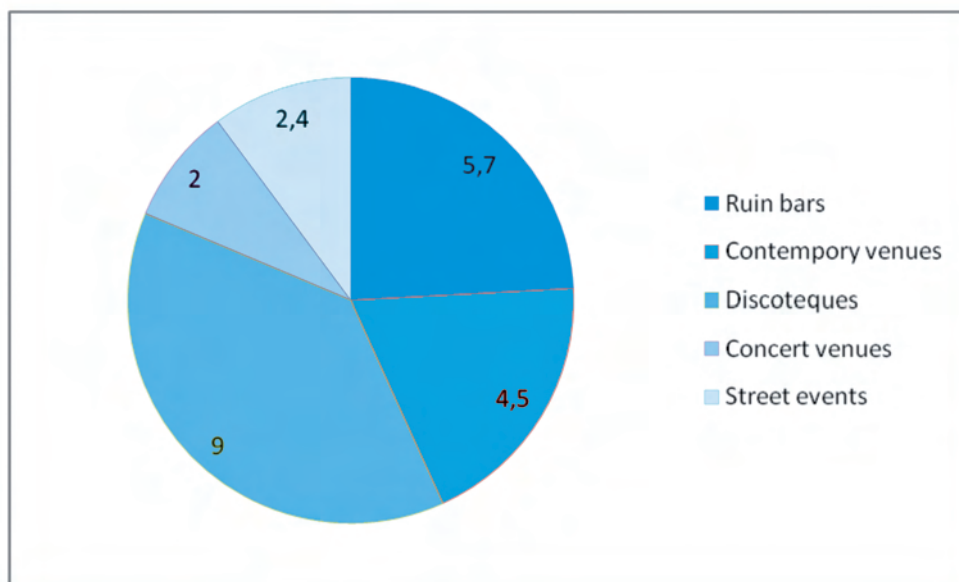
TABLE 1. LIMITS OF CURRENT REGULATION

	Not covered automatically by the new regulation	Under the new regulation
Contemporary	Ruin bars and gardens A38 ship, Trafó	Contemporary (nonconformist) festivals
Conventional	Private parties +18 clubs	Discotheques, Conformist festivals

Regarding the role of nightlife, socialisation processes are essential. In theoretical literature “nightlife economy” is not developed well yet, no relevant information is available on it. Nevertheless, night-timed mass leisure industries are usually taken into account when planning urban regeneration processes and public policies.

In financial matters Nóra Somlyódy (2007) published the income data of Szimpla ruin garden which showed some 0,4 billion euro yearly income from one pub! No other venues’ data has come to light before and after, however, we can calculate a similar but probably lower average income for the existing 19 ruin bars that are listed by www.romkocsmak.hu web site. All in all, estimated yearly balance of ruin pubs and gardens must be about 6-8 million euro. Other contemporary places like A38 ship, Trafó, etc. probably gain not much more than half of this amount yearly. Other places like discotheques, concert venues and street events in Budapest must achieve a reasonable balance, despite of the fact that not all of them operate continuously. Altogether the calculated nightlife budgets result in 25-30 million euro turnovers in Budapest –according to my estimation.

DIAGRAM 2. ESTIMATED BUDGET OF NIGHTLIFE IN BUDAPEST.  
(MILLION EUR)



This balance contains most of the places that are involved into young generations’ nightlife, but does not contain the venues that are also part of the business but not limited to the youth, this is why casinos and nightclubs are not included.

### 2.2.2. Nightlife in Hungary: representation in secondary sources

Relatively few academic reviews cover the issue of nightlife and they usually cover problems, dynamics of ruin bars and urban rehabilitation. Therefore one must turn to the media coverage in order to get a picture of how the subject is problematized in Hungary. The media usually try to reflect the public opinion and focus on emotions in order to attract more viewers. Therefore it is not surprising that scandals and criminals are in focus, mostly the car accidents of youngsters driving home after parties.



In the beginning of the 2000s media highlighted the conflicts of ruin bars and owners, especially the debates about Tűzraktár (Fire Warehouse), opened in 2005. From June to October some volunteers led by a management group (also volunteers) called FunGo Association organized programs in a building owned by a private person, named Dr. László Ruzdas. In the first season from June to October they had exhibitions with 180 artists, 64 theatrical performances, 10 dance performances, 147 concerts, 2 circus performances, 13 avant-garde performances, 5 literature programmes and 5 fashion shows carried out in a 12.000 square meters building in Tűzoltó (meaning Firemen) street 54-56 (9th district). Organisers realised a lot of problems that were discovered during the operation process: noise, security, non-paying pub management. In the second season the management split into different groups but the inner circle continued to set up a different management group under a modified name called Tűzraktér (Fire Ware place) under the umbrella of a different organisation called Art Sector Foundation. After the second season they had serious conflicts with underworld security persons and again with the pub management, and the local government wanted to close this unique but privately owned place, programmed by an autonomous group of young people (source: [www.tuzrakter.hu](http://www.tuzrakter.hu)). Later the group moved to a local government owned building at 3 Hegedű Street but soon similar problems came to light: the self-government wanted the management to leave the building or pay more rental fee, while the management of Tűzraktér started a Facebook campaign in order to stay in the same place with all the artist groups (Kovács 2011). Finally the self-government started to run the building without the former management group and this way the self-government had a stronger control on nightlife. Former Tűzraktér management started a lawsuit.<sup>1</sup>

The other important action having media coverage was the closing down of László Vizoviczky's nightlife entertainment businesses. He was the key person in the Hungarian discotheques and entertainment business, but, as it turned out, he used mafia methods in order to obstruct his competitors and enjoy immunity from the police in the illegal drug business. The majority of the discotheque-like venues in Budapest and in Hungary had belonged to him by the end of 2012, therefore the market is being readjusted now (Csikász 2013). His most famous venue was situated in Óbuda Island, where Sziget festival took place in summer. Vizoviczky's colleague and successor was probably poisoned after having taken over the business from him.

Regarding public policies the Hungarian Government has accepted the National Youth Strategy 2009-2024 that is under revision currently. The introduction of the strategy indirectly covers the issue of nightlife under the cultural consumption section and community life section. Among the strategic goals it includes section 4.6.2.2-Creation of cultural values, cultural mediation that is about to identify the need for cultural mediation bodies. Section 4.6.2.3 on Consciousness and social integration targets to cover the issue of an inclusive society. Section 4.6.3.1 on civil society focuses on the importance of the involvement of the youth into local non-profit organisations. The government decision prescribes that the strategy has to have action plans for every three years.

Other secondary sources focus on the habits of the time spent with friends and the effects of technology on youngsters' community actions. As a special target group students living at university campuses are covered by a reasonable share of researches on issues of young people's interests.<sup>2</sup>

### 2.3. Statistical data on the youth's nightlife

As discussed in the first part of this report, the main characteristics of the development in Hungarian night life landscape are those of the transition from conventional nightlife to a late modern Night-Time Economy, the disappearance of discotheques and the appearance of ruin bars and gardens and those of the de-criminalisation of venues and reregulation of mass events.

Although there was a Safe Entertainment Venues Programme (2000-2002), specific indicators were created by the National Youth Strategy (2009-2024), and its action plan for 2012-13 shall be introduced in order to illustrate the expected outcome of the changes. The administrative body responsible for the strategy currently is the State Secretariat responsible for Sport and Youth Affairs at the Ministry of Human Resources; however, the strategy itself was developed and accepted by the former government (2008-10) and the Ministry of Children, Youth Affairs and Sport.

The Hungarian National Youth Strategy was formed following the European Commission White Paper -where a new impetus for the European youth is that the youth is identified as the age group 15-25. Although the National Youth Strategy extended

<sup>1</sup> [http://nol.hu/kult/a\\_tuzrakter\\_perbe\\_hivia\\_budapestet](http://nol.hu/kult/a_tuzrakter_perbe_hivia_budapestet)

<sup>2</sup> *Living at Campus (In Hungarian: Campuslét) was itself a research Project 2010-2012 at Debrecen University. For more info: <http://campuslet.unideb.hu/>*

this age group from the age 8-12 up to age 25-30 in its Index 2, the statistics cover the age group 15-29. A more detailed description found in the introduction: young people are considered “autonomous individuals capable of making decisions to shape the future, the opportunity to exploit their abilities.” (pp13.)

Despite of this wide focus, the strategy has a limited relevance: “strategy is a summary of state responsibility for youth and embodiment” (page 13). This could mean that all objectives and priorities are to be implemented by state bodies (including institutions and arm’s length principle bodies) or supported by public funds.

The main chapters (analysis and objectives) cover

- Demographic situation, family and social sustainability, long term effects
- Education, training, talent, social mobility
- Employment, labour market situation
- Marginalization, exclusion
- Consumption, economic situation
- Culture, media, info-communication
- Youth and health
- Youth and crime, deviations
- Community, participation, public life
- Geographical mobility, migration

This overarching approach of the National Youth Strategy carries the risk of being lost in details or of being insufficient. Indeed, the strategy grabs some specific problems and fields but the whole picture remains fragmented and the reader may have the feeling of missing the essence. This feeling strengthens while reading the indicators.

*TABLE 2. RELEVANT INDICATORS CONSIDERED BY THE NATIONAL YOUTH STRATEGY*

indicator	expectation
• Hours spent in a cultural activity (average weekly)	increase
• Cultural activities that never rate among 15 to 29 year olds	decrease
• At least one foreign language speakers share within the youth age groups	increase
• Every year, over a period of a week in a foreign language environment	increase
• Reject rate of foreign and minority people among young people	decrease
• Participation of foreigner young people in youth Exchange programs in Hungary	increase
• Cultural youth exchange programmes and co-operations between Hungarians on both sides of the border	increase
• Rate of young people involved into community and charitable activity	increase
• Proportion of young men in the youth age groups	increase
• Share of organisations promoting attitude development programs among all organizations	increase
• Integrated programs for disability	increase
• Disabled and non-disabled integrated programs for children	increase
• Weekly Sport activities in children groups,	increase
• Number of active youth organizations	increase
• The number of active members of youth organizations	increase
• per thousand persons concerned youth-oriented community space (m2)	increase
• Work done by youth volunteers (HUF)	increase
• the proportion of members in the age of offenders	decrease
• Number of youth reached by prevention programs	increase
• organizations providing prevention programs	increase
• proportion of youth organizations among all organisations	increase
• number of organizations performing public tasks civilian youth service	increase
• participating of youth organizations , communities in decision -making	increase
• Number cohort members participating in formal organizations active	increase
• Number of Local Governments with youth referrals	increase
• Number of accredited youth service providers	increase

This unfocused list reveals the lack of strategic thinking, because there are a lot of objectives and indicators reflecting various problems but there is no clear scope of what the most important is and the objectives are not set into a clear structure. Therefore this strategy sends the message of “everything is important” therefore nothing is “really important”. Above all, this old fashioned strategy does not pay any attention to nightlife and the risks of nightlife.

The forthcoming new action plan has not been finished and publically available yet, but its logic shall be more reasonably structured. Besides the indicators of the National Youth Strategy it is essential to turn to the National Statistical Office statistics in order to see how youth nightlife is covered by the largest official statistical data collection.

It is easily recognisable that ruin bars and discotheques are not surveyed in the official statistics and only a smaller part of concert venues are considered –provided they are situated in an interdisciplinary cultural centre–, as for example A38 ship, which is part of an interdisciplinary scene. Other contemporary places like Trafó House of Contemporary Arts are parts of performing arts data. The reason for the reduced scope is the fact that the Central Statistical Office covers only institutions receiving grant or structural fund from central or local public bodies. Detailed data shows how visits to cultural institutions have decreased and how this has tried to get balanced by a decreasing trend in the number of institutions in last decade. An improvement has shown only by the theatre scene alone.

*TABLE 3: CINEMA, THEATRE AND CONCERT STATISTICS, 1990-2012*

Year	1990	2000	2004	2008	2010	2011	2012
Cinemas (No.)	1 960	564	531	418	411	..	..
Cinema projections (1 000)	416	372	445	472	478	..	..
Cinema (million visits)	36.2	14.3	13.6	11.6	11.1	..	..
Cinema (visits per citizen per year)	3.5	1.4	1.3	1.2	1.1	..	..
*Theatre (No.)	43	52	56	74	143	170	171
*Theatre (1 000 performances)	12	13	14	15	19	21	22
*Theatre (No. of visits per 1 000 persons)	482	393	460	406	458	475	515
Concerts (No.)	1 723	1 281	1 395	2 785	3 654	3 830	3 176
Concert (1 000 visits)	749	426	455	954	994	1 197	1 099
Concert (No. of visits per 1 000 persons)	72	42	45	95	99	120	111

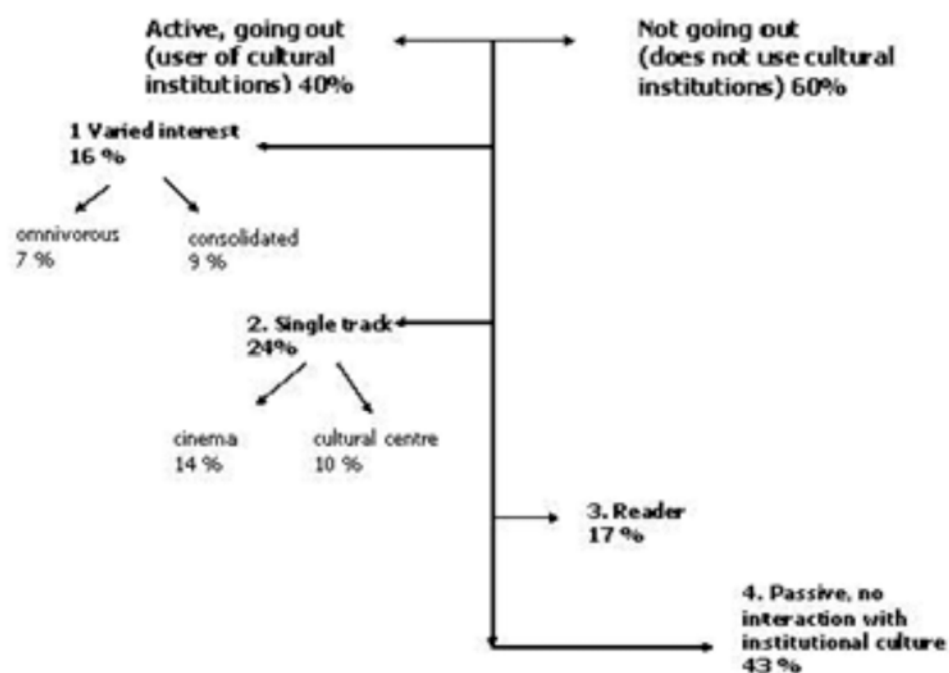
Source: Central Statistical Office.

\* From 2008, statistics include independent / alternative theatres, too. Only classical music is included under concerts; from 2008, statistics cover a fuller range than previously.

The absenteeism of ruin bars, discotheques and other popular music concert venues, not to speak about most of the contemporary places, in the categories of the Central Statistical Office can partly explain why visits to traditional cultural institutions have decreased. Visitors probably have not disappeared in a huge number but night time expectations of young generations have changed as well as the physical space in the city of Budapest.

The overall use of cultural institutions, modelled by Hunyadi (2005), showed a massive group of passivity. She found that those who did not go out created the largest group of people with about 60% of the total population, while the people with varied interests represented only 16%.

PICTURE 1. CULTURAL ACTIVITY PATTERNS OF THE HUNGARIAN SOCIETY



Source: Hunyadi 2005

Searching for the reasons of the lack of interaction with cultural institutions, available financial sources must have a role in this pervasive passivity. Considering household spending in 2009 from the value of 771 146 HUF (0.7% decrease compared to 2008) a reasonable share, 4.1%, went to culture. Afterwards, in 2010 and 2011 the relative percentage of cultural spending as well as the amount spent on culture slightly decreased. The nominal value of cultural spending decreased by 1.3% but if we consider the inflation (2.5% in 2011) or the consumer price index (CPI, 3.9 in 2011) the real value of the decrease in cultural spending must have been about 3.8-5.2%, which is a huge year/year reduction. Furthermore we cannot have positive expectations for the year 2012 or 2013 because real household incomes decreased by 2.2% in 2012 and 0.1% in 2013.

TABLE 4: HOUSEHOLD EXPENDITURE FOR PRIVATE CULTURAL PARTICIPATION AND CONSUMPTION, BY DOMAINS, IN HUF, PER CAPITA, 2010 AND 2011

Items (field / domain)	Household expenditure for culture		% share of total household expenditure	
	2010	2011	2010	2011
News, journals	4 053	4 222	0.52%	0.51%
Cultural services (cinemas, theatres, museums, etc.)	15 069	14 243	1.92%	1.74%
Cultural tourism	14 494	14 463	1.85%	1.76%
TOTAL	59 761	58 990	7.62%	7.20%

Source: <http://www.ksh.hu>

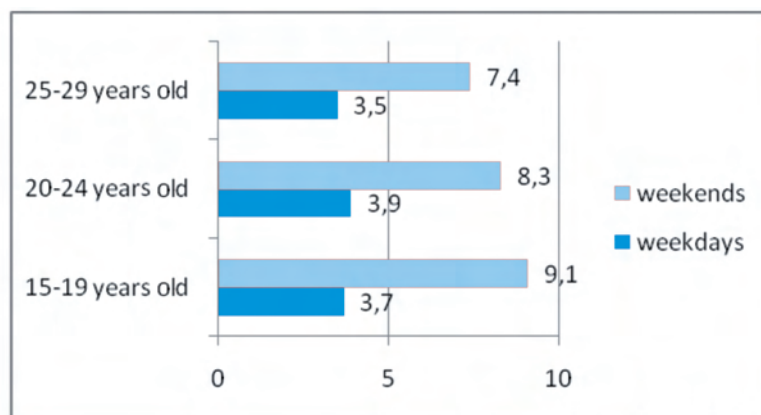
Another important youth statistic is the Hungarian Youth 2012 Report. Essays of this study book are set into nine different issues:

- Demography
- Family and children
- Education
- Employment
- Mobility
- Risk behaviour
- Free time
- Media consumption
- Participation in civic and public life (relation to politics and church)

In the chapter on risk behaviour articles cover risks like smoking, alcohol, mental health, accidents and suicides. Although the 2012 report has done a great step forward to a well-shaped, focused and clearly prioritised paper compared to the National Youth Strategy, unfortunately articles miss to cover the risks and conflicts of nightlife.

Nevertheless in the chapter on youth free time spending Nagy (2013) investigated the features of the leisure society and found that there were no sharp boundaries between the aspects of time (leisure or free time), recognised the growing demand for converting quantitative time to qualitative time and reported a growing social prestige of leisure.

DIAGRAM 3. AVERAGE LEISURE TIME IN DIFFERENT AGE GROUPS (HOURS, N=6856WD, 7221WE)



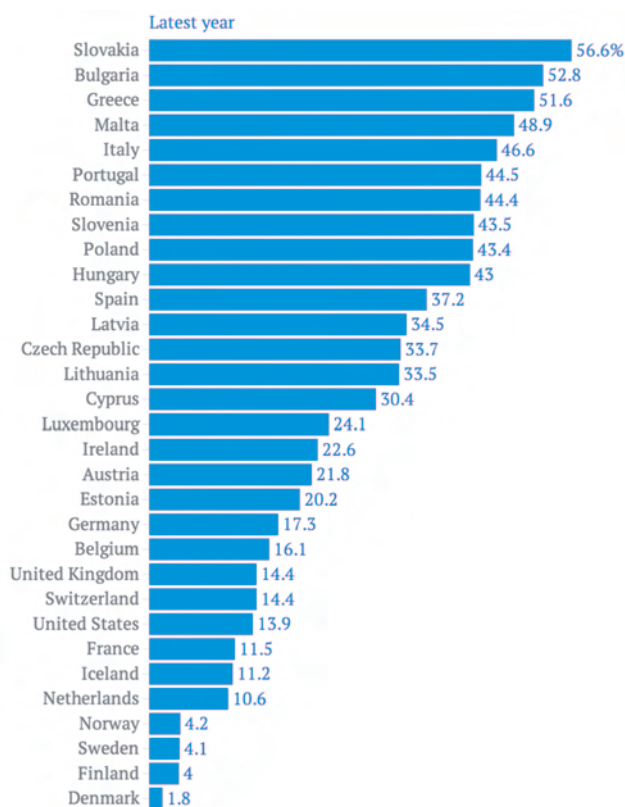
Source: Nagy 2013:216

Diagram 3. Shows that the younger one is the more leisure time one has. However, the difference is less than 19% during a period of 15 years! It is also notable that females have 24 minutes less leisure time on average weekdays and 60 minutes less leisure on average weekends.

After the investigation of the quantity of leisure time researchers focused on where young people spend their leisure time most frequently. Surprisingly the majority of people answered that they stayed at home (76% weekends, 85% weekdays) or stayed with friends (56% weekends, 43% weekdays). If we focus on which places are linked to nightlife we can find pubs nearly at the end of the list (2% weekends, 1% weekdays). A more detailed picture is painted by the activities that young people do in their leisure time.

A European survey investigated "Who's still living with their parents" and they found that the actual financial crisis affected young people badly in Europe as it was reflected in the share of young people who still lived with their parents. Turbulent years like the period of 2008-13 had a negative impact on young people, not just in Europe but in the US as well: where recent trends are almost the same as in Europe. (Karairan 2014)

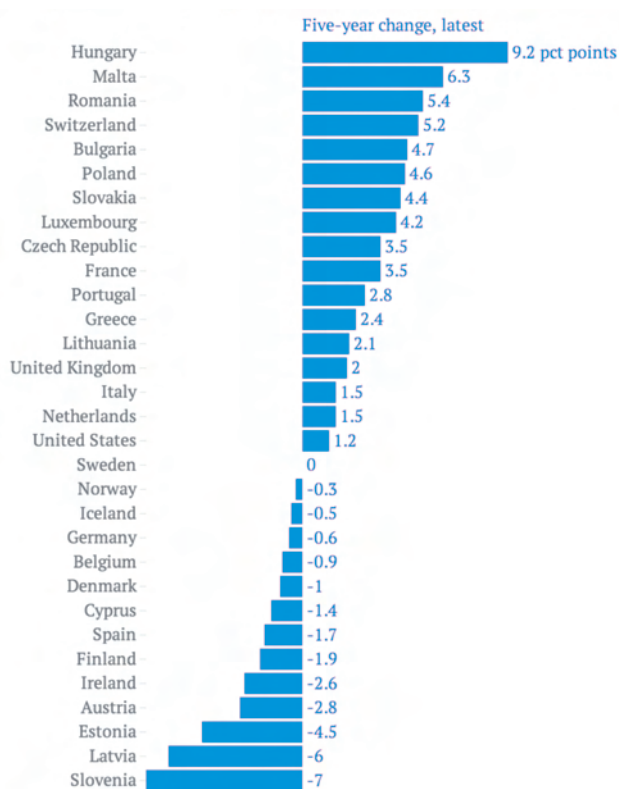
TABLE 4: SHARE OF YOUNG PEOPLE AGED 25-34 LIVING WITH THEIR PARENTS.



Source: Hunyadi 2005

Regarding recent trends young people stay longer with the family in most European countries except for some Western European countries like Spain and Ireland, where indicators are smaller than before the crisis. It is probably because many of them have left their home countries for working and learning purposes.

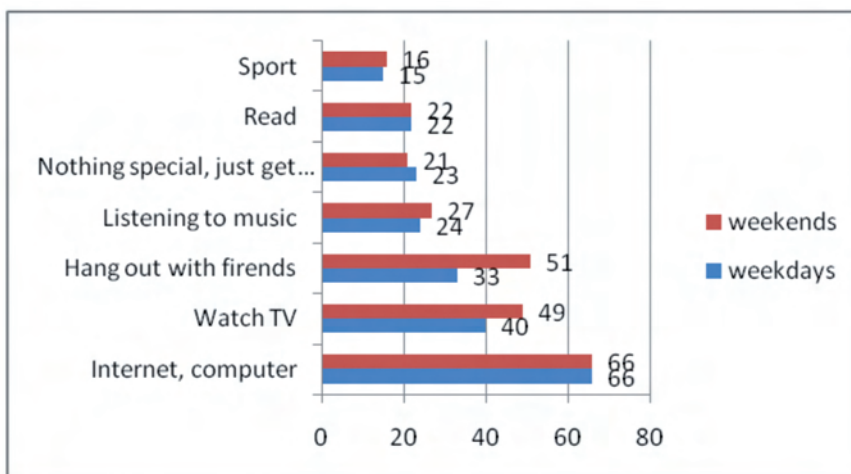
TABLE 4: CHANGE IN THE SHARE OF YOUNG PEOPLE AGED 25-34 LIVING WITH THEIR PARENTS.



Source: Hunyadi 2005

Continuing with the analysis of the Hungarian Youth 2012 Report, we can now focus on the places that are linked to nightlife. In this case one can find pubs nearly at the end of the list (2% weekends, 1% weekdays), but a more detailed picture is painted by the activities that young people do in their leisure time.

DIAGRAM 4. LEISURE ACTIVITIES (% N=7345) ABOVE 10%



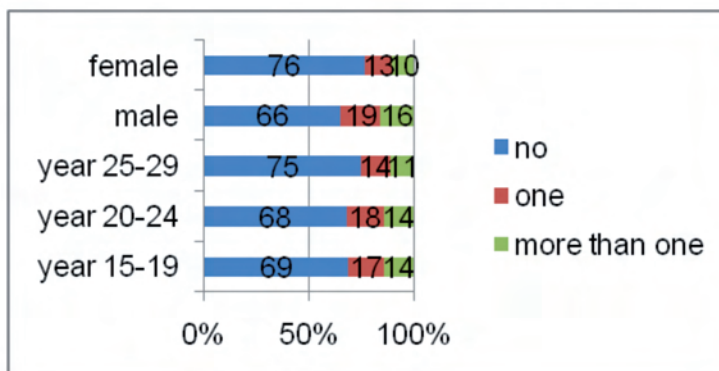
Source: Nagy 2013:218

Corregir en la tabla: quitar Read y poner Reading / eliminar just get.../ quitar Watch tv y poner Watching TV / eliminar Hang out y poner Hanging out with friends

Diagram 4 gives us the answer of why people do not mention that they would go to a pub. There were no questions addressed to nightlife directly, therefore all nightlife activities were found in the category of hanging out with friends or staying with friends. Another lesson to be learnt is that the internet, computer and TV are really available alternatives to being with friends or putting it the other way around: friends are available alternatives to electronic media. However, in 2012 only 75% of young people had a circle of friends (75% in 2008), the rest of the people lived without one.

A reasonable share of leisure time is spent with friends, but friends are not faithful fans of any favourite places or stamping grounds. However, 35% of young males have one or more stamping ground, while females are more uncommitted (76%) to any of them.

DIAGRAM 5. STAMPING GROUNDS (% N=7790)  
DO YOU HAVE A STAMPING GROUND WHERE YOU MEET WITH FRIENDS WITHOUT MAKING AN APPOINTMENT?

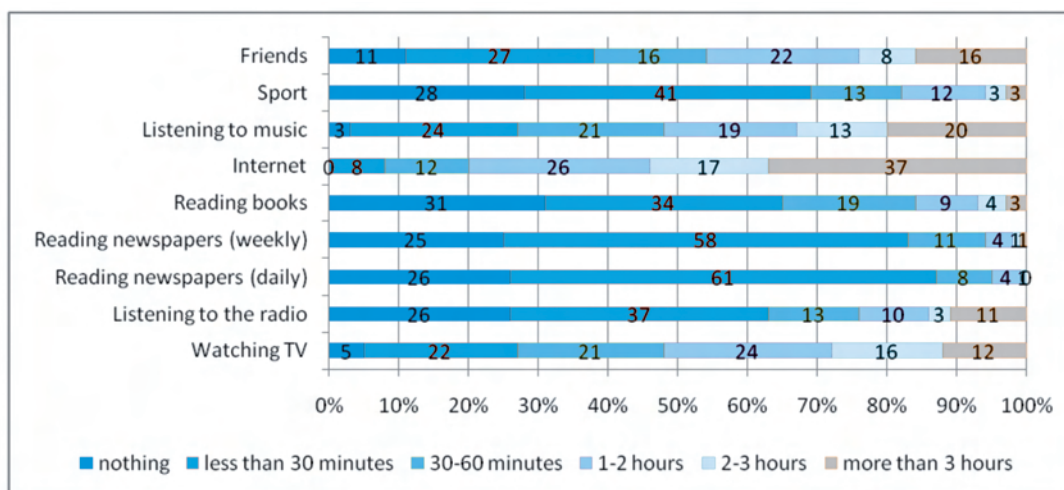


Source: Nagy 2013:222

Among stamping ground places researchers found that the majority (52%) of places are pubs or places with services (discotheque, game room, billiards parlor). Unfortunately the detailed structure of closed questions does not allow me to get closer to night life venues, and especially not in Budapest.

In the following leisure time based surveys in Fanta reports (Ságvári 2008, 2009) a different indicator system was worked out and specialised on the youth and free time economy. Ságvári surveyed young people about clothes (fashion) and music, as well as on culture and media consumption in leisure time. One of his main indicators focuses on the time spent with doing or attending something on weekdays and weekends. Of course, nightlife activities are considered under “friends” category again.

DIAGRAM 6. HOW MUCH TIME DO YOU SPEND WITH THE FOLLOWINGS ON AVERAGE WEEKDAYS? (N=450)

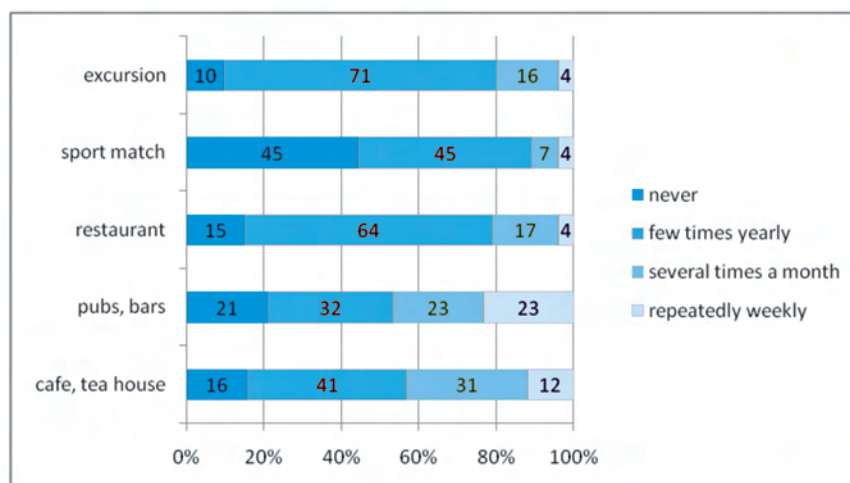


(Ságvári 2009:8)

The emerging role of the Internet is reflected here too in the answers of youngsters, since 80% of all the people asked used internet at least one hour daily. Only friends (46%), TV (52%) and listening to music (52%) compete with the weight of Internet usage. On weekends these activities are even more time consuming. Nevertheless, hanging out with friends is the most important activity for the youth, far more important than the Internet.

Besides what people do, the frequency of doing it is another important question. The most frequently visited places are, not surprisingly, pubs and bars, followed by cafes and tea houses – all other activities are typically not repeated weekly. Unfortunately bars and pubs are not divided into sub-categories; therefore readers do not know where to understand discotheques and techno/electric parties for example.

DIAGRAM 7. HOW OFTEN DO YOU VISIT THE FOLLOWING PLACES? (N=450)



(Ságvári 2009:10)



All in all, the lack of a specific youth nightlife statistics or indicators is conspicuous. First of all venues are not covered by official statistics, because nighttime economy is not funded or supported by public budgets. On the other hand, general categories of pubs and bars do not describe precisely if they include discotheques or concert halls with or without live music. It is possible that researchers could not identify the venues where young people go because of the variety of names and places that include markers like cellar, pit, house, tower, island, club... etc. Secondly, nightlife and all its venues, parties and services are outside of the institutionalised culture scene, not transparent (budgets) and sometimes there is a danger of black market or organised crime.

Despite of all the difficulties, the cultural consumption of young people can be modelled by the typical groups of young people (Ságvári 2009: 13-14):

- screen addicted (17%) – heavy use of TV and computer for leisure
- party faces (20%) – heavy use of places with dance and drink
- cubes (17%) – heavy computer users (not TV)
- bored (25%) – not going out
- book lovers (22%) – readers

## 2.4. Final Reflections

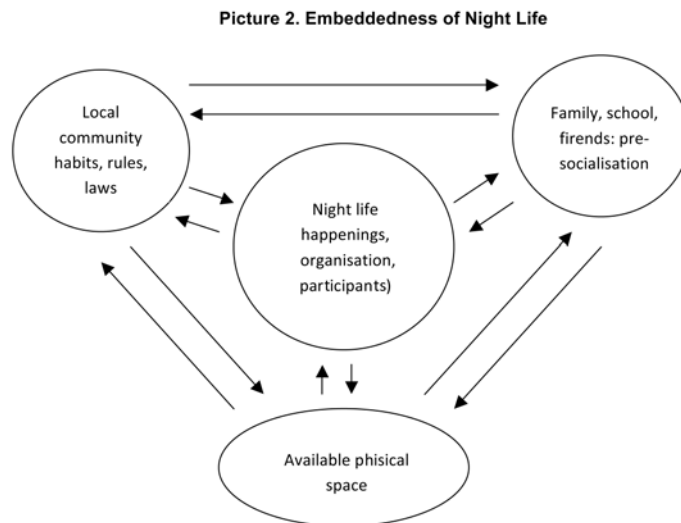
Night time activities in Budapest can be described as a part of the socialisation process of the youth –at least by the tools of late modern Hungarian social sciences. In this sense, the context of the mainstream line is represented by the transformation of cultural venues from a conventional room to a late modern cultural space. Besides the transformation of physical space, cultural habits also change generations. It is reflected in leisure time statistics and the number and frequency of visits to cultural institutions. Changes have positive and negative effects on the lifestyle and the physical and mental health of the youth. In this short communication I proposed to give a general description of the process and a brief analysis of current processes in the physical space, life style and leisure time usage.

Expectations of the youth are mostly collected by pilot research projects, especially by the Fanta Trend Report (Ságvári 2008, 2009). Young people above all prefer spending their time with friends. Statistics also show that young people prefer living with their parents and like spending their free time at home. However, a more detailed international analysis found that it is because of economic difficulties due to the current financial crisis.

The main expectations of Generation Y are to meet with friends; otherwise they keep contact through electronic gadgets. Nightlife venues serve as late modern agoras for the youth, who go there for releasing tension and living community life and they wait for the weekly parties as the highlights of the week, and similarly festivals are the highlights of the year. The analogy with agoras foreshadows question: what changes hands in nightlife venues? The answer might be found in the socialization process: young people change and strengthen their values, involve themselves in the discipline and they need frequently repeated gatherings for that purpose as well.

Relationships and interactions around nightlife programs include not just program management, maintenance, performers and participants, but effect local community, (habits, rules and laws), other institutions of socialization (friends, family, school) and the available physical space. This interaction network provides an overall framework for embeddedness of nightlife. All the domains (rules of the community, institutions of socialization, physical space) have a special role in nightlife happenings. The nature of this interaction is reflexive in all directions. Local community habits and legislation provide the rules of the game and the general "zeitgeist" around the actions happening at the local scene. Institutions of socialization provide intellectual and mental background for young people who grew up in these institutions, and, regarding nightlife, they provide preliminary socialization for nightlife visitors. Finally, available physical space does not just give floor to nightlife happenings, but events recreate, recapture, reorganize or sometimes rehabilitate cultural spaces in the city.

## PICTURE 2. EMBEDDEDNESS OF NIGHT LIFE



Regarding patterns, physical spaces are in a continuous change of course, however, there are special and unique venues that have characterised the last decade. First of all acid/techno parties were the first music trends that reached Hungary without a reasonable delay in the beginning of the late 1980s and early 1990s. Later, after the turn of the millennium, acid parties came back again in the form of rave parties and/or electric music parties and successfully integrated in the form of discotheques. Today discotheques playing the 1980s 1990s euro disco or pop music are considered to be retro parties. Secondly, when alternative rock music has become part of the mainstream, new concert halls could open and find their audience. These alternative places sometimes give floor to rave parties and live rock music, as Trafó House of Contemporary Culture does.

Other places like A38 Ship combine alternative rock and visual arts as well. A common characteristic to the 1990s is that there is a restaurant in these places. Thirdly, a new form of pubs that were called ruin bars or ruin gardens were created in the mid-2000s. These are the late modern age alternatives to traditional cafés and bars. In most cases ruin bars and alternative places combine arts and music with food and drinks, and prefer creating a kind of atmosphere with old photos or second hand furniture, creative wall paintings and innovative signals (toilet by large Lego/Play figures). Another important but probably not local speciality is that entertainment areas have been built after urban rehabilitation projects. These are the recent trends in the field of the conditions of nightlife in Budapest. It is also typical that the new artists come on stage in these venues: DJs and rock bands (or both).

As physical spaces changed, it was reflected in the changes of habits and cultural consumption. Traditional institutions like operas, concert halls, cinemas and libraries are losing their audience – only theatres are holding the fort. These visits to traditional institutions are not lost, but much rather taken to ruin bars and alternative places. At least habits are still strong in the direction of spending leisure time with friends. Unfortunately official statistics do not reflect it because they focus on traditional cultural institutions, therefore ruin bars and music halls are not considered in them. Luckily youth researches pay attention to new trends in the habits of the youth, they list bars and pubs in youth statistics and polls but they are not interested in specifying bars and pubs in a more detailed way. Nevertheless, new trends are based on easily available manifestations of fashion and the online music revolution (downloading opportunities). Young people have a penchant for getting new fashions, but there are already established new consumption groups among them like screen addicted (17%), party faces (20%), cubes (17%) bored (25%) and book lovers (22%).

Regarding the risks and legal framework, regulation of nightlife is an issue that has two main ways of appearance: when the noise is a problem and when there is a crime or tragedy. In the last ten years all three options have happened. On one hand noise is a recurrent issue around entertainment areas and around single venues or events, on the other hand crime was only eliminated last year as the owner of the most famous discotheque venues was taken into pre-trial detention in 2013. Nightlife visitors are most highlighted in case of ruin bars and electric music parties visitors and their conflicts with Generation Z, who go to party in large and loud groups and stand or dance separately from the older Generation Y (over 20).

Besides the noise effects and crime affairs, the largest attention was drawn by a tragedy at the discotheque called West Balkán on January 15, 2011. Within two months the government accepted the government decree 23/2011. (III. 8.) on the safer operation of music and dance events. It was a prompt legislative answer; however, ruin bars are not covered by this decree somehow.

Policies regarding nightlife are in a quite plastic state. Today the administrative body responsible for the youth is the State Secretariat responsible for Sport and Youth Affairs at the Ministry of Human Resources, led by the right-centre government. However, relevant policies are based on the National Youth Strategy developed and accepted by the Ministry of Children, Youth and Sport of the former left wing government (2008-10). Political shifts usually do not make the implementation of policies easier. The National Youth Strategy was formed following the European Commission White Paper - a new impetus for the European youth that identified youth as the age group of 15-25. The National Youth Strategy extended this age group from the age 8-12 up to age 25-30, although the referred statistics cover only the age group 15-29. The notion of youth was completed by a detailed written description in the introduction where young people were considered as autonomous individuals, capable to make decisions, shape the future, and have the opportunity to exploit their abilities. The strategy itself has a wide focus, but it is limited mainly to the responsibility of the state, therefore it has relatively little use in practice in the field of non-governmental bodies and entrepreneurs. This might be the reason why neither ruin bars and gardens nor risks of night life are presented in the strategy.

This research paper has reported on some 'work in progress' which nonetheless has raised some important questions regarding the political and developmental functions of night time economy. There is still some way to go, especially with respect to ruin bars and concert halls in Central and Eastern Europe for which the historical record is incomplete and the depth of contemporary research is undeveloped. Limitations in understanding are therefore to be expected but I hope that building on this future research work continues to examine the artistic, community and political functions of nightlife and sharpens our understanding of these qualities today and how to maximise their contribution to a more vibrant cultural sector in the future.

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