

The horizon of late modernity: everyday challenges and political activism

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The challenges of late modernity

- Modernity: an era, where the *horizon of expectations* is independent from the *space of experiences* (Koselleck)
- The past does not predict the future, the unexpected is to be expected
- Late modernity: the augmentation of these trends and also new challenges:
 - Institutional uncertainty, ontological insecurity, contested identities
 - Ecological risks (nature loses its naturality)
 - Globalization of inequalities (precariat) and culture
 - Differences of generations (ruptures in family socialization)
 - Nivellating effect of information society

The potentials of late modernity

- While modernity is full of dangers it also opens up new possibilities:
 - Instrumental rationality (technology, science, law etc.)
 - Communicative rationality (democratization of private relationships, institutions and public sphere)
- Beside these potentials, new ones also emerge:
 - Increased reflexivity (cognitive and aesthetic)
 - Individualization of lifestyles and career patterns
 - Access to information and real time communication
 - New patterns of identity, roles and interactions

The horizon of late modernity

- Young people face a world framed by these general challenges and potentials, their perception and behavior patterns are shaped by this setting
- Late modernity has unseen promises on the one hand and dreadful dangers on the other
 - Everything seems possible and the individual is responsible for the success (anomie)
 - However global and local structural position still determines the actual possibilities, while the new challenges also need to be faced
- These are the basic phenomenological tensions of young people's socialization framing their relation to the broader political sphere

Crisis symptoms of the EU

- Beside these general challenges emerging on the level of everyday life, young people also find themselves in turbulent political times:
 - Financial crisis of 2008 shake the Eurozone
 - Greek debt crisis of 2012
 - EP elections 2014: increase of extreme right and Eurosceptic parties
 - Tensions of the refugee crisis in 2015
 - Recent terrorist attacks
 - BREXIT 2016
- The democratic consensus is questioned resulting in the potential disintegration of the EU and the strengthening of antidemocratic semantics
- Question: how do young people living in the late modern condition react to these crises?

About the research

- Project MYPLACE (FP7 no. 266831): 2011-2015, 14 European countries, qualitative and quantitative methods, 16-26 years old cohort
- In this presentation the results of the survey (14 000 participants) are analyzed
- Representative sample of 600-600 from two socio-economically contrasting locations in each country
- Dimensions of political culture: active/ passive, democratic/ radical, historical knowledge/ lacking past, left/ right/ religious ideologies, security/ insecurity, trust/ distrust, active/ passive network

Ideal-typical patterns of political culture

	anxious anomic (8%)	satisfied bystander (22%)	politically alienated (21%)	traditional antidemocrat (16%)	emancipatory activist (15%)	populist antidemocrat (18%)
indifference	-,14	-,15	<u>,85</u>	,03	<u>- 1,22</u>	,24
radicalism	-,08	-,36	-,33	,33	<u>-,64</u>	<u>1,12</u>
living memory of 20th century traumas	,08	,30	<u>-,76</u>	-,19	<u>,89</u>	-,05
nationalist attitudes	-,16	-,23	-,36	<u>,60</u>	<u>-,72</u>	<u>,86</u>
leftist attitudes	,10	<u>-,57</u>	-,34	-,15	<u>,59</u>	<u>,70</u>
politicized religiousness	-,07	-,35	-,33	<u>1,57</u>	-,35	-,26
trust in political institutions	-,32	<u>,86</u>	<u>-,71</u>	<u>,40</u>	,04	<u>-,45</u>
sense of insecurity	<u>1,42</u>	<u>-,76</u>	,02	,07	,04	,18
relevant others political activism	-,22	<u>,41</u>	<u>-,78</u>	-,04	<u>,86</u>	-,15
homogeneous social network	<u>-2,33</u>	,34	,17	,14	,06	,24

Political cultures as late modern strategies

- Anxious-anomic: failed handling of the challenges, extreme stress blocks any political perspective
- Satisfied bystander: unharmed by risks of late modernity, political indifference, focus on individual life
- Politically alienated: extreme distrust, self-distancing from the past and politics, exile from public sphere
- Traditional antidemocrat: religious-nationalist acceptance of authority, paternalist trust
- Emancipatory activist: active handling of the challenges of late modernity, public life is part of identity construction (life politics)
- Populist activist: angry reaction to the pathologies of late modernity, regressive answer

European patterns (some examples)

	anxious anomic (8%)	satisfied bystander (22%)	politically alienated (21%)	traditional antidemocrat (16%)	emancipatory activist (15%)	populist antidemocrat (18%)
Hungary	4,7%	<u>11,5%</u>	<u>35,0%</u>	8,5%	<u>1,8%</u>	<u>38,5%</u>
Russia	14,1%	<u>10,8%</u>	<u>26,9%</u>	12,8%	<u>5,6%</u>	<u>29,7%</u>
Slovakia	11,7%	<u>8,3%</u>	<u>30,2%</u>	16,2%	<u>4,1%</u>	<u>29,6%</u>
Denmark	3,2%	<u>61,8%</u>	10,0%	5,4%	16,2%	<u>3,5%</u>
West Germany	4,2%	<u>35,6%</u>	11,9%	5,4%	<u>36,9%</u>	<u>6,1%</u>
Spain	7,0%	13,6%	15,6%	6,1%	<u>47,5%</u>	10,3%
Estonia	9,0%	<u>31,7%</u>	<u>32,4%</u>	7,0%	<u>6,8%</u>	13,1%
Finland	8,5%	<u>50,7%</u>	16,8%	5,9%	<u>6,5%</u>	11,7%
Greece	5,1%	6,2%	20,0%	<u>27,8%</u>	<u>14,1%</u>	<u>26,8%</u>

European pathways

- Post-socialist countries (Hungary, Slovakia, Russia): populism and alienation dominates
- Consolidated democracies (Germany, Denmark): satisfied passivity and emancipatory activism dominates
- Democratic revolution (Spain): emancipatory activism dominates without satisfied passivity
- Apolitical consolidation (Estonia, Finland): satisfied indifference, without activism
- Crises after match (Greece): extremism is counterbalanced by traditional and democratic voices

Political culture and structure

	anxious anomic	satisfied bystander	politically alienated	traditional antidemocrat	emancipatory activist	populist antidemocrat
Living comfortably on present income	7,2%	31,4%	13,0%	11,4%	24,8%	12,1%
Coping on present income	7,2%	21,5%	21,4%	20,2%	12,1%	17,6%
Finding it difficult on present income	8,5%	13,5%	29,1%	15,0%	10,1%	23,8%
Finding it very difficult on present income	9,4%	8,0%	34,4%	15,0%	6,6%	26,7%
Total	7,6%	21,8%	21,4%	16,1%	15,1%	17,9%

Economic factors and beyond

- Structural factors matter: alienation/ populism is higher in bad economic conditions, satisfied passivity/ emancipatory activism is higher in good
- But they do not determine the relation to late modernity at all: these connections vary in individual countries
- In countries like Denmark or Russia political culture is independent from economic situation
- In countries like Hungary or Estonia alienation/ satisfaction is the result of economic situation, while low level of activism is a general characteristic
- These exceptions indicate that beside structural factors, local social historical context also matters

Concluding remarks

- Young people's perception of the private and public world is equally shaped by general and local challenges
- The experiences they collect in their everyday life affects their capacity of handling the challenges either individually or by collective action
- The role of drama pedagogy can be identified at this point: it may provide elementary experiences capable of widening the horizon of late modernity, turning alienation into reflexivity

Thank you!
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**Radicalism and
indifference**

Memory transmission,
political formation and
modernization in Hungary
and Europe

