

Value Preferences of the Physically Active and Non-Active Hungarian Youth Population

Szilvia Perenyi

Faculty of Physical Education and Sports Sciences, Semmelweis University

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Hungary has a long and proud history of sports, encompassing remarkable performances of individual athletes as well as team sports triumphs, sometimes with political undercurrents. The national sports, water polo and football, are also where Hungary has had the majority of its international successes, besides fencing. In men's water polo, which was introduced as an Olympic sport as early as 1900, Hungary is by far the most successful nation, and one of the most memorable team sport matches in sport history involves the Hungarian water polo team. Hungary and the Soviet Union met in one of the semifinals the 1956 Melbourne Olympics. The match, known as the "blood in the water" match (in Hungarian *Melbourne-i vérfürdő*), followed on the heels of the Soviet invasion of Hungary two months earlier, and it was indeed violent and bloody. Hungary was declared winner, and subsequently defeated Yugoslavia in the final.

Another international match with political connotations took place two years prior to the Melbourne bloodbath, during the Football World Cup of 1954 in Switzerland. Hungary met West Germany in the final, having defeated Brazil in the quarterfinal round in one of the most violent football matches ever played, known as the "Battle of Bern", and Uruguay in the semis in what was arguably the most exciting game of the tournament. In the final, the exhausted Hungarian favorites faced a West German team in Adidas' newly developed football shoes with exchangeable studs, and in the Germans favorite weather: heavy rain. The West German side won 3-2, the win considered an international comeback for a country that still suffered heavily from losing World War II. – It's worth noting that Hungary is in third place in the Olympic men's fencing all-time medal table, and in second place in the women's table.

So, what is the state of sports in Hungary of today? A very ambitious interview survey, conducted every four years and asking 128 questions to 8000 Hungarian youths between 15 and 29 years of age, includes questions about sport and physical activity. It turns out that only one third of the respondents consider themselves physically active as defined by the survey. The survey was carried out by the National Research Institution for Youth, and the research was led by Laszlo Laki and Bela Bauer. In an attempt to further elucidate the differences between the two groups, Szilvia Perenyi has performed secondary analyses of the voluminous survey data, studying the two subpopulations of physically active and inactive respectively, specifically in terms of sets of basic human values, such as family, piece, power, traditions, love, and in this article she reports on the first part of her study.

Human actions comprise of the complexity of morals and values developed and adapted through the socialization process starting in early childhood and continuing throughout one's entire life (Deci and Flaste, 1995, Andorka, 2000). VALUES are what individuals or groups consider important (Andorka, 2000), and besides other factors such as individual identity, social status, and life style values are reflected in the every day activity structure of humans (Giddens, 2000).

During the socialization process the basic human values are constantly changing, especially in the years of adolescence and young adulthood as youth generations are discovering the unknown, they are exposed to new information and examples of actions communicated by their family, the education system, their peers and the media. This is the period of a human's life during which individuals are the most receptive and capable of adaptation, long lasting lifestyle habits and the structure of values are being developed. These years are also critical for establishing physical activity habits lasting into adulthood and the so-called third age. Research shows that childhood and adolescent participation in organized sports increases the possibility of continued physical activity, it functions as a predictor for continued physical activity in later life periods (Vanreusel et al, 1993; Perkins et al, 2004;). So early participation is a key to building physical activity into the everyday activity program of an individual in order to realize the scientifically proven positive social, physical, psychological and economical benefits of physical activity (Vanreusel, 1993; Pikó, 2005; Kósa, 1999; Pluhár, 2004).

Sport as one of the social institutions, with its content and its structure, is a platform for the process of socialization by projecting its own values to sports participants. The sporting activity is placed in a certain environment, played by certain written and un-written rules and led by certain personnel (Coakley, 1993). Within its boundaries a certain value system is in place purposely projecting positive values such as fair play, winning, strength, health, integrity, pride, etc., but of course it has shortfalls such as cheating, aggressiveness, violence, or unfair advantage of drug usage. Sports participants are exposed to this communication and the effects are dependent on the recipients capability of adapting these messages (Coakley, 1993). Of course the complexity of this issue is raised by the various images of the different type of sports, just simply think of wrestling and gymnastics or mountain biking and fitness.

But not to forget, this is a two-way street, sport is like a living organism, communicating within and outside of its own boundaries, sending of course messages to its surroundings and receiving effects from the outside society. Research analyses value-transition both within sports and outside of sports. More research is conducted that examines the values within organized sporting environments pertaining to competition sports' participants and a fewer studies refer to physical activity on the leisure level. In organized sports the effects on participants' values revealed positive changes on fair play, helpfulness, and human relations (Dubois, 1986; Bredemeier & Schilds, 1993). However, the enhancement of aggressiveness and antisocial behavior has also been reported as a negative effect (Coakley, 1993). A proof of the durability of these value preference changes is not available as no such longitudinal research has been conducted. Time and even the sports branch can make a difference in value preferences, e.g.: team vs. individual sport, or track and field vs. gymnastics or weight lifting. It is emphasized that positive effects can only be reinforced or

negative effects eliminated with careful planning and conscious goal orientated behavior of all parties involved in the sporting process (Cruz, 1995).

The value-transmission power of sport is just rarely researched in relation to general human values flowing over the boundaries of sports. These studies compare general human values of athletes with non-athletes and most of them do not recognize the effect of sport to be strong enough to record differences between the two groups. Research conducted among 16-18 year old German youth found no differences in the level of importance of values between athletes and non-athletes, only in the order of values (Mielke & Bahlke, 1995). Other findings from local data received in Hungary from the same age group clearly showed the difference between the two groups. Children participating in regular organized sports value friendship and interpersonal relationships in general, significantly higher than the non-active (Pluhar et al, 2003). Furthermore, physically active youth showed more development on values related to personal relationships with peers, have better school grads and better psychosomatic health (Aszmann, 1997). These studies emphasize the power of organized sports and physical activities in the socialization of the young generation.

The question, which arises by sport being one of the platforms of the socialization process, is that physical activity with its own environment is something that alters the value preferences of youth. Is it strong enough to change the preferences of certain values? Does in fact sport have a value transformational effect on those who participate in regular exercise? Can it be stated, that it is physical activity which is causing such change?

The purpose of this study was to examine the differences that the Hungarian youth population participating in physical exercise may have in their preferences of basic human values from their non-active peers. Furthermore, to find values or value groups, that have probable affiliation to sport participation. Furthermore, how other demographic variables have any effects?

It is assumed, that there will be differences in the consideration of importance of human values between the physically active and the non-active groups. There will be values or value groups that will be shaped along the physical activity participation and by other demographic variables.

Method

This study is based on YOUTH 2000[®], a central government funded comprehensive research series conducted among the Hungarian youth by the top Hungarian social science institutions¹ and top Hungarian social scientists². In YOUTH 2000[®] 15 to 29 year old subjects (N=8000) were included. It is a nation wide representative sample on age, gender, type of settlement and municipality of residency.

1 Youth2000[®] has been funded by the Ministry of Youth and Sports and the Prime Ministers' Office. Institutions conducting this research were the following: National Institute for Youth Research, Central Statistic Agency, Institute of Sociology for the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, Institute of Political Sciences for the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, Institute of Educational Research, Foundation of Century Ending Political School.

2 Scientists participating in Youth2000[®] Sociologists: László Laki, Béla Bauer, István Fábri, Kálmán Gábor, Ferenc Gázsó, Andrea Szabó, Erzsébet Bukodi, András Lőw, Gergely Rosta, Tímea Tibori; Mathematician: István Neméskéri.

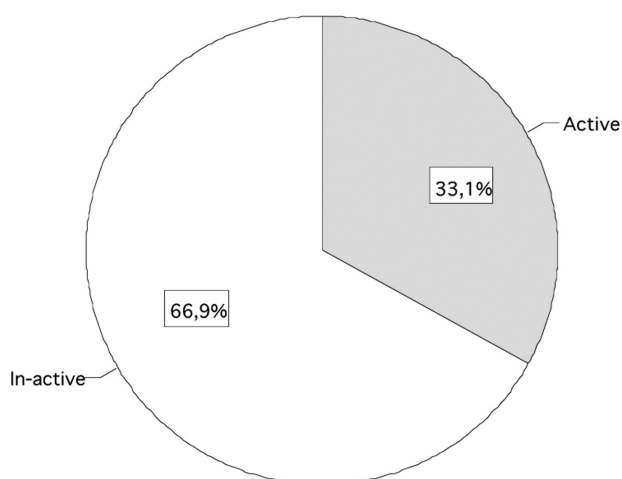
The complexity of the research is reflected in the diversity of the 128 questions, in the 14 chapters of the questionnaire touching on all life aspects of the subjects. The measurement of sporting habits and value orientations have been incorporated as separate chapters eliminating answer automatism and answer expectations. Subjects were examined by questionnaire based personal interviews conducted by professional agents. The instrument contained open and closed ended questions; interviews lasted for approximately 120 minutes.

Questions measuring the importance of general human values listed 16 values³ evaluated on a scale of 1-5, where numeric digits received the following meanings: 1 = not important at all, 5 = very important 2, 3, and 4 = interim grades. Data received on the preference of the listed human values were accepted as independent variables. The chosen dependent variables had the following ranges: gender (men, women); age group (15-19, 20-24, 25-29 years); education (low, middle, high)⁴, size of settlement (capital, county towns, towns, villages) and labor-market activity (student, employed, unemployed).

This study is a second analysis of YOUTH 2000[®] using SPSS 10.0 version. Statistical Analysis included Cross Tabulations to describe sports participation of subjects; Mean to demonstrate the order of values; non-parametric tests, Mann & Whitney U test to compare the Meanranks of values of active and non-active subjects in order to see differences between them (Tenenbaum, 2005).

Findings

The answers for the self-reported question whether one participating in physical exercise outside of physical education classes showed that 66,9 % of Hungarian youth population is non-active, not participating in any form of physical activities outside of PE (Graph 1.).



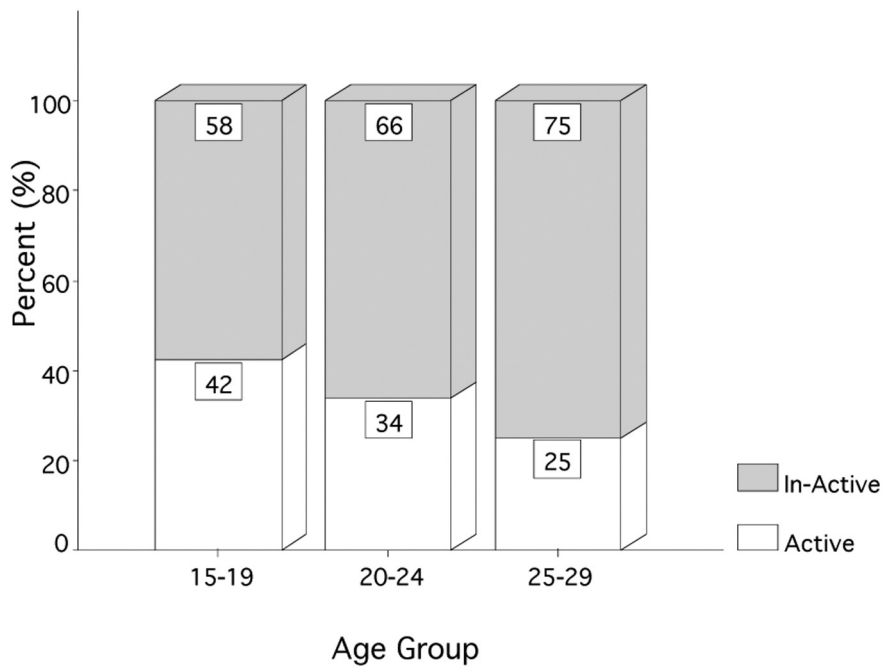
Graph 1 Physical Activity Participation (N= 7921)

- 3 Human values measured on a scale of 5: family security, peace, inner harmony, power, traditions, love, beauty, social order, religion, true friendship, creativity, interesting life, diverse life, wealth/richness, nations role, freedom.
- 4 Low education level = finished elementary school. Medium education level= finished highschool, vocational school. High education level= finished college and university with Bachelor, Master's or Phd degrees.

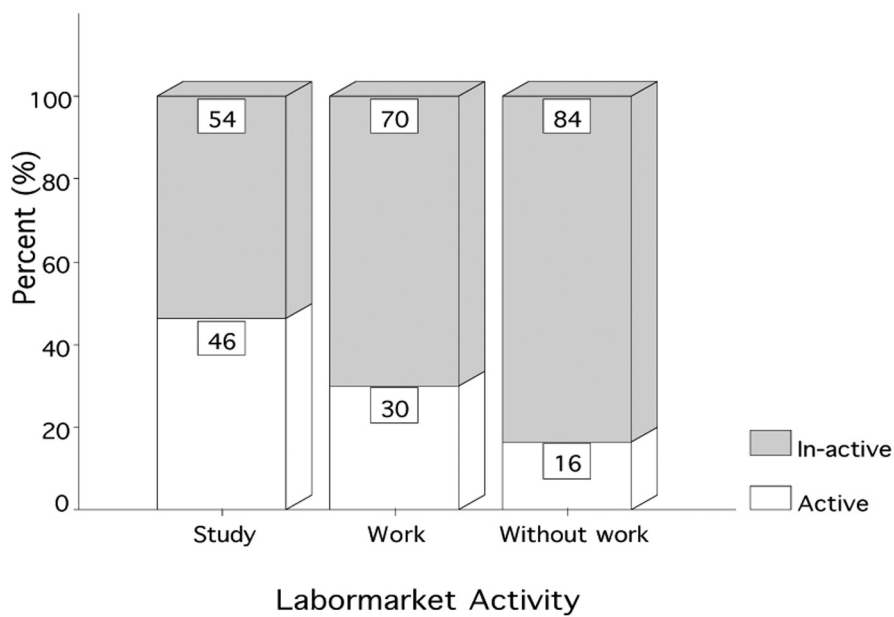
Patterns show that the participation in physical activities is increased amongst males by 12% in comparison to female subjects; only one quarter of women are physically active (Graph 2.). Participation in physical activities is reduced by the increase of subject's age. The oldest age group (25-29) shows 9% less involvement than the 20-25 years group and 17% less than the youngest (15-19) group (Graph 3.). Furthermore, physical activity decreases by 16% as soon as individuals leave the student-life-period of the educational system and enter the job market, this decrease further grows to 30% among non-active groups of the labor market such as groups of unemployed, disabled, or mothers with small children (Graph 4.).



Graph 2 *Physical Activity by Gender (N= 7921, $\chi^2 = 112,2$, $p = .000^{***}$, Phi & Cramer's V= .119)*

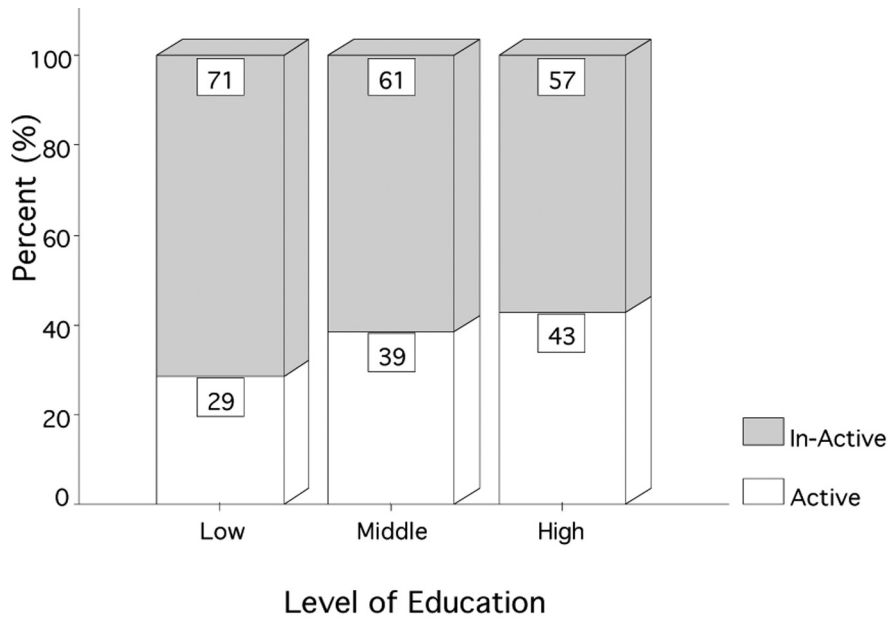


Graph 3 Physical Activity by Age Group ($N = 7922$, $\chi^2 = 168,38$, $p = .000^{***}$, Φ & $Cramer's V = .146$)

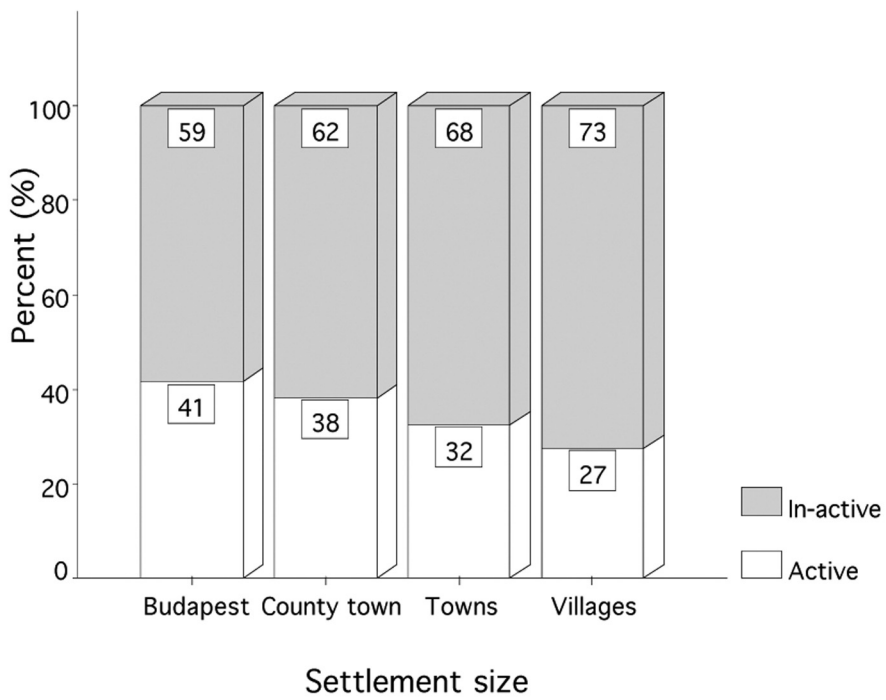


Graph 4 Physical Activity by Labormarket Activity. ($N = 7901$, $\chi^2 = 409,31$, $p = .000^{***}$, Φ & $Cramer's V = .228$)

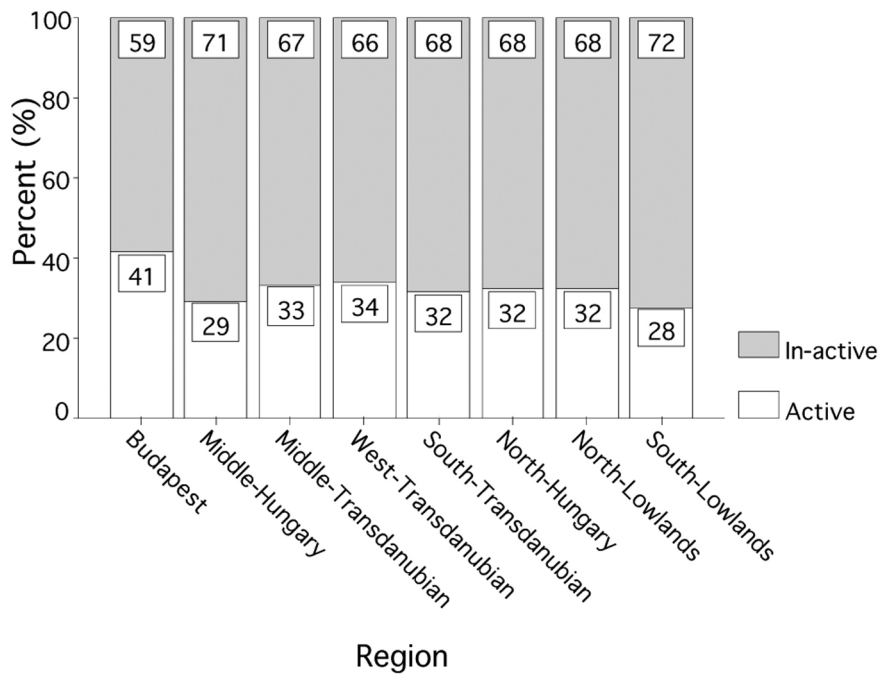
The increase in education level and the increase in the size of settlement show an enhancement in physical activity. 43% of subjects with a high level of education are physically active in contrast to the 29% of those with basic level of education (Graph 5.). The highest participation in physical exercise is reported amongst inhabitants of large cities (38-41%) beside the 27% involvement of villages and small settlements (Graph 6.). Interestingly, a balance of distribution is reported through out the regions of the country with a peak in the capital as it is considered an independent region (Graph 7.).



Graph 5 *Physical Activity by Education Level. (N= 7912, $\chi^2 = 104,69, p = .000^{***}, Phi \& Cramer's V = .115)$*



Graph 6 *Physical Activity by Size of Settlements. (N= 7922, $\chi^2 = 98,02, p = .000^{***}, Phi \& Cramer's V = .111)$*



Graph 7 Physical Activity by Region. ($N = 7923$, $\chi^2 = 62,05$, $p = .000***$, Φ & $Cramer's V = .089$)

The possible differences in the value preferences of the two sub-groups of the sample (physically active and non-active) are shown in Tables 1-5, demonstrated by the Mean and the Meanrank, received from the non-parametric Mann & Whitney test (Tenenbaum, 2005). The order of values (based on Means) shows hardly any difference between the two sub-groups Table 1.

Table1 *Order (Mean) of Values of the sample as a whole, and the two sub-groups (Active and Non-active)*

		Physical activity	
		Total N=7518	Active N = 2497
Family safety	4,84	4,84	4,85
Peace	4,80	4,78	4,82
Love	4,76	4,75	4,77
Inner harmony	4,66	4,67	4,65
True friendship	4,64	4,73	4,59
Freedom	4,56	4,62	4,53
Wealth/richness	4,22	4,08	4,29
Social order	4,13	4,14	4,12
Interesting	4,02	4,16	3,94
Diverse life	3,98	4,14	3,90
Creativity	3,94	4,15	3,83
Nations role	3,87	3,87	3,87
Traditions	3,80	3,83	3,79
Beauty	3,60	3,64	3,57
Religion	2,61	2,57	2,62
Power	2,55	2,57	2,54

Based on the results gained from the Man & Whitney U test the two sub-groups show strong significant differences ($p < .001$) in their values preferences in 6 values such as freedom, interesting life, wealth/richness creativity, diverse life, and true friendship. The direction of importance however, demonstrates that the importance of wealth/richness is higher for those in the non-active group, meanwhile all other values are more important for subjects in the physically active group (Table 2.).

However, there are other values showing differences ($p < .01$, $p < .05$) as well. All together only 5 out of the 16 values that actually do not show any differences between the two sub-groups, namely inner harmony, power, social order, nations role, and traditions; out of which only two, inner harmony, social order is placed in the upper half of the order of values, others are positioned low as demonstrated by the means of the values (Table 1.) . The non-active group evaluate peace, religion, family safety, and love higher, values that suggest affiliation with rather traditional value structure. The physically actives beside the above mentioned 6 values ($p < .001$) are also high on the consideration of beauty, however on the order of values this one received a very low rank (Table 1.)

Table 2 Value preferences of the physically active and non-active.* : $p < .05$;** : $p < .01$, *** : $p < .001$

Values	Meanrank	
	Active N = 2497	Non-active N = 5021
Inner harmony	3787,28	3745,68
Power	3816,14	3731,33
Freedom	3926,49***	3676,46
Social order	3801,70	3738,51
Interesting life	4084,09***	3498,08
Wealth/richness	3457,01	3909,93***
Nations role	3744,31	3767,05
Kreativity	4209,19***	3535,86
Peace	3703,59	3801,13**
Traditions	3827,43	3738,88
Religion	3683,64	3811,16*
Family safety	3714,25	3795,77**
Diverse life	4109,73***	3596,97
True friendship	4001,81***	3651,22
Love	3709,61	3798,10*
Beauty	3842,39*	3731,86

Reviewing the value preferences of the physically active and the non-active in the light of demographic variables it was found that the 6 values with strong significance ($p < .001$) listed in Table 2. are maintained regardless of the inclusion of gender, education level, or job-market activity. We found that the physically active men and women equally consider interesting and diverse life, creativity, and true friendship very important ($p < .001$), while the physically non-active state the importance of wealth/richness much higher. Weaker differences ($p < .05$) were found in the case of inner harmony (active women), traditions (active men), peace (non-active women), beauty (active men and women)(Table 3). It must be mentioned that these results somewhat differ (inner harmony, traditions) from the results received from Table 2, and need further evaluation.

Table 3 Comparison of the preference of values for the physically active and non-active by gender (men, women) * : $p < .05$; ** : $p < .01$, *** : $p < .001$

Value	Meanrank Men		Meanrank Women	
	Active N = 1513	Non-active. N = 2344	Active. N = 1014	Non-active. N = 2671
Inner harmony	1959,04	1909,61	1904,19*	1839,65
Power	1928,14	1929,55	1868,19	1853,41
Freedom	1937,59*	1899,69	1951,20***	1821,69
Social order	1937,59	1923,46	1867,67	1853,61
Interesting life	2059,34***	1844,87	2015,49***	1797,12
Wealth/richness	1765,33	2034,65***	1685,73	1923,15***
Nations role	1942,65	1920,19	1831,34	1867,50
Creativity	2120,35***	1805,48	2140,23***	1749,44
Peace	1887,84	1903,65	1809,16	1855,85*
Traditions	1949,11*	1864,64	1861,63	1835,85
Religion	1898,22	1897,04	1803,11	1858,14
Family safety	1887,97	1903,57	1830,58	1847,72
Diverse life	2054,77***	1797,36	2034,17***	1771,43
True friendship	2041,33***	1805,92	1940,64***	1805,93
Love	1908,38	1890,57	1829,02	1848,31
Beauty	1944,97*	1867,27	1915,96**	1816,30

The strong differences of the value preferences between the two subgroups can be found on the low and and the middle education level in reference to the 6 values. Subjects with higher education level, however, showed differences only in the cases of two values specifically interesting life, and wealth/richness (Table 4.). It is also found that non-active subjects with lower education level consider peace, family safety, love, beauty more important.

Table 4 *Comparisom of the preference of values for the physically active and non-active by education level (low, middle, high) * : $p < .05$; ** : $p < .01$, *** : $p < .001$*

Value	Meanrank Low		Meanrank Middle		Meanrank High	
	Active N = 1244	Non-active N = 3035	Active N = 1033	Non-active N = 1654	Active N = 244	Non-active N = 311
Inner harmony	2122,54	2115,41	1337,01	1348,37	263,56	269,59
Power	2136,95	2109,46	1364,19	1331,39	274,50	261,35
Freedom	2208,84***	2079,72	1397,74***	1310,44	262,11	270,68
Social order	2120,02	2116,46	1360,16	1333,91	259,08	272,97
Interesting life	2307,81***	2038,77	1412,58***	1301,17	293,38***	247,13
Wealth/richness	1928,83	2195,55***	1254,02	1400,20***	252,07	278,25***
Nations role	2139,04	2108,59	1347,65	1341,72	254,39	276,50
Creativity	2398,52***	2007,25	1461,65***	1270,52	274,58	261,29
Peace	2095,73	2158,15*	1310,70	1345,41	268,32	285,60*
Traditions	2183,73	2122,07	1346,14	1323,10	273,11	281,84
Religion	2181,24	2123,10	1257,78	1378,74***	275,40	280,04
Family safety	2095,70	2158,16**	1323,53	1337,34	277,56	278,34
Diverse life	2410,71***	2029,04	1433,74***	1267,93	280,78	275,82
True friendship	2346,11***	2055,93	1385,55***	1298,28	272,47	282,34
Love	2099,09	2156,77*	1311,06	1345,19	270,48	283,90
Beauty	2210,19*	2111,23	1357,75	1315,79	267,29	286,40

The values that seems to be attached to sport raise their head again as activity on the labor market is considered in the analyses. In all three activity groups' (student, employed, un-employed) the values of interesting life, devise life, creativity, true friendship given significantly higher importance by the physically active group and the value of wealth/richness by the non-active group.

The sixth values of the 'sporty' pattern, freedom, is loosing out as subjects leave the so called student life period (Table 5). Non-active students are also higher on the consideration of peace and religion and those from the active group who already employed consider freedom more important as opposed to those who are unemployed.

Table 5 *Comparisom of the preference of values for the physically active and non-active by their role on the labor market (students, employed, unemployed) * : $p < .05$; **: $p < .01$, ***: $p < .001$*

Values	Meanrank Student		Meanrank Employed		Meanrank Unemployed	
	Active N = 1191	Non-active N = 1383	Active N = 1085	Non-active N = 2499	Active N = 244	Non-active N = 1106
Inner harmony	1288,38	1886,74	1821,41	1795,01	690,11	672,28
Power	1297,78	1278,65	1807,85	1800,89	695,53	671,08
Freedom	1335,56***	1246,11	1854,08*	1780,83	696,92	670,77
Social order	1286,77	1288,13	1824,35	1793,73	663,72	678,10
Interesting life	1339,88***	1242,40	1908,53***	1757,20	777,02***	653,10
Wealth/richness	1227,21	1339,42***	1676,42	1857,93***	585,18	695,42***
Nations role	1287,39	1287,60	1782,48	1811,91	662,56	678,35
Creativity	1369,82***	1216,61	1952,27***	1738,22	806,63***	646,57
Peace	1255,76	1300,71*	1779,90	1797,97	667,39	680,20
Traditions	1305,78	1257,97	1815,15	1782,66	670,87	679,48
Religion	1247,70	1307,60*	1800,73	1788,93	639,95	685,90
Family safety	1270,64	1288,00	1776,80	1799,31	679,44	677,70
Diverse life	1369,37,***	1203,65	1928,63***	1733,39	773,45***	658,18
True friendship	1318,18***	1247,38	1872,20***	1757,90	775,46***	658,18
Love	1261,62	1295,70	1791,05	1793,13	678,95	677,80
Beauty	1287,84	1273,30	1826,10	1777,91	717,05	669,89

Discussion

The physical activity trends of Hungarian youth population follow the findings of other national and international findings (Skille, 2005, Stempel, 2005, Wilson, 2002, Laki, 1999, Fábri, 2002, Falussy, 2002, Galdi, 2002, Pluhár, 2003), as in Hungary as well men, younger age groups, students, the more educated, and the inhabitants of bigger settlements show higher participation rates in physical activities.

Findings revealed that physically active and non-active youngster's value structure is similar, as subjects of the two sub-groups stated hardly any difference in the order of values, but they were different in how much importance they gave to each of the specific values. The results of the Mann & Whitney U test showed that subjects gave similar importance to values like family safety, peace, inner harmony, traditions, love, beauty, social order, and religion. However, youth participating in regular physical activity value true friendship, creativity, interesting and diverse life and freedom significantly higher, while the physically non-active population mostly preferred wealth/richness. These results are mostly maintained as the demographic variables were considered in the analyses.

Other values also showed difference between the two groups, such as beauty, religion, nations role, tradition, however these values were very low in the order of the values, meaning that neither the physically active nor the non-active group considered them in the focus of their value structure.

Our findings supports the results of previous research conducted with smaller, not representative Hungarian samples in the same age groups and stated that youth participating in regular sporting activities value friendship significantly higher (Pluhar, 2003), they are also more open to change, accept others easier and able to adopt to changing circumstances better than their non-active peers (Asztmann, 1997).

Further investigation is needed in order to find out what may cause the growth of importance allocated to the so-called 'sporty' values, whether it is the participation in physical activity, it is gender, it is education, or it is the activity status of life-period. The education level, detailed in Table 4, gives the necessity of raising such question as the difference in the consideration of values decline between the two sub-groups from low education toward to high education level. It raises the question how our result has relation to cultural capital.

Finding such answers would out-grow the methodology of this present study; other multidimensional statistical analyses shall be used, such as ANOVA, factor/principal component analyses, or even lineal regression analyses. This prospective on the evaluation of the data shall be concluded and published in the near future.

Conclusion

Health issues are becoming more of a concern year by year in the Hungarian society. Known that 'physical inactivity' is among the most common inclination factors for cardiovascular disease, obesity, etc., defined the by the Report of the National Health Organisation (Kosa, 1999). Despite of it there is still a severe under representation in sports and physical exercise across all ages of society. Regardless, that Time Scale Survey of Hungary indicated a 14% of growth in available free time between 1986 and 1999, the overall participation rates in sports seems to be pending on the same level. The available of free time is realised in the increase of consumption in television hours (Falussy, 2002).

The severe under-representation of Hungarians in physical activities the biggest concern for the health of the youth population, as there are no indications in Time Scale Survey results to have physical activity built into the life of future society.

As YOUTH2000 gives a broad societal prospective on sports as well. Our findings reinforce the importance of physical activity not only as a token for the general physical health of future generations, but also as fundamental element of the socialisation process of Hungarian youth in the shaping of values. Also, sport may provide stability to human value structure of citizens during transition periods of social, economical and political change, such periods that Hungary and other Central European countries experienced during the last decade of the previous century.

An association is suggested by the findings between the preferences of specific values and the sporting activity, which emphasizes the role of sports and physical activity in the socialization process of youth. Values like true friendship, creativity, interesting life, and

diverse life were valued higher among the physically active Hungarian youth, while the physically non-active population preferred values such as wealth/richness.

However, it cannot be stated, that it was sports activity that caused those differences in the value-preferences of subjects, it may also well be that, youngsters having higher preferences on those particular values choose to participate in order to seek for true realization of those values through in sports.

In order to further investigate this phenomenon the previously mentioned alternative methodological prospective shall be taken.

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