

Deliberative Poll About Unemployment and Job Creation in the Area of Kaposvár

May-June 2008

SUMMARY OF THE RESULTS

*„It would be good to have more of these events, we have learnt a lot”
(a participant’s comment – SG 11)*



Plenary session – participants are listening to the experts



Experts at the plenary session – György Nagy, Gábor Tóth, István Vilmos Kovács, Ágnes Hárs



Small group discussion

Introduction

The Institute of Sociology and Social Policy of the Corvinus University of Budapest has conducted a Deliberative Poll® in the summer of 2008 in Kaposvár and its area on the topics of employment and job creation and the European Union and its employment policy.

This research is part of the IntUne project which deals with different aspects of European integration one of its objectives being to increase citizen's participation, to mobilise public opinion.

What is IntUne?

The IntUne (Integrated and United? A Quest for Citizenship in an Ever Closer Europe) project is financed by the European Union within the 6th Framework Programme on the theme of Citizenship. IntUne is a four year project which started in September 2005. Coordinated by the University of Siena it involves 29 European Institutions and more than 100 scholars across Eastern and Western Europe.

Nowadays that the EU is facing several challenges, and that its legitimacy and democratic capacities are often questioned, it is important to address the issue of EU citizenship, whether it exists and how it is emerging.

The main objective of this research is to study the changes in the meaning of citizenship as an effect of the process of deepening and enlargement of the European Union. The project aims to analyse how processes of integration and decentralization are affecting the different aspects of citizenship: identity, representation, and the scope of governance.

About Deliberative Polling®

Deliberative Polling® was conceived by Professor James Fishkin in 1988¹. The research program since that time has been a collaboration with Professor Robert C. Luskin. Deliberative Polling® is a technique which combines traditional random sampling public opinion polls with deliberation in small group discussions. A number of Deliberative Polls have been conducted in various countries around the world (e.g. Britain, Australia, Denmark, US, etc.) in various themes - some national and some local. The main argument behind this technique is that citizens are often underinformed about key public issues, thus traditional public opinion polls represent the public's shallow impressions on an issue. The public, according to the theory of "rational ignorance" in social sciences, does not invest time and effort in acquiring information or establishing a grounded opinion.

Deliberative Polling® is aiming to use public opinion research in a new way including the possibility of public consultation. A representative sample of people is first polled on the targeted issues. Then, a sub-sample of the original sample is invited to gather at a single place for a weekend in order to discuss the issue. The participants first receive a balanced briefing material prior to this event in order to gain information on the issue and then engage in dialogue with experts and political leaders based on questions they develop in small group discussions with trained moderators. After the event, the sub-sample is again asked the original questions. The resulting changes in opinion represent the conclusions the public would reach, if people had the opportunity to become more informed and more engaged by the issues.

¹ Deliberative Polling® is a trade mark of James S. Fishkin. Any fees from the trade mark are used to support research.

The Employment Situation in Kaposvár Small Area

Kaposvár Small Area is located in Southern Transdanubia in Somogy county. From the 11 small area of the Somogy county Kaposvár small area has the most settlements (54 settlements belong there), despite the fact that in January 2008 23 settlement left the small area and formed the Kadarkut- Nagybjom small area and is working on independently. The centre of the county, Kaposvár is the only town in the small area, the number of habitants is 67,746. The second biggest settlement in population is Taszar with 2,089 habitants. In the small area with a population of 101.309 this way *Kaposvár has the two third of habitants.*

According to sociological researches and a recent poll of the Hungarian Gallup Institute unemployment is the greatest problem in the region. In Hungary 55 % of the population in working age (15-64) work in officially administered jobs. The average in the European Union is 64 %. The region's activity rate is just slightly below the Hungarian average (54 %).

As for unemployment the region's conditions are worse. The rate of unemployment (according to the ILO standards) was 17 % at the end of the last year whilst the national average was 10 %. In other words Somogy County's position is the 4th worst in the country in this respect. 1/3rd of the unemployment is lasting more than a year, which is a very unfavourable condition again.

After the transition as a function of changing social and economical conditions the labour market changed remarkably. This process manifested in significantly decreasing number of employees and increasing unemployment. The decrease in the number of employees characterised the agriculture to the greatest extent. The decrease was less important in the education, in the health service and in public service.

The employment centre of the area is Kaposvár. 80% have their workplace there. In the villages the biggest employer is the local government and there is also some agricultural work. But for the majority of the people Kaposvár is the only opportunity for a job.

From the 46 thousand employees in the area 13 thousands work in industry and construction, 30 thousand in the service industries and only 3 thousands in agriculture. The employment rate of the population aged 15 and 64 was 53,7% in the small area and 61,6% in Kaposvár. The unemployment rate (the registered job-seekers at a rate per cent of active age group population) 15,4% in the small area and 9% in Kaposvár.

Regarding unemployment the number of registered unemployed in Somogy county was 25 471 in February 2008, 3 464 in Kaposvár. 34% of the registered unemployed were long-term unemployed which means that they were without job for more than 1 year, in Kaposvár this rate was 33%.

Details of the research

In May 2008 a representative sample of the inhabitants of Kaposvár Small Area has been polled (n=1514) on the themes of employment, job creation and the European Union. The respondents of the survey have been invited to participate to the deliberative weekend. A briefing material, containing information and facts about employment and pros and cons about the possible measures and policies that could facilitate the discussion, has been sent out for all of those 435 persons who were willing to come. At the end *108 persons have participated* to the event held at the Kaposvár University on the 21-22 of June 2008. During this weekend the participants have discussed the themes with each other in small groups of 5-10 and with invited experts during plenary sessions.

Experts of the plenary sessions:

Dr. Adler Judit	GKI Economic Research Co.
Dr. Bertalan Péter	University of Kaposvár
Hárs Ágnes	Kopint-Tárki Institute for Economic Research Ltd.
Kovács István Vilmos	National Development Agency
Nagy György	Local Development Agency
Dr. Nagy Gyula	Corvinus University of Budapest
Szabó János	Family Help Center in Kaposvár
Dr. Tarrné Dr. Törzsök Piroska	Public Employment Service
Tóth Gábor	Ministry of Social Affairs and Labour
Varga József	Chamber of Commerce and Industry in Somogy County Electrotechnical Factory Kaposvár Ltd.
Weisz Zoltán	Public Employment Service - Somogy County Center
Moderator:	
Babarczy Eszter	Moholy-Nagy University

Socio-demographic characteristics of the participants

In terms of gender, age and education no statistically significant difference existed between participants and non-participants of the weekend. However, pensioners and unemployed were more willing to participate to the event than employees, whilst village dwellers were underrepresented.

		non-participants (N=1406) 100%	participants (N=108) 100%
Gender:	male	42,8%	48,1%
	female	57,2%	51,9%
Age:	-50	46,6%	43,3%
	51-	53,4%	56,4%
Settlement:	Kaposvár	65,9%	78,3%
	villages	34,1%	21,7%
Education:	primary school or less	27,4%	23,1%
	vocational school	28,2%	30,6%
	secondary school	32,0%	31,5%
	college/ university	12,4%	14,8%
Present occupation:	employee	34,7%	25,0%
	entrepreneur	5,0%	1,9%
	doing casual work	0,8%	0,9%
	unemployed	9,2%	17,6%
	pensioner	39,5%	49,1%
	on maternity leave	5,4%	3,7%
student	3,9%	1,9%	

Opinion changes: opinions before and after the deliberative weekend

The below tables contain the distribution of the opinions of the participants of the deliberative weekend (n=108) before and after the deliberation in percentages of the valid answers².

There was a significant change in terms of the perception of the protection of national industries and the open market: the proportion of those favouring an open market has increased.

1-7 scale %	Certain industries should be protected against foreign competition (1-3)	exactly in the middle (4)	Market should be made as open as possible (5-7)	No opinion	Avg* (1-7)
Before deliberation	37,0	23,1	36,1	3,7	3,91
After deliberation	24,1	22,6	50,9	2,8	4,82

* statistically significant change ($t=-3,29$, $p<0,01$)

Before the deliberation about two thirds of the respondents thought that it should be made difficult for employers to fire – this opinion slightly increased after the deliberation.

The proportion of those who thought that finding a job is one's own responsibility increased from 26% to 44% after the deliberation, whilst the proportion of those insisting on the government's responsibility has dropped from about 40% to 21%.

1-7 scale %	Finding a job is one's own responsibility (1-3)	exactly in the middle (4)	Providing jobs for all citizens is the government's responsibility (5-7)	No opinion	Avg* (1-7)
Before deliberation	25,9	34,2	38,9	0,9	4,28
After deliberation	44,4	34,4	21,2	0	3,35

* statistically significant change ($t=3,87$, $p<0,01$)

Opinions on the reasons of becoming unemployed have also changed after the deliberation. Living in deprived settlements became more accentuated – 58% thought that living in a deprived settlement was true for the unemployed which increased to 77% by the end of deliberation.

There was no change in terms of the perception of the lack of skills as a reason of becoming unemployed. Similar number of people thought that it was either not true (17%) or true (59%) before and after the deliberation.

Regarding the different measures to deal with unemployment opinions were very positive both before and after deliberation. The proportion of those supporting active measures of employment policy, namely labour market services, training support, wage- and contribution-type subsidies, communal work or support for self-employment was more than or about 80% in all cases. Passive measures of employment like the job search allowance and benefit was supported by 65% whilst the regular social aid by about half of the respondents.

² T1 and T3 surveys

The effect of the deliberation could be noticed in that the number of respondents opposing job search allowance and benefit and the regular social aid dropped from 16% to 5%. Furthermore the support for communal work or self-employment decreased from 88% to 69% and 90% to 76% respectively.

The opinions on who should get allowances and on what conditions have also changed. The proportion of respondents saying that allowances should be paid only to those who are working for them has decreased and the proportion of respondents stating that everyone who is in difficulty should be taken care of have increased after the deliberation.

<i>1-7 scale</i> %	Allowances, aids and benefits should be paid only to those who work for them (1-3)	exactly in the middle (4)	Everyone should be taken care of (5-7)	No opinion	Avg* (1-7)
Before deliberation	26,9	21,3	51,9	0	4,85
After deliberation	14,8	7,4	76,9	0,9	5,79

* statistically significant change ($t=-3,7$, $p<0,01$)

Opinions on illegal work on which taxes are not paid remained stable. The proportion of respondents supporting or opposing governmental measures against it was more or less the same before and after the deliberation.

<i>1-7 scale</i> %	Government should prevent all illegal work (1-3)	exactly in the middle (4)	Government should no do anything against illegal work (5-7)	No opinion	Avg* (1-7)
Before deliberation	65,7	18,5	12,9	2,8	2,43
After deliberation	61,1	20,4	14,8	3,7	2,65

* non-significant change

There was an important shift in the opinions on the question whether unemployment is nowadays avoidable. The proportion of respondents stating that it cannot be avoided has significantly increased.

<i>1-7 scale</i> %	In nowadays' economic situation unemployment can't be totally avoided (1-3)	exactly in the middle (4)	Unemployment should be avoided at any cost (5-7)	No opinion	Avg* (1-7)
Before deliberation	31,5	17,6	50,9	0,0	4,35
After deliberation	49,1	11,1	38,9	0,9	3,56

* statistically significant change ($t=2,59$, $p<0,05$)

Another important opinion change occurred on the issue of taxation. After the deliberation there were fewer respondents stating that the government should decrease taxes even if this meant less funding for education, health care and pensions.

<i>1-7 scale</i> %	Government should decrease taxes even if this means less funding for education, health care and pensions (1-3)	exactly in the middle (4)	Government should spend more on education, health care and pensions even if this means increasing taxes (5-7)	No opinion	Avg* (1-7)
Before deliberation	45,4	26,9	25,9	1,9	3,47
After deliberation	28,7	33,3	34,2	5,6	4,13

* statistically significant change ($t=-2,38$, $p<0,05$)

In European countries today, political decisions can be made at three different levels of government: at regional level, at national level, and at the level of the European Union. The following table contains respondents' opinion on which governmental level fighting unemployment should be dealt with. There was a slight shift towards the regional level after the deliberation:

%	Before deliberation	After deliberation
Regional level	32,4	36,1
National level	38,9	37,0
European Union level	21,3	22,2
None of them	1,9	0,0
Don't know	5,6	4,6

The percentage of respondents who felt that what happens to Europe has important consequences on their life has decreased after the deliberation. For the question „*How far do you feel that what happens to Europe in general has important consequences for people like you or to you?*” we got the following answers:

%	Before deliberation	After deliberation
A great deal	25,0	11,1
A fair amount	39,8	38,0
Not very much	26,9	34,3
Not at all	3,7	3,7
Don't know	4,6	13

Along with the changes in opinion and attitudes there was a change in terms of the overall knowledge on the issues addressed – this change was rather due to the deliberative weekend and less to the briefing material distributed before the event. For example at the end of the event significantly higher proportion of the participants could tell correctly who can apply for regular social aids. On the other hand there was no great change in the correct answers regarding the unemployment rate in Hungary, the EU or Kaposvár after the deliberation.

Evaluation of the event

Nearly half of the participants of the deliberative weekend mentioned that the event as a whole was rather valuable in helping them clarify their opinion – the small group discussions were considered to be the most valuable followed by the plenary sessions. The informal discussions with other participants appeared to be the less valued with only one third of the respondents stating that it helped clarify their opinion.

<i>0-10 scale</i> %	A waste of time (0-4)	exactly in the middle (5)	Extremely valuable (6-10)	No opinion
Participating in the small group discussions	22,2	31,5	41,7	4,6
Meeting and talking to other participants outside of the formal discussions	25,9	35,2	33,3	5,6
Participating in the plenary sessions with experts	22,2	30,6	38,9	8,3
The event as a whole	14,8	31,5	48,1	5,6

In terms of what skills or knowledge was improved by the event participants mentioned first of all the increased motivation to participate actively in the public debate (75%), but it also served to better communicate with other people and better understand their attitudes and behaviour (68-69%). A lower number of participants mentioned that the event served to understand the public debate on employment (64%) or to improve their knowledge on employment issues or on the EU (61%-61%).

<i>0-10 scale</i> %	Didn't improve at all (0-4)	exactly in the middle (5)	Improved a lot (6-10)	No opinion
Factual knowledge on the EU	7,4	27,8	61,1	3,7
Factual knowledge on employment issues	7,4	25,9	61,1	5,6
Understanding of attitudes and behaviour of other people	2,8	24,1	67,6	5,6
Ability to understand the public debate on employment	9,3	20,4	63,9	6,5
Motivation to participate actively in the public debate	5,6	16,7	75,0	2,8
Ability to communicate with other people	3,7	23,1	68,5	4,6

Further Information

IntUne

>> <http://www.intune.it/>

Center for Deliberative Democracy

>> <http://cdd.stanford.edu/>

Corvinus University of Budapest
Institute of Sociology and Social Policy
Centre for Empirical Social Research (CESR)

>> <http://www.etk.uni-corvinus.hu>

Organizers:

Project leader: György Lengyel

Edina Dóci
Borbála Göncz
Krisztina Jáger
Bence Tordai
Lilla Tóth
Éva Vépy-Schlemmer
Lilla Vicsek

For further information about the research please contact:

Lilla Tóth: lilla.toth@uni-corvinus.hu
Borbála Göncz: borbala.goncz@uni-corvinus.hu

