CREATING NEW SUBJECTIVITIES:
THE HUNGARIAN STUDENT NETWORK,
A COUNTERCULTURE IN THE MAKING

by

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ABSTRACT

The present thesis describes and analyses the case of the Student Network (Hallgatói Hálózat - HaHa) as a recent social movement in the Hungarian contentious politics, by looking at the productive dimension of the movement, mainly how participants re-imagine the social through creating a new subjectivity ("the occupier"), new public spaces and going beyond the accepted repertoire of contention. I argue that the recent cycle of protest, namely the student demonstrations and the occupation of ELTE BTK are not directly a result of the social-political context, particularly the grievances related to the massive cuts in the higher education system, but a product of the internal relationships within the student movement. Further, I am addressing the meaning and the orientation of collective action, which reside in the shared values and practices of the student community. This means that I am accounting for the subcultural ground of the community that formed HaHa, underlining the change in the membership of the Student Network as channeling an emergent counterculture.

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INTRODUCTION

The triumph of neoliberalism and its crisis have shifted the terms of economic and political life, but they have also operated a social, anthropological transformation, fabricating new figures of subjectivity[1]

On Monday morning, 11 February 2013, a group of students from Eötvös Loránd University[2] and Corvinus University, in Budapest, occupied the building of Faculty of Humanities (ELTE BTK[3]). They instituted the state of *blockade* ("*blokád*"), while shouting on the corridors of the occupied building the slogans "Nothing about us without Us[4]" and "Free Country, Free University[5]" (see Fig. 1). Specifically, this action meant to stop the educational process through boycotting classes, organizing sit-ins and sleepovers in the university. Above all, students aimed at reclaiming the space of the university by transforming it into a space of free debate and direct participation, where they can actively get involved in the process of decision, concerning the higher education system. Moreover, the blockade was understood as an ultimate solution to the failure of representative democracy, specifically, the corruption of the former Student Union and its lack of transparency in the processes of decision-making. To a larger extent, the occupation emphasized the potentialities of self-organization in changing the structure of student representation through a decentralized configuration based on grassroots democracy.

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[1] Hardt and Negri 2012. Further, I will refer to subjectivity as a new type of social identity, resulted from collective action, and especially emerging during the university occupation.
[2] I will refer to as ELTE in further text.
[3] Eötvös Loránd Tudományegyetem Bölcsészettudományi Kar.
[4] In Hungarian, „Semmit rólunk, nélkülünk"
[5] In Hungarian, "Szabad ország, Szabad egyetem"

The background events of 2011 and 2012, specifically, the wave of reforms and decisions carried out in the Hungarian Educational System, explains much of the frame of "contentious politics" (Tilly and Tarrow 2007). These reforms were carried out as economic-crisis based measures and imposed severe budget cuts, more than 30 percent in the university state financed places, preponderantly in the non-profitable specializations, such as the Humanities and the Social Sciences. For this reason December 2012 marked a month of massive student protests against these cuts and the implementation of the student contract system[6] that would mean precarious life prospects. Further, the context of grievance was magnified by the official announcement that the government would modify the Hungarian Constitution (Hungary's Fundamental Law)[7] by adding a Fourth Amendment[8], which would make the reform immutable, along with other constitutional changes, perceived as being against human rights and the democratic principles of governance[9]. Indeed, the idea of occupation emerged as a counteraction to what might be called a process of knowledge commodification in neoliberal capitalism, and for this reason it led to a reactionary student movement, against overregulation, the loss of university autonomy, drastic budget cuts and centralization[10].

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[6] Those admitted to a government-funded degree programme would have to sign a contract, which stipulates that they will not leave the country after graduation, or the full tuition fee is to be reimbursed to the government. Retrieved June 3, 2013 (http://www.rednews.hu/hirek-a-frontrol/default/awake-from-your-slumber-class-analysis-of-the-recent-student-protests-in-hungary.html.)

[7] Online post related to the background events of the constitutional change, Paul Krugman, blog entry, "Constitutional Revenge", March 1, 2013. Retrieved June 3, 3013: (http://krugman.blogs.nytimes.com/2013/03/01/guest-post-constitutional-revenge/)

[8] The Fourth Amendment to Hungary's Fundamental Law, in English: (http://lapa.princeton.edu/hosteddocs/hungary/Fourth%20Amendment%20to%20the%20FL%20-Eng%20Corrected.pdf)

[9] Online post related to the consequences of enacting this amendment, Paul Krugman, blog entry, "The Fog of Amendment", March 12, 2013. Retrieved June 3, 2013: (http://krugman.blogs.nytimes.com/2013/03/12/guest-post-the-fog-of-amendment/)

[10] Károly Füzessi, February 11, 2013. Retrieved June 3, 2013: „Higher education under threat in Hungary", an online post on the general background of the background protests in December 2012: (http://www.opendemocracy.net/k%C3%A1roly-f%C3%BCzessi/higher-education-under-threat-in-hungary)

The state of *blockade* officially lasted till 27th March, during which students participated in a series of actions and applied a diverse repertoire of contention[11], for instance combining street demonstrations (flash mobs, marches, street protest, and public speeches, re-enactments referring to the historical and political past), and direct action (occupying bridges, and joining in action other activist groups[12]). Apart from the organizational innovations, such as the working groups or the daily plenums that enabled the creation of a decentralized structure of democratic discussion and participation, there were also tactical innovations, for example combining Occupy strategies with street protest and civil disobedience.

In addition, the street mobilizations and the occupation are part of a "logic of action" (Day 2004) attributed to the Hungarian Student Network or Hallgatói Hálózat (HaHa in further text), an alternative student initiative[13] that emerged in May 2011 as a response to a crisis of student representation in Corvinus University, namely the perceived malfunction of the Students' Union[14] at the university level. Before their plan to mobilize students on 11th February, HaHa became publicly visible in December 2012, when it reunited teachers and students in a plenum and established the "6 points" agenda[15] as a main goal to be achieved in the further months. Equally important is that HaHa gave an ultimatum to the government to fulfill these claims by 8th February and threatened to create a national strike if the government would refuse to accomplish the agenda. While the government did not consider their claims

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[11]I understand by repertoire of contention "the whole set of means for making claims of different kinds on different individuals or groups" (Tilly 1986: 4).

[12]*Such as the occupation of Fidesz's Headquarters on 7th March 2013, along with activists from A Város Mindenkié (City is for All) and other civil organizations, they join in action under the name "Az alkotmány nem játék" (Constitution is not a game).*

[13] I name it 'alternative' because the Student Network is not an organization *per se* with a legal status as the Student Union, but a student movement, based on horizontal structures, following an associational model characterized by diversity and fluidity in membership. Their members are students from both ELTE and Corvinus.

[14]In Hungarian, Hallgatói Önkormányzatok Országos Konferenciája, HÖOK in further text

[15] "We demand the complete reform of public and higher education; the number of government-funded seats should be reinstated to the 2011 level. Stop budget cuts and compensate previous cuts; Abolish the student contracts; Do not limit the autonomy of universities. Give a chance to disadvantaged students to enter higher education."

and the strike did not happen, but they occupied the Humanities' building and, later that day, they organized a large street protest, where hundreds of people joined the students, entering the faculty's building and participated in three general plenums, while supporting the blockade.

The following events of the occupation are strongly connected with what Tilly (1986) would define as going beyond the generally accepted repertoire of collective action, in particular the legitimate forms of action in a society at a certain point in time. So, going outside the accepted repertoire, such as marches or public speeches, would enable a movement, as Tarrow (1991) claimed to call public attention and successfully challenge established politics. After the first day of occupation, students appropriated the space of the largest classroom in the building, and used it, in their terms, as the "square of debate"[16], namely as a space for daily plenums, where students could freely participate in the decisions related to the occupation and what needs to be done with the educational system. They aimed at changing the structure through grassroots democracy and pointing at de-hierachization. In this regard, they organized themselves in specific working groups, and apart from the tactical innovations discussed above, they appropriated the university space(s), redefining the occupied space as 'theirs', through sleeping, washing dishes, eating, practically moving in.

Although, the idea of *Occupy* is not new for Hungarian universities, as another attempt took place earlier at the beginning of 2012 at Corvinus University, the occupation of ELTE BTK is the first successful one in terms of enactment and repertoire of action. Consequently, the frame of these events generates the following questions: Why the occupation of ELTE was carried out by the Student Network at this point in time, and how this action transcends the

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[16] In Hungarian, Vita Tér.

accepted repertoire of contention in Hungary by creating new subjectivities, new public spaces and consolidating HaHa's newly formed countercultural identity?

The research in the field of social movements has generally concentrated on structural contradictions, disregarding the micro-interaction level, such as the cultural ground of social movements. Consequently, this present paper extends the general macro-level analysis on social movements, such as looking at how the social-political context potentiates collective action. Although, the related structural contradictions will not be overlooked[17], for instance the external relationships of the Student Network within the political context, the primary focus of this paper is on the productive dimension of the student movement, namely to evaluate how during the Blockade, HaHa re-imagines the social by creating new forms of organization and participation as well as new social subjectivities.

I address the case of HaHa as a student movement in the recent context of Hungarian contentious politics by looking at the micro-interaction level of the student community and how the change in the membership, the pre-existent subcultural features, and the movement identity underpin HaHa as the expression of a political counterculture in the making. My analysis is methodologically based on almost 3 months of ethnographic fieldwork before, during and after the Blockade, participating in street demonstrations, bridge occupation, marches and public speeches, conducing ethnographic interviews, talking with participants and HaHa members and taking part in their social events in Frico and Sirály bars.

In Chapter 1, I will draw the general theoretical lines that correspond with the New Social Movement paradigm, as I aim to look at the cultural ground of the student movement. The identity (Melucci 1985; Cohen 1985) oriented theories as well as Koopmans (1995)'s

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[17] I imagine the movement in a system of reference (Melucci 1985), a field of forces, namely Hungarian political and social structure, encompassing actors, alliances and divisions within the field and how this structure potentiates collective action, re-activate and activate a new set of internal relationships and interactions at the student organization level. But in the same time, I am not addressing that the movement is the pure product of this structure that is why I aim to look at the roots of the movement, which I will argue are community-based.

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typology of social movements will enable me to grasp the subcultural and countercultural features of the Student Network. Further I will follow Melucci's model of movement as an action system for my analysis, and focus on how solidarity, conflict and breaking off the system translates into my case.

Chapters 2 deals with the system of reference, which refers not only to the Hungarian social and political background that draws the context of grievance, but also the historical background of the Student Network, the community basis of the movement and the change in memebership. Chapter 3 focuses on the analysis of the empirical evidence collected during fieldwork and describes HaHa as a student movement with an identity project at its core. This means that in order to reveal the core of the movement identity, I will be looking on one hand at the occupied room as a space where this identity is expressed through symbols, practices and new organizational and participatory structures. Next, I will concentrate on the performativity of the movement identity, explicitly in the street demonstrations and through the renewal of the repertoire of action, which is going to be analyzed in Chapter 4 along with the characteristics of provided by the recent global movement of resistance, such as Occupy or Los Indignadas. In Chapter 5 I will draw my final considerations and I assert according to my analysis that HaHa encompasses the elements of a counterculture in the making.

Fig.1 The morning of the Blockade

Fig. 2 The Plenum (Photo: Huszti István, source: index.hu)

CHAPTER 1: LITERATURE REVIEW

Much of the literature on social movements has developed a theoretical groundwork for analyzing the dynamics of contention[18], either stressing the political and economical implications of collective action or emphasizing identity and cultural-oriented perspectives. In this regard, in the last decades, the social movements' theory appears to have been challenged by several influential paradigms, acknowledged as "paradigm warriors" (Ryan 2006), the most notable being the Resource Mobilization Theory, which highlights the organization and the instrumental character of participation in collective action[19]; and the Political Process Theory[20], formulated by Sidney Tarrow and Charles Tilly, which emphasizes political opportunities, alliances and divisions within the political elite and the electoral instability[21].

Even though classical Marxian theory has been considered the predominant theory of social movements, because of the prominent labor movement, it appears that underlining the collective identity of social actors through an emphasis on economic contradictions, class relations, and crises is no longer adequate (Cohen 1983). The recent lines of inquiry in social movement analysis tend to break with the approach of understanding collective action from a general theory that explains structural pre-conditions for mobilization, as it happens with functionalism or structural Marxism[22] (Scott 1990). As Cohen (1985: 667) argues:

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[18] According to Tilly (1986), contention is defined as a distinct type of collective action, what he accounts as discontinuous and contentious collective action. For recent conceptualization of this term, see McAdam, Tarrow, and Tilly 2001; Tilly and Tarrow 2007.

[19] Formulated by McCarthy and Zald in the 1970s, it explores mainly how a movement is formed, how it survives in time and in relation to the political and social environment that is why it tends to omit the cultural orientation of collective action and concentrate mostly on the political environment. For a recent revisit of this theory, see McCarthy, McAdam, and Zald 1996.

[20] See further Tilly 1991; Tilly and Tarrow 2007; Jasper and Goodwin 2012.

[21] in Koopmans, 1995.

[22] This is one of the general theories in social movements, which builds on class struggle and social transformation and identify social movements as class movements (e.g. labor movement). This paradigm treats class and structure as central explanatory categories in social movement analysis.

> Class background does not determine the collective identities or the stakes of their actions, but they target the social domain of civil society rather the economy or the state, raising issues related to the democratization of everyday structures and focusing on forms of communication and collective identity.

Next this entails a shift of emphasis from class analysis towards a non-class based analysis, meaning to consider those movements with non-class based political program, for instance, the environmentalist movements, or recent one, such as *Los Indignados* in Spain, or Occupy Wall Street. This shift has to be considered as I will have to deal during this thesis with what Oberschall called a loose structured movement that "lacks a common leadership, a shared communication network and a routinized mechanism for collecting and allocating resources for common goals" (1993: 222), which makes class analysis incongruous with my standpoint on the student movement.

Current debates stress on expanding the boundaries of old theoretical models, such as the Resource Mobilization and the Political Opportunity theories by accounting for the "symbolic dimensions of collective action" (della Porta and Diani 2006), through the lenses of a cultural approach, for instance, looking at actor's perceptions and motivations, emotion-driven collective action, or at life-styles and patterns and trajectories of participation (Corrigall-Brown 2012). Even if current debates, for example on direct action (Graeber 2009) or the alterglobalization movement (Maeckelberg 2009; 2011), do not consider class as a structural category in explaining collective action, this does not mean that class antagonisms do not exist. Nonetheless, as Koopmans (1995) assumes, the concept of class cannot be withered away, particularly when analyzing a student movement, which clearly has a predominantly new middle-class base that is why it requires a redirection of focus from *class* as explanatory category to the *class actor* as a force of social change. This shift is reconciled along with the New Left legacy and the politics of 1960s, when the emergence of new social movement

(NSM) paradigm demarcates an important separation from class politics and Marxism in social movement analysis.

Even if the 'new-ness' builds on the traditional 'old' frames, the new social movements aim at structural reform, the democratization of society, rather to revolution. Specifically, they raise issues related to the democratization of everyday structures, seeing in democracy not simply a way to govern but as a social system where individuals enjoy equal chances of participating in decision-making processes (Gassert, Fink and Junker 1998). Accordingly, I argue that the analysis of the Student Network aligns within the lines of this paradigm.

Touraine (1981) asserted that these new movements arose more as a new cultural paradigm[23], as forms of social mobilizations that contest the cultural models of social practices. Additionally, he theorizes them as what Gledhill (2000:187) defines in terms of "struggle over normative models of society", which means these movements are defined in the lines of a counterculture, as search for alternative forms of social and cultural life. Consequently, they are new not only because their focus is not on economical redistribution and detachment from an identifiable political ideology, but they focus on post-material values, issues like social identity, culture, lifestyle, human rights concerns, and unconventional methods of political action (Ryan 2006). This means that NSMs are inclined to new forms of organization, such as grassroots forms and open decision-making structures, guided by a logic of action which is not instrumental-oriented but focused on the creation and expression of alternative life-styles and collective identities, through a "highly unconventional action repertoire and strong ties to the new middle class" (Koopmans 1995:231).

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[23] Melucci (1985:789) claims that starting with the eighties, collective action is shifting more and more from the political form to a cultural ground.

I have traced the general lines of the New Movement paradigm in order to underline the theoretical frame of my analysis, namely the detachment from class analysis which is incongruent with my stance on the student movement, and an orientation of focus on the (sub-) cultural ground of the Student Network, which demands to look at the collective identity.

1.1 Student Movement as an Action System

In this subsection, I will draw the lines of a more specific theoretical frame of analysis by completing Melucci's theory of systemic relationships with Touraine's focus on the meanings that participants in social movements ascribe to their action.

Melucci (1985) detaches from what he calls the skeptical paradigm[24] of the seventies in social movements and proposes a theory of movements as action systems, operating in what he calls a systemic field of possibilities and limits. This entails an analysis oriented toward "systemic relationships" and not the simply logic of action as previous theories concentrated on, which further presupposes an analysis of a "system of internal and external relationships which constitutes action" (1985: 792). Granted that this would require an analysis within structural contradictions, collective action cannot be reduced only to this, that is why Melucci argues that action imposes an interplay of aims, resources and obstacles in a system of opportunities and constraints. Moreover, Melucci's standpoint is that social movements are social constructions and they form as systems, in which the actors represent the structures and who activate action from inside. In this regard, I would complete Melucci's theoretical line by adding Touraine's (1981) idea that society produces itself, meaning that he emphasizes the

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[24] Mainly referring to the resource mobilization theory that was leading at that time the social movement debate. But from Melucci's point of view, this theory only explains the 'whys' of a social movement and sees collective action as a thing, specifically, this approach does not address the meaning and the orientation of collective action.

actor's agency in producing and re-producing the social structure. Further, this will orient differently my inquiry, namely that I will look at the student movement not a pure product of these systemic relationships within the socio-political field in Hungary, for example, the level of the formal institutions, or how the alliances and divisions in the Hungarian political scene, produces the collective action of the Student Network. On the contrary, the movement is constantly reproduced, re-defined, it's not a static phenomenon, but it adjusts, it's fluid, it's a process of internal and external relationships. This does not contradicts Melucci's argument that collective action is in the end the link between these systemic opportunities or constraints and orientations but it enriches it by accounting for the meaning and the orientation of collective action that actors themselves attribute to their action[25].

But Melucci (1985: 793-4) acknowledges that the main issue in the social movement paradigm is the fact that social movements are treated as empirical phenomena[26], which are not meaningful in themselves because collective action as argued earlier occurs as a result of systemic determinations and of individual and group orientations. In order to consider a movement as an action system, Melucci argues that it is necessary to have a system of reference[27] and certain analytical dimensions[28] for the collective action. Consequently, he defines a social movement as a "form of collective action based on solidarity, carrying on a conflict, and breaking the limits of the system in which action occurs" (1985: 795).

Although, I find Melucci's theoretical model of movements as action systems enlightening for my analysis on HaHa, it seems incomplete while I am dealing with what Oberschall

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[25] This would constitute as a unified theory of Melucci's stress on systemic opportunities and Touraine's emphasize of actor agency in the movement and its changing according to the ascribed meaning of its action.
[26] In supporting this idea, Melucci argued that in order to detach from this process of reification of new movements, we have to treat them as a "multipolar action system" that is subjected to continous process of construction and reconstruction (in Tarrow 1991: 61).
[27] For example, it can be an organizational system, a political system, or a mode of production.
[28] Melucci (1985: 794-5) used conflict, solidarity and breaking of the system limits as internal analytical dimension. Conflict is conceptualized as a relationship between opposed actors fighting for the same resources, meanwhile solidarity is defined as the recognition of the membership to a system of social relationships, as the capability to share a collective identity.

defines as a "loose coalition of activists", some of them part-timers and sympathizers, whose boundaries are ill-defined and shifting, who lack a central leadership, organization and "clear-cut procedures" for deciding upon a common course of action (1993: 67). That is why the system of reference and the analytical dimensions become insufficient in explaining the social ontology proposed by HaHa and this requires that the individual and group orientations have to be treated further, such as the emergence of new subjectivities.

1.2 Subjectivities: collective identity, movement nexus, identity work processes

In analyzing collective action, the identity component appears to be a crucial concept in understanding movement dynamics. Considering the frame of analysis of NSM paradigm, namely that social movements are primarily directed at the formation and reproduction of collective identities (Koopmans, 1995), identity theories become central in explaining movement dynamics. In this regard, I find Cohen's (1983; 1985) identity oriented paradigm an important contribution in understanding the student movement HaHa. From his standpoint, in contemporary social movements, the collective actors do not envision themselves in terms of a socioeconomic class but they struggle to create a group identity within a general identity whose interpretation they contest (Cohen 1985, in Koopmans 1995: 17). This "group identity" is related to Melucci's (1985) concept of "collective identity", as a shared definition of the field of opportunities and constraints offered to collective action: "shared" means constructed and negotiated through a repeated process of "activation" of social relationships connecting the actors. Further, it also refers to the idea of an "emergent culture" (Stryker, in Stryker, Owns and White 2000) being supra-individual, established not only by membership and activities of the group, but also deriving from "common interests, experiences, and

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solidarity, involving a *we*-feeling that is constructed, activated and sustained through interaction in movement communities" (Taylor, 1989[29]). Following Cohen's (1985) idea, collective identities are not determined by class background, but they target the social domain of civil society, addressing the democratization of everyday structures and focusing on forms of communication and collective identity.

The collective search of identity becomes central in movement formation (Johnston, Larana, and Gusfield 1994:10). Furthermore, this relates to Klapp's (1969)[30] line of argument that participants in contemporary social movements are engaged in a "collective search for identity". This process involves a connection, or it can be imagined in terms of a negotiation between the personal/individual identities (of the participants) and the movement identity (collective identity). More, this can be translated in terms of a sense of "we-ness", what Snow and McAdam (in Stryker, Owns and White 2000) understands by "identity/movement nexus". This concept is seen as the result of various movement dynamics, such as a process of conciliation between personal/individual identities and movement/collective identities.

Melucci conceptualizes collective identity as a process and a movement characteristic that is constructed, activated and sustained through interaction in the movement, "an interactive and shared definition produced by several individuals (or groups at a more complex level) and concerned with the orientation of action and field of opportunities and constraints in which the action takes place" (1996: 44). This means that this paper aims at this process, specifically analyzing the movement nexus of HaHa, and how it is shaped in relation with individual identities, social identities[31], external instances (political actors, other activist

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[29] Cited in Stryker, Owns and White 2000: 23.
[30] Cited in Stryker, Owns and White 2000: 43.
[31] It refers to a feeling of belonging to a specific group, it is determined by a person's membership in a group or community (Klandermans and Weerd, in Stryker, Owns and White 2000)

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structures, opponent forces etc)[32]. This translates into the "identity work process" (Snow and McAdam, in in Stryker, Owns and White 2000: 46), meaning how the individual and collective identities arrive in a congruence point through the range of activities that individuals engage in the movement.

1.3 Subcultural and Countercultural Identities

When considering identities in social movements, it cannot be omitted the fact that identities are defined in relation to the 'other', to another instance. That is why discussing the Student Network and dealing with identities, It is certain that in social movements paradigm identities are essentially negative, defined by opposition to something else (Koopmans 1995: 19). Defining against something or in relation with something it requires a conceptualization of what does it means counter- and sub-culture. Koopmans (1995) proposes a typology of social movements that embodies three logics of action in relation with the political environment: instrumental movements, subcultural movements and countercultural movements. He argues that the instrumental type does not value collective action as an end in itself and seek the allocation of specific collective resources. Koopmans argues that subcultural identities are produced mainly by the interaction between movement participants, through the sharing and reproducing of practices, values, and beliefs within the group. Meanwhile, countercultural movements explicitly seek conflictive interaction with political opponents in order to reinforce the group identity. In the same time, the main difference between sub- and counter- is that subcultural movements are more emancipatory nature, and promote the interests of

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[32] This also refers to Melucci's line of argument, namely to look at the movement in terms of a system connected to the external structures.

specific groups of people, meanwhile, the countercultural is more identity-oriented, but it depends on conflictive interaction with others (Koopmans 1995: 32-3).

Underlining these distinctions that indicate what subcultural and countercultural identities consist of and how they form in relation with an 'other', indeed Koopmans' typology, along with Melucci's theory seem to highly contribute to the analysis by providing the orientation lines of my inquiry, in particular how action is valued in the interaction within the movement and with opposing others.

CHAPTER 2: THE SYSTEM OF REFERENCE. THE SYSTEMIC FIELD OF POSSIBILITIES AND ITS LIMITS

2.1 A View on Orbán' s political agenda

The recent cycle of protest (Tarrow 1991) in Hungary is connected to an ongoing crisis in the university system that was enhanced by the transition period in the early nineties[33], but was amplified in the context of the economical recession and because of a package of austerity measures carried out by Orbán's government. This relates to the Kálmán Széll Plan[34] of early 2011, which had as a main purpose the reduction of the sovereign debt. In this regard, this plan pointed also at the higher education system by proposing drastic cuts in the government-funded places, namely more than 30%, from 40 000 to 10 000 during 2013/2014 term.

Furthermore, the reforming of the education system was pointing at adjusting the university system to the job market, what it is usually defined through the process of knowledge commodification[35] and make it performative according to the neoliberal capitalism. The frame of grievance was extended along with the proposal of introducing the student contract, a system that addresses to those admitted to a government-funded degree programmes and who would have been obliged to sign a contract that will not permit them to leave the country after graduation, only with the condition of reimbursing the full tuition fee to the government. The risk of getting into debt in exchange of university education as well as the scarcity of

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[33]A brief insight on the transforming situation of the university system in Hungary prior to 1990 and in the early 90s is offered in the first part of this online newspaper article, published 28 January 2013. Retrieved June 4, 2013. (http://www.rednews.hu/hirek-a-frontrol/default/awake-from-your-slumber-class-analysis-of-the-recent-student-protests-in-hungary.html)

[34] A blog entry from 1 March 2013 on this governmental plan. Retrieved June 4, 2013. (http://hungarianspectrum.wordpress.com/2011/03/01/the-newest-plan-named-after-a-former-finance-minister-and-prime-minister/comment-page-1/#comments)

[35] This refers to knowledge becoming the most important source of contemporary capitalistic valorization, specifically, the university is transformed in a productive central site for capitalist valorization (Bernardi and Ghelfi 2010: 108)

student's life prospects created the context for new organizations, such as the Student Network (Hallgatói Hálózat), to emerge and crystallized the frame for the studentprotests of December 2012.

2.2 Movement subculture: the formative period

"We are the first generation that grew up in democracy and we don't want to be the last one" (HaHa member)

In the context of these proposed changes, the need for a Student movement emerged, as one of my interviewees argues, and the period of 2011 is perceived as the "formative period". However, this student initiative did not appear instantaneously but it was based on an existing student community from Corvinus University.

Student Network was formed in May 2011[36] by students, from a renowned college, The College for Advanced Studies in Social Theory[37] (in Hungarian: Társadalomelméleti Kollégium, TEK in further text), at Corvinus University. As one of the former members mentions, 80 percent of HaHa membership in the first phase, was constituted of close friends and colleagues, living in the same dormitory ,in other words a community setting based on non-hierarchical structure, and defined as a "participatory democratic organization, governing itself". Additionally, this community had a structure defined as a formal organization, particularly the TEK community. The call for a student initiative different from the Student Union emerged on the background of 2011, along with the governmental plan discussed above, but also because of a more specific problem localized at the university level,

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[36] According to the interviewees, in the first stage, HaHa had approximately 20 members.
[37] This type of college, along with others, such as Rajk László College, which I will mention further, is a type of institution that offers apart from education, also accommodation. So, this involves a closed community group of people, studying in the same specialization and living in the same establishment, such as a dormitory.

specifically the announcement that Corvinus University is going to be torn apart along with TEK.

Because of a perceived failure of the Student Union in managing this situation : "I think this is an old feeling among the students that Student Union doesn't represent us (…) They don't do anything in a participatory sense, they don't ask anyone concerned" (former HaHa member), students from TEK formed HaHa, sketching a general agenda of action. At the beginning, they organized themselves against the closing of the university, addressing further the problems regarding what they called 'the bigger picture', and protesting against the systemic cuts and against Orbán' s regime. Discussing with former members, a definitive pre-HaHa event took place in the winter of 2012 under the form of a political protest. Students from TEK College and another renown college, Rajk László College for Advanced Studies[38] (Hungarian: *Rajk László Szakkollégium*) mobilized against a new law that would decrease the autonomy of the Constitutional Court and which was perceived by both student communities as an attack to the democratic institutions. After this incident, they came together in April 2010 and the tensions between TEK students and other student organizations, including Rajk College were amplified. The tensions appeared because the others found problematic only the way in which democracy works and how decisions are taken, but they were not addressing, as TEK did, the systemic problems[39], namely that the content of these decisions resides in Orban's regime, further, are a result of an austerity program and radical action has to be taken as soon as possible. This incident was mentioned because it reveals the ideological orientation of HaHa at the beginning of its formation and its distinctiveness in relation with

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[38] I find very important to mention that from the interviews emerges the idea that in the university's field, TEK and Rajk have always been in a tease competition as they are ideological opposed. One of my respondents argued that Rajk students are seen as the "neoliberal ones, specializing in mainstream economy studies", meanwhile TEK is more leftist, students are pejoratively named "commies".

[39] Rajk students as well as other student organizations did not position themselves against the money withdrawal from the education system but rather against the methodology of the decision-making process.

other student organizations: "We weren't part of the organizing committee [as Rajk], we wanted to do something leftist, something participatory, something radical".

It appears that the first HaHa event actually happen on June 2011,in particular the "surrogate" university[40], when approximately 100 students gathered in Fővám Tér to protest against shutting down Corvinus. This event it is important from an identity-formation perspective because it is the first time when students wore T-shirts with the HaHa logo (see Fig. 3) and they appeared for the first time publicly under the HaHa banner.

HALLGATÓI HÁLÓZAT

Fig. 3 HaHa logo

Therefore, relating to Koopmans's (1995) typology, it can be argued that HaHa embodied at first the features of a subculture at TEK, namely people shared same values, friendships, practices that were localized because of living in the same dormitory, and reproduce their practices, in a closed "exclusive group with the college guys at its core" (HaHa member). In addition, it can be argued that HaHa was predisposed to become a successful driven force of collective action because, as Kriesi puts it, movement subcultures are reservoirs for collective action as its participants came from a pre-socialized group, which finds collective action congenial (Kriesi 1988, cited in Tarrow 1991:13)

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[40] It supposed to be an event that would have gathered all the students from Corvinus University, also presupposed sleepovers in the university but the rector banned the event and they were forced to do it outside, in front of Corvinus, in the public square.

As contemporary forms of activism are not oriented to explain any class antagonisms (Day 2005), in order to reconcile with this, I propose to look at the members' *habitus*, in Bourdieu's (1977) terms, including their social status and their social background, and how depending on this, they inscribe to the movement a particular sociocultural and sociopolitical character[41]. Above all, the movement embodies elements of a New Left discourse and furthermore, students from HaHa are an "almost bourgeois youth" (Habermas 1989) who participates in student protests, without renouncing their middle class *habitus*. Further, they act in the name of the oppressed and exploited, articulating what it might be perceived as a New Left ideology which is not plainly assumed but is embedded in practice. This might illustrate what Graeber (2009: 214) pointed out as a political movement in which the practice comes first and theory is essentially secondary.

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[41] As Habermas (1989: 28) argued, while analyzing the German student movement, "we are confronted here with the first bourgeois revolt against the principles of a bourgeois society that is almost successfully functioning according to its own standards".

CHAPTER 3: THE OCCUPATION OF ELTE

The focus of this chapter is on the event of the occupation, envisioning it as driving force for the emergence of new subjectivities, the creation of new public spaces and also a channel for the renewal of the generally accepted repertoire of contention. In the first section, I will make clear my position and entrance in the field, dealing also with the methodological part of the present work. Then, the other sections relate to my fieldwork data, such as the ethnographic notes, interviews and informal discussions, and they encompass my analysis of the movement identity and how the occupied space potentiate the emergence of the 'occupier' subjectivity and new forms of democratic participation.

3.1 Positioning and entering the field

"Welcome, come in, and please leave your politics at the door"[42]

The street demonstrations began in December 2012 after a General Assembly with students, university professors, and parents, taking place inside the main hall of the Polytechnic University in Budapest. Although, I did not know much about who is organizing the protest, the implied requests and who is HaHa at that time, I attended the event from solidarity and position myself against the planned cuts.

First time I encountered the members of HaHa was at the beginning of January, when I went to Frisco, a bar in Budapest, which happened to be their meeting place. With some friends, I *occupied* a corner with red pillows in this bar, we sat down comfortably and enjoyed the

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[42] In Hale (2008: 1).

place where *time stands still*[43]. Near us, a group of approximately 7 people were sitting at a table; they seemed to be having a meeting. They passed behind us and opened a red door in the wall, right behind our backs: there was a cellar used as a smoking place, even if in Hungary it is forbidden to smoke in bars. It was a very cold, dark, and scanty place, where barely 5 people could fit and there were 2 chairs, a little table and a mini-sofa. In the poor lighting, we could hardly see the faces. They were continuing their discussion, as the meeting was moved for a while in the *underground*. We found out about the ultimatum and that they would organize a protest. After this encounter, I decided to work for my ethnography course on HaHa along with other three colleagues[44] from CEU. Thus, I conveyed ethnography on HaHa from 20th January till the 11th March 2013, using participatory observation and following its members during the occupation of ELTE, in the space of the Forum, in the streets during their marches, occupying the public space (e.g the Liberty Bridge - Szabadság híd, and Petőfi bridge), and in their „offices", in Frisco and Sirály bars.

The 19th January marks my entering in the field, when I attended my first HaHa meeting in Sirály. The idea of entering for the first time into the field was exciting as Sirály was a subversive place, partly illegal since its opening in 2006, a place with a history of conflicts with authorities, where many-fold activities[45] had been organized there. As a non-Hungarian speaker, during my ethnographic fieldwork, I have been participating in their meetings and during the plenums as an observer, while I had Zsofi translating for me into English. Apart from this, also the interviews and the informal discussions were conducted in English. During my fieldwork, which ended in May 2013, I managed to talk with former members of HaHa, as well as with new members, and one member who left HaHa in order to join one of the

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[43] There is a movie poster with the Hungarian movie "Time stands still" (Megállazidő, 1982).
[44] Tamara, Zsofi and George.
[45] This place has an important significance for the activist scene in Budapest as LMP, the Hungarian Green Party, and Milla, the civil organization, were both founded here and they planned many of their street demonstrations in this place. Along with this, before the occupation HaHa organized here the "Open University" week and in the same time a lot of parties took place here. Now, the place is officially closed.

opposition party. I also had the chance to get in touch with other activists, and discuss the student movement from a broader perspective, such as its contribution to this field of political forces and its place in the Hungarian Civil Society.

Writing about my position in the field involves, as Heyman (2005) argues, to stand at the point of intersection between the quest of knowledge and public moral questions. I was participant in most of their direct actions, alternating inside-outside positions: sometimes it felt like a theater performance where I was a spectator (for instance, during plenums) or other times, I got a role in this performance, as I marched in the street, blow the whistle and shout "Free Country, Free University". Nevertheless, because of the language barrier and depending on other's translations, I was an outsider. I experienced the position of being an insider, feeling as 'we', as part of the flow of meanings, doing what Scheper-Hughes (1995) understands through 'militant anthropology'. Furthermore, it meant discovering the "really real" by being politically and morally engaged[46], specifically, breaking with traditional anthropology, get engaged with the field[47] and adopting an inside position of the "activist anthropologist" (Maeckelbergh 2009: 29).

Finally and in addition to the researcher's engagement, I find it important to mention the attention that is recently given to the request for a political positioning in the field as well as in the academia, which is expressed very well through the notion of activist scholarship, what Charles Hale (2008) means by the accommodation between research and political engagement as an enriching process in activist anthropology and in methodological rigor.

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[46] This is what Scheper-Hughes (1995) relates to as "companheira" (participant) anthropology.
[47] This reminds of Touraine's proposal of the engaged researcher, what he calls by *sociological intervention*, which demands the detaching from the objective sociological inquiry and pleading for the active intervention of the sociologist as the only mean to bring out the concealed social relations hidden "behind a mesh of approved and organized practices "(1981:139).

3.2 Creating solidarity: The Movement as a Medium

In mid-February 2012, there was an attempt of occupy driven by the former members of HaHa that lasted only for a couple of hours, and then later, in April-May, same year, they tried to occupy the rector's office at the Medical University. These actions are the expression of a radical repertoire of action applied by HaHa's former members but not as successful in practice as the Blockade of February 2013 proved to be. The main question is why? In what resides the success of the 'occupiers' in 2013? The first tendency is to answer by relating to the context of generalized grievance, namely the proposed cuts and the changes of the Fundamental Law in Hungary. I contend that this is not sufficient in explaining the driving force of the occupation that is why I will look at the micro-level of the founding group, following Melucci's analytical dimension of solidarity, and track the changes in the membership of HaHa that I argue have channeled this action.

I discussed in Chapter 2 the formative period of HaHa and how this student initiative was grounded on a community structure in one of the most renowned colleges in Hungary. According to my interviews with former and new members, after the first HaHa event in Fővám Tér, February 2012 represents a month of "influential HaHa activities", with important media coverage and attention that marks the moment when HaHa's former members start recruiting new people.

The "new guys"[48] entering HaHa were actually from another university and another campus, namely ELTE, Social Sciences Faculty (LÉK[49]). What is appealing in the new membership is that the new people were also pre-socialized in another community, with their own shared

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[48] I am aware of the fact that this term is gender-sensitive but I am using it here as part of ethnographic language, as it is used by my interviewees, and which is translated as the new members.
[49] LÉK - Lágymányosi Community Advocacy, in Hungarian: LÉK - érdekképviseleti közösség; based in Lágymányosi Campus. This was not a homogenous community of students as TEK.

values and practices, having a student organization cell, prior to the foundation of HaHa. The particularity of the LÉK group is, as one of the former members of HaHa defines it, is the "everyday activism", taking part in everyday life, such as planting trees, gardening in the campus, and various community activities but on a small scale. In comparison with the TEK group, more oriented toward debates and conversations, usually held in Frisco[50], apparently LÉK was seen more connected to the real students by engaging directly in the student organization and through these campus activities. Additionally, the different orientation of the new members seems to be perceived as a source of tensions within the Student Network[51].

In the first stage, the discussions in HaHa seemed to be dominated by the founders, the old members who in fact were "really exclusive, expecting everybody to know [their] language" and another important point is related to embracing and reproducing the existing leftist ideology of the group. Apart from this, there were also requirements in terms of punctuality, responsibility, engagement, and efficiency, as core shared values for the well functioning of the organization. Moreover, this led to visible tensions inside the new based student network, translated as a perceived lack of freedom in participation[52] in the decisions of HaHa. As one of the former members claims, these tensions were more related to group dynamics as in a student classroom, where you have "cliques", such as the cool guys or the popular ones. Another member imagines this as a question of seeing the others as "good soldiers for the case, comrades", or just bohemian nice guys but not so responsible.

During interviews, a clear "us-them" discourse emerges when I ask about HaHa events and membership before December 2012. It is interesting to see how this community dichotomy

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[50] This is another bar that functions as HaHa's office. This is an important meeting point, runned by former students.

[51] "It was a vicious circle because we weren't sharing responsibilities (…) We were more thinking about media coverage, they were more like taking part in everyday life" (former HaHa member)

[52] "It was a high tension in that time and we were really frustrated that they are not taking part; they were really frustrated that we don't let them take part" (former HaHa member).

TEK- LÉK visibly structures the members' discourse in terms of old and new "generation"[53] or "wave". In this regard, in the forthcoming text, I will understand by "old generation" the TEK group, the former members, an exclusive group of students who founded HaHa but at the end of the academic year of 2012 because of graduation, they tend to "pass" HaHa to the new guys[54]. The "new generation" refers to the new recruited members, coming from LÉK, who became the real "new wave" in December 2012 by forming the Strike group and "Occupy HaHa", as one of the members claimed. In conceptualizing "generation", a difference of age can be spotted between the two groups, but I assert that the ideological orientation and the subcultural features of each group are more relevant in understanding the changes in the membership.

In this sub-section I give a possible explanation for the "why's" of the Blockade or the source of the "new collective action frame"[55](Tarrow 1991) promoted by the movement. With this in mind, I argue that apart from the general political context, the driving force of the Occupation is a generational shift in HaHa, due to a change in the membership of the organization. Moreover, this shift from the old to the new wave entails also a transition from a pure theoretical position of HaHa to a more radical logic of action oriented toward practice.

This happens also because some of the new members managed to connect their profession or education with the HaHa activities. For instance, during the Occupation, when the working groups were constituted, according to one of my interviewees, many students in media studies took part in the communication and media working group, practicing what they have learned and improving the efficiency of the Student Network in various areas.

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[53] A couple of my respondents also mention a "middle generation" that tried to penetrate the network during this transition from Strike to New HaHa, in December 2012.
[54] As one of the former members affirmed, they exclaimed to the new members "You are the HaHa now!"
[55] I understand here the change in the repertoire of contention and in the same time the new forms of organizations and action brought in by HaHa during the occupation.

During the summer of 2012, a decline in participation is perceived, on the background of unleashed tensions and because most of the former members graduated[56]. As one of the former members observes, "[former HaHa members] were rather thinking about media coverage, they were more like taking part in everyday life" and at the end of the summer, everything collapsed because "the [new guys] were really fed up with HaHa. For them HaHa meant this exclusive, really radical leftist thing" or "Bolshevik community that you have to fight against". Hence, what I can grasp from this is that we have new members who are coming inside HaHa with their own personal identities and previous social identities[57], and they have to adjust to the collective identity of the Student Network, which demands a certain set of values and practices imposed by the old generation.

In addition to this, the new members constituted the new generation in HaHa when they formed the Strike group, and in December 2012 they took over HaHa[58]. This is the moment when the new generation "occupies HaHa", from a need to detach from leftist labels that former members promoted.

> They decided not to choose an organizational name, as they didn't want a new organization, just one name that will tie everything together to Strike. That we organize the strike, and that's all, we don't have a name, we don't have anything. We are just students, which is very similar to the Croatian way[59] (new HaHa member).

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[56] The participation in the Student Network was mainly perceived as being connected to the student life, as one of the former members argues, "it's not like an organization when you can do that whenever you wat".

[57] I proposed in the earlier theoretical chapter that I will refer to social identity as the feeling of being part of a group, translated as membership and identification with the group, according to this membership.

[58] I need to make clear the fact that the Strike has to be envisioned as a transition phase between old HaHa and new HaHa, with no public visibility as an organization. Still, according to my interviewees, it actually came up with the idea of occupation and organized the general assemblies in December (5th and 10th), where also the '6 points' agenda was conceived. Nevertheless, the occupation was made under the banner and the symbols of (new) HaHa. "Taking over" HaHa refers here to this transition.

[59] The Croatian way refers to the screening of a Croatian documentary entitled the Blockade and which depicts the Croatian student movement from 2009, which took place under the form of a strike inside the university, students taking over the building and instituting the state of blockade.

Consequently, the detachment from HaHa was not with the purpose of forming a new organization but just introducing a new name that "would not separate students from us [new members]", as the new wave seemed to imagine. Many members from the new generation saw in former HaHa a "closed group of elite students", "liberal inner-city intellectuals", a "radical group of people, revolutionary type, different from several generations", portrayed as the they were the "intelligentsia" or "were much more hipsterish, they had ideas but action not so much".

From both groups, interviewees claim that there were tensions generated not only by HaHa's name, which had already some meaning attach to it, namely the leftist orientation, but also because of "personal differences" and "personalities". This suggests a sort of discrepancy between individual identities and the sense of "we", the sense of being part of a group that shapes the social identity related to membership and fundaments the collective one.

From the interviews, the idea of the new generation avoiding the leftist "etiquette" emerges and this is mainly because of the political landscape in Hungary. As one member explains, there is a great politicized ideological landscape, namely the Right and the Left and "if you say leftist you already align, position yourself in the box". Further, the fear to be called a leftist is actually avoiding this binary system that would limit your actions by having only two alternatives of positioning and action.

The message of the movement, which emerges from my interview analysis, is that even if this polarization of the ideological landscape exists, HaHa members tend to distinguish between two ways of doing politics and participate in politics, for example party politics, respectively, everyday politics. Furthermore, by detaching from "party politics" for instance does not mean not having a position in "everyday politics". For this reason, the first type of politics represents something that they do not believe in because it resides in the manner how they

imagine a movement: "if you want to built a movement you should stay away from party politics", meaning political affiliations[60].

> The political culture is not so set for the scene but even if the right party gets into power, they will get corrupted very soon and they will be forced by the logic of representative democracy, they will start being demagogical and start thinking differently till when they will want to be re-elected. And they want to get re-elected because this is how they work. And we think that giving up being critical to the system would take away our message because our message is: much more people should get involved in politics, involve in democracy, we want to create participatory systems even in university level or at smaller levels (…) it could take our message away if we sign with a party, or if we share the message of one party (HaHa member)

The second type of politics is related to offering a critique of the system, as one of the members expressed it: "it's not about getting away from party politics or get into party politics, it's more like being critical to the system". And this meets the perceived need of participation in democracy, encouraging students to organize themselves. Additionally, implementing participatory democracy, the improvement of the education system comes as the mission of HaHa because, as one of the members argues, "education defines everything, is the key, the core" (HaHa member). What is latent and graspable only through the analysis of interviews, is HaHa's view on the Hungarian politics, which address the systemic issue in which resides all the other problems: "Orban is just the product of the system, not the key element and it doesn't really matter if he or another similar person gets into power (…) real change can come if society change, changing the elites". For this purpose, they stress the education reform and make this subject the main point of their action agenda because their vision of social change resides in changing from below, meaning solving the way in which the system functions and how this system produces its structures.

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[60] In this regard, they also have this inside rule of HaHa that no political affiliated person is allowed to join the network. This becomes really interesting in the context of after-occupation and the fact that next year is election year and some people left the movement as they started identify with the political agenda of certain opposition parties. So, it is interesting from a perspective of double identity: on the one hand, they have this social identity, movement identity but on the other hand, there are cases of members leaving HaHa because "some believe that party politics can work in Hungary if the right people are the leaders" (HaHa member).

In accordance with this analysis on generations and how HaHa envisions the political sphere and the social-activist duties, it appears that the message of the movement relates to what Melucci argued, that is a symbolic challenge to the dominant patterns, "the medium, the movement itself as a new medium, is the message. As prophets without enchantment, contemporary movements practice in the present the change they are struggling for: they redefine the meaning of social action for the whole society" (1985: 801).

3.3 The Occupied Room: New Public Space, New Subjectivities

In this sub-section I will deal with the period of ELTE's Blockade and the transformations of space as an expression of reinforcing the movement identity and in the same time, creating the subjectivity of 'occupier'.

According to my respondents, the idea of occupation crystallized along with the formation of the Strike group, after watching the documentary on the Croatian Blockade, in the autumn of 2012. Talking with former and new members, it seems that the main reason to undertake the blockade was that this action, as one member argues, "would have had a spillover effect which would serve as the basis of the movement". In other words, it seems that the occupation would have served as a crucial contribution to the identity movement nexus, by unifying HaHa's collective identity, creating a common subjectivity, such as the "occupier", and impelling the organization from a state of latency to public visibility.

In this sense, Melucci (1985: 800) proposes a two pole model related to latency and visibility, which applied to my case, underlines a transition from HaHa as the expression of a subculture to becoming a counterculture. Furthermore, this means that alternating between latency and visibility, allows HaHa not only to reproduce its values, codes and practices within the

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organization's internal relationships, but also to bring them into the public space, make them visible under an agenda of claims that is alternative to and opposing the dominant social codes[61]. As Melucci argues, these two dimensions bring a great input into forming new solidarities and enhance mobilization, but in the same time is attracting new participants and militants[62]. As one of the members put it, "the occupation is really happening and is the magnet which brings people [in]".

In the weekend before the occupation, 8-10 February, HaHa planned the blockade in two bars in Budapest, Frisco and Sirály. It is very enriching from an ethnographic point of view that I had the chance to be there when they discussed the plan, when they organized the action and then arrived at ELTE just in the morning of the occupation.

The Blockade officially lasted till March 27 but the planned 'strike' in the Croatian style was maintained only in the day of the action. Nevertheless, one would assert that the occupation comes as an important contribution not only for creating this new subjectivity of 'occupier' but it reveals the productive dimension of the student movement. This is further understood through the creation of a grassroots structure of democratic discussion and participation, which is the plenum, the appropriation of space, which embodies a double contradiction, is public and private in the same time; the potentialities of decentralization and de-hierarchization. But also it points at a new repertoire of contention, through organizational innovations, such as the working groups, tactical innovations, such as non-violent action and civil disobedience, demanding democratization through forms of participatory democracy, which represents a new view on how to do politics through de-politicization and how to re-imagine the social and the civil society.

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[61] Such as opposing the model of representative democracy, and offering as alternative form of governing, the participant and direct democracy.

[62] The occupation had great impact on increasing the number of members in HaHa. If at the beginning, there were around 20 members, then in December 2012, between 30-40 people, after February 2013, the Facebook group showed an official number of 160 members. So, this action channeled the recruitment and potentiated participation.

Manifested through appropriating one of the biggest classrooms in ELTE BTK, the Hungarian blockade was defined mainly through activities such as the plenum, the teach-ins, the sleepovers, but also through the presence of the media and in opposition with different social instances, such as government representatives, right-wing football supporters (Ultras Liberi), Student Union representatives, University officials or other students[63]. The first stage of the occupation is defined through this appropriation of space, familiarizing with it, establishing the routines, such as the daily forum and using the sign language, which sets the basis for a collective identity of the occupiers. Familiarizing with the space presupposes to merge a public space for open debate with a privatized space for eating, drinking, reading, sleeping etc.

In this regard, the occupied room appeared to embody a contradiction, became a two-folded space, public and private in the same time. I will offer a passage from my ethnography that emphasizes the transformation and the redefinition of the occupied room, and how this contradiction emerges:

> As we entered in the building, heading towards the plenary room, we crossed through the hall, where usually a messy table with food and drinks is laying near the entrance (see Fig. 4)…somebody was making a toast sandwich (a toaster was standing on a chair frying the bread) and in the hall smell of all kinds of foods. I felt like I was about to enter in someone's living room, people were pouring drinks, smearing slices of bread, it made this a really homey atmosphere, inviting you to join. From the entrance, the first thing that I have observed was the general mess: sleeping bags everywhere, HaHa banners rolled in and cleft in one of the corners of the room (clearly, they have a problem of identity, in the sense who is actually occupying the university, Haha or ordinary students, or maybe they kept them rolled because of the

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[63] I refer here to students which oppose HaHa, specifically I refer to the incident to which I took part in the 10th day of occupation, 20th February, when approximately 50 students from ELTE came in the room of the Forum, refusing to sit down and use the sign language, and they start clapping as a sign of defiance. They argued that they cannot accept "[HaHa] rules, as long as HaHa does not comply with "[their] rules/demands" (such as stopping the occupation and this boycott of the educational process). It was interesting to observe in these moments the division underlined by the used language, such as 'us-them', 'your rules-our rules' and HaHa being portrayed by the group as an outlaw group that does not comply to the rules of the university.

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group[64] who was supposed to attend later the forum), clothes, papers, empty or half full bottles on the floor or on the front desk, where usually the moderators stand.

On the margin of the sink, near the blackboard was some liquid soap for washing dishes, and some glasses freshly rinsed, there was also a radiator (brought from home) for people who are spending the night in the plenary room. I could also observe the fact that on the blackboard, among the schedule of the today's forum, where also some lyrics from Pink Floyd, adapted to the '6-points' situation: "We need higher education/We don't need no thought control…". Also, on the blackboard they have drawn a plate as those from the city with "Vita Ter 6-8" (The Square of Debate, 8th Distict – this is clearly a reference to the bad reputed district); so, they transformed the space of the auditorium in a personalized space of debate, friendly and cozy to live in. They improvised under the front desk a little library. What I found amusing is that during the plenary, a girl came in the room and while people were debating and voting she started washing dishes, as she was in her own kitchen, washing dishes in the sink where usually professors are washing the chalk off their hands. (see Fig. 5)

All these indicate, apart from an appropriation and a familiarization with the space, the transformation of space into a detained one, which is taken under control. This place actually became more than an ordinary room in the university, where people come and go, professors lecture and then leave. It became *their* place ('theirs', the "square of debate" but also where people live, eat, wash dishes, sleep, read books from their own library etc), which is kept under control, is 'blocked'. Additionally, this room was governed by another dimension of time than the rest of the rooms in the building because after 8 o'clock the university closes and they are locked inside, the public becomes closed, the private takes over. Also, I believe that having this room under control ("locking themselves in there" or being locked inside during the night, because after 8 o'clock, officially the faculty closes) empowered them to admit that they were actually occupying and that the blockade is not only symbolic but it takes place by having this room under control and sleeping in there. The room of the general assembly defines them as 'occupiers', it is the room where they were forging a new type of democracy (the participatory one), and in the same time, this room comprised a whole repertoire of symbols for exclusiveness (such as the personal objects of the occupiers who are

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[64] Refereing here to the Humanities Student Union representatives.

in fact HaHa members, the making of 'theirs' and of the private) and for inclusiveness (the banners with the 6 points, Hungarian flags, the routine of the assembly, namely, what made the place 'open for the public').

Fig.4

Fig. 5

Implementing the plenum model as a practice of democratic discussion and participation, it seems to have transformed the room in what Melucci (1985: 815) defines as:

> A new political space is designed beyond the traditional distinction between state and civil society: an intermediate public space, whose function is not to institutionalize the movements nor to transform them into parties, but to make society hear their messages and translate these messages into political decision making, while the movements maintain their autonomy.

While witnessing a process of collective identity cosolidation though which members struggle to attain consistency between individual identity and the movement identity, the space of the occupied room seemed a stage, the melting point where the external and internal relationships of HaHa potentiated or diminished identity dynamics (Snow and McAdam, in Stryker, Owens and White 2000). A decisive moment in terms of creating subjectivities and consolidate or extend HaHa collective identity, is that during the Occupation, after 2 days after taking over the Faculty of Humanities, HaHa voted in the plenum to attribute this

blockade to the 'occupiers' and not HaHa. That is why all the symbols, such as banners, slogans and logos related to HaHa were removed from the occupied amphitheater, because, as former members believe "[new guys] just felt it's exclusive again (…) so they didn't want to built barriers with all HaHa bullshit" as this would keep away many students that did not feel identifying with the movement. Thus, we can witness these different stages in shifting identities[65] that depend on how HaHa imagines how the movement is externally perceived, and in the same time, this last shift, from HaHa to occupiers is also sign of struggling for inclusiveness.

Fig. 6 The Occupied Room

Fig. 7 During the Forum

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[65] Such as Old HaHa – Strike – New HaHa – Occupiers and HaHa

Changing the view on the occupation by shifting from HaHa occupation to an action of the 'occupiers' was also a strategy against the attacks from the media, especially the right-wing one, because "doing a fresh thing you cannot be criticized", as one HaHa member has asserted. It appears that they were pushed in different directions, and they had to distance themselves from these forces, such as media attacks, because apparently for them it was more important the message that they transmitted, and how those who read newspapers see them. On the other hand, by creating this new subjectivity of 'occupier' involves a more open attitude toward new participants ("Openess is important when building a movement. Sometimes you should put aside your ideologies and concentrate on the practical side." – former HaHa member), meaning to value more the message which is about educational reform and direct participation and leave aside the ideology, as it becomes shallow in the polarized political context.

Related to the occupied room it seems that apart from constituting the basis for the 'occupier' subjectivity, it is also the space of experimenting with new democratic forms. Consequently, it seems that the purpose of this movement is not only to address the emergence of new type of subjectivity or collective identity, but as Cohen would put it, also the democratic potential in it, such as "the creation of new public spaces, of additional democratic forms, and the restructuring or revitalization of old ones, as it happens in the context of the occupation". As a conclusion to this sub-chapter, it appears that the Forum or the creation of plenum represents a new public space, a detained one in which occupiers experiment with subjectivities, shifting identities, building a new space, in relation to the external instances and opposing actors (1983:111).

Fig. 8 Detail: Sleeping bags, Different objects, and the sofa

Fig. 9 "Library"

Fig. 10 One corner of the occupied room

CHAPTER 4: COUNTERCULTURE IN THE MAKING

As discussed in the previous section, it seems that the occupied space is redefined through the practices that challenge the usage of it, in the sense that it encompasses two complementary dimensions: being public, through the practice of the Forum, the open debates and the fluidity of spectators, actors, moderators; and being private, through the occupiers' personal objects that define it as being 'theirs', such as sleeping bags, dishes, books, towels and different other objects.

Although the occupied space encapsulates this new identity of 'occupier', along with the reproduction of a new political participation space, the room exhibits practices, values, codes, rules that define the Student Network. Further it means that what was an underground subcultural collective identity, produced within-group interaction, is now made public through the media presence and other instances present in this room. Moreover, this collective identity attains visibility also through the street demonstrations, and through the renewal of the repertoire of contention that I will deal with in the second part of this chapter. For this reason, I will concentrate on the transition of HaHa from a subculture to a counterculture in the making, asserting that the blockade is the driving force of this process of becoming, while alternating the space of the occupied room with the streets of Budapest.

4.1 Making Subculture Visible

But what does it entails a counterculture in HaHa's case? I discussed in the previous sections that the student movement comes as a medium, is a message which refers to education and which defines not only the purpose or the aims of the movement, but the movement in its entirety, such as it is made by students for students, "we have to map all these connections

through education because it's our topic that's why we come to be, that's what we do" (HaHa member).

I understand HaHa as the expression of a political counterculture (Carter, 1973), because it manifests through a fusion between underground subculture (an alternative community to the official Student Union, with its own practices, rules, and lifestyle), leftist politics (which is not clearly assumed, but embedded in the practices), and the new created subjectivity of the 'occupier'.

What makes it remarkable from this perspective is its complexity in self-representation and the performativity feature, which is driven by "a collective search for identity" (Klapp, 1969; in Stryker, Owens and White, 2000), which further constitutes the object of the movement activity. The countercultural characteristic is built on the opposing external relationships of HaHa with the antagonist forces, for instance, different actors and institutions, such as Student Union representatives, government officials, media, or the Ultrasi Liberi (right-wing football fans). Building a collective identity against these opponents also entails bringing into mainstream the subcultural features of the movement and proposing new forms of organization and participation. Furthermore, HaHa appears to be conceptualized by its members in terms of a very fluid movement, based on participation, horizontality, which according to Oberschall (1993)'s understanding of "loosely structured movement", incorporates new forms of democracies and organizational structures.

In terms of novelty, looking at how members, mainly the new generation, envision participation and membership in HaHa, the movement is conceptualized in terms of being part of something "new", "fresh", although some members were part of other civil organizations before. In the same time, this perception comes mostly from those members who were not from Budapest but from other cities near the capital, and who express the

"novelty feeling" that they become part of a community that knows how to debate and achieve something through this fluidity of ideas. In this regard, members value the culture of participatory democracy and this is what they understand through "everyday politics". The model that they propose along with the idea of occupation indicates not only an emerging countercultural dimension but also the global feature of the movement.

They named the occupation *blokád*, which is a term borrowed from the Croatian Student Occupation in 2009, and which was previously implemented by Serbian students in 2006. Therefore, the analysis on the occupation reveals a pattern of occupation that apart from being applied regionally (Balkans region, Central Europe), is molded on the example of *Los Indignadas* and Occupy Wall Street, incorporating main elements such as the general assembly process, sparkly fingers (the hand language), consensus-based decisions, organization in working groups and the embrace of prefigurative politics (Maeckelbergh 2009). Therefore, I will underline the global character of the movement and how it was adjusted to the local context important in expressing the basis of HaHa as a counterculture. From interviews and discussions with the members, it appears that one of the most appreciated principles is *horizontality*, understood both as a practice and as a value (Castells 2012; Maeckelbergh 2009; 2011; 2012).

Maeckelbergh (2012: 211) defines horizontality as an "active creation of nonhierarchical relations through decision-making processes" and envisions it in relation with a process of 'decentralizing power'[66], namely an anarchist strategy for dealing with power (Maeckleberg 2011). As Maeckelbergh argues further, this is made possible through the process of de-hierarchization, meaning the construction of collective processes that disperse power, as it happens in the case of HaHa group. One of the members gives the example how they

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[66] This means that power tends to centralize in the hands of a hegemonic authority, and through horizontality this is avoided in exchange of attaining equality between actors (Maeckelbergh 2011).

conceived a poster together, through "collaborative working"[67], and "in 3 minutes [they] had the plan of the poster and none knew where the ideas came from (…) it's not an individualistic thing but we feel like part of a collective, is part of our individual set" (HaHa member). The idea of "collective" suggests what Hardt and Negri (2012) refer to, in the recent cycle of movements, as the rejection of representation. The creation of a direct democracy scheme is an element that indicates an internal organization of these movements as a multitude, a "whole of unrepresentable singularities" (Negri 2002), where subjects speak and decide for themselves.

Additionally, another point that helps me understand this participatory scheme is conceptualized by Day (2004) through the concept of *affinity* or anarchist logic of struggle specific to the newest social movements that tends to undermine every form of hegemony, understood here though verticality and hierarchical forms of organization, to what HaHa stand against. During the interviews, the idea of fluidity appears as a governing principle in participation. This principle of fluid participation is understood in relation being leaderless: they reject the idea of elitism, meaning people who have power over the group and they affirm that they don't have leaders but people who more of their time to the movement. Fluidity is also understood through what Freeman (1970) calls the "tyranny of structurelessness", which refers to what HaHa members understand by "anarchist structures", so to say, the movement is formed on flexible structures, with an unevenly distribution of tasks. But as Freeman argues, it is very difficult to imagine a structureless group because any group inevitably structures itself. In this regard, a HaHa member points out a larger degree of organization acquired by the initiative in the last months, such as its internal organization: the "highest decision body" is the forum where all the members can vote. Then, they have the

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[67] "Collaborating, acting together as a group without leaders or any other structure, or organization is a counterculture" (new HaHa member)

"cells" at the universities which are "kind of informal groups". "More important are the workgroups (...) which are basically committees" that are charged for proposing strategies on specific issues, "such as communication with media advertising, finances, legal issues" and ad hoc groups on specific tasks.

Related to this, in the occupy ethnographies appears the assumption that movement practices of horizontality will always allow inequality in the process of decision-making (Maeckelbergh 2012; 2009). Although, consensus explicitly aims to prevent the oppression if there is a system of majority and minority voting (Glück and McCleave Maharawalin 2012), the minority is always disenfranchised. This can be also understood through different degrees of participation: leadership is not openly expressed but there are people more involved or more active than others. In the same time, if we look at their vision of democracy (della Porta 2009), it relates to an assembleary model: the decision-making process takes place in a daily Forum (plenum) in the faculty's auditorium that includes the members of the movement and other students/partisans – whoever wants to participate. Although, decisions are taken by the majority through voting and using the hand language, this decision-making process is governed under the supervision of a moderator that orients the direction of the debates according to the daily agenda.

Clearly, the culture of participatory democracy, the plenum, the practice and value of horizontality, along with the pattern of Occupy suggests that HaHa incorporates a global dimension by sharing values and practices of the recent global movements. With this in mind, the particularity of the student demonstrations resides in how these elements translate into the local practices, such as the renewal of the repertoire of action, by introducing new strategies and new forms of protest, along with alternating the engagement in Occupation with the street protesting.

This refers to tactical innovations as well as to the repertoire of contention that albeit it tends to become more radical, it involves nonviolent forms of action like civil disobedience or the occupation of bridges. While examining the recent activism of the Student Network (HaHa), I argue that the strategies and tactics used by HaHa, such as direct action in order to occupy the Faculty of Humanities and different public spaces, such as bridges (e.g the Liberty Bridge - Szabadság híd), flash mobs and street demonstrations (marches, public speeches), then introducing the plenum in the space of university, are apart from signs of forging new forms of democracy, an expression of a counterculture in the making. Further, I look at these strategies not mainly as signs of crisis and tension in a social order, but as attempts of experimenting and offering participatory alternatives to the malfunctioning representative democracy and the failures of the government.

4.2 Breaking the Limits: Renewal of the Repertoire of Contention

I will deal in advance with underlining the elements that reinforce HaHa as the expression of a counterculture through the renewal of the repertoire of contention. So, apart from the participatory democracy scheme and the practice of horizontality, which have no correspondent in Hungarian political culture, I have already mentioned the stress on non-violent confrontations, such as civil disobedience and direct action[68]. Moreover, during these street actions, an element of novelty is using historical references and reenacting important political moments. During December 2012 the protesters, as one member argues, have "stolen" Human Platform's demonstration and gave it a symbolical meaning, related to the Revolution of 1956. They headed to the Hungarian Radio Station and demanded the Radio to

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[68] As it happened on February18 (see Fig. 10) the street march ended with the occupation of Petőfi Bridge and then of the Liberty Bridge, even if the Police opposed this action and tried to stop the march. It is important to mention that usually the repertoire of action a combination of actions such as public speeches, then marches, and direct action such as occupy.

broadcast their claims like the protesters from 1956. As one of the members confirms, "the radio demonstration has absolutely a symbolical meaning of 1956, as the revolutionaries occupied the radio, and they announced that they are free", but in the same time it constituted an attack to the government because as the same member affirms, the radio is ruled by the government. Another reference appears in the day of the occupation, when during the evening's street demonstration, they went to the National Museum and collectively started to recite on its stairs a famous poem written by Sándor Petőfi, NemzetiDal[69], as a re-enactment of the events of the 1848 revolution.

Discussing these reenactments with HaHa members, it appears that these serve as creating a common ground for people to identify with and also as a source of mobilization, apart from ideologies and political preferences, with the purpose to attract sympathizers:

> "We wanted to make people with national feelings more empathic to us (…) let them see that we were peaceful, that this is not a riot, we are not a hoard, but we are intelligent young people who want to make this country better" (HaHa member, who initiated this action of reciting).

Using these political and historical references, it clearly positions the student movement in a national and local context. Another reference is more accidental and comes on March 7 with an action, which was not organized by HaHa itself, when HaHa activists and others from various civil organizations climbed the fences of Fidesz's headquarters and occupied its courtyard for a day. While sitting in the courtyard, HaHa activists opened one of the dustbins and found Fidesz-programs and leaflets from 1989 and 1990 and started to read loudly what Fidesz had to say about education, freedom of speech and democracy back then – something very similar to what HaHa activists aim at today and something extremely different from what Fidesz says and does. The parallel with the young-Fidesz back in 1989 and the HaHa

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[69]"On your feet, Magyar, the homeland calls! / The time is here, now or never! /Shall we be slaves or free? /This is the question, choose your answer! - / Bythe God of the Hungarians /We vow, / We vow, that we will be slaves / No longer!"

movement today is even stronger if it is considered that when the, then liberal, party was founded – never trusting anyone over the age of thirty – only people under 35 were allowed its membership. In supporting this parallel, one of the former members told me that when Strike took over HaHa, one of the newly suggested rules was that only students can be part of HaHa, considering that many former members were graduates at that time, which would have involved the exclusion of the old generation[70].

Apart from historical and political references, another innovation in the repertoire of contention just mentioned above was used more as a strategy in street mobilization, what some of the members refer to as "stealing demonstrations" or "occupy the demonstration", as one HaHa member exclaimed. For instance, in the case of the Human Platform demonstration, apparently HaHa took over, and lead the people to the National Radio. Another time, it happened on 19th December on Margit Bridge, when HaHa demonstrators met with the High School students leading a parallel march and then they took over again the demonstration, by uniting in forces and organizing a spontaneous forum on the bridge. As one member explains "there was always formal demonstration that was announced to the police and was absolutely legal, and after that it was a spontaneous demonstration" resulted from merging two groups of protestors or as it happened in the day of the occupation, when the afternoon protest had a certain itinerary, announced at the police but HaHa activists decided to bring the people inside the university and headed toward the university.

For this reason, the renewal of the repertoire of contention comprises three dimensions, such as the non-violent action (civil disobedience, direct action), merging group of protestors ("stealing the demonstration") and the historical re-enactments, as strategies of mobilizing people and undoubtedly redefining the conflictive relationship with the present government's representatives and maintaining the expressivity of the movement. Certainly, we have to deal

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[70] This rule was not enacted in the end.

with a "movement remarkably sophisticated at self-representation" (Graeber 2009:10) and this performativity is obviously reinforcing the expression of movement identity, which builds on the conflictive interaction with the Hungarian political environment, according to Koopmans (1995), which is essential to the re-production of their identity ("Things seem to go slower if is it nothing to go against, there is no clear target"- HaHa member).

Fig. 11 Forum in the day of the Blockade

Fig. 12 Occupation of Petőfi Bridge (on February 18, 2013)

CONCLUSIONS

In this paper I have described and analyzed the case of the Student Network (HaHa) as a newly formed student movement that succeeded in challenging the established politics and impelled the Hungarian repertoire of collective action beyond the accepted forms. Discussing the recent cycle of protest (Tarrow 2011) in Hungary that culminated with the student occupation of ELTE BTK in February 2013, I proposed to look at the (sub)cultural ground of the student movement, particularly to explore the micro-interaction level of the group that founded HaHa. Although, I did not disregard the political and social context in Hungary, being a potentiator of collective action, I relied mostly on how the subcultural ground of the movement channels the collective action. I considered that in order to explain the 'whys' of the recent contention, it is necessary to look at the meaning that the participants ascribe to the movement and the orientation of it, which emanate from the student community that formed HaHa.

Moreover, I have discussed that the occupation is a radical action that apart from contributing to the renewal of the repertoire of contention, it is also a medium for the pre-existing subculture of the Student Network to attain public attention. HaHa was founded by a pre-socialized, closed group of students, coming from a renowned college in Budapest (TEK) but tensions appeared when the membership started to change because students from other colleges joined the network. This shift to a new wave of members, who are bringing along their values, practices, ideas in the Student Network, introduces tensions but it also establishes a new orientation and a detachment from the previous ideological etiquettes. Indeed, the student movement is propelled by what I refer to as an "identity work process" (Snow and McAdam, in in Stryker, Owns and White 2000: 46), negotiated within the

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movement between the new and old wave of members, meanwhile the Blockade enhanced this process. Apart from this, occupying the space of the university reveals the emergence of a new subjectitivty, such as the 'occupier', and of new public space, which is the occupied room. The room embodies a contradiction, in the sense that it is privatized, through the presence of the occupiers, who are personalizing the space, is a symbol of exclusiveness, and in the same time, it is public through the daily routine of the plenum that stress on inclusiveness and direct participation. Moreover, the renewal of the repertoire of contention incorporates new forms of action such as: civil disobedience, direct action, and as new strategies of mobilizing and attracting participants, merging two demonstrations or re-enact historical and political moments.

The creation of new subjectivities, of new spaces, changing the repertoire of action, and proposing new forms of organization and participation finally indicates that the Student Network is the expression of a countercultural movement in the making, opposing the established forms of representative democracy and reimagining the social through this productive dimension of the movement. In other words, this paper contributes to the field of research through orienting the analysis of social movements to what many studies ignored, namely the micro-interactions and the cultural background of the movement. More broadly, this paper offers an insight on how people who engaged in this type of activism create a new social ontology and new subjectivities, as part of daily performativity.

Further studies might address further the trajectories of participation (Corrigal-Brown 2012) in this student movement and also how the individual factors, such as ideology, resources, social networks, and also the social biography influence the initial engagement in the movement. For instance, it would be inspiring to trace the differences in the trajectories of participation for members who come from the countryside in comparison with those from

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Budapest. In according to this, it is worth mentioning that HaHa has also a cell in Pécs[71] that is why a future study might reveal clear existing differences between the capital and countryside reception of the movement, or even breaks from the specificities of Budapest.

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[71] According to my interviewees, it was also a cell in Debrecen but apparently because of the political alliances, the members from Debrecen decided to leave HaHa and join Együtt 2014, an opposition political alliance.

APPENDIX

Timeline with my fieldwork main events

12.12.2012 Polytechnic University Forum; street protests

20.01.2013 Sirály - officially entering the field

3-7.02 Open University week started in Sirály: screening the Croatian Blockade,

8.02. Frisco night, end of ultimatum, amendment script came out

9-10.2 Preparations in Sirály

11.02 Blockade and Protest, 3 forums

12.02 Ultras came in the Forum

13.02 Open university program, meeting with foreign students from Croatia and Serbia, discussing the blockade

14.02 Discussion on the Rise of the Right in Hungary, Ultras came again in the Forum, and recorded

15.02 Street protest Ki-Ha (High School Students)

18.02 Street protest bridge occupation (Liberty and Petőfi Bridges)

20.02 A group of approximately 50 students came in the Forum against HaHa's practices

26.02 Human Chain flash mob

27.02 HÖK debate in the Forum (HÖK is the Humanities Student Union cell)

4.03 Forum dissolving to working groups

7.03 Fidesz Occupation

9.03 Az alkotmány nem játék! Protest against the constitutional amendment.

11.03 Ne írd alá, János! Protest against the constitutional amendment.

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