

**FROM ‘QUANTITY’ TO ‘QUALITY’:  
THE POLITICS OF REPRODUCTION IN STATE SOCIALIST  
HUNGARY (1948-1989)**

**By  
Anikó Gregor**

*Submitted to  
Central European University  
Department of Gender Studies*

*In partial fulfillment for the degree of Master of Arts in Gender Studies.*

Supervisor: Professor Éva Fodor

Budapest, Hungary  
2011

## Abstract

My thesis examines the changing emphasis in reproductive policies during the state socialist Hungary. First, by applying the theoretical framework of politics of reproduction I analyze how politics influenced reproductive behavior and what kind of differences can be identified between the two periods in this process. By analyzing transcripts and reports of the meetings of the Hungarian Politburo and important regulations on population issues I argue that while in the Stalinist period (1948-1956) the quantity of the fertility, namely that more and more children should be born was more important for the policymakers than the social composition of it, in the Kádár regime officials thought that less children should be born and only for providing the replacement level but the social origin and background, and in this sense the quality of children became more important issue.

Second, I point out the ways how reproduction itself made politics in these regimes. I argue that in both periods reproductive policies served as tools through which the political legitimacy of the existent system could be reached. In the Stalinist regime officials used decisions on reproductive policies in order to express their responsibility towards mothers and children, in a sense towards the future of Hungary and this emphasis played a significant role in the political legitimizing of the system. In the Kádár regime positive financial incentives, like the paid childcare allowance and grant fit the consumerist context of 'goulash-communism' which played an important role in the legitimacy of the regime. These incentives also helped distance the Kádár regime from its Stalinist predecessor.

## Acknowledgments

First of all, I would like to thank my supervisor, Éva Fodor for her tireless efforts and help during the period of thesis writing. Without her useful guidance and advice this thesis would not have been finished. Her support and encouragement helped me a lot when I felt I stuck in my project.

I would also like to say thanks to all of my professors at the Department of Gender Studies at CEU for the knowledge they passed to me through this academic year.

I would like to thank my sociologist friends and colleagues (Juli, Ildi, Tanárnő, and every member of the 'Asztaltársaság') at ELTE who tried to load me as less as possible in order to fulfill all the requirements at CEU. Without their support I couldn't have finished my studies at CEU. I am also grateful for their interest towards my research project and for their attention when I had to talk to somebody about my thesis in order to clarify and structure my thoughts.

I would like to say thanks to all of my friends and my family who tolerated my absence from many joint activities and celebrations during this year.

And last but definitely not least my greatest gratitude regards to Peter, who knows me the best and who helped and supported me through this year. Thank you for your endless patience!

# Table of Contents

ABSTRACT .....	i
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS.....	ii
TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	iii
LIST OF FIGURES, TABLES AND ILLUSTRATIONS.....	iv
CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION .....	1
1. 1. Research topic and research question .....	2
1. 2. Methodology and sources .....	2
1. 3. Structure of the thesis .....	3
CHAPTER 2. GENDER REGIMES AND THE STATE.....	5
2. 1. State as a multilayer entity .....	5
2. 2. The concept of gender regimes .....	5
CHAPTER 3. THE POLITICS OF REPRODUCTION .....	7
3. 1. Politics make reproduction .....	7
3. 2. Reproduction makes politics.....	10
CHAPTER 4. SOCIAL, POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC CONTEXT – HUNGARY IN THE STATE SOCIALIST PERIOD .....	15
4. 1. The broader context: Hungary as a state socialist gender regime .....	15
4. 2. Economic changes and consumerism .....	17
4. 3. Demographic situation during the state socialism.....	21
4. 4. Public debates on demographic problems.....	23
4. 5. Pronatalist policies and the politics of reproduction in other state socialist countries .....	25
4. 6. The organization of the Politburo .....	26
CHAPTER 5. MOTHERHOOD AS A QUANTIFIABLE CONTRIBUTION AND DUTY IN THE STALINIST PERIOD (1948-1956).....	27
5. 1. Policies: ban on abortion, decisions on mother and child protection, and tax on childlessness .....	28
5. 1. 1. Regulation of abortion.....	28
5. 1. 2. Decisions on mother and child protection .....	30
5. 1. 3. Tax on childlessness.....	35
5. 2. Propaganda: public abortion trials, and awards for mothers with a high number of children.....	36
5. 2. 1. Abortion trials in public.....	36
5. 2. 2. Awards for mothers .....	37
CHAPTER 6. CONSOLIDATED STATE-SOCIALISM (1956-1989): SHIFT TOWARDS MOTHERHOOD AS A QUALITATIVE CONTRIBUTION .....	41
6.1. The constant but consolidated emphasis on the ‘quantity’: changes in the ideal number of children .....	42
6. 2. Making difference between women: who should and who shouldn’t reproduce herself? .....	45
6. 3. Motherhood as paid work: giving prestige and preserving the standard of living.....	49
CHAPTER 7. CONCLUSIONS.....	54
APPENDICES .....	57
BIBLIOGRAPHY .....	60

# List of Figures, Tables and Illustrations

## List of Figures

Figure 1. Number of lived births and abortions and the total fertility rate in Hungary (1945-1989) ...21

## List of Tables

Table 1. The main population indexes .....58

## List of Illustrations

Picture 1. Family photo album .....20

Picture 2. Crèche in the factory .....34

Picture 3. Children celebrate 1 May.....40

## Chapter 1. Introduction

My mother noticed she was pregnant with me in September, 1983. She was 17 years old then, and she was a fourth-year-student in a vocational high school in a small Hungarian town close to the Hungarian-Romanian border. Although my father had a job as an elementary school teacher and he had a small apartment in a block of flats with a mortgage on it, they were not married, my mother hadn't got a job which would have made her eligible for paid childcare allowance, and she hadn't even finished the school and they knew each other only for a couple of weeks when my mother became pregnant. Thus, the conditions were far from the ideal situation of childbearing. When my mother visited the gynecologist in order to confirm her pregnancy, the doctor declared that she was eligible for an abortion because she was unmarried and gave her a paper to visit the abortion committee. She never went to the committee and they decided that they would get married and have me together.

If this whole story had happened 30 years before, in 1953, she would have been forced to give birth to her child in the name of the infamous slogan of those years: "Giving birth is an honor for a girl, a duty for a wife" (*Lánynak szülni dicsőség, asszonynak kötelesség.*) (Kocsis 2006). Abortion was strictly banned in the 1950s and every woman was forced by laws and encouraged by propaganda to become a mother. Being unmarried or having uncertain social conditions was not a basis for being eligible for abortion. Every woman had to give birth to children, as many as they could. In contrast, in the 1980s and even in the 1960s or 1970s the situation was different. By regulating abortion in a way that defined which groups of women were allowed and which were not allowed to have an abortion and by creating a generous paid childcare allowance and grant for working women, state the encouraged or forced certain types of woman to have their babies and defined those groups of women who were not encouraged or who were allowed, like my young unmarried mother, not to reproduce themselves.

## **1. 1. Research topic and research question**

In my thesis I analyze political arguments, discussions and decisions of the Politburo (*Politikai Bizottság*), one of the most important political decision-making groups of the political field, about reproductive policies and reproduction related welfare policies in the periods of Stalinist and state-socialist years of Hungary. My research question is what kind of differences and similarities can be identified between the Stalinist period (1948-1956) and the post '56 state socialist period (1956-1989) in the aims of the reproductive policies through the transcripts and reports of the Politburo. I am interested in how influential Hungarian politicians imagined and constructed 'motherhood' in these periods and what was the meaning of this concept for them.

I argue that while in the Stalinist period of state socialism the political emphasis was more on the idea that women had to bear as many children as possible, no matter which social group they belonged to, and less attention was paid to the conditions of childrearing or to the social class or the origin of children, in later periods of state socialism the political emphasis was shifted towards concerns with 'quality'. The aim became to have a certain number of children (2-3) from certain social classes and by ensuring much longer paid childcare leave than in the Stalinist period the quality of childrearing became more important. I also argue that although these reproductive policies were grounded in important economic concerns, they served as a basis for these regimes' political legitimacy, too.

## **1. 2. Methodology and sources**

After the change of regime more and more transcripts and reports of different communist and socialist political committees became available for research purposes in the National Archive of Hungary<sup>1</sup>. I have chosen transcripts of the Politburo from the two periods and I analyze reports on the meetings and decision making processes containing debates and discussions within this group. I chose those meetings in which the Politburo dealt with the issue

---

<sup>1</sup> These reports and transcripts are available through the website of the National Archive of Hungary ([www.mol.gov.hu](http://www.mol.gov.hu)). Here I follow the reference by referring to the index used in the Archive. In the reference the exact date of meeting can be found in brackets thus one can look for these transcripts by date, too.

of population policies. Besides the reports and transcripts I use suggestions and reports done by other departments of the party towards the Politburo and I use the texts of population policy enactments or decisions, too. There is a difference in the transcripts and reports between the Stalinist period and the Kádár regime. While in the post '56 period every report contains a transcript of the discussions or the debates within the group of the Politburo, in the Stalinist regime reports contains only a summary about the final decision of the Politburo made on the suggestions. Although it limits my research, in my opinion even the summaries can contain additional information about decision making processes and the background of certain policies.

I am going to show the operation of the Politburo at the end of the Chapter 4. Here I only note that the Politburo received different suggestions and reports from the bureaucrats of different departments concerned with, for example, population issues and these reports were discussed in the meetings of the Politburo. These discussions are my primary sources from that time. The list of those meetings which I have analyzed and the list of inquired regulations, orders, enactment and laws can be found in the Appendices (Appendix I. and Appendix II.).

Besides reports and transcripts of the Politburo I also turned to the exact text of different regulations and orders concerning with population and reproductive issues. I suppose that the texts of the regulations and the transcripts of meeting together can complement each other in a sense that not just the regulation itself but the reasons behind it become more evident.

### ***1. 3. Structure of the thesis***

After the introduction I situate my research into the existent scholarly literature about the relationship between state and gender regimes and I show how my thesis contributes to previous research and approaches on the politics of reproduction, especially in state socialist countries. In Chapter 4. I give a description of the social, political and economical context of those periods that I examine. In Chapter 5 I present those policies and propaganda elements which support my argument that in the Stalinist regime motherhood meant that women had to give birth to as many



children as they can. Then I move on to the Kádár regime and I argue that the focus of reproductive policies shifted from the importance of ‘quantity’ of the fertility to the ‘quality’ of it. At the end of my thesis I draw the conclusions and I suggest some further possible research topics connected to my analysis.

## Chapter 2. Gender regimes and the state

### ***2. 1. State as a multilayer entity***

In my thesis I am going to analyze the changes in the construction of 'motherhood' by one of the most important political groups, the Politburo. The Politburo as a governor organization in the political hierarchy was a part of the very complex phenomenon of 'the state' on the national level. I find R. W. Connell's approach to the notion of state very useful when she argues that state should be conceptualized as a process rather than as a thing (Connell 1990, 509). In this sense the notion of 'state' contains several organizations working on different levels and making decisions concerned to different issues (Gal and Kligman 2000a, 20; Haney 2002). The idea of state as process allows us to analyze the complexity of this process from different aspects. Here I chose the analysis of one of the most important decision making group's transcripts and reports.

Several feminist authors claim that the state is not a gender neutral and gender-blind entity but it regulates relationships between men and women and it also creates new types of gender relations (Pateman 1988; Connell 1990; Waylen 1998; MacKinnon 1989). In the recent years there has been a shift in the analysis of state from the structural and institution-focused approaches to the practice and discourses-focused ones (Waylen 1998, 6). My analysis also fits into this trend because in my research I am focusing on the opinions of the members of the Politburo and certain social policy decisions in order to show how motherhood was constructed in the state socialist Hungary and what kind of changes appeared in this process.

### ***2. 2. The concept of gender regimes***

The pattern of gender relations in a society is a result of several structural procedures mainly but not exceptionally derived from the state. According to Connell every state has a certain kind of gender regime which means a special gender order of the society (Connell 1990, 523). The division of labor between genders and the gendered structure of power relations

expresses the most important characteristics of a certain gender regimes. State plays a significant role in the formulation and regulation of gender relations in the society because state is “the central institutionalization of power” (Connell 1990, 527). More precisely, “[s]tate practices construct and legitimate gender divisions” (Waylen 1998, 7).

Other definitions of gender regime do not refer directly to the complex concept of state; rather, they emphasize the existence of complex rules and norms which influence gender relations and which define tasks, duties and rights of men and women (Sainsbury 1999, 5). Gender regimes are described as “systems of interrelated gendered structures” (Walby 1997, 6). By using the term ‘gender policy regimes’, Diane Sainsbury refers to a gender regime which has an effect on the construction of policies (1999, 5). Gender policy regimes thus seem to be more based on institutions and different policy frames than gender regimes. Different reproductive policies are situated in a certain context of gender policy regime.

At the same time, different policies also can have consequences on gender relations. For example, several authors highlighted the gendered nature of welfare regimes in general (e.g. Orloff 1993, 1996; Lewis 1997; Sainsbury 1999) and in the case of Hungary after WWII (Haney 2002; Bicskei 2006). Negative sanctions or positive incentives on reproductive behavior, like the introduction of long-term maternity allowance and grant can shape gender relations and norms on that.

As Gal and Kligman argue, socialist gender regimes and their basic processes which shaped gender relations changed over time and space (Gal and Kligman 2000a, 5). In my thesis I compare two periods of the Hungarian state socialism in order to show the changes in reproductive policies and how the focus has been shifted from the ‘quantity’ and fertility aspect of motherhood to the quality of fertility and the activity of childcare. This means that my analysis will attempt to highlight changes in the notion of motherhood between different periods of the Hungarian state socialist gender regime.

## Chapter 3. The politics of reproduction

In the next section I am going to place my research in the existent and relevant scholarly literature of the politics of reproduction. The notion of politics of reproduction contains and refers to two different processes. The first process means those policies which concern with reproductive issues in a society, like pro or anti-natalist policies and abortion regulations. Not just politics make reproduction, but as Gail Kligman and Susan Gal argue, reproduction itself can make politics (Gal and Kligman 2000a). This means that reproductive policies have further consequences and not just on the demographic trends but they can serve as tools for rebuilding political structures and political legitimacy, for example, in transitory periods. Based on the existent literature first I am going to describe how politics make reproduction and then how reproduction makes politics.

### ***3. 1. Politics make reproduction***

Michel Foucault argues that at the end of eighteenth century a new kind of politics on human body emerged. In the focus of this new politics one can find human beings as living beings, bodies that contain several bodily processes. These processes, for example, birth, death, reproduction came into the interest of this new kind of power what Foucault calls “biopolitics” (Foucault [1976] 2003, 243). The aim of biopolitics is to control these processes and pay attention to the social-economic environment in which these processes take place. By monitoring these processes through censuses, nation-wide statistics, biopolitics would intervene if unwanted and disadvantageous phenomena appear on the scene. As Foucault highlights: “Biopolitics deals with the population, with the population as political problem, as a problem that is at once scientific and political, as a biological problem and as power’s problem.” (Foucault [1976] 2003, 245) The similar argument is made by Georgina Waylen who claims that reproductive policies can be understood as policies through which the state constructs and regulates men’s and women’s bodies (Waylen 1998, 10). I agree with both Foucault and Waylen that through reproductive policies state can regulate male and female bodies, and in my thesis I am going to highlight how

the goals of body regulation through reproductive policies have changed during the state socialist period. However, I also argue that reproductive policies served not just the aim of biopolitics, but these policies served as ways through which political identity of the period was articulated.

The politics of reproduction is a specific part of biopolitics. As Faye Ginsburg and Ryna Rapp argue in their article “The Politics of Reproduction” (1991), both the word “politics” and “reproduction” have several meanings, but the combination of these terms has a new meaning. The locality of reproduction and the global characteristic of politics are intertwined in the notion of “politics of reproduction” (Ginsburg and Rapp 1991, 313). According to those authors, politics of reproduction examines “the multiple levels on which reproductive practices, policies, and politics so often depend” (Ginsburg and Rapp 1991, 313).

One might see the notion of the politics of reproduction as paradoxical or at least strange because it connects two different and distant spheres. As Susan Gal and Gail Kligman claim in their book *The Politics of Gender After Socialism* (2000a), politics is usually connected to the macrostructure and public life, while reproduction is associated with childbearing that is seen as a part of personal life (Gal and Kligman 2000a, 17). The appearance of the concept of politics of reproduction can be connected to the feminist critiques of the public/private distinction. Feminist critiques argue that this distinction is just an idealized construction of the separation of these fields and thus conceals the connection between issues which are closely connected to each other (Gal and Kligman 2000b, 9-10). The distinction and the opposition between private and public sphere was a way how liberal theory constructed and organized the social world. Feminist critiques show how these spheres are intertwined and how the boundary between them is not as stable as it is supposed to be (Pateman 1988; Walby 1994). As Yuval-Davis notes, setting up the boundary between private and public sphere can be seen as a political act (1997, 80), not to mention the fact that the content and the definition of these concepts vary from time to time and from culture to culture (Gal 2002, 85).

Pronatalist policies are direct forms of how politics make reproduction. According to Alena Heitlinger, pronatalism can operate on several different levels, like culturally, ideologically, psychologically and on the level of population and reproductive policies (Heitlinger 1991, 345). In my opinion ideological level of pronatalism operated in the Stalinist period when laws were enacted in order to raise the fertility which served as a sign of the well-operation of the communism. When pronatalism operates on the level of population policies the question of the balance between quantity and quality of the fertility emerges (Heitlinger 1991, 347). In her article from 1991 Heitlinger claimed about Western countries that those years “there has been a noticeable shift in emphasis from “child quantity” to “child quality”, with the result that the broader population policies are for the most part directed towards improving the quality and lifestyle of a near-stationary population rather than towards increasing the size of the population” (Heitlinger 1991, 351). In my thesis I show that this shift was not a characteristic only of Western countries, but it was visible in the case of the state socialist Hungary, too.

Among the socialist countries, Romania was an extreme example of how politics determined reproduction. As a response to the decline of birthrate a very strict abortion regulation was enacted in 1966 (Kligman 1995, 237). Besides negative sanctions, maternity leave and work protection were guaranteed for mothers, family and child-support benefits were introduced (Kligman 1995, 237). Propaganda decisions were also made, for example, medals and awards were granted those women who gave birth and reared at least six children (Kligman 1995, 237). In 1967 a special tax on childless people was introduced, too (Moskoff 1980, 605). As I will show this kind of motherhood award, tax on childlessness and ban on abortion existed in Hungary and in the Soviet Union, too. However, it is an important difference that in both countries these policies existed during the Stalinism, while in Romania they were introduced in the late 1960s. One can argue that this is a sign of that both in the Stalinism and in Ceausescu’s regime strict control on reproductive issues served as tools for expressing the totalitarian characteristic of the system, thus reproduction made politics.

### **3. 2. *Reproduction makes politics***

Gal and Kligman argue that reproductive issues and debates played crucial roles in the way politics and political authority have been reshaped and reconstituted in the transitory years in the change of regime in the Eastern European post-socialist countries (2000a, 15). They claim that these kinds of debates served as a tool for reformulating the political structures in new democracies (Gal and Kligman 2000a, 15). Through the field of reproduction, political processes and discourses together not just shape the politics of reproduction but they have effect on higher-level politics itself and reshape it, or, as they say, “reproduction makes politics” (Gal and Kligman 2000a, 21). Susan Gal gives a broader definition by claiming that the politics of reproduction are “the ways in which political interests at global, national, and local levels influence the policies, practices, and ways of conceptualizing human procreation and the female life-cycle” (Gal 1994, 258).

By using the approach of Gal and Kligman, I argue that both the Stalinist regime and the Kádár regime, especially its first 10 years can be seen as transitory periods in which reproductive policies served tools for gaining political legitimacy.

Gal and Kligman claim that reproductive policies contribute to the process of ‘state-making’ (2000a, 17). They argue that reproduction should be seen in the net of interests of different actors, like the state or the ordinary people, men and women. These groups have sometimes contradictory interests towards reproductive issues. This fits to my analysis because I will describe how the political interests of members of Politburo were in contrast with the interest of, for example, those women who wanted to have an abortion when it was banned.

The authors point out that from the point of view of the state both the quantity and the quality of the population are important (Gal and Kligman 2000a, 19). In my thesis I claim that there can be a shift between these aspects because I argue that while in the Stalinist period more emphasis was paid to the quantity of the fertility, in the Kádár regime the quality aspect became

more important. These shifts were in parallel with the political interests of the regimes and the way how they wanted to gain the political legitimacy of the population.

Susan Gal presents a spectacular example for how reproduction can make politics in a case study of the abortion debate in Hungary in 1992, soon after the collapse of state-socialism. She identifies two main sides in the debate and she argues that these sides use the topic of abortion in order to formulate their political groups after the change of regime and tried to posit themselves in the political field through the debate (Gal 1994). In this sense the debate was a tool for them to express their broader views on political and social values through this discourse. László Kürti refers to this period in the Hungarian history, too, when he points out how the topic of the defense of families and traditional gender roles appears in the political discourse in order to unite political factions in one platform (Kürti 1991, 61-62).

Gal and Kligman identify different ways in which the process of reformulation of political structure through reproductive policies works. Here I present those which connect to my argument. According to the authors, the relationship between state and the population is shaped through public discourses on reproduction and it is a way how subjects of the member of the population are constructed. Gal and Kligman point out that the authority of the state over citizens result in the division of different groups within citizens: from the point of view of the state there will be good citizens who reproduce themselves and whose reproduction is needed and those who don't reproduce themselves although they should, or those who reproduce themselves but they shouldn't (Gal and Kligman 2000a, 22-23). In my analysis one of my aims is to show how reproductive policies defined in state socialist Hungary who should or shouldn't reproduce herself and in this sense how the 'quality' of fertility had been regulated.

Another way through which reproductive policies reconstruct states is debates on population issues which on a deeper level they dealt with the political legitimacy (Gal and Kligman 2000a, 28). They present the example of the contradiction between the tropes of "immoral communism" and tropes of "moral democracy" which was a favored comparison in



the transitory years in order to distinguish democratic political systems from communism. I argue that both in the Stalinist and in the Kádár regime decisions on reproductive policies served as strategies for making a distance from previous political periods. Emphasizing difference was important also in the Stalinist period, but with the legacy of the revolution in 1956 it was more important for the Kádár regime to distinguish itself from the Stalinist period of state socialism.

As Kligman shows, after the change of regime in Romania the abortion regulation was among the very first regulation which was repealed (Kligman 1995, 246). This act represented legal and ideological discontinuity and break-up with the Ceausescu regime. In Hungary, similarly rapid decisions were made on the tax on childlessness in 1957 and the repealing of motherhood grants. These decisions were also the part of the Kádár regime's politics of reproduction through which it expressed its difference from the Stalinist regime.

Reproductive policies strongly connect to the notion of nationalism. Although the discussions of the Hungarian Politburo were not ruled by nationalistic approaches on population issues, there are some signs that the interest of the state (what was argued to be "socialist") and sometimes the interest of the 'nation' were mentioned in these debates. As Nira Yuval-Davis points out in the introductory chapter of her book *Gender & Nation*, scholars of nationalist discourse on reproduction usually don't pay attention to the role of women in this processes and how their figure is constructed in these discourses (Yuval-Davis 1997, 2). The same critique is mentioned by Tamar Mayer who claims that academic discussions dealing with nation and state usually avoid addressing their issues from the point of view of gender and sexuality (Mayer 2000, 3).

The interest of the nation serves as a basis in the process how certain kinds of sexual behavior and certain groups' sexual behavior is judged. This means, according to Mayer, that a certain kind of hierarchy among nations, genders, sexualities will be declared (Mayer 2000, 3). The aim of reproductive policies is to encourage people to decide to have children. As a result 'productive' heterosexual relationships are highly favored from the point of view of the state. The

extreme tax on childless people introduced in 1953 is a good example how officials stigmatize those whose sexual behavior was not productive.

Nira Yuval-Davis argues that there are three different kinds of discourses which can be mostly identified in nationalist discourses around population policies. These discourses are as follows: (1) the discourse of 'people as power', (2) the eugenicist discourse and (3) the Malthusian discourse (Yuval-Davis 1997, 29). While the Malthusian discourse focuses on the problem of disastrous growing of the number of the population (Yuval-Davis 1997, 33), the first emphasizes the need for its continuous growth which might be justified by several reasons (Yuval-Davis 1997, 29). This kind of discourse continuously appears in the Hungarian political discussions in both periods of the state socialism. The need for more children was justified usually by the need for more workers and tax payers in the future. Yuval-Davis presents the notion of 'demographic race' which is a part of this discourse of 'people as power'. 'Demographic race' appears when an ethnic minority is framed as a threat to the majority in the sense that minority women are claimed to have higher fertility rate than majority women and in a few decades minority becomes majority and the nation of the majority will disappear (Yuval-Davis 1997, 30). This notion can be identified in Hungarian discourses in which Romany minority appears as a group which has higher fertility than the Hungarian majority. However, in state socialism this issue was not framed as a threat to the Hungarian majority but as a question of the social background of the future population.

This discourse is connected to the second one, to the so-called 'eugenicist discourse'. According to Yuval-Davis, in eugenicist discourse the focus is not on the quantity, but rather, on the quality of the nation (Yuval-Davis 1997, 31). The effort to raise the fertility of certain groups within a society is a sign of this kind of discourse (Heng and Devan 1992). In my research I focus on this issue by examining how Hungarian policymakers wanted to encourage well-educated and middle-class women to have children in order to ensure the appropriate quality of fertility.

In this chapter I presented the broader theoretical framework of my research project. By using the concept of politics of reproduction I am going to show that in both state socialist periods different incentives and sanctions were used in order to influence reproductive behavior and at the same time these policies served as tools for expressing political identity of these regimes. In the next chapter I move on to the description of the certain social, political and economical context of state socialist Hungary.

## Chapter 4. Social, political and economic context – Hungary in the state socialist period

### *4. 1. The broader context: Hungary as a state socialist gender regime*

In my thesis I describe how an important political group within the Hungarian state influenced population policies and thus shaped an aspect of the Hungarian state socialist gender regime. First, it is a question whether there was a separate and homogenous state socialist gender regime (Gal and Kligman 2000a, 5). I agree with Susan Gal and Gail Kligman who claim that there are some basic characteristics of state socialist countries which are common concerned to the relation of gender (2000a, 5). One of the most important characteristics was the contradictory goals of policies on women (Goven 1993, 35). On one hand, women's full employment and paid work outside the home was a very important economic aim of the state and it was declared as a way through which the goal of women's emancipation can be achieved. On the other hand, maternal role of women remained important, too, but it became contradictory to the working role of women. Equal rights were given to women and the legal equity with men was declared<sup>2</sup>, while the state often treated the group of women as a distinct and different category of citizens (Gal and Kligman 2000a, 5; Fodor 2002).

Ideologies on gender relations in state socialist gender regimes have different roots and origins. Socialist ideology and theories have a certain concept about the figure of women which is rooted in the writings of Marx, Engels and Lenin (Molyneux 1981, 63). However, Maxine Molyneux claims that these writings were not coherent about women, thus later Marxist-Leninist theorists composed a consistent theory on women (Molyneux 1981, 63). According to orthodox socialist theory, women's subordinated position is a consequence of economic reasons. Barbara Einhorn claims that Marxist and Engelsian theory depicts women as oppressed by capitalist relations and men's supremacy within the patriarchal family was a consequence of this economic

---

<sup>2</sup> The Stalinist political officials declared women's legal equality with men in the Constitutional Law in 1949 and in a tiny separate law in 1948, too. Besides these general declarations in 1952 the new law on family and marriage also made more equal the relationship between men and women – at least according to the law. These decisions made the legal frame of the state socialist gender regime in Hungary.

system (Einhorn 1993, 19). Thus, emancipation was imagined by bringing women into the paid labor market, organizing social services in order to take over the burden of homemaking and childcare, enacting legal equality, and bringing women into the sphere of politics (Molyneux 1981, 65). But official socialist ideology missed the reorganization of the domestic sphere in order to ensure the equality of men and women (Molyneux 1981, 66). Instead, in the popular and propagated ideas the importance of women's roles in the domestic sphere was echoed (Molyneux 1981, 66). This kind of contradiction and ambivalent treatment of women play crucial roles in the state socialist policies on women. The interest of the economy influenced politicians to emphasize the need for women as labor power, and reproducers of the future's labor power.

As we can see, the notion of the bourgeois family with the dominance of the man and the subordination of the woman was rejected by the state socialist gender regime (Gal and Kligman 2000a, 47; Goven 1993, 34). However, this old kind of paternalism within the private sphere of the bourgeois family was replaced by a socialist state paternalism in the public sphere with the Communist Party as a parent, or more precisely, as the father (Verdery 1994, 230). Socialist states wanted to challenge the classical division of private and public spheres, but instead of rejecting this division, they reconfigured the notion of them. It was not just the definition of women as workers that brought women to the public sphere, but the declaration of childbearing as a productive work in the early years of Stalinist period was also a way of situating women in the newly reconstructed public sphere (Gal and Kligman 2000a, 48). Raising the fertility of people but mostly women and childbearing became points of social interest and motherhood was constructed as a duty towards the state. In my analysis I am going to contribute to these arguments by presenting the reconstruction of 'public sphere' concerned to childbearing through reproductive policies during the state socialist period and I will show how the notion of motherhood started to contain characteristics which belonged more to the private sphere.

## ***4. 2. Economic changes and consumerism***

In the next few paragraphs I describe the most important changes in the economical context during the state socialism in Hungary which had effects on the politics of reproduction.

After the WWII, Hungary had to face with the project of rebuilding the country and the reconstruction of its social, economical and political establishment. According to estimations, Hungary was among those Eastern European countries which suffered the biggest economic losses in the war (Berend 2001, 256). Iván T. Berend claims that Hungary's total war damage was equal to the double of Hungary's national yearly income before the war and only Poland and Yugoslavia lost more in the war (Berend 2001, 256). Besides the cost of rebuilding the country, Hungary had to pay a reparation of 300 million American dollar to the Soviet Union, to Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia (Berend 2001, 257). Hungary as a hostile country belonged under the Soviet-led Allied Control Commission after the war and the Soviet Union put heavy pressure on the country and its officials in order to serve the interest of the Soviet Union. It resulted in the higher influence of the Hungarian Communist Party which had a stronger political power than its public support would have suggested (Berend 2001, 259). The communist party argued for a state controlled rebuilding of the country and the economy. This state control peaked in the nationalization of firms and factories started at the end of 1945 (Berend 2001, 264). The rebuilding of the country needed mainly industrial products, however, before the war Hungary was an agricultural country. In 1941 almost half of the society worked in agriculture, and one quarter in industrial sectors (Balassa 1959, 25).

Three years after the end of the war, the communist Hungarian Workers' Party took over and continued to implement the Soviet model ('Sovietization' – Berend 2001, 273) in every sphere of the social, political and economical life (Valuch 2001, Kürti 1991, 57). Firms and factories employing more than 10 people in the private sector were nationalized by the end of 1949 (Berend 2001, 275). The first five-year plan was introduced in 1950<sup>3</sup>. In the name of the

---

<sup>3</sup> Previously between 1947 and 1950 a three year plan was enacted.

preparation to a new world war and in order to be prepared to producing military equipments, industry and more precisely heavy industry became one of the most important sectors (Staar 1977, 121; Berend 2001, 283). The years of the early 1950s were spent in a more and more intensified preparation to the third world war.

Forced industrialization called for new labor force. On one hand, women were highly encouraged to enter paid work. Wages were very low and in the first years of the 1950s they became lower than they were in the late 1940s (Goven 1993, 29-30). Two earners in one family became not just a political goal but an economic necessity; too, thus it was also a way in order to force groups of women to the labor market (Berend 2001, 285). On the other hand, a supplement of the new labor force was needed and thus the interest of officials turned toward fertility issues. Women were the target group in this project, too.

Extensive industrialization and the emphasis on heavy industry put a heavy burden on the population. Wages were low, prices were relatively high, and more and more taxes and agricultural products had to be surrendered (Valuch 2001, 286). Private lands and properties of agricultural workers and peasants were collectivized started by 1948. Those who didn't want to work in the newly established collective farms, so-called *kolkhoz* (*termelőszövetkezet*) also flowed to the industrial sector (Berend 2001, 286).

After Stalin's death in 1953 the political climate became a bit more moderate but the basic political situations and the rule of the Soviet-oriented communist party hadn't changed. The revolution in 1956 brought significant changes in the political and economic climate. The volume of forced industrialization, the preference for heavy industry and the preparation for the new world war became less important (Berend 2001, 304). The newly emerged political elite knew that they had to gain the legitimacy of the population otherwise their political power would be unstable. Increasing the standard of living of the population played a key role in this process (Valuch 2001, 287; Szalai 2004, 12; Berend 1996, 162; Berend 2001, 309). The so-called 'consolidation' and the depolitization of the population was a main aim of the political system. In

order to achieve this, the sovereignty of private life was restored to some extent and the system offered the possibility of financial growth to people (Valuch 2002, 367). In this sense a special contract was “signed” both by the political elite and the population. Officials secured a moderate but constant growth in the standard of living in order to receive legitimacy. Consumption and the ensured standard of living were among the most important things through which the Kádár regime gained its legitimacy.

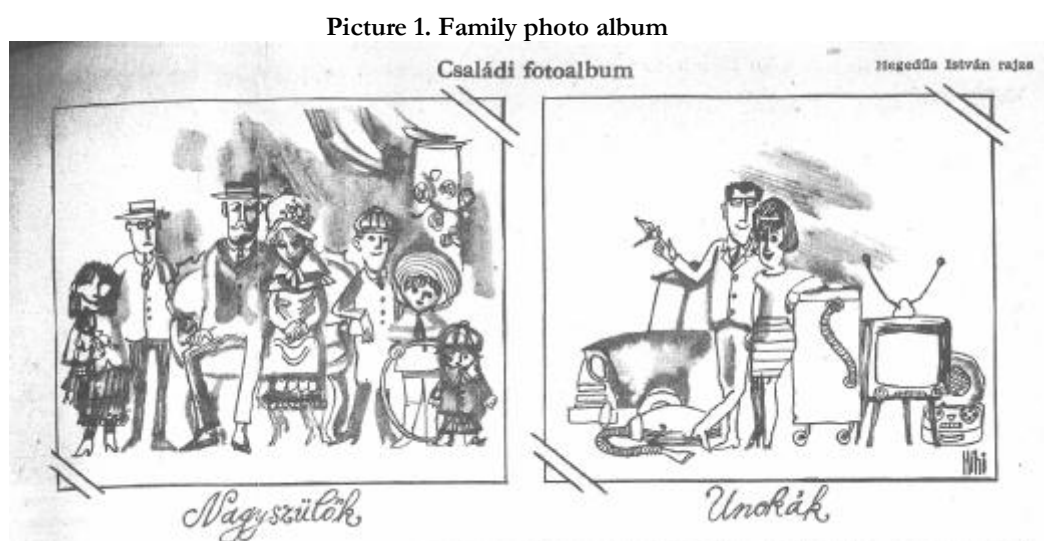
In the middle of the 1960s economic reforms started to be implemented. It became clear that the Hungarian economy needed serious structural reforms because the volume of the extensive industrialization couldn't be maintained and the centrally planned economy system failed (Valuch 2002, 369). The whole economy needed a rationalization. This new system was called New Economic Mechanism (NEM) and it was introduced in 1968 (Haney 2002, 94; Corrin 1994, 67). In the name of NEM enterprises had more responsibility in planning their productivity and the aim of these enterprises became the maximization of the utility of labor power (Corrin 1994, 67) in order to produce enough products to satisfy the consumerist demands. These market processes on the labor market would have resulted in unemployment and labor surplus which was unimaginable in a socialist economy. On one hand, the state was interested in encouraging certain groups to leave the workplaces at least for a temporary period of time. On the other hand, the state didn't want to reintroduce unemployment. Instead, women were encouraged to have a child and stay home for two or three years. This meant that mothers would walk out of job voluntarily and temporarily (Haney 2002, 94; Corrin 1994, 68). These goals were in parallel with the demographic aims of the officials who wanted to target women in order to have more children because of the negative demographic numbers.

As I have shown, consumerism played a key role in the process of the legitimacy of the political system. But this had a further effect on population issues. Politicians, and not just in Hungary, but in other Eastern European countries in the Soviet block also were surprised by the declining fertility (Drezgic 2010, 191). This was contradictory to the Marxist ideologies (Wolchik



2000, 60) which claimed that if the standard of living is higher, more children should be born. Although the standard of living was increasing in Hungary, fertility was decreasing. In the early years of the 1960s, politicians and a group of nationalist intellectuals saw consumerism as a negative effect on fertility. A well-known slogan from that time was the ‘Baby or car?’ (*Kicsi vagy kocsi?*) which expressed the dilemma of choice of young couples (Spéder 2005, 96; Kiss 1991, 54).

The next picture illustrates that consumerism and its effect on reproductive decisions were well-known in public opinion. It was published in a highly circulated satirical weekly magazine, *Lúdas Matyi*.



“Grandparents and grandchildren”

Source: *Lúdas Matyi* (satirical weekly magazine) 5 March 1964, p.7.

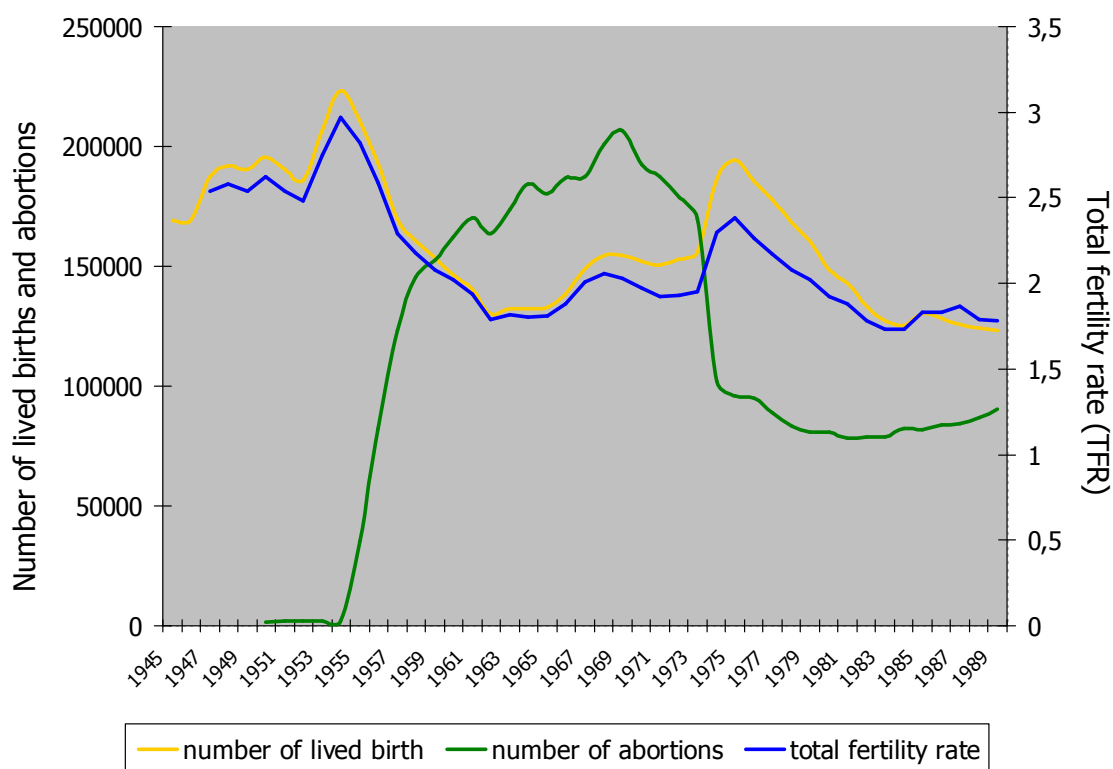
While the grandparents are encompassed with children and relatives, grandchildren are full with household goods. The fact that what made grandparents and grandchildren proud changed. Instead of having children young spent their money on goods.

#### 4. 3. Demographic situation during the state socialism

In the next section I am going to present the demographic situation of the examined periods in order to show the demographic context in which reproductive policies were introduced.

In WWII approximately 5-6 per cent of the population died (Valuch 2001, 30; Berend 2001, 253; Goven 1993, 26). After the war the number of live births increased and the total fertility rate (TFR) was higher than the replacement level (Figure 1.).

Figure 1. Number of lived births and abortions and the total fertility rate in Hungary (1945-1989)



Sources: Demographic Yearbook, 2005, Central Statistical Office, Hungary  
Abortions, 2000, Central Statistical Office, Hungary  
Induced abortions 1995-2006, Central Statistical Office, Hungary  
Statdat-database, Central Statistical Office, Hungary  
Historical Statistics of Time Series 1867-1992, Central Statistical Office, Hungary

However, the infant mortality rate was quite high: every tenth newborn baby died before the age of one (see full table in Appendix III.). At the beginning of the 1950s fertility rates started to decline and this served as basis for introducing strict reproductive policies. As a result, in 1954

the TFR almost reached 3 and more than 200 thousand children were born in 1953 and 1954<sup>4</sup>. As a result of health policies targeted mothers and infants the infant mortality rate continued to decrease which also resulted in a higher number of the population<sup>5</sup>.

After 1955 the number of lived births and the total fertility rate started to decrease sharply. Parallel with this phenomenon and as a result of the liberalization of abortion in 1954 and 1956 and the lack of tools for contraception, number of abortions increased rapidly. In the early years of the 1960s the number of lived births per thousand people reached the minimum so far and the TFR decreased below the level of replacement. Besides these rates, the number of abortions was higher and higher every year. It was the time when the Politburo developed a deeper interest in population issues<sup>6</sup>.

The introduction of paid childcare allowance (GYES) in 1967 raised fertility rates a bit and the TFR increased slightly above the replacement level. However, the effect didn't seem to be stable. The number of abortions reached its peak in the late 1960s when approximately 200 thousand abortions were conducted every year. Mechanical or medical tools for contraception were partly available that time. Oral pills, like Infecundin and Bisecurin were introduced in 1967 and in 1971 but the use of them were under medical control and the social security system didn't subsidize their prices (Tischler 2006).

The abortion regulation in 1973 increased the fertility rate well above the replacement level temporarily and decreased the number of abortions by 50 thousand from 1973 to 1974. However, after a few years the number of abortions started to increase moderately again. From 1976 the TFR started to decrease again until 1985 when the new, income-based child care benefit

---

<sup>4</sup> Those who were born in those years were called as Ratkó-children (*Ratkó-gyerekek*) after the Minister of Health, Anna Ratkó.

<sup>5</sup> Besides infant mortality rates, the growth of life expectancy also showed the positive consequences of health related decisions and modernization (Szelényi and Szelényi 1994, 215).

<sup>6</sup> For example, because of the emerging importance of demographic issues the research group of the Demographic Research Institute of the Hungarian Central Statistical Office was founded in 1963. This institute remained the most important which deals with demography in Hungary. (Source: website of the institute: <http://www.demografia.hu/index.php/az-nki-rol/ismertetes>)

(GYED) was introduced. GYED raised fertility rates but the effect was temporary again. In 1981 the size of the population started to decline and since then this trend has not changed.

It is clear from the statistics that different positive incentives and negative regulations had an effect on fertility but these results, especially on the fertility were only temporary.

#### **4. 4. Public debates on demographic problems**

From the beginning of the 1960s, parallel with the publicity of the above mentioned negative demographic numbers, public debates started to emerge in the ‘restricted public sphere’ (Heller et al. 1995, 129) on the topic of population issues. It was a kind of an exceptional possibility for intellectuals and journalists to express their hostility towards the existent political system, even by hiding behind the population problems. In a sense these debates served as tools for intellectuals to express their political opinions (Kiss 1991, 54). That time when the democratic right for free speech was restricted, it was a legal way to express one’s political identity which was against the ruling party (Heller et al. 1990).

I have to emphasize that politicians of the Politburo paid attention to these public debates. These nationalistic writings served as impetus for politicians to declare it publicly with a speech or with a short statement that they also deal with the issue of population<sup>7</sup>.

However, these debates around demographic problems were not a new phenomenon in Hungarian history. Ágnes Békési analyzes debates among rural and urban writers and intellectuals on demographic issues from the 1930s (Békési, 1988). The demographic strategy called “only-child” (*egyke*) which was a characteristic of certain rural and agrarian social groups was criticized by these authors. They claimed that economic reasons could be found behind this demographic behavior, namely that these groups didn’t want to have more than one child because it would mean that the case of inheritance land property should be divided (Békési 1988).

---

<sup>7</sup> As János Kádár said in the meeting of Politburo in 1974: “The ministry of health gives a statement, a short one, an easy-to-read one: it is well-known, the population issues were cases at issues, it was a social question and then it was analyzed. Contrary to what was found in the past, recently the situation is this. And that’s that! [...] A statement like this would be good, because we *were full with news like death of the nation and things like that.*” (italics added) MOL M-KS 288.f.5/684. ő.e. (1976.02.10.) 50R/75

These debates in the 1960s were re-started by nationalist and populist writers who expressed their fears about the “death of nation”. Later liberal authors joined this debate but they represented only a weak sounded opposite minority. In these debates population decline was connected to consumerism as one of the main causes of low fertility rate (Heller et al. 1995, 133).

Another frequently mentioned reason was the process of women’s emancipation. In the wave of the debate in the 1970s the figure of the ‘anti-mothers’ appears in the debates who voluntarily don’t want to have children (Goven 1993, 292). According to Joanna Goven, a newly emerged topic in these public debates on population issues is the quality of the population “measured by the social standing of the family of origin” (Goven 1993, 293). It illustrates that participants of public debates also focused on the quality of fertility. Not just nationalist writers but famous medicals warned the public about the importance of qualitative family planning (Goven 1993, 293). In the early 1970s the fertility of Romany women also appeared in these discussions and they have been named as those groups which shouldn’t have as many children as they had. The reasoning behind this argument was that Romany people’s social economic situation was much worse than the average.

Officials didn’t contribute to these debates until the 1980s when demographers and other scientists started to express their scientific opinion about population decline (and their hostility towards feminism and women’s emancipation) and they stepped into this debate field with the authority of science and with the support of state (Goven 2000, 288; Heller et al. 1990).

Negative demographic trends and public discourses around the issue also appeared in other state socialist countries. In the next section I present the way other socialist countries dealt with the issue of declining fertility.

#### ***4. 5. Pronatalist policies and the politics of reproduction in other state socialist countries***

In the 1950s state socialist countries usually implemented the population policy regulations of the Soviet Union (McIntyre 1975, 366). In the second half of the 1950s and in the early 1960s fertility rates started to decrease in the state socialist countries. Hungary had a very low fertility rate among the socialist countries (McIntyre 1975, 367). Responses given to this demographic varied broadly among the countries. Methods varied from different positive incentives such as paid or unpaid maternity leave and its extension, family allowance, subsidized flats for families to restrictions or full ban on abortion and the introduction of other negative sanctions. For example, in Czechoslovakia access to abortion was limited but aside from this several positive incentives were introduced (Wolchik 2000, 65). In Bulgaria abortion was restricted and the tax on childlessness was reintroduced (Drezgic 2010, 193; Brunnbauer 2009) but the family allowance system was restructured and increased up to the third child (McIntyre 1975, 374). In Poland a birth allowance was introduced as well as an unpaid maternity leave of up to three years (Bradatan and Firebaugh 2007, 183). Child benefit was increased in the GDR and maternity leave was extended in 1976 (Einhorn 1993, 84). The positive incentives had some common characteristics. For example, according to McIntyre in Czechoslovakia and Bulgaria second and third-order births were encouraged by the family allowances (McIntyre 1975, 373-374). I will show that the situation was similar in Hungary, too. This means that even in other state socialist countries the emphasis moved from the idea of 'give birth to as many children as you can' towards a limited number of children, around two or three which can ensure the reproduction. As I presented it before, Ceausescu's regime in Romania was an exception because of the extreme reproductive policies since the second half of the 1960s. Romania was an example of a country in which there was more emphasis on negative sanctions in the reproductive policies.

#### 4. 6. *The organization of the Politburo*

At the end of this chapter I describe the organization of Politburo in order to see how influential this organization was on population policies. I situate this group within the broader Hungarian state socialist leadership network and present the operation of it.

The political structure of state socialist countries was built following the example of the Soviet Union (Skilling 1966). In state socialist countries the political leadership structure was doubled. This meant that beside state units the party had its own separate political units on every level, too. Party units could order and instruct state units on the same and lower levels. The Politburo, both during the Stalinist period and the Kádár era was one of the most important and influential party organization which dealt with the daily important issues and made decisions on them (Bihari 2005, 97). The Politburo worked with the responsibility of a government (Valuch 2001, 242). The real government called Council of Ministers (*Minisztertanács*) did also exist but it was controlled by the Politburo. The number of members of the Politburo varied during the state-socialism from 4 to 15 (Nyíró 1989). The Politburo was one of the most influential groups of officials which dealt with the issue of population policies among several many other issues. This organization was subordinated only to the First Secretary of the party who was also a member of the Politburo, thus one can argue that it belonged to the most influential political groups of state socialist officials. Besides the Politburo other important groups were the Central Committee (*Központi Bizottság*), the Secretariat (*Titkárság*) and the Organizer Committee (*Szervező Bizottság*). The Politburo usually received different suggestions and reports from the bureaucrats of different departments of the party concerned with population issues and these reports were discussed in the meetings which were held usually once a week. Finally a final version of the decision was accepted by the members of the Politburo and these texts were also attached to the reports and transcripts. These discussions are one of my sources from that time.

## **Chapter 5. Motherhood as a quantifiable contribution and duty in the Stalinist period (1948-1956)**

In this chapter I am going to present the political discussions and policies in the Stalinist period which dealt with reproductive policies. In 1948 the communist Hungarian Workers' Party with the leadership of Mátyás Rákosi took power and started to build a one-party totalitarian political system that adopted the Stalinist model of the Soviet Union. This meant that similarly to other changes, the process of "women's emancipation", the project of increasing women's participation in the paid labor market, the reformulation of laws concerning family life and reproductive policies and the reconstruction of the notion of motherhood were also implemented by adopting the Stalinist models (Goven 2002; Schadt 2003, 13). In this Stalinist model 'productivity' was a key element of the evaluation of people. The notion of productivity was applied in the same way in the labor market and in the private sphere of reproduction. In the labor market workers' productivity meant producing more and more of the products (one can remember the famous figure of the Stakhanovite worker). On the level of personal lives women's and men's productivity meant producing more and more children. However, women's (re)productivity was targeted more directly by policies than men's.

I argue that in this era leader politicians of the Politburo imagined motherhood as mainly a quantifiable contribution to the building of the new communist Hungary. Motherhood was constructed as an obligation and a responsibility towards the country to bear as many children as they could in order to ensure the labor power for the future (Haney 2002, 32), to compensate the 5 per cent loss of the population after WWII (Goven 1993, 26), to express the prosperity of the country and the sign of the societal health (McIntyre 1985, 273) and to express the legitimization of the political system (Schadt 2003, 132). First I show how policies and propaganda decisions of the Politburo followed this logic.



## ***5. 1. Policies: ban on abortion, decisions on mother and child protection, and tax on childlessness***

On the next few pages I am going to present those policies which served as tools for raising fertility rates and the number of population. I argue that the emphasis of these policies was on the quantity of fertility and less attention was paid to the difference of social background of fertile women.

### **5. 1. 1. Regulation of abortion**

A law from the year of 1878 prohibited abortion in Hungary, but from 1933 it was available, but only for medical reasons confirmed by doctors (Pető 2002, 51). After 1945 because of the rapes committed on Hungarian women by Red Army soldiers, abortion was available free of charge and until the new regulation in 1952 there was a “judicial uncertainty about the issue” (Pető 2002, 51).

As in many spheres of the political life, the Soviet Union served as an example to be followed, thus politicians started to implement the Soviet type of regulation on abortion. In the Soviet Union abortion was banned since 1936 except for medical reasons (Jancar 1978, 140; McIntyre 1985, 273; Pető 2002, 52). In the text of the 81/34/1952. order of the Ministry of Health on the issue of the regulation of abortion, abortion is declared as a danger to life, health, labor power, and the future reproductive ability of the women and to the number of the population.

As we can see, according to the order abortion meant a direct danger to the number of the population that time and to the future of it because of the consequences of abortion to female reproductive ability. The protection of women's health was important only to fulfill their roles as workers and to be able to get pregnant and bear children in the future. This means that abortion was framed as an enemy of women's productive working roles, childbearing duties and it was described as the enemy of the volume of the growing of the population.

Tools for contraception like condoms or oral pills were not available that time<sup>8</sup> and methods of abortion surgeries were less developed thus for women it was likely to have further negative consequences on future fertility. The control of abortion meant control over women's fertility behavior.

According to the new regulation, abortion was permitted only because of strictly regulated medical reasons up to the 28<sup>th</sup> week of the pregnancy and a two-level medical committee made the decision on the permission. Abortion surgeries were conducted only in certain hospitals and every surgery had to be strictly registered. This emphasis on bureaucratic control served as a tool for keeping an eye on every single case when these medical committees decided to permit an abortion. The name and the address of those who were rejected were sent to the local community nurse of mother and child care (*védőnő*) in order to register their pregnancy. In this sense every applicant's future was monitored by bureaucratic tools.

As I mentioned, abortion was permitted only for medical reasons. In this sense, regardless of social conditions, age, the number of living children or marital status, every woman who became pregnant and who did not have a state-defined medical reasons had to give birth to her child. Social or economic conditions couldn't be obstacles or barriers to giving birth to a child (Pető 2002, 52).

After the death of Stalin in 1953 and its effect on the Hungarian government (the reformist Imre Nagy became the Prime Minister), the restrictions on abortion became a bit more moderate. First, jail sentences for the mothers and the doctors who participated in illegal abortion became lower<sup>9</sup>. Beginning with 1954, abortion became available because of family and social reasons, but the regulation didn't give an exact definition or description of those situations in which a woman could ask for permission to get an abortion (Kamarás 2000, 8). Thus, medical committees decided whether a woman could or could not have an abortion. This meant that it

---

<sup>8</sup> A regulation from 1949 defined those medical reasons which made women eligible for prescription for contraceptive devices (Pető 2002, 55).

<sup>9</sup> 81/34/1952. order of the Ministry of Health on the issue of the regulation of abortion

depended on the committees whose situation was seen as “bad” or what kind of situation made somebody eligible for abortion.

The main change in the regulation of abortion happened in 1956, a few months before the revolution in parallel with changes in the Soviet Union, too. In the Soviet Union abortion became legal in 1955 (McIntyre 1985, 273), however, Hungarian officials didn’t implement the change in the regulation immediately (Pető 2002, 72). In the decision of the Council of Ministers<sup>10</sup> every woman who applied to have an abortion was given the permission. Women had to visit a committee but its role was restricted only to trying to convince the woman to keep her baby. In this sense, at the end of this period abortion became available for every woman without any restrictions but before it almost every pregnant woman had to give birth to her child.

A strict and universal ban on abortion supports my argument that in the Stalinist period every pregnant woman had to bear a child except for strictly controlled medical reasons. Later when the political climate became a bit more moderate the regulation of abortion also became less strict and finally in 1956 it became available for every woman. After Stalin’s death changes of the abortion regulation, both in the Soviet Union and in Hungary, supported the process of de-Stalinization. This means that changing reproductive regulations expressed distance from the Stalinist regime and in this sense they made politics.

### **5. 1. 2. Decisions on mother and child protection**

Besides negative sanctions, positive incentives were also introduced in order to raise fertility rates and the number of population. As I presented it in the background chapter, infant mortality rate was quite high after WWII. In February 1953 a decision of the Council of Ministers was made on the expansion of mother and child protection<sup>11</sup>. Although, at first this regulation seems as a kind of welfare support of mothers, there was a clear direction towards the final version of the text that “every notion and word referring to the increasing of the number of

---

<sup>10</sup> 1.047/1956 (VI. 3.) decision of the Council of Ministers on the regulation of abortion and on punishment of illegal abortion.

<sup>11</sup> 1.004/1953 (II.8.) decision of the Council of Ministers on the development of mother and child protection.

the population must be eliminated from the text of the proposal and the decision”<sup>12</sup>. Even the first version of the proposal of the decision was titled as “Proposal for the Politburo about necessary decisions on the issue of raising fertility”<sup>13</sup>. This shows that the decision on mother and child protection was raised from the point of view of the importance of increasing the number of births.

The main features of the decision are connected to the protection of mothers’ health during pregnancy and to the protection of newborn babies’ life after birth. The main aim of these tools was to decrease infant mortality rates and to provide that every child who was born has to stay alive. Thus, this meant that it was a tool for raising the number of the population and the fertility. This regulation served as a tool for stimulating population growth.

According to the decision every woman was eligible for free layette (*kelengye*) if she attended on free medical examinations at least three times during her pregnancy. By taking into consideration that due to the shortage of certain products on the market, this guaranteed and free layette containing a few textile diapers and clothes for the baby<sup>14</sup> was a big help for mothers in receiving these goods. Thus, mothers were really encouraged to visit doctors and be under medical control during their pregnancy. It raised the probability that doctors could identify and cure possible health problems during the pregnancy and it made more likely for women to give birth to a healthier child. On the one hand, giving free layette for those who attended on medical examinations served as a tool for control women’s pregnancy. On the other hand, these examinations decreased the probability of infant mortality, thus resulted in better future life chances of newborn babies.

Women who had social security insurance could give birth to their children in hospitals and their expenses were covered by the social security system. This meant that they were

---

<sup>12</sup> 26 January 1953, Announcement for the Council of Ministers about the proposal of mother and child protection (UMKL XIX-A-2-ee)

<sup>13</sup> MOL M-KS 276.f.53/276.f.53.cs. 108.ő.e. 23 October 1952. 48R/73.

<sup>14</sup> I would say that even the content of this layette package was assembled in order to provide things which would facilitate the healthy way of caring the babies.

encouraged to give birth in hospitals instead of at homes which was seen as less safe for children and was more out of the sight of the authorities. Those who hadn't got social security could go to the hospitals or maternity hospitals but they had to pay a reduced price for the service. It supports my argument that officials wanted to achieve that more and more women bear their children in hospitals where the hygienic circumstances were better and thus the probability of infant mortality was lower. Despite that one can argue that officials made difference between those who had social security insurance and those who hadn't I note that reduced prices also express the efforts of policy makers for raising the number of those women who could give birth in a hospital.

The decision prohibited the employment of women in certain jobs which could be harmful for their health, more precisely, for their reproductive organs<sup>15</sup>. In this sense the protection of women meant the protection of their reproductive function. Pregnant or nurturer women were not allowed to work in night shifts, to do work requiring heavy physical labor or to be overworked. This regulation also served the prevention of complications during the pregnancy or later during the breast-feeding which could easily resulted in the illness or the death of the fetus or the infant. This decision also supports the argument that policymakers' interest in the protection of female fertility was to maximize the quantity of lived births and to minimize the infant mortality rates.

Working mothers received 12 weeks of paid leave. After the leave they had to return to their workplace. Up to the child's 6<sup>th</sup> month every mother had a half-an-hour break twice a day for breast-feeding and one break a day up to the child's 9<sup>th</sup> month. If the woman couldn't manage to go home and get back to the work during 30 minutes, she could have a three month leave but without any pay. Taken into consideration that there were only a few crèches (mainly in the factories or in industrial towns), it can be supposed that the state was less interested in how these

---

<sup>15</sup> MOL M-KS 276.f.53/276.f.53.cs. 108.ő.e. 23 October 1952. 57R/73.

newborn babies would be looked after. Feeding twice a day was declared as a necessity because of health reasons<sup>16</sup> in order to protect the babies' immune-system.

According to the decision, family allowance became progressive with the number of children, thus the more children a family had, the more money they received after one child. It was also an encouragement for families to have one more child. Family allowance after one child had been repealed; in this sense state policies didn't support families with fewer children than the replacement level.

The decision addressed the shortage of crèches, kindergartens and day care for grammar school pupils, too. It stated that more and more places should be available for children of working women and the opening hours of the crèches should be widened up to 13 or 16 hours. The Politburo directed the authors of the proposal of the decision on mother and child protection that they had to examine again the possibility of setting up non-stop crèches in which children could stay even at night<sup>17</sup>. It is clear that the politicians wanted to ensure mothers that while they are working even during the night, they can place their children in state-run day-care institutions and they shouldn't worry about them. Kindergartens were declared by the Ministry of Education as places in which the task of care has been fulfilled (Bicskei 2006, 163). In this sense the care-giving task of mothers was replaced by kindergartens. In those years the newly emerged conflicts between working roles and the caring aspects of motherhood was solved by preferring the working role of women while care work was collectivized in kindergartens.

The next picture which was taken in a factory crèche by the official Hungarian News Agency illustrates how working mothers had the possibility to breastfeed their children in the factory-run crèche in the early 1950s during their working hours and how it was presented in the official media.

---

<sup>16</sup> Proposal for the Politburo about necessary decisions on the issue of the raise of the fertility MOL M-KS 276.f.53/276.f.53.cs. 108.ő.e. 23 October 1952. 53R/73.

<sup>17</sup> MOL M-KS 276.f.53/276.f.53. cs. 108. ő.e. 23 October 1953. 4R/47.

**Picture 2. Crèche in the factory**



10 January 1953. Budapest. Mrs. Istenes, Mrs. Schach and Mrs. Kovács, workers of the factory of textile, are feeding their children in the middle of the work in the crèche of the factory. Photo: MTI (Hungarian News Agency), Pál Jónás (In the background: the picture of Mátyás Rákosi on the wall)

Mothers are sitting on a bench in line in a small and under-equipped room, like they would be working next to the assembly line. In the background there is a picture of Mátyás Rákosi on the wall who is looking at these women who fulfill their role as productive mothers, besides their paid work. After the officially allowed 30 minutes of breastfeeding they have to go back to work and fulfill their other productive responsibilities.

The decision on mother and child protection mentioned unmarried women and their pregnancy in a separate part. First, if it was possible, state-run institutions had to look for the father of the children and had to convince the father to get married with the mother or to pay maintenance for the mother after the child (Haney 2002). According to the decision unmarried mothers who couldn't manage to take care of their children could give them up to the state-care institutions. Thus, the state promised unmarried women that if they couldn't be responsible for their children, the state itself bore the responsibility for them. This shows that the quantity of the

newborn babies was more important for the politicians than the social background or the social characteristics of the mother.

To sum up, the main aim of the decision of the Council of Ministers was to decrease infant mortality rates and to improve the health conditions of newborn babies in order to stay alive. The protection of women and mothers also served as a tool for protecting their reproductive organs and to ensure their health conditions during their pregnancy. After giving birth, the role of mothers was narrowed to breast-feeding and they had to go back to work as soon as possible. The goal was that every woman should give birth to as many children as they could.

### **5. 1. 3. Tax on childlessness**

Besides full ban on abortion, another negative sanction was introduced in order to create a distinct category of those who hadn't contributed with any children to the population yet. At the end of the decision of the Council of Ministers in 1953, a special tax was introduced for childless people<sup>18</sup>. Men between 20 and 50 years old and women between 20 and 45 years old without any children had to pay 4 per cent of their monthly salary for tax on childlessness. The obligation of paying this tax was ended after one month of the birth of the first child. The idea of this type of tax came from the Soviet Union, too (Schadt 2003, 138). The text of the decision contains the justification of this tax. According to the text, childless people have to contribute to the financial support of the state which spends a lot of money on the protection of mothers and children. Childless people don't have to spend money on their children thus it is reasonable if they have to pay this tax in order to contribute to the expenses of the state. This meant that if somebody didn't contribute with his or her fertility to the growth of the population at least with one child, he or she had to pay. The tax on childlessness was repealed in 1957, after the revolution of 1956.

---

<sup>18</sup> 8/1953 (II. 8.) enactment of the Council of Ministers on tax of childless people.



It is important to emphasize that this regulation was expanded to men, too. In this sense productivity or being fertile was an expectation not just towards women, but men, too. However, state policies emphasized more the financial responsibilities of man who should support his family by his paid work and his salary or at least who should pay child maintenance for the mother of his child (Haney 2002).

The introduction of tax on childlessness supports that in the Stalinist Hungary rearing a child was declared as a contribution to the country. The fact that the basis of this type of tax was whether a person had or hadn't got living children also express that having a child was seen as an obligation. If somebody didn't contribute to the growing number of the population he or she had to pay.

In this subchapter I presented those policies and their background which served as tools for raising the fertility and for decreasing the infant mortality rates. These decisions expressed policymakers' interest in the growing number of Hungarian population. In the next subchapter I show how the propaganda was used in order to express the importance of the quantity of fertility.

## ***5. 2. Propaganda: public abortion trials, and awards for mothers with a high number of children***

Although previously mentioned policies and regulations were advertised in every forum in the public<sup>19</sup>, other propaganda campaigns and decisions also spread the word about the state's population policies on the quantity of fertility. Here I present two of them: public abortion trials, and awards for mothers of at least six.

### **5. 2. 1. Abortion trials in public**

Illegal abortions were strictly punished by the regulation of the year 1952. Abortion trials had a heavy publicity in newspapers in order to express that conducting abortion is totally against the goals of the population policy that time. Andrea Pető claims that "[t]he well publicized abortion cases and police actions served the same purpose: to control the reproduction process

---

<sup>19</sup> Even the famous Hungarian satirical magazine called *Lúdas Matyi* advertised the decision on mother and child protection on its cover in February 1953.

and the medical information connected with it” (Pető 2002, 70). These trials expressed that courts would punish those who asked the abortion and those who conducted it. In this sense it regulated both the women and the doctors and represented the opinion of the state on illegal abortions.

The Politburo emphasized the importance of the publicity of these trials, especially in rural areas<sup>20</sup> where illegal abortions conducted mainly by midwives were supposed to be frequent. This suggests that these trials were used as a form of propaganda of the state to express that illegal abortion is a serious crime and the trials served as deterrents, mainly for rural women.

### 5. 2. 2. Awards for mothers

Besides regulations and restrictions, rewarding of motherhood was adopted from the Soviet Union, too (Jancar 1978, 140). The idea of rewarding mothers with a high number of children first emerged in 1949. According to the suggestion of the Hungarian Women’s Democratic Alliance [*Magyar Nők Demokratikus Szövetsége*]<sup>21</sup> to the Politburo, the government should award 100 mothers who have more than 8 children and who rear them in the spirit of the national democratism<sup>22</sup>. Besides the award, mothers would receive 1000 Ft<sup>23</sup>, too. According to the suggestion, most of the selected mothers would have been workers or peasants, and only a few of them would have been “middle-class”. It is also clear from the document that this award served mostly political goals because it was used in the agitation procedure of women before the elections in 1949. But even from this suggestion, it is evident that having a lot of children made a

<sup>20</sup> MOL M-KS 276.f.53/276.f.53. cs. 108.ő.e. 23 October 1952. 5R/47.

<sup>21</sup> This organization was established in 1945 by the Hungarian Communist Party (later the Hungarian Workers’ Party) in order to serve as a joint group which represents women’s issues and helps in the rebuilding and reestablishing of the country after the WWII. The association had another important political function, namely the political organization and education of women and it helped in the political agitation, too (Burucs 1991)

<sup>22</sup> MOL M-KS 276.f.54/276.f.54.cs. 40. ő.e. 27 April 1949. 42R/50. However, there is no further explanation of what ‘the spirit of national democratism’ means.

<sup>23</sup> In order to compare: the average monthly salary of workers in the construction industry was 1002 Ft in 1951 (Farkas 2003, 66), thus one can say that this amount of money was more than an average monthly salary that time.

woman eligible for being nominated or selected to an award like this<sup>24</sup>. There is also an emphasis on motherhood as a quantifiable contribution to the building of the country. Susan Gal and Gail Kligman draw the parallel between the awarding of Stakhanovite workers who overproduced the standard quantity of the work and those mothers who had a lot of children (Gal and Kligman 2000a, 48). In both situations the productivity of the person was awarded and the fact that s/he produced screws or children didn't make any difference.

However, I have to point out that in this short suggestion two notions of quality appeared. Namely that not just the number of children was a criterion but the social class was an important aspect, too, and the properness of spirit of the childrearing. Here we can see the notion of women as cultural reproducers (Yuval-Davis 1997, 23) and the importance of the ideologies on social classes, although they were the ideas of the Women's Alliance and not that of the Politburo.

In 1951, when a decision<sup>25</sup> was born on the Motherhood Merit Award [*Anyasági Érdemrend*] and Motherhood Merit Medal [*Anyasági Érdemérem*] (Burucs 1997; Kéri 2002, 49), the text of the regulation didn't contain any reference to these criteria. Awards were granted to mothers of at least six, medals were given to mothers of at least ten by the Presidential Council<sup>26</sup> [*Elnöki Tanács*]. It was a criterion that every child had to be older than 1 year old and only living children should have been counted amongst the children of the mother. This criterion also supports my argument that the number of children was more important than their social background and officials wanted to be sure that these children would stay alive, thus they had to be older than 1 year after which the probability of mortality was lower. Later adopted children were counted, too, but those nominees who had adopted children had to be separated from the others in the process of the rewarding. In this sense, these awards rewarded the extreme number

---

<sup>24</sup> It would be interesting and fruitful to examine the process of how women were nominated to this award and how the final decision was born on who would receive the price. It can be a subject of a further research.

<sup>25</sup> Nr. 9. enactment in the year of 1951 in the subject of awarding Motherhood Merit Award and Merit Medal and of granting mothers with a lot of children

<sup>26</sup> The Presidential Council was a legislative group of 17 members and had the rights of the President of the Republic.

of one's own children, the highly reproductive women and preferred those who reared their own children. Besides the awards, certain amount of money between 1000 Ft and 2000 Ft was granted to the mothers.<sup>27</sup> These awards were repealed in 1957<sup>28</sup>.

Motherhood Merit Award and Motherhood Merit Medal were awarded on International Women's Day in every year. Mother's Day was not celebrated officially since 1945 because according to a report of the Agitation and Propaganda Department of the party, churches were assumed to use this day to emphasize the religious aspects of motherhood and use the celebration for their own purposes<sup>29</sup>. In this sense both sides used mothers and motherhood in order to express their political goals and values. However, here not the issue of reproduction, but motherhood makes politics. At the same time, combining Mothers' Day and Women's Day also has a message that being a woman in the 1950s in Hungary meant that according to the political propaganda, one's role as a woman can be fulfilled when she becomes a mother and the more children she has, the more merit is granted to her.

In this chapter I supported my argument that motherhood was constructed as mainly a quantifiable contribution to the building of the country after the WW II. Strict regulations on abortion, decision on mother and child protection and tax on childlessness expressed that women had to give birth to as many children as they could. Politicians used not just policies but propaganda in order to emphasize that state merited those who gave birth to extremely high number of children. I found only one or two examples which show that officials addressed the question of the 'quality' but they didn't introduce further policies in order to influence the fertility of certain groups of women.

These policies and decisions reflected the ways politicians dealt with the issue of the mothers and their children in the society. The emphasis on the responsibility of the Stalinist regime towards mothers and their children played a significant role in the political legitimizing of

---

<sup>27</sup> In order to compare: The average monthly salary of workers in the construction industry was 1002 Ft, in the state-run farms 531 Ft in 1951 (Farkas 2003, 66). A winter coat cost 910 Ft in 1952 (Farkas 2003, 77).

<sup>28</sup> However, financial grant for mothers of at least 6 remained enacted but without any official award or medal.

<sup>29</sup> MOL M-KS 276.f.54/276.f.54. cs. 358. ő.e. 28 March 1955 44R/129

the existent political system. Children meant the symbol of the future and the prosperity of the country and mothers were those who could bear these children and, in this sense, the future of the country. The regime by protecting mothers and children could argue that as responsible politicians they protected the future of the country. The next picture of the Hungarian News Agency illustrates this effort of the regime.

**Picture 3. Children celebrate 1 May**



Túrkeve, 1 May 1956. Children celebrate 1 May. Source: MTI – Hungarian News Agency  
(Photo: László Tóth)

The slogan: “Our goal is the free country, where children are cheerful and mothers are happy.”

In the picture the slogan expresses how reproduction and motherhood made politics in Hungary in the 1950s. By claiming that Stalinist Hungary and communism work for the happiness of mothers and cheerfulness of children officials and policymakers expressed that their politics deal with the issue of mothers and children. They emphasized the importance of these groups in the future life of the country. Women as biological reproducers (Yuval-Davis 1997) of future labor force and the symbols of prosperity of Hungary were declared as important group.

## Chapter 6. Consolidated state-socialism (1956-1989): shift towards motherhood as a qualitative contribution

After the revolution of 1956, in the period of so-called ‘consolidation’ (Asztalos Morell 2007, 41) the political elite of the Kádár regime started to reconstruct social and political relations.<sup>30</sup> In this process motherhood was also reshaped by political leaders through reproductive policies. By presenting evidence from the research materials, I argue that the quantity of the children remained important for the political elites of the Kádár regime but the new officials of the Politburo had different views on the ideal number of children than in the Stalinist period. The focus shifted from ‘give birth to as many children as you can’ towards having a limited number of children. However, the importance of the ‘quality’ of these children strengthened. This ‘quality’ aspect meant three different but intertwined things.

First, this meant that leading politicians started to be interested in the monitoring of which social groups reproduce themselves and which don’t and by using policy incentives and a reformulation of the regulation of the abortion they wanted to influence certain groups of women to give birth to their children and others to don’t. This meant that the Kádár regime made explicit differences between mothers based on their social class, their labor market participation and even their ethnicity and the regime wanted to influence them differently in their reproductive decisions.

Second, the meaning of the notion of motherhood as an activity, especially in the first years of the children’s lives, changed. The Kádár regime by introducing paid childcare allowance in 1967 up to the child’s age of two and a half and later three shifted care and nurturing work done by mothers to a productive work (Zimmermann 2010). In parallel with the rationalization processes in the economy that time and the growing emphasis on the quality and usefulness of

---

<sup>30</sup> Although historians like Tibor Valuch and Tibor Huszár argue that from the point of view of political history the period of Kádárist consolidation (*kádári konszolidáció*) started in 1963 (Valuch 2001, 17; Huszár 2006, 137), they use the enactment of almost general amnesty of the participants of the revolution in 1956. Here I argue that from the point of view of my research topic this consolidation period started earlier with the liberalization of the abortion law shortly before the revolution in 1956 and later it continued by the repealing of honor awards and prizes of mothers in 1957.

the products, the quality of the care work process done at home by mothers became more important. The psychological ties between the mother and the child was raised and emphasized among politicians in order to justify their decisions on longer childcare leave.

Third, by paying mothers for staying at home with children for a certain amount of time, the regime used money as an incentive in order to raise fertility rates. The raising of the standard of living started in the late 1950s and the encouragement of the consumption of the population were tools of the political elite for legitimizing the political system (e.g. Szalai 2004). Paid maternity leave and financial supports of families with children played significant roles in minimizing the decline of standard of living because of the birth of babies. On the surface, the declaration of motherhood and care work as paid work served for giving honor and valuable prestige to this activity and framing it as an occupation. At the same time, paying a certain amount of money in every month as an allowance served to maintain the standard of living of those who decided to have a child. In this sense, paying mothers in order to stay at home can be seen as a part of this legitimizing process.

On the next pages I present these shifts by examining transcripts of the Politburo and decisions and enactments on population policies. First, I show how the ideal number of children in a family was constructed around two and three. Then I move on to describe those policies which deal with the issue of difference making among women concerned population policies. At the end I support my argument that paid childcare allowance and grant played significant roles in the process of legitimacy of the Kádár regime thus it was a way how reproduction made politics.

### ***6.1. The constant but consolidated emphasis on the ‘quantity’: changes in the ideal number of children***

The regime headed by János Kádár<sup>31</sup> declared the memory of the previous Stalinist era’s strict reproductive policies and the heavy propagation of the importance of motherhood as

---

<sup>31</sup> János Kádár who was the First Secretary of the Hungarian Socialist Worker Party soon after the revolution knew well the Stalinist Hungarian regime because he had been the Ministry of Home Affairs for two years between 1948 and 1950. In 1951 he was arrested because of fictional political reasons and he became another victim of communists’ well-known tactic of ‘looking for the enemy amongst us’. He got out from the prison in 1954 and in 1956 he was again among the leaders of the party-state (Huszár 2006, 13-14).

policies which should be avoided because they intervened too deeply into the private lives of the people. This legacy served as a constant reference point for the members of the Politburo when they defined what they did and did not want to do in order to raise the fertility and the number of the population. However, the demographic situation was even worse in the late 1950s, early 1960s than in the first half of the 1950s: the number of live births per thousand people reached the minimum so far and the total fertility rate decreased below the reproductive level<sup>32</sup>. Besides these rates, the number of abortion was higher and higher every year (see Appendix III).

Thus the main aim of the Politburo was to reach the net reproductive level of the total fertility rate. This meant that the ideal number of the children became two or three in order to the reproduction and a slight growth, but not more. First, in 1959 an enactment<sup>33</sup> changed the amount of family allowance and it became progressive up to the third child (families with one child were not eligible for childcare allowance). After the third child it was linear, but not progressive (Grád 1988, 26).

Zoltán Komócsin, who was a member of the Politburo and he was a vice-head of the agitation department in between 1948 and 1950 (Nyíró 1989), made his opinion more explicitly on the ideal number of the children:

"It belongs to motherhood that women must give birth to children. Nobody wants to restore the old regulation when women in their early 30s were totally undone because of the so many childbearing. It is about only 2 or 3 children."<sup>34</sup>

First of all, we can see here how the strict regulation of the Rákosi regime serves as a reference point for Komócsin. Other members of the Politburo referred to that time during the debates around population policies, too. It is important to emphasize that here a certain kind of competition appears between the two regimes in the question of which treated women and

<sup>32</sup> Total fertility rate shows that assuming that the number of live births of that year will stay the same during women's life, how many children a woman will have until the end of her life. If this number is less than 2.1 (which is the reproductive level), this means that the population won't reproduce itself.

(Source: Hungarian Statistical Office, Population Statistics, Methodology <http://portal.ksh.hu/pls/ksh/docs/hun/modsz/modsz10.html>)

<sup>33</sup> 15/1959 (III. 27.) enactment of the government on the increasing of family allowance of workers of at least three and single worker women.

<sup>34</sup> MOL M-KS 288.f.5/604. ő.e. (1973.02.13.) 160R-161R/187.



mothers better, or more precisely, which regime could subordinate women to their goals with the least harm to them. Two or three children were declared as ‘enough’ for the political goals, namely for the achievement of the reproductive level. Two or three children are enough for maintaining the number of the population and it was far from the harmful goals of the “old” times.

In 1965 family allowance after two children was almost tripled<sup>35</sup> in order to encourage families with one child to have another one. It was also an incentive for deciding to have a second child in one-child families which would have meant enough number of children for achieving the replacement level.

It is also important to emphasize that the new regulation of the abortion in 1973<sup>36</sup> set up the limit of three children or two children and one further obstetrical case as one of the eligibility criteria of abortion. It is also a sign that those who had three children could decide whether they would like to have more or not. In this sense this regulation forced a woman to bear her third children if other eligibility criterion didn’t allow her to receive permission for the abortion. It also proves that politicians imagined the ideal number of children around 3 in order to ensure the reproductive level.

A few months after this regulation another enactment has been published<sup>37</sup> in which the amount of childcare allowance (GYES) was differentiated between the first, the second and the third child. After the first child mothers received 600 Ft, after the second they received 900 Ft and after the third or more they received 1000 Ft per month. Childcare allowance became progressive up to the third child. However, the average salary was around 2500 Ft that time, thus this means that the value of childcare allowance was quite low (Grád 1988, 34).

Finally, the reintroduction of the tax on childlessness as a possible tool for raising fertility appeared in the Kádár era, too, in the debate around the regulation of abortion in 1973.

---

<sup>35</sup> MOL M-KS 288.f.5/406. ő.e. (1966.10.04) 112R/231.

<sup>36</sup> 1040/1973. (X. 18) Order of the Council of Ministers on exercises in population issues.

<sup>37</sup> 11/1973. (XII. 23) order of the Ministry of Labor Affairs about the supplement and modification of the 3/1967 (I.29.) government order on childcare allowance.

According to the report of the Political Economy Department for the Politburo, the new name of the tax would have been ‘family support contribution’ (*családtámogatási járulék*), which is less offensive than the previous name was and which didn’t ring the bell of the memories of the previous regime<sup>38</sup>. However, finally the idea failed because officials in the Politburo assumed that the financial use of the regulation, namely that it would have meant income to the budget, it would be lower than the harm of the assumed negative public opinion on that. As János Kádár highlighted it in the discussion: “it would have negative consequences on the standard of living”<sup>39</sup>.

The fact that even the idea of tax on childlessness reappeared in the Politburo meant that the question of the number of live births remained an important issue for the politicians but the reintroduction of tax on childlessness was seen as a danger to the legitimacy of Kádár regime.

## ***6. 2. Making difference between women: who should and who shouldn’t reproduce herself?***

In the Kádár regime the importance of making difference between women in order to define who should and who shouldn’t give birth to a child emerged. I argue that introduction of eligibility criteria into the abortion regulation is a declaration of which groups of women are allowed to not to reproduce themselves. At the same time, those groups of women who did not belong to any of the eligible categories were defined as those who should give birth to a child. Besides the regulation of abortion, paid childcare grant (GYED) introduced in 1985 also wanted to incite middle- and upper-class women to bear children.

The idea of the regulation of the abortion appeared in the Politburo well before its enactment. Politicians postponed the decision because of two reasons. First, they waited for the effects of childcare allowance introduced in 1967 on birth rates and second, politicians feared from regulating this aspect of private life because of the memory of the strict regulation in 1952. Finally in 1973 the members of the Politburo made the decision on the regulation of abortion.

<sup>38</sup> MOL M-KS 288.f.5/625. ő.e. (1973.12. 04)

<sup>39</sup> MOL M-KS 288.f.5/625. ő.e. (1973.12. 04) 135R/142.

According to the enactment not every woman, but only certain groups were allowed to have an abortion, namely those, who were unmarried, or mother of three or mother of two and had one further obstetrical case, or who were older than 35 years, or didn't have or her husband didn't have flat, and who were poor. It is easy to see who was declared as a potential mother in the society and who was forced to bear the child if she became pregnant: childless married women or mother of two, or younger women who lived on a certain wealth level. This abortion law defined the requirements of becoming a mother for certain groups of women. But in the name of the law, those who were poor, unmarried women without any own place to live could have permission for abortion. It was a hidden way of defining who should and who shouldn't reproduce themselves. Here we can see the shift from the notion that every woman should have a child to the notion that there are some certain groups of women who are allowed not to have. In this sense, abortion regulation made a difference between women and it preferred the reproduction of wealthy women with stable social conditions.

Soon after the introduction of the regulation of abortion, the question of the quality of fertility appeared in the meetings of the Politburo in a more direct way. Referred to the childcare allowance and the growing number of women who took this leave, one of the members of the Politburo said that "I have a feeling that it is not those who bear a child who should".<sup>40</sup> He contrasts ordinary assembly worker women and intellectual female architects in a factory he visited. He claims that while worker women work exactly for a period of time which makes them eligible for childcare allowance, architects don't want to bear a child because the 2-3 years childcare allowance is too long a break for them in their professional lives and there isn't enough crèches where they could leave their children. Here he expresses his preference that mothers with an intellectual and wealthy background should have children, rather than those who want to take advantage of paid maternity leave.

---

<sup>40</sup> MOL M-KS 288.f.5/684. ő.e. (197602.10) 49R/75

The question of the characteristics of the fertility emerged connected to the ethnicity of mothers, too. János Kádár referred to Romany people's fertility when he talked about the successfulness of the population policies of the 1960s and he mentions that

[o]f course we know that gipsyfertility is in this [higher number of births], etc., but do not thinking about it because it conflicts with all of our ideology if we start to analyze it and if deal with it as a negative phenomenon. It was high before that [population policies in 1973], too. It comes from our ideology that we do not make any differences between child and child. It is not a problem if hooligans bear a child. The child who is born is a living; new Hungarian citizen and we hope that s/he won't be a hooligan.<sup>41</sup>

First, it is clear how Kádár tries to convince himself and others that on the basis of socialist ideology they shouldn't deal with Romany people and their fertility. But still, he mentions this and it is a sign that politicians followed with attention the Romany population and its demographic characteristics. In 1971 the first representative research was conducted on the Hungarian Romany population by István Kemény and a small report was published in 1974 in a public intellectual journal (Kemény 1974). Kádár as the most influential political leader must have known this report or must have received a longer and secret report which was written in 1976 (Kemény 1976). It is also important to highlight that he places Romany and young deviant hooligan population together. In this sense he draws a parallel between them as both groups are different from ordinary group of people. Here he wants to express the political ideology of the party that every child is valuable but at the same time he stigmatizes certain groups and makes difference not just between them and "ordinary" women, but between the value or the attribute of the fertility of these groups.

In another meeting of the Politburo in the 1970s György Aczél, who was responsible for cultural issues in the party and in the Politburo, raised the idea that family allowance should be progressive only up to the third child. He justifies his idea with "the gypsy population and many other things"<sup>42</sup>. By saying this he expresses that higher number of children in Romany families shouldn't be supported with higher amount of family allowance per child. By referring to

<sup>41</sup> MOL M-KS 288.f.5/684. ő.e. (1976.02.10) 51R/75

<sup>42</sup> MOL M-KS 288.f.5/604.ő.e. (1973.02.13.) 169R/187.

Romany families he makes it clear that higher fertility rate of them is simply not desirable. Thus, he makes a difference between Romany and non-Romany women and the evaluation of their fertility.

Ethnicity and social class relations are intertwined. Thus, when a regulation tries to raise the fertility of middle or upper-class women, it excludes lower class women amongst whom the percentage of Romany women is higher. In this sense, reproductive policies can have an indirect effect on the fertility of women from different ethnic groups. On the level of social policy the introduction of childcare benefit (GYED) in 1985<sup>43</sup> was influenced by the aim of increasing middle-class women's fertility (remember the example of the architect) because mainly it was the group who didn't used childcare allowance (Haney 1999, 167). The amount of childcare benefit was 75 or 65 percent of the previous salary. Differences were made upon the length of employment previously. Those received 75 percent who had been employed for at least two years before the pregnancy. Others with less employed time received 65 per cent of their previous income. In this sense this benefit even made difference within those who were eligible for the childcare benefit. Those who worked at least the same period than the length of the paid childcare benefit (2 years) received the maximum amount of their income, while those who spent less time on the labor market than the duration of childcare benefit received less. This means that previous contribution to the productive work made difference between mothers and supported most who worked more.

If we take into consideration the amount of the previous income, it is obvious that this childcare benefit preferred those who would loose more money with the previous and fixed amount of childcare allowance. This means that this support encouraged those women who would have had the biggest gap between their salary and the fixed amount of allowance by narrowing this gap with the income based benefit.

---

<sup>43</sup> 3/1985. (I. 17.) order about the modification of 17/1975. (VI. 14.) order about social insurance and pensions.

Some differentiation can be seen in the case of childcare allowance (GYES), too. Those who worked before their pregnancy were eligible for the allowance thus this support was also linked to labor market participation. However, the amount of the allowance was usually much less than the salary was (around 40 per cent, Zimmermann 2010, 8) and every mother received the same amount of money. In this sense no difference were made among working women in the entitlement and nurturing of every children were granted with the same amount of money. One can say that every child of working mothers was worth the same. Susan Zimmermann argues that this meant that those mothers who were excluded from formal paid work, even though the full employment, were not eligible for GYES and Romany women were highly represented in this group (Zimmermann 2010, 2). In this sense, even the fixed amounted childcare allowance had an indirect effect on making difference between women and supported certain groups in having a child<sup>44</sup>.

### ***6. 3. Motherhood as paid work: giving prestige and preserving the standard of living***

In this subchapter I present the third aspect of how the notion of quality emerged in the Kádár regime connected to motherhood. I argue that officials of the Politburo constructed motherhood as paid work in order to stimulate women's decision on having children. By granting an allowance to mothers, officials wanted to minimize the impact of mother's wage loss and wanted to maintain a decent living condition of families with children. In this sense they wanted to hold the spending power of these families and protect their consumerist power, too. Another economic reason was that building and running crèches cost more than paying childcare allowance and waves in the number of childbirths could result easily in the vacancy of crèches.

---

<sup>44</sup> Members of the Politburo recognized that sometimes it had a contradictory effect compared to their pronatalist aims. For example, on a meeting in 1984 one of the members mentioned that young university students were not eligible for childcare allowance (GYES) because they didn't work. University students represented the group of intellectuals in this comment and the growth of their fertility became an aim. (MOL M-KS 288.f.5/919. ő.e. (1984.08.28.) Finally, in 1985 the 6/1985. (I. 17.) enactment of the Council of Ministers made eligible university and college students for childcare allowance.

Besides economic reasons officials emphasized the importance of the qualitative relationship between mother and child and the importance mothers as full-time caregivers in the first three years of the child. This argument served as a justification of decisions on the introduction of paid childcare allowance. Thus, it hid the economic interest of policymakers. Mária Adamik argues that the introduction of childcare allowance (GYES) in 1967 was a direct “political step against women’s employment” (Adamik 2001, 194) and women’s emancipation was sacrificed on the altar of economic interest.

In 1967 paid childcare allowance (GYES) was introduced up to the child two and a half and later to three years<sup>45</sup> (in order to fit to the existent infrastructural system of kindergartens started at the age of three). Every working woman was eligible who had worked at least for 12 months before the child-birth. The monthly amount of paid childcare allowance was 600 Ft, for collective farm workers it was a less, 500 Ft<sup>46</sup>. That time this payment meant around 40 per cent of the average wage in Hungary (McIntyre 1985, 278). This new positive incentive emerged in a special economic situation, namely soon before the introduction of the New Economic Mechanism.

The idea of the GYES up to the child’s two and a half year appeared in a suggestion for the Politburo in 1966. In this document GYES was defined as an allowance which makes possible for working mothers to stay at home because of their own will after the five months of childbirth leave and mothers would receive a certain amount of financial support. It is important to emphasize that in this sense GYES was not compulsory but if we take into consideration that according to the report only 9 percent of children under 3 had places in crèches, childcare allowance seemed a ‘solution’ for the deficiency of places in crèches.

---

<sup>45</sup> 3/1967. enactment of the government on the childcare allowance.

<sup>46</sup> It is important to emphasize that this kind of difference making also appeared in the Stalinist regime when the amount of family allowance was different in the case of collective farm workers and ordinary workers. However, family allowance was introduced in Hungary well before the Stalinist regime in 1912 and from the very first time it defined those groups of occupations which made somebody eligible for the allowance (Grád 1988, 15).

Officials had a normative vision on how long a woman should stay at home with the child, too. János Kádár justified it in the following way: “a mother doesn’t leave a baby permanently [during a day] easily but it is more likely that she leaves her child in the kindergartens”<sup>47</sup>. György Aczél, one of the members of the Politburo is claims something similar but from a different point of view when he says: “there is no crèche around the world which can substitute the mother”<sup>48</sup>. It shows that longer childcare allowance was constructed as a need of the well-developed mother-child relationship. These approaches to the quality of mother-child relationship were new among the members of Politburo. This supports that the shift towards the quality of mothers emerged. The re-establishment of the discipline of psychology in the 1960s and the emergence of scientific research on child development (Haney 2002, 95) served as basis for arguing the importance of quality relationship between mother and child<sup>49</sup>.

By paying money for mothers in order to appreciate and acknowledge their time spent on childrearing, the state evaluated and expressed the importance of the motherhood and childrearing. At the same time, financial incentives have limited the way how this evaluation could be expressed. Gyula Kállai, one of the members of the Politburo and the president of the Council of Ministers argued in 1966 that “people really deserved what comes to hand, what they can spend”<sup>50</sup>. Others, like Zoltán Komócsin agreed with him in this question<sup>51</sup>. For example, in 1970 the free package of layette turned into cash benefit<sup>52</sup>. It supports the idea that officials had the conception that people should receive money instead of other forms of support. Giving money for people that they could spend on goods what they needed was the logic behind the political legitimacy project. The introduction of the income-based childcare grant in 1985 rested on the same assumptions with the aim of inciting the fertility of certain social groups.

---

<sup>47</sup> MOL M-KS 288.f.5/406.ő.e. (1966.10.04.) 31R/231

<sup>48</sup> MOL M-KS 288.f.5/604. ő.e. (1973.02.13.) 169R/187

<sup>49</sup> For example, on a meeting of the Politburo in 1976 János Kádár mentions that “different disciplines are doing research and trying to explain that the care giving by the mother to the child is irreplaceable. It has also some advantage, sense that mothers care and nurture the infants.” MOL M-KS 288.f.5/684. ő.e 52R/75

<sup>50</sup> MOL M-KS 288.f.5/406.ő.e (1966.10.04) 24R/231.

<sup>51</sup> MOL M-KS 288.f.5/406.ő.e (1966.10.04) 18R/231

<sup>52</sup> 1007/1970. (IV. 12.) government order on the introduction of cash benefit instead of free layette package.



However, this consumerist behavior was declared as a holdback on childbearing. As János Kádár claimed in a meeting of the Politburo in the early 1960s that “[u]nfortunately, nowadays there is a public opinion that young married couples need television and not child”<sup>53</sup>. This problem remained in the 1970s when Kádár says in the discussion about the regulation of abortion that “I can push the responsibility to the people if I want. The car, the plot, the television, etcetera, are more important [than having a child], but it won’t be fair”<sup>54</sup>. Egoistic consumerist behavior was negatively evaluated by the politicians of the Politburo, but it was a result of the system what they have built in order to legitimize their political system. In this sense paying for mothers in order to stay at home with their children was a part of the legitimizing process.

Not just the fact that it was paid suggested childcare allowance as a work, but also the fact that those years which were spent on the leave was counted into labor relation period connected to pension and special legal regulations protected women from being paid off during the leave. This shows that state considered childcare allowance as a temporal period in women’s lives in which they ‘worked’ at home by taking care of their small child. The ties to the workplace did not split up and mothers were ensured that they can go back to continue their job after the leave. It gave a new quality to their motherhood. They shouldn’t have been worried about the future possibilities of their work and their income. They could pay as much attention as they wanted to their children. It was a way how officials tried to make safety circumstances for having a child. Mothers didn’t have to worry because their future work and in this sense their financial safety were ensured.

The suggestions to the Politburo on reproductive issues usually contained ideas on how the tension between worker’s role and mother role should be solved. These suggestions usually raised the possibility of part-time work, flexible working hours, temporary work or work-at-home. However, most of these ideas were remained unreflected by the policymakers; it is clear

<sup>53</sup> MOL M-KS 288.f.5/267. ő.e. (1962.06.12.) 37R/211.

<sup>54</sup> MOL M-KS 288.f.5/615. ő.e. (1973.07.17.) 65R/69.

that in the head of the officials and experts the notion of motherhood has changed. While in the Stalinist regime the conflict of work-family life was solved by preferring the working role of the mother, in the Kádár regime family life and motherhood was preferred by policymakers instead of the working role. It proves that motherhood was imagined as a duty which women should pay more attention for.

In this chapter I supported the idea that in the Kádár regime the importance of ‘quality’ aspects emerged. First, officials’ vision on the ideal number of children has changed and it became lower than in the Stalinist regime. Second, officials paid more attention to which social group’s fertility is higher or lower than the ‘ideal’. By introducing partial restrictions on abortion and the income-related childcare grant (GYED) officials defined those groups of women who should and who shouldn’t reproduce themselves. Finally, positive incentives like paid childcare allowance and grant played significant roles in the support of standard of living and thus it supported the legitimacy of the regime.

## Chapter 7. Conclusions

In this thesis by using transcripts and reports of the Hungarian Politburo and texts of different regulations on reproductive policies I argued that there was an important difference between the Stalinist era and the Kádár regime in their population policies. In the Stalinist regime the quantity of fertility was more important than the social composition of those women who reproduced themselves. In order to provide higher fertility rates abortion was banned, different medical and health protections of mothers and children were introduced in order to decrease infant mortality and propagandistic decisions like the introduction of awards for mothers who had more than six children were enacted. A growing number of the population was declared as a sign of the prosperity of the country and an economic necessity in order to provide the future's labor force.

In the Stalinist period the notion of motherhood was constructed along the requirement of productivity. Motherhood or more precisely, bearing as many children as possible meant an obligation towards the country. Like assembly workers who produced more and more products, women should have given birth to more and more children.

Soon after Stalin's death in a bit more moderate political climate of de-Stalinization reproductive regulations, like the ban on abortion have changed. The period of de-Stalinization can be seen as transitory years and it is an example for how reproduction makes politics and how changing of regulations expressed the difference of previous strict communist regime.

After the revolution in 1956 the Kádár regime had to face the dilemma of how to influence fertility behavior without such strict and direct interventions into people's 'private' sphere. This meant that in the Kádár regime the boundaries of the public and private sphere were reconstructed and reproductive policies played a significant part of it. The memory of the Stalinist period and the revolution held back officials from strict and negative sanctions in population issues. Instead of introducing a total ban on abortion or other strict regulations policymakers preferred positive incentives like family allowance, childcare allowance or childcare grant in order

to encourage women in childbearing. By using positive incentives the Kádár regime expressed that their visions on how politics should influence reproductive behavior was different from the conceptions in the Stalinist regime. This means that reproductive policies served as tools for expressing a difference in political identity.

In the Kádár regime officials were interested in the number of lived births but they constructed the ideal number of children in a family around two or three. However, policymakers' interest in the social background and social origin of newborn babies and thus their mothers was a new aspect in reproductive policies. Both negative sanctions like the restrictions on abortion (1973) and positive incentives like the introduction of paid childcare grant (1985) which was based on the previous salary of the mother expressed that officials selected groups of women who should and those who shouldn't reproduce themselves. In this sense the quality of fertility came into the focus which was a new characteristic compared to the Stalinist regime.

Paying for mothers' care work at home up to the two and a half and later three years of a child's life was declared as very generous support for (working) mothers who decided to have child and stay home with them. By paying mothers policymakers tried to minimize the loss of income in the families. In the context of consumerism supporting an appropriate standard of living for the population was a very important aim of the officials. Well-being of the population was one of the main sources of the system's political legitimacy. In this sense paid childcare allowance and grant as reproductive policies were tools for ensuring the political legitimacy of the Kádár regime.

During my research project several interesting topics emerged which can be analyzed in the future. First, in this thesis I have not focused on nationalistic discourses in the transcripts of Politburo. In the era of state-socialism officials declared nationalism as a harmful ideology. However, members of the Politburo used examples of foreign countries in the socialist block and of other countries as well as reference points when they tried to make decisions on positive incentives and negative sanctions on reproductive issues. For example, Romania and its very strict

sanctions of reproductive policy appeared as bad example which should be avoided in Hungary. Members of the Politburo argued that Hungary had already gotten over these regulations in the Stalinist regime. Hence, it seems that it was also a way how Hungarian policymakers expressed their views on the modernity of Hungarian reproductive policies compared to the pre-modernity of Romanian policies. It seems that reproduction made not just politics in general but international politics in particular, too.

Another interesting research topic can be the examination of how the project of women's emancipation was addressed connected to reproductive policies in the materials of the Politburo. In the public debates on demographic issues nationalist and populist writers saw women's emancipation as one of the main reasons behind the fertility, and later the population decline. Officials also made some references to the contradiction between the message of state's emancipative policies and fertility issues. It would be interesting to see how leader politicians of a state socialist gender regime dealt with this conflicting issue and which side they preferred.

These topics of possibly future research show that the state socialist period of Hungary is still a rich field of examinations and several gendered analysis can be made in order to inquire different aspects of reproductive policies and state socialist gender regimes.

## Appendices

### *Appendix I.*

#### **List of sources – reports of the meetings of Politburo**

23 October 1952 – MOL M-KS 276.f.53/276.f.53.cs. 108.ő.e. 23 October 1952  
 8 October 1953 – MOL M-KS 276.f.53/276.f.53.cs. 140. ő.e. 8 October 1953  
 12 June 1962 – MOL M-KS 288.f.5/267.ő.e. 12 June 1962  
 4 October 1966 –MOL M-KS 288.f.5/406.ő.e. 4 October 1966  
 6 April 1967 – MOLM-KS 288.f.5./421.ő.e. 6 April 1967  
 13 February 1973 –MOL M-KS 288.f.5./604. ő.e. 14 February 1973  
 17 July 1973 – MOL M-KS 288.f. 5./615.ő.e. 7 July 1973  
 4 December 1973 – MOL M-KS 288.f.5/625.ő.e. 4 December 1973  
 10 February 1976 – MOL M-KS 288.f.5/684.ő.e. 10 February 1976  
 18 October 1977 – MOL M-KS 288.f.5/729.ő.e. 18 October 1977  
 17 February 1981 – MOL M-KS 288.f.5/820. ő.e. 17 February 1981  
 29 September 1981 – MOL M-KS 288.f.5/837. ő.e. 29 September 1981  
 28 August 1984 – MOL M-KS 288.f.5/919. ő.e. 28 August 1984

#### **Other meetings:**

Organizer Committee 25 April 1949 – MOL M-KS 276.f.55/276.f.55.cs.68 ő.e. 25 April 1949  
 Secretary 27 April 1949 – MOL M-KS 276.f.54/276.f.54.cs.40. ő.e. 27 April 1949  
 Secretary 1 February 1950 – MOL M-KS 276.f.54/276.f.54.cs.84. ő.e 1 February 1950

### *Appendix II.*

#### **List of cited regulations**

- 1951. évi 9. számú törvényerejű rendelet az „Anyasági Érdemrend és Érdemérem” adományozására, valamint a sokgyermekes anyák jutalmazása tárgyában [Nr. 9. enactment in the year of 1951 in the subject of awarding Motherhood Merit Award and Merit Medal and of granting mothers with a lot of children], In *Miniszteri Rendeletek I. 1951* [Enactments of Ministers I. 1951], p.68. Budapest: Minisztertanács Elnökének Hivatala [Office of the Head of the Council of Ministers].
- Az egészségügyi minister 81/34/1952. Eü. M. számú utasítása a terhesség megszakításának szabályozása tárgyában. [81/34/1952. order of the Ministry of Health in the issue of the regulation of abortion] In Monigl, István, ed. 1992. *Az 1952-53. évi népesedéspolitikai program Magyarországon (dokumentumgyűjtemény)* [The population policy program of 1952-1953 in Hungary. (collection of documents)], 19-21. Budapest: KSH NKI [Central Statistical Office Demographic Research Institute]
- 26 January 1953, Announcement for the Council of Ministers about the proposal of mother and child protection (UMKL XIX-A-2-ee) In: Monigl, Istvan, ed. 1992. *Az 1952-53. évi népesedéspolitikai program Magyarországon (dokumentumgyűjtemény)* [The population policy program of 1952-1953 in Hungary. (collection of documents)], Budapest: KSH NKI [Central Statistical Office Demographic Research Institute], p105.
- 1.004/1953. (II.5.) számú minisztertanácsi határozat az anya- és gyermekvédelem továbbfejlesztéséről [1.004/1953 decision of the Council of Ministers on the development of

mother and child protection.] In *Törvények és rendeletek hivatalos gyűjteménye 1953*. [Official collection of laws and enactments 1953.] 1954. 173-176. Budapest: KJK.

- 8/1953. (II.8.) számú minisztertanácsi rendelet a gyermektelenek adójáról [8/1953 (II.8.) enactment of the Council of Ministers on tax of childless people] In *Törvények és rendeletek hivatalos gyűjteménye 1953*. [Official collection of laws and enactments 1953.] 1954. Budapest: KJK.
- 1.047/1956. (VI.3.) számú minisztertanácsi határozat a terhesség megszakításával kapcsolatos kérdések szabályozásáról és a magzatelhajtás büntetéséről [1.047/1956 (VI.3.) decision of the Council of Ministers on the regulation of abortion and on the punishment of illegal abortion.] In *Törvények és rendeletek hivatalos gyűjteménye 1956*. [Official collection of laws and enactments 1956.] 1957. p158. Budapest: KJK.
- 15/1959. (III. 27.) számú kormányrendelet a három vagy ennél több gyermeket eltartó dolgozók és az egyedülálló dolgozó nők családi pótlékának emeléséről [15/1959 (III. 27.) enactment of the government on the increasing of family allowance of workers of at least three and single worker women] In *Törvények és rendeletek hivatalos gyűjteménye 1959*. [Official collection of laws and enactments 1959.] 1960. p209. Budapest: KJK.
- 3/1967. (I. 29.) korm. számú rendelet a gyermekgondozási segélyről [3/1967. enactment of the government on the childcare allowance] In *Törvények és rendeletek hivatalos gyűjteménye 1967*. [Official collection of laws and enactments 1967.] 1968. p289. Budapest: KJK.
- 1007/1970 (IV. 12.) korm. számú határozat az ingyenes csecsemőkelengye természetbeni juttatása helyett készpénzsegély bevezetéséről [1007/1970. (IV. 12.) government decision on the introduction of cash benefit instead of free layette package.] In *Törvények és rendeletek hivatalos gyűjteménye 1970*. [Official collection of laws and enactments 1970.] 1971. Budapest: KJK.
- 1040/1973. (X. 18.) számú minisztertanácsi határozat a népesedéspolitikai feladatokról [1040/1973. (X. 18.) order of the Council of Ministers on exercises in population issues] In *Törvények és rendeletek hivatalos gyűjteménye 1973*. [Official collection of laws and enactments 1973.] 1974. 434-438. Budapest: KJK
- 11/1973. (XII. 23.) MüM számú rendelet a gyermekgondozási segélyről szóló 3/1967. (I.29.) korm. számú rendelet végrehajtásáról kiadott 3/1967. (II. 26.) MüM számú rendelet kiegészítéséről és módosításáról. [11/1973. (XII. 23.) order of the Ministry of Labor Affairs about the supplement and modification of the 3/1967. (I.29.) government order on childcare allowance.] In *Törvények és rendeletek hivatalos gyűjteménye 1973*. [Official collection of laws and enactments 1973.] 1974. Budapest: KJK
- 3/1985. (I. 17.) MT számú rendelet a társadalombiztosításról szóló 1975. évi II. törvény végrehajtása tárgyában kiadott 17/1975. (VI. 14.) MT számú rendelet módosításáról, valamint a nyugellátások és egyéb ellátások kiegészítéséről, illetőleg emeléséről [ 3/1985. (I. 17.) order about the modification of 17/1975. (VI. 14.) order about social insurance and pensions.] In *Törvények és rendeletek hivatalos gyűjteménye 1985*. [Official collection of laws and enactments 1985.] 1986. p225. Budapest: KJK

### Appendix III.

**Table 1. The main population indexes (1945-1989)**

Year	Number of population	Number of live births		Number of abortions		Total fertility rate	Infant mortality per thousand live births
		total	per thousand population	total	per hundred live births		
1945	9,082,000 <sup>55</sup>	169,091	18.7	n.a. <sup>56</sup>	n.a.	n.a.	169.1
1946	9,015,259	169,120	18.7	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	116.5
1947	9,048,893	187,316	20.6	n.a.	n.a.	2.54	106.6

<sup>55</sup> Approximately data.

<sup>56</sup> Not available.

Year	Number of population	Number of live births		Number of abortions		Total fertility rate	Infant mortality per thousand live births
		total	per thousand population	total	per hundred live births		
1948	9,118,672	191,907	21.0	n.a.	n.a.	2.58	94.0
1949	9,204,799	190,398	20.6	n.a.	n.a.	2.54	91.0
1950	9,292,514	195,567	20.9	1,707 <sup>57</sup>	18.4	2.62	85.7
1951	9,383,024	190,645	20.2	2,000	19.8	2.54	83.9
1952	9,462,887	185,820	19.6	2,000	23.5	2.48	69.9
1953	9,545,207	206,926	21.6	2,000	20.6	2.75	70.8
1954	9,645,068	223,347	23.0	2,000	26.1	2.97	60.7
1955	9,766,600	210,430	21.4	35,398	37.3	2.82	60.0
1956	9,883,210	192,810	19.5	82,463	42.8	2.59	58.8
1957	9,828,578	169,714	17.0	123,383	73.8	2.29	63.1
1958	9,850,158	160,665	16.0	145,578	91.9	2.18	58.1
1959	9,913,029	153,347	15.2	152,404	100.8	2.08	52.4
1960	9,961,044	146,461	14.7	162,160	110.7	2.02	47.6
1961	10,005,980	140,365	14.0	169,992	121.1	1.94	44.1
1962	10,049,935	130,053	12.9	163,656	125.8	1.79	47.9
1963	10,071,715	132,335	13.1	173,835	131.4	1.82	42.9
1964	10,104,179	132,141	13.1	184,367	139.5	1.80	40.0
1965	10,135,490	133,009	13.1	180,269	135.5	1.81	38.8
1966	10,160,380	138,489	13.6	186,773	134.9	1.88	38.4
1967	10,196,926	148,886	14.6	187,527	126.0	2.01	37.0
1968	10,236,282	154,419	15.1	201,096	130.2	2.06	35.8
1969	10,275,347	154,318	15.0	206,817	134.0	2.03	35.7
1970	10,322,099	151,819	14.7	192,283	126.7	1.97	35.9
1971	10,353,721	150,640	14.5	187,425	124.4	1.92	35.1
1972	10,381,352	153,265	14.7	179,035	116.8	1.93	33.2
1973	10,415,626	156,224	15.0	169,650	108.6	1.95	33.8
1974	10,448,484	186,288	17.8	102,022	54.8	2.30	34.3
1975	10,508,956	194,240	18.4	96,212	49.5	2.38	32.8
1976	10,572,094	185,405	17.5	94,720	51.1	2.26	29.8
1977	10,625,259	177,574	16.7	89,096	50.2	2.17	26.2
1978	10,670,802	168,160	15.8	83,545	49.7	2.08	24.4
1979	10,698,841	160,364	15.0	80,767	50.4	2.02	24.0
1980	10,709,463	148,673	13.9	80,882	54.4	1.92	23.2
1981	10,712,781	142,890	13.4	78,421	54.9	1.88	20.8
1982	10,710,914	133,559	12.5	78,682	58.9	1.78	20.0
1983	10,700,155	127,258	11.9	78,599	61.8	1.73	19.0
1984	10,678,770	125,359	11.8	82,191	65.6	1.73	20.4
1985	10,657,420	130,200	12.3	81,970	63.0	1.83	20.4
1986	10,640,006	128,204	12.2	83,586	65.2	1.83	19.0
1987	10,621,121	125,840	12.0	84,547	67.2	1.87	17.3
1988	10,604,360	124,296	11.9	87,106	70.1	1.79	15.8
1989	10,588,614	123,304	11.9	90,508	73.4	1.78	15.7

Sources: Demographic Yearbook, 2005, Central Statistical Office, Hungary  
 Abortions, 2000, Central Statistical Office, Hungary  
 Induced abortions 1995-2006, Central Statistical Office, Hungary  
 Stadat-database, Central Statistical Office, Hungary  
 Historical Statistics of Time Series 1867-1992, Central Statistical Office, Hungary

<sup>57</sup> Approximately data.



## Bibliography

- Adamik, Mária. 2001. "The Greatest Promise – The Greatest Humiliation." In *Gender in Transition in Eastern and Central Europe Proceedings*, edited by Gabriele Jähnert et al. 190-199. Berlin: Trafo Verlag.
- Asztalos Morell, Ildikó. 2007. "How to Combine Motherhood and Wage Labour: Hungarian Expert Perspectives During the 1960s." In *Gender, Equality and Difference During and After State Socialism* edited by Rebecca Kay, 41-62. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Balassa, Bela A. 1959. "Chapter 2. Background: Hungarian Economic Policies during the Postwar Period" In *The Hungarian Experience in Economic Planning*. 25-43. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Berend, T. Iván. 1996. *Central and Eastern Europe, 1944-1993*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- . 2001. "The State Socialist Attempt at Modernization, 1945-1989" In *The Evolution of the Hungarian Economy 1848-1998. Vol I.* edited by Berend, T. Ivan and Csato Tamas, 253-374. Boulder, Colorado: Social Science Monographs.
- Békési, Ágnes. 1988. "A népesedési viták háttere a két világháború között." [Background of the population debates from the period between the two world wars.] In *Terhesség - Szülés - Születés I.* [Pregnancy – Labor – Birth I.] edited by Hanák, Katalin, 62-69. Budapest: MTA Szociológiai Kutatóintézet.
- Bicskei, Éva. 2006. " "Our Greatest Treasure, the Child": The Politics of Child Care in Hungary, 1945-1956." *Social Politics*. 13(2): 151-188.
- Bihari, Mihály. 2005. *Magyar politika 1944-2004*. [Hungarian Politics 1944-2004]. Budapest: Osiris.
- Bradatan, Cristina and Firebaugh, Glenn. 2007. "History, Population Policies, and Fertility Decline in Eastern Europe : A Case Study." *Journal of Family History* 32(2): 179-192.
- Brown, J.F. 1988. "Chapter 6. Hungary" In *Eastern Europe and Communist Rule*. 200-229. Durham and London: Duke University Press.
- Brunnbauer, Ulf. 2009. " "The most natural function of women": ambiguous party policies and female experiences in socialist Bulgaria" In *Gender politics and everyday life in state socialist Eastern and Central Europe* edited by Shana Penn and Jill Massino, 78-96. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Burucs, Kornélia. 1997. "Gyermek a szovjet rendszerben. Adattár, 1945-1971." [Child in the soviet regime. Database 1945-1971.] *História* 1997/5-6. Available online at <http://www.tankonyvtar.hu/historia-1997-056/historia-1997-056-081013-12>  
Last access 8 May 2011
- . 1991. "MNDSZ. Magyar Demokratikus Nők Szövetsége." [HDWA. Hungarian Democratic Women's Alliance] *História*. 1991/4. Available online at <http://www.tankonyvtar.hu/historia-1991-04/historia-1991-04-mndsz>  
Last access 11 May 2011
- Connell, R.W. 1990. "The State, Gender, and Sexual Politics: Theory and Appraisal." *Theory and Society* 19(5): 507-544.
- Corrin, Chris. 1994. *Magyar Women: Hungarian Women's Lives, 1960s-1990s*. New York: St. Martin's Press.
- Demográfiai Évkönyv 2005*. [Demographic Yearbook 2005]. 2006. Budapest: Központi Statisztikai Hivatal [Hungarian Central Statistical Office]
- Drezgic, Rada. 2010. "Policies and practices of fertility control under the state socialism." *History of the Family* 15(2): 190-205.
- Einhorn, Barbara. 1993. *Cinderella goes to market. Citizenship, Gender and Women's Movements in East Central Europe*. London-New York: Verso.
- Farkas, Gyöngyi. 2003. "Gyertek lányok traktorral!" [Come, Girls, to the tractor!], *Korall* 13. 65-86.

- Fodor, Éva. 2002. "Smiling Women and Fighting Men: The Gender of the Communist Subject in State Socialist Hungary." *Gender & Society* 16(2): 240-263.
- Foucault, Michel. [1976], 2003. "Eleven – 17 March 1976." In "Society Must Be Defended". *Lectures at the College de France*, edited by Bertani, Mauro – Fontana, Alessandro, 239-263. New York: Picador.
- Gal, Susan – Kligman, Gail. 2000a. *The Politics of Gender After Socialism*. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press.
- . 2000b. "Introduction." In *Reproducing Gender. Politics, Publics, and Everyday Life after Socialism*. 3-19. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press.
- Gal, Susan. 1994. "Gender in the Post-Socialist Transition: The Abortion Debate in Hungary." *East European Politics and Societies* 8(2), Spring 1994: 256-286.
- . 2002. "A Semiotics of the Public/Private Distinction." *differences: A Journal of Feminist Cultural Studies* 13(1): 77-95.
- Ginsburg, Faye – Rapp, Ryna. 1991. "The Politics of Reproduction." *Annual Review of Anthropology*, 20:311-343.
- Goven, Joanna. 1993. *The gendered foundations of Hungarian socialism: State, society, and the anti-politics of anti-feminism, 1948-1990*. Berkeley: University of California. Ph.D. dissertation, manuscript.
- . 2000. "New Parliament, Old Discourse? The Parental Leave Debate in Hungary" In *Reproducing Gender. Politics, Publics, and Everyday Life after Socialism*, edited by Susan Gal and Gail Kligman, 286-306. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press.
- . 2002. "Gender and Modernism in a Stalinist State." *Social Politics* 9(1):3-28.
- Grád, András. 1988. "A jogi szabályozás kapcsolata a gyermekszületéssel és gyermekvállalással" [The connection between legal regulation and the number of children and decision of having a child] In *Terhesség - Szülés – Születés I.* [Pregnancy – Labor – Birth I.] edited by Hanák, Katalin, 9-50. Budapest: MTA Szociológiai Kutatóintézet.
- Haney, Lynne. 1999. "'But We Are Still Mothers': Gender, the State, and the Construction of Need in Postsocialist Hungary." In *Uncertain transition. Ethnographies of change in the postsocialist world*, edited by Burawoy, Michael and Verdery, Katherine, 151-187. Lanham, Boulder, New York and London: Rowman&Littlefield Publishers Inc.
- . 2002. *Inventing the needy. Gender and the Politics of Welfare in Hungary*. Berkeley – Los Angeles – London: University of California Press.
- Heitlinger, Alena. 1991. "Pronatalism and Women's Equality Policies" *European Journal of Population / Revue Européenne de Démographie*, 7(4): 343-375.
- Heller, Mária, Rényi, Ágnes and Némédi, Dénes. 1990. "Népesedési Viták Magyarországon 1960-1986." In *Népesedési Viták Magyarországon, 1960-1986: A KSH Népeségtudományi Kutatóintézet Tudományos Vitaülése [Debates on Reproduction in Hungary, 1960-1986: Scientific Debate Session of the Hungarian Central Demographic Research Institute]*, edited by István Monigl, 13-125. Budapest: Központi Statisztikai Hivatal Népeségtudományi Kutatóintézet [Hungarian Central Statistical Office]
- . 1995. "Populist Discursive Strategies under State Socialism: The Demographic Debates." *Journal of Popular Culture* 29(2): 129-141.
- Heng, Geraldine, and Janadas Devan. 1992. "State Fatherhood: The Politics of Nationalism, Sexuality, and Race in Singapore." In *Nationalisms and Sexualities*, edited by Andrew Parker, Mary Russo, Doris Sommer and Patricia Yaeger, 343-64. New York: Routledge.
- Huszár, Tibor. 2006. *Kádár. A hatalom évei 1956-1989*. [Kádár. The years of power 1956-1989] Budapest: Corvina.
- Jancar, Barbara Wolfe. 1978. *Women under communism*. Baltimore – London: The Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Kamarás, Ferenc. 2000. "A terhességmegszakítások hazai irányzatai." [Tendencies in the Hungarian induced abortions] In *Terhességmegszakítások: tanulmányok, adatok, jogszabályok, hazai és nemzetközi trendek* [Induced abortions: papers, datas, legal acts, Hungarian and

- international trends] 7-24. Budapest: Központi Statisztikai Hivatal [Hungarian Central Statistical Office]
- Kemény, István. 1974. "A magyarországi cigány lakosság." [The Gipsy Population in Hungary] *Valóság*, January 1974: 63–72.
- . ed. 1976. *Beszámoló a magyarországi cigányok helyzetével foglalkozó 1971-ben végzett kutatásról*. [Report on a research dealing with the situation of gypsies in Hungary and conducted in 1971], Budapest: Hungarian Science Academy Sociological Research Institute.
- Kéri, Katalin. 2002. "Gyermekeképünk az ötvenes évek első felében." [The figure of children in the first part of the 1950s], *Iskolakultúra*, 2002/3. 47-59.
- Kiss, Yudit. 1991. "The Second 'No': Women in Hungary." *Feminist Review*, No 39, Shifting Territories: Feminism & Europe (Autumn, 1991), 49-57.
- Kligman, Gail. 1995. "Political Demography: The Banning of Abortion in Ceausescu's Romania." In *Conceiving the New World Order*, edited by Faye Ginsburg and Rayna Rapp. 234-255. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Kocsis, Piroska. 2006. "A szövőszéktől a miniszteri bársonyszékig" *ArchivNet – official website of the National Archive of Hungary* Available online at [http://www.natarch.hu/archivnet/old/rovat/cikk.phtml?cikk\\_kod=209#1](http://www.natarch.hu/archivnet/old/rovat/cikk.phtml?cikk_kod=209#1) Last access 7 May 2011.
- Kürti, László. 1991. "The Wingless Eros of Socialism: Nationalism and Sexuality in Hungary." *Anthropological Quarterly*, 64(2): 55-67.
- Lewis, Jane. 1997. "Gender and Welfare Regimes: Further Thoughts." *Social Politics* 4(2): 160-177.
- MacKinnon, Catharine. 1989. *Toward a feminist theory of the state*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- McIntyre, Robert J. 1975. "Pronatalist Programmes in Eastern Europe." *Soviet Studies* 27(3):366-380.
- . 1985. "Demographic Policy and Sexual Equality: Value Conflicts and Policy Appraisal in Hungary and Romania." In *Women, State and Party in Eastern Europe*, edited by Sharon L. Wolchik and Alfred G. Meyer, 270-285. Durham: Duke University Press.
- Mayer, Tamar. 2000. "Gender ironies of nationalism. Setting the stage." In *Gender Ironies of Nationalism. Sexing the Nation*. 1-22. London-New York: Routledge.
- Molyneux, Maxine. 1981. "Women in Socialist Societies. Problems of Theory and Practice." In *Of Marriage and the Market: women's subordination internationally and its lessons*, edited by Kate Young, Carol Wolkowitz and Roslyn McCullagh. 55-90. London and New York: Routledge.
- Monigl, István, ed. 1992. *Az 1952-53. évi népesedéspolitikai program Magyarországon (dokumentumgyűjtemény)* [The population policy program of 1952-1953 in Hungary. (collection of documents)], Budapest: KSH NKI [Central Statistical Office Demographic Research Institute]
- Moskoff, William. 1980. "Pronatalist Policies in Romania." *Economic Development and Cultural Change* 28(3): 597-614.
- Nyíró, András. 1989. *Segédkönyv a Politikai Bizottság tanulmányozásához*. [Guidebook for studying the Politburo.] Budapest: Interart Stúdió Kiadói Iroda.
- Orloff, Ann Shola. 1993. "Gender and The Social Rights of Citizenship: The Comparative Analysis of Gender Relations and Welfare States." *American Sociological Review* 58(3): 303-328.
- . 1996. "Gender in The Welfare States." *Annual Review of Sociology* Vol. 22. 51-78.
- Pateman, Carole. 1988. *The Sexual Contract*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- Pető, Andrea. 2002. "Women's Rights in Stalinist Hungary: The Abortion Trials of 1952-53." *Hungarian Studies Review*, 29(1-2): 49-76.
- Sainsbury, Diane. 1999. "Introduction." In *Gender and welfare state regimes*. 1-11. New York: Oxford University Press.

- Schadt, Mária. 2003. *"Feltörekvő Dolgozó Nő" – Nők Az Ötvenes Években* ["Ambitious working woman" – Women in the 1950s]. Pécs: Pro Pannonia.
- Skilling, H. Gordon. 1966. "The Pattern of Power." In *The governments of communist East Europe*. 45-69. New York: Crowell.
- Spéder, Zsolt. 2005. "The rise of cohabitation as first union and some neglected factors of recent demographic developments in Hungary." *Demography*. English Edition. 77-103.
- Staar, Richard F. 1977. "Hungarian People's Republic." In *Communist Regimes in Eastern Europe*. 107-125. Stanford: Stanford University.
- Stadat-database (electronically collection of statistics), Hungarian Central Statistical Office  
Available online at  
[http://portal.ksh.hu/pls/ksh/docs/hun/xstadat/xstadat\\_hosszu/h\\_wdsd001b.html](http://portal.ksh.hu/pls/ksh/docs/hun/xstadat/xstadat_hosszu/h_wdsd001b.html)  
Last access 24 May 2011
- Szalai, Erzsébet. 2004. *Az első válaszkísérlet*. [The first attempt to respond] Budapest: Nemzeti Tankönyvkiadó.
- Szelényi, Iván – Szelényi, Balázs. 1994. "Why Socialism Failed: Toward a Theory of System Breakdown – Causes of Disintegration of East European State Socialism." *Theory & Society*. 23(2): 211-231.
- Terhességmegszakítások: tanulmányok, adatok, jogszabályok, hazai és nemzetközi trendek* [Induced abortions: papers, datas, legal acts, Hungarian and international trends] 2000. Budapest: Központi Statisztikai Hivatal [Hungarian Central Statistical Office]
- Terhességmegszakítások 1995-2006*. [Induced abortions 1995-2006] 2007. Budapest: Központi Statisztikai Hivatal [Hungarian Central Statistical Office]  
Available online at  
<http://www.ksh.hu/pls/ksh/docs/hun/xftp/idoszaki/pdf/terhesmegsz06.pdf>  
Last access 24 May 2011
- Tischler, János. 2006. "Az Infecundin-sztori, 1967." [The Infecundin-story, 1967]. *Beszélő* [Speaker] 11(1).  
Available online at <http://beszelo.c3.hu/cikkek/az-infecundin-sztori-1967>  
Last access 25 May 2011
- Történeti statisztikai idősorok 1867-1992*. [Historical Statistics of Time Series 1867-1992]. 1992. Budapest: Központi Statisztikai Hivatal [Hungarian Central Statistical Office]
- Valuch, Tibor. 2001. *Magyarország társadalomtörténete a XX. század második felében* [Social history of Hungary in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century], Budapest: Osiris.
- . 2002. "A „gulyáskommunizmus”" [The 'Goulash Communism']. In *Mítoszok, legendák, tévhitek a 20. századi magyar történelemről*. [Myths, legends and misbelieves about the Hungarian history in the 20th century.] edited by Romsics, Ignác. 361-390. Budapest: Osiris.
- Verdery, Katherine. 1994. "From Parent-State to Family Patriarchs: Gender and Nation in Contemporary Eastern Europe." *East European Politics and Societies* 8(2): 225-255.
- Walby, Sylvia. 1997. "Introduction." In *Gender transformations*. 1-21. New York: Routledge.
- Waylen, Georgina. 1998. "Gender, feminism and the state." In *Gender, politics and the state*, edited by Vicky Randall and Georgina Waylen. 1-17. London: Routledge.
- Wolchik, Sharon L. 2000. "Reproductive Policies in the Czech and Slovak Republics." In *Reproducing gender: politics, publics, and everyday life after socialism*, edited by Susan Gal and Gail Kligman. 58-91. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Yuval-Davis, Nira. 1997. *Gender, Nation and State*. London –Thousand Oaks – New Delhi: SAGE.
- Zimmermann, Susan. 2010. "Gender Regime and Gender Struggle in Hungarian State Socialism." *Aspasia*, Vol. 4. 1-24.