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“In the Mantle of Professionalization.”

The Openness and Confinement of Family Sociology in Hungary during the 1970s and 1980s.*

As part of my investigation into external influences on sociology in Hungary, first I examined the sub-discipline of the sociology of the family. There were a number of reasons for that. On the one hand, there was significant research in this field at three different Hungarian workshops (KSH, MTA, ELTE) during the 1970s and '80s. On the other hand, there was a paradigm shift on the international scene at the same time; exploring that paradigm shift promised some intriguing results in terms of the adoption and reception of international developments in the Hungarian sociological research scene. That is why an outline of sociological paradigms of the family is provided below, which is then followed by an introduction into the Hungarian scene, looking at factors that enhanced, hindered, or prevented reception. I grouped the sources that I have used according to the institutionalisation of the respective sub-disciplines. I looked at recollections in connection with the Hungarian Central Statistical Office (KSH), as well as literature on the history of the office's library. For the Hungarian Academy of Sciences (MTA), I examined studies in the journals *Szociológia* and *Társadalmi Szemle*, as well as recollections, research reports, and published books. In connection with Eötvös Loránd University (ELTE), I delved

* This paper was prepared in the framework of the research project *Western Impacts and Transfers in Hungarian Culture and Social Sciences in the 1970s and 1980s* financed by NKFIH (Nr. 125374.)

into issues of the journal *Szociológiai Figyelő*,¹ and conducted interviews. I considered the examination of the perspectives of teacher-researcher sociologists a priority in terms of Western impact assessment, as sociological knowledge could only reach a wider—and not necessarily a limited—professional audience due to the peculiarities of university education.

I have encountered a number of difficulties concerning this topic. Knowledge produced in an informal way (e.g., research material left in the drawers, unpublished) is always problematic, since researchers could only share their results with co-workers due to limitations on publishing because of censorship practices. This means that sociological knowledge could only find its way into professional publicity in a filtered, partial form. Another difficulty is that the scene of sociological research, which was primarily founded on personal relationships, hardly involved following generations. Plenty of research documentation disappeared or was left to waste. As such, a topic could disappear from the research scene for decades if not explicitly passed along to other researchers.²

Sociology of the Family in the 1970s and 1980s

As posterity sees it, sociology of the family was a moderate, somewhat unexciting sub-discipline until the 1970s, which was dominated by a consensus on the conjugal model of the family. Social challenges of the time—like class or social injustice, prejudice or consumption—mostly attracted researchers from other disciplines. Sociology of the family came into the centre of attention in the 1970s as the institutionalization of the field quickly started to develop. Population policy discovered the means that sociology of the family could offer, while the

¹ This research offers a qualitative analysis of the sources. To my knowledge, the quantitative impact assessment of Western influences is being conducted by Viktor Karády and Péter Tibor Nagy.

² Vera Szabari, Éva Kovács, and András Lénárt, *(Disz)kontinuitások—A magyar szociológia 1960 és 2010 között*, [(Dis)Continuities—Hungarian sociology between 1960 and 2010], manuscript, 1999.

family itself started to be more and more difficult to define due to the plurality of family forms—and became an increasingly interesting research topic. The decrease in the number of children and increase of divorces inspired a lot of empirical research with more or less government support depending on the central population policy.

However, the functional paradigm of the family had been questioned well before the spectacular changes often referred to as the crisis of the family. The feminist approach had the biggest role in that: questioning static and hierarchical roles in the family, a refutation of exploitation, unpaid domestic work and of functional family model as such.

According to the Parsonian functionalist approach that had been dominant in sociology of the family until the 1960s, the function of the family—as a sub-system of the social system—is reproduction and socialization. The transfer of norms and values through roles assigned to positions (making the obligations of and expectations from the individual clear) sustains the balance of the system as well as the construction of the personality (system) and in adulthood it also provides a stable background for the ability to handle stress. In Parson’s model, the main role (function) of the nuclear family—which is based on marriage and reproduction—is socialization, that is, to create emotional stability relying on a clear distinction between male and female roles. Such an idea of family structure is rather rigid, certain (gender) expectations (tasks) are assigned to positions. Men have instrumental tasks, e.g., executive, judgemental, decision-making functions; women have expressive roles, e.g., they are supporters, who make harmony and ease tension.³ The modern, nuclear family got rid of a number of traditional roles such as education, the force of transferring the profession, or taking care of the elderly; families became predominantly isolated (from the family they originate from, other relatives). This patriarchal family model based on gender inequality and represented as functionalist was not a valid appropriate explanatory framework

³ According to the theory, this is why fathers do not participate in raising children during the early years.

even in the 1970s, and yet demography had no doubts about its valid (and doctrinal) character for decades.

Another paradigm in the sociology of the family at that time was interactionalism. This approach appeared in the 1920s and had the notion of role in its centre. The family was a particularly interesting scene for the realization of socially defined and projected roles and struggles for them, as well as for the examination of learning, losing, and transformation of roles. Hungarian social changes would have offered a great opportunity to apply this paradigm, however, it rarely happened.

The third school was the development approach—the latest of the three, so it could exploit the results and conclusions of the empirical researches of the two other approaches. That is why the development approach led to theoretical eclecticism to a certain extent. At the same time, the development approach made way for the dialectical approach, which was better fit for longitudinal and multi-generational data collection, and it was easily operationable.⁴ While the pluralization of family forms was a challenge for statisticians in terms of operability, the development approach could not handle childless couples, couples living together without being married, or remarried couples, and many saw (and still see) signs of a crisis in the transformation of the family or in its collapse as an institution. However, from the 1970s onward, international and Hungarian sociology of the family saw the adaptational potential in family forms that transformed due to economic, political, and social changes. In the 1960s, Hungarian social scientists dutifully applied the conceptualization of the crisis of the family to—exclusively—Western, bourgeois families, but it is less typical from the 1970s. This flexible approach is hardly true for non-professionals. To this day, changes concerning (gender) roles in the family, marriage, and decisions about one's own body are still referred to as crisis in debates on population growth. (And for the same reason emancipation struggles for change

⁴ László Cseh-Szombathy, *Családszociológiai problémák és módszerek* [Problems and Methods of Family Sociology] (Budapest: Gondolat, 1978), 23.

are still condemned.⁵) While family had long been considered as a means to transfer the dominant forms of tradition and society, in the last three-to-four decades this changed radically: the family became the scope of investigation in terms of the change and transformation of norms and values in society.⁶

To describe the context of adoption in the field of sociology of the family, it is essential to outline its institutionalization and general development in Hungary. Before it became an established subfield, there had been constant research into the morphology of the family as well as into demographical trends at Hungarian Central Statistical Office (KSH). The sub-discipline itself developed as a result of Western influence, because two influential researchers realized during their trips to Western Europe that the academic area of family-related research existed separately from other fields. One of the best-known Hungarian researchers, László Cseh-Szombathy, became acquainted with the leader of the sub-committee on Family Research of the International Sociological Association in 1969. This relationship made it possible for him to meet the best representatives of family research in the same year at a seminar in Geneva, with some of whom he developed friendships. The

⁵ On the debates on population (policy) in the sixties and seventies, see Mária Heller, Dénes Némédi, Ágnes Rényi, *Népesedési viták Magyarországon 1960–1986* [Debates on Demography in Hungary, 1960–1986] (Budapest: KSH, 1990); Attila Melegh, “Ki mitől fél? Kommentár a népesedési körkérdésről [Who fears what? Commentary on the demographic all-round inquiry],” *Demográfia* 3–4 (1999): 339–350; Zsombor Bódy, “A Népeségtudományi Kutatóintézet története és a népesedéspolitika a Kádár-rendszerben, [The history of the Demographic Research Institute and Demographics Policy in the Kadar Era],” *Demográfia* 4 (2016): 265–300; Erzsébet Takács, *Hulló magyarság. Az eltűnés félelme a hazai demográfia krízisdiskurzusában a Kádár-kortól napjainkig* [Falling Hungarians. The Fear from Disappearance in the Crisis Discourse of Hungarian Demography from the Kadar Era to Present Days], Manuscript.

⁶ Since the 1990s, the following research tendencies have become common: research based on demographic data (morphology, demographic factors that influence the life of a family), research on the internal operation and dynamics of the family (functions, strategies, internal relationships, the elements of power and aggression), and analyses of family political issues (families and the ruling establishment, responsibility relations). In the 2000s, a bigger emphasis was placed on roles, identity, and the problem of (primarily intergenerational) solidarity.

other sociologist, Péter Somlai, also discovered the potential of the area on a Western research trip.⁷ The story is not unique: Zsuzsa Ferge also heard about social policy as an independent discipline at a conference in Evian in 1966.

Western influence in the Hungarian Central Statistical Office (KSH)⁸

In terms of Western influence, KSH was in an exceptional position. On the one hand, in the Rákosi- and Kádár-era a unique continuity characterized it on both personal and institutional levels, which is best proven by the papers of researchers active in the 1930s and '40s that were published in *Demográfia* at this time. On the other hand, it was deeply embedded internationally compared to other academic institutions. A number of recollections highlight the excellent professional expertise of employees of KSH, their international recognition, which was partly due to the fact that the leaders of KSH at the time, György Péter and Egon Szabady, “collected the tainted ones.”⁹ They employed talented people who were put aside or made unemployed because of their political activities.

⁷ His stay at the Ruhr University (Bochum, Federal Republic of Germany) was made possible by the Humboldt scheme in 1976. One of the “potentials of the area” was the possibility to do research autonomously: “One must research only if they are curious about something and does not know the final results,” said Péter Somlai in my interview with him (Interview with Péter Somlai, 2019. Interviewer: Erzsébet Takács). Sociology of the family was an excellent “escape route” in the sense of research free from incessant political control, as it was a sufficiently neutral field with low prestige. László Cseh-Szombathy and Rudolf Andorka said similar things, and Pál Lócsei, who participated in the 1956 events, also ended up in this field.

⁸ The Hungarian Demographic Research Institute was established in 1968 within the KSH, with various research groups (later, departments) where research on the sociology of the family was conducted as well. Certainly, the sociology of the family cannot (and should not) be distinguished from other areas. For example, the research of Zsuzsa Ferge—of the Social Statistics Department at KSH—on social strata were connected to the topic.

⁹ Interview with László Cseh-Szombathy, 2000. Interviewer: Gábor I. Kovács. In: *Emberi viszonyok: Cseh-Szombathy László tiszteletére*. [Human relations. Hommage à László Cseh-Szombathy] [Szerk.]: Spéder Zsolt, Tóth Pál Péter,

It was its international acknowledgement and embeddedness that saved the Demographic Research Institute (Népeségtudományi Kutatóintézet) of KSH from reorganization/elimination in the 1960s and again in the 1980s. An argument for keeping the institute in both cases was its “missionary role” in socialist countries, as there was no similar institute in the Soviet bloc, especially not with such an international network and recognition, so it was presented as a common interest for these states to be represented on the demographic scene by Hungary. Without a doubt, demography had certain autonomy in the 1960s. The potential and intriguing research topics originated only partly from Hungarian demographic trends; the majority was identified by the international professional community, due to the foreign relations of Hungarian demographers. The researchers could word questions and research plans in a way that they were approved or even supported by “higher levels” and at the same time they met international standards for the discipline of demography.¹⁰ From the turn of the 1970s and 1980s onward, the situation slightly changed at KSH. Several departments were eliminated and some newly appointed leaders with different mentalities and strategies forced many employees—including László Cseh-Szombathy—to leave. Financial support for research on the sociology of the family and the KSH’s library was also reduced significantly.¹¹

The library of KSH, which operated as an independent institute, was also unique in terms of reception history and access to Western literature.¹² In the 1960s, they subscribed to twenty “capitalist” journals on demography alone, and from

Budapest, Andorka Rudolf Társadalomtudományi Társaság – Századvég, 2000, 13-38.

¹⁰ Zsombor Bódy, op. cit., 280.

¹¹ Ibid., 280.

¹² The director of the library employed István Bibó and Rudolf Andorka (and many more). Bibó was responsible for the acquisition of foreign books for a while.

1980 onward they received more than 200 foreign periodicals.¹³ As Lajosné Leölkes recalled,

From around 1970 we had catalogues from mainly economic publishers coming in from abroad. From these, we had to choose which ones to buy. In other libraries in Budapest, the party secretary or the trade unionist would check what was coming in from the West. Nobody cared here. On the one hand, they didn't speak the language—they pretended, "as if," but did not look into it. On the other hand, they were used to exchange; that is how anything that was necessary for the Hungarian administration entered the country. Certainly, we couldn't just give foreign statistics to anyone. Those who wanted to read them would go to the director and ask for a stamped permission. In the "soft dictatorship," we got everything that we found good.¹⁴ We had money, since KSH would give to support culture and especially have foreign literature brought in. We had everything coming in: statistics, economics, sociology, economic geography, political sociology. We subscribed to series of textbooks from American universities on statistics and economics. Rudolf Andorka and Iván Szelényi would not have become the people they became had they not been here. They were close to everything, they had access to everything.¹⁵

¹³ Half of which were in English, 11% in German, 9% in French, 10% bilingual (English-French and French-German), 6% in Russian and 11% in other languages. István Csahók, "A Központi Statisztikai Hivatal könyvtára és dokumentációs szolgálata, [The Library and Documentary Service of the Central Statistical Office]," *Statisztika Szemle* 5 (1986): 518–526.

¹⁴ For example, they ordered the book *Old Family/New Family*, edited by Nona Glazer-Malvi (New York: Van Nostrand, 1975), which was cited by László Cseh-Szombathy in connection with intimacy in a relationship. The book had probably not been checked, since more than half of the chapters are about research on homosexual couples and families.

¹⁵ Lajosné Leölkes "Ez a könyvtár nagyon jó ugródeszkának bizonyult". In: Dávid Rózsa, Ákos Lencsés, "Három visszaemlékezés a KSH könyvtárának harminc évéről, [Three Reminiscences on the KSH Library]." Source: <http://ki2.oszk.hu/3k/2012/09/harom-visszaemlekezés-a-ksh-könyvtáranak-harminc-everol/> (Retrieved on September 2, 2019).

In the 1980s, due to decreasing financial resources, the foreign exchange network of the library gained even more significance. That is how KSH could acquire most of the official foreign statistical data. In return, its own material had to be produced and—at least the tables—had to be translated.¹⁶ In the 1980s, 2000–2500 works arrived from abroad (and 2500–3000 left in return).¹⁷ Although the Metropolitan Ervin Szabó Library (FSzEK) had the best-supplied Hungarian library stock,¹⁸ KSH's main appeal was that everything could be available to the public.

Foreign academic literature could be accessed in other research institutes as well. In 1969, the Institute of Social Science of the Central Committee was established (led by Sándor Lakatos), where not only classics (Durkheim, Max Weber, R. K. Merton, W. Mills, György Lukács), but the most recent works (Western, or critical) could be accessed as well as freely discussed among each other. Csaba Gombár remembered that

We learned a lot, read and argued a lot, inspiring each other. Our friend, János Széll, conveyed Eurocommunism based on his experiences in the Gramsci Institute, and the attitude of the Italian Communist Party, which was

¹⁶ About collection and publication of statistical data see: Róbert Takács, Hungarian Foreign Policy and Basket III in the Cold War Confrontation from Helsinki to Madrid, *Múltunk* 2019 Special Issue, 95.

¹⁷ In 1985, the library was in contact with 418 foreign institutes (60% of which were European, 12% North-American, and 14% Asian.) 70% of the institutes in exchange programmes were socialist, but there were 46 international institutes as well. The collection of statistical works, with 130,000 books in the library, was unique even on a European scale due to its wide range and historical concept. István Csahók, op. cit., 521–522.

¹⁸ FSzEK increased the number of its periodicals from 80 to 160 between 1970 and 1982, but they could not keep up with the specialization of the discipline: at the end of the 1970s there were 550 sociology journals worldwide. Another, more serious problem than specialization was the increasing prices of the journals. László Remete, “A Fővárosi Szabó Ervin Könyvtár szociológiai periodikaállományának keletkezéséről és fejlődéséről (1870–1982), [On the Formation and Development of the Stock of Sociological Periodicals in FSzEK (1870–1982)],” In *A FSzEK évkönyve*, 19. 1979–1980. [*The FSzEK Yearbook, 1979–1980*] (Budapest: FSzEK, 1980), 59–65.

much more open than ours. We learned about German literature through Zsolt Papp, who had been to Germany, and paid attention to what was going on there. All in all, we had an outlook beyond Hungary's borders, on the whole of East-Central Europe, also to the Balkan region, and thanks to our colleague Péter Polónyi on China, too. After a while, those who could read in Spanish helped us access the other hemisphere as well. There was the obvious desire to know more and more about the United States. This led me to California as well, when I could study a year in America. We sought knowledge ferociously, literature too. We had exceptional opportunities to gather information from many places. Considering the fact that the institute was fundamentally interdisciplinary in terms of composition, we were happy to cross these academic boundaries.¹⁹

However, nothing of that “could leave that place,” the knowledge acquired resulted in “exclusive” sociological knowledge.²⁰ In the Institute of Social Sciences there was no research into the sociology of the family, but the authors whose works were studied here were later taught in various places (e.g., by Zsuzsa Ferge, Kálmán Kulcsár, Iván Szelényi, Ferenc Pataki, and Tibor Huszár), which had a great impact on research into family sociology and research on lifestyles.²¹

The third scene of family sociology was the university, or more specifically, Eötvös Loránd University (ELTE). Decades of effort by Sándor Szalai to promote sociological research

¹⁹ Interview with Csaba Gombár, in Vera Szabari, Éva Kovács, András Lénárd, op. cit.

²⁰ Melinda Kalmár, *Történelmi galaxisok vonzásában* [In the Pull of Historical Galaxies] (Budapest: Osiris, 2014), 317. Sándor Lakos recognised that a certain amount of autonomy was necessary for researchers in order to explore reality, but at the same time he heavily censored and banned any material that got out.

²¹ It is important to mention that the journal *Szociológia*, which was founded by the institute in 1972, had Cseh-Szombathy as chief editor, and that the Hungarian Sociological Association came into existence through the institute in 1978 with Sándor Szalai as president.

and institutionalize its education²² succeeded in 1970, when the first sociology department was established at ELTE, led by Tibor Huszár. It was followed by another at the Karl Marx University of Economic Sciences (today, Corvinus University), led by Rudolf Andorka.²³ The role of universities in terms of the diffusion of knowledge from abroad is of extreme importance. As Péter Somlai recalled,

I think in '82, I listed a specialization course at the university and it was very successful. A lot of students came ... we could hardly sit down. Even though this specialization course was about the theory of communicative action, all I did was talk about the great work of Habermas chapter by chapter. And there were students who had never read Hegel, George Herbert Mead, or Durkheim in their lives, authors that play an important role in that book, but they were still very excited about it. That course gave the basis for the Hungarian book, which has been in use to this day.²⁴

Specialization courses were not attended by sociology students but by journalists, pedagogists, public educators and students of other courses in humanities.

The university scene provided an opportunity to learn (and use) foreign methods. Péter Somlai learnt it during his stay in Bochum: how to involve students in research, on what conditions and for what kind compensation (grades, grants) they can be expected to give professional performance. Somlai's two-decade-long, famous research²⁵ was carried out with a method based on the active participation of students (a

²² Vera Szabari, “Szalai Sándor (1912–1983),” *Szociológiai Szemle* 3 (2012): 105–122; Vera Szabari, “Egy tanszék létrehozás az 1970-es évek Magyarországon [Creation of a Department in the 1970s in Hungary],” in *Vita Publica: Tanulmányok Rényi Ágnes tiszteletére*, edited by Vera Szabari, Erzsébet Takács, and Eszter Pál (Budapest: ELTE, 2015), 207–220.

²³ Demography studies were only included randomly in Hungarian higher education, to demographers' dismay.

²⁴ Interview with Péter Somlai, 2010. Interviewer: Vera Szabari.

²⁵ Péter Somlai, ed., *Családmonográfiák* (Budapest: Oktatási Minisztérium, 1979).

method he saw at the Ruhr University). In 1964, László Cseh-Szombathy learned empirical methods from Paul Lazarsfeld for three weeks, which were definitive in sociological research methodology after 1945 as well as in forming a paradigm. (It turns out from his recollections that he taught at the university from these notes even in the 1980s.²⁶)

The book series Social Science Collection (SSC—Társadalomtudományi Könyvtár) of Gondolat Publishing House was also launched in the early 1970s, and can also be associated with Tibor Huszár.²⁷ Until 1991, fifty-two books were published, thirty-two of which were Western (and Hungarian immigrant) authors, including sociologists Jürgen Habermas, Max Weber, George Simmel, Ferdinand Tönnies, Robert Merton, George H. Mead, Pierre Bourdieu, and Herbert Marcuse. In the beginning, the appropriate proportion of the authors was important, which changed in favour of Western authors as time passed. Publishing Western books was more expensive because of royalties, and it also required a bigger scientific apparatus. These non-Marxist “capitalist” volumes demanded forewords or afterwords to explain appropriate interpretation to Hungarian readers. According to András Lénárt,

The SSC series did not break down taboos, it only paved the way for the results of Western social sciences—and that was its original intention. The party publishing house, Kossuth, undertook the publication of more delicate works in numbered copies and distributed them in a closed network, but they [Gondolat Publishing House] dealt with the “unpublishable” books.²⁸

²⁶Interview with László Cseh-Szombathy, 2000. It was organised by Sándor Szalai. To my knowledge, Zsuzsa Ferge and Bálint Surányi participated aside from Cseh-Szombathy. Interview with Péter Somlai, 2019.

²⁷See András Lénárt, “Egy sorozatról: a Társadalomtudományi Könyvtár [About a Series: The Social Science Collection].” In *Kádárizmus—áteszeszek. Az 1956-is Intézet évkönyve*, XVII [Kadarism—Leakages. The Yearbook of The 1956 Institute, vol. XVII], edited by Gyula Kozák, 154–183 (Budapest: The 1956 Institute, 2011). The first book published in the series was (naturally) a Soviet opus about the opinion poll (B. A. Grusin) to balance Jürgen Habermas’ book *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*.

²⁸Ibid.

Institutionalization and professionalization of sociology—by Soviet influence?

Professionalization could have been the result of internal evolution, but it was not entirely. On the one hand, it is known that the leadership of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) urged changes in science policy. The so-called Moscow Programme aimed at not only accelerating academic research but also increasing its social role. Research topics were modified accordingly after 1969, but more importantly, there was an intention among the highest circles to explore *reality*, which would provide grounds for planning ahead realistically. They also counted on sociology’s contribution in that sense. The scientific-technological pressure, which was (or which had hoped to be) introduced to optimize management, efficiency, and develop the desired trend of structural change, secularized and professionalized the leadership at all levels. By “outsourcing” planning, it involved economic, academic, and social participants. In all socialist countries, new, large centres were established, for example to lay down the foundations of “applied” sociology and its “appropriate” supervision. In the case of Hungary, it was different, as they counted on already-existing academic capital, involving former experts.²⁹ Unlike other socialist countries, censorship was not supervised from large centres, but it was delegated to lower levels—as the practices of journal- and book-publishing testify—along with the widespread practice of self-censorship.³⁰

The idea that sociology was—at least partly—professionalised by foreign influences is further proved by the fact that Sándor

²⁹ Probably the result of this multi-centeredness was the establishment of the Institute of Social Sciences in 1969, to counterbalance the Institute of the Hungarian Academy of Science. The establishment was related to the changes in Hungary: the Korčula Declaration of 1968, the removal of András Hegedüs, the philosopher trials, exclusions in 1973. See Melinda Kalmár, op. cit., 319–325.

³⁰ Melinda Kalmár, op. cit., 297. About self-censorship, see Róbert Takács, “Sajtóirányítás és újságírói öncenzúra az 1980-as években [Press Control and Self-Censorship of Journalists in the 1980s],” *Mediakutató* Spring (2005): 55–70.

Szalai fought for decades in vain to institutionalize sociology and to establish sociology training³¹ as well as by the earlier failure of a professionalization strategy. The context was certainly different—and that is the point; when András Hegedüs promoted the idea of creating an autochthonous critical Marxist sociology in 1963, it was a better fit to the propaganda of modernization and development than Szalai's professionalization strategies).³² At the time, professional expertise, efficiency in exploring reality, and the application of scientifically reliable methods, were neither attractive nor highly appreciated—and nor was Sándor Szalai himself. Nevertheless, his international network of relationships was highly exploited by his environment, the broad and close academic scene.³³

The idea of introducing Western methods came up as early as the 1960s; Sándor Szalai argued for the indispensability

³¹ Szabari, "Szalai Sándor (1912-1983)," op. cit.; Szabari, "Egy tanszék létrehozás..." op. cit.

³² Júlia Szalai, "A családi munkamegosztás néhány szociológiai problémájáról, [About Some Sociological Problem of Distribution of Work within the Family]," in *Család és házasság a mai magyar társadalomban* [Family and Marriage in Today's Hungarian Society], edited by Pál Lócsei (Budapest: Közgazdasági és Jogi Könyvkiadó, 1971); John P. Robinson, Philip E. Converse, and Alexander Szalai, *The use of time daily activities of urban and suburban populations in twelve countries* (Hague, Paris, Mouton: European Coordination Centre for Research, 1972). For an analysis of the debate, see Vera Szabari, "Töredezett" tudománytörténet? A szociológia hazai történetének 1960 és 1987 közötti recepciója, 2000 - Irodalmi és társadalmi havi lap, 2011, 59-74. The establishment of critical "Marxist sociology" at the end of the 1960s gave Hegedüs opportunity and ammunition against his competitors (e.g., Erik Molnár's historical materialism and Sándor Szalai's professionalization strategy), but it became suspicious after 1968, precisely because of the critical element.

³³ Despite Szalai's efforts, András Hegedüs was appointed to lead the Sociology Research Group of the Hungarian Academy of Science, and Szalai was invited to New York in 1966 to be the research deputy of the United Nations Institute for Training and Research, where he worked for six years. In 1972, he published his book, *The Use of Time*, which was the summary of his international comparative time budget research with the involvement of 12 countries, which gave an opportunity for some Hungarian sociologists to participate in international research. See Vera Szabari, "Töredezett' tudománytörténet? A szociológia hazai történetének 1960 és 1987 közötti recepciója [Fragmeted' Science History? The Reception of the History of Hungarian Sociology between 1960 and 1987]," 2000 4 (2001): 59-74.

of Western methods on several occasions, unsuccessfully.³⁴ The success of the professionalization strategy was (is) greatly dependent on the external (political *and* economic) context—as the sociology of the 1990s illustrates well. The assessment of sociology in the Kádár-era from a socio-historical point of view is determined by the interpretations in the 1990s, which tried to rearrange the Hungarian sociological scene according to the buzzword of the time, “professionalism” (which can be integrated in international academic work).

The concept of science in the 1990s is much more dominated by methodological considerations, mainly the application of quantitative methods which are adaptable, efficient, can be broadly applied, but most importantly, are compatible with international academic life. From this perspective, sociology in the 1960s can be characterised with dilettantism, and in the 1970s with professionalism. Whilst the seemingly paradoxical situation where a political regime that was becoming more and more isolated and rigid in fact contributed to an institutionalization and professionalization that embraced foreign influences,³⁵ the results of the 1970s could not have been achieved without the “dilettante” accomplishments of the 1960s. Certainly, social scientists of the socialist countries in the 1960s worked (and published) in completely different conditions, but as I see it, it was not due to the ignorance or negligence of (Western) methods, but rather because of the goals set (e.g., the creation of an overall autochthonous sociology rooted in Marxist ideology), the comprehensive and interdisciplinary methods assigned to them, as well as to the uncertainties that followed.³⁶

³⁴ Vera Szabari, “Határmunkálatok a magyar szociológiában: burzsoá kontra marxista szociológia, [Borderworks in Hungarian Sociology: Bourgeois vs. Marxist Sociology],” in *Határmunkálatok a tudományban* [Borderworks in Science], edited by Gábor Kutrovácz, Benedek Láng, and Gábor Zemlén (Budapest: L'Harmattan Kiadó, 2010), 104., 111.

³⁵ Szabari, Kovács, and Lénárt, op. cit. That reaction took place in demography as well, as we will see in the following.

³⁶ On revisiting Soviet sociological research, see Martine Mespoulet, “La «renaissance» de la sociologie en URSS (1958–1972). Une voie étroite entre matérialisme historique et «recherches sociologiques concrètes»,” *Quelle*

Hungarian results in the sociology of the family

The first significant Hungarian work in sociology of the family (which can also be seen as the launching point of the period) was *Család és házasság a mai magyar társadalomban* [Family and marriage in contemporary Hungarian society], edited by Pál Lócsei.³⁷ Its foreword mentions the preceding research in the 1960s, moreover, Lócsei emphasizes that the morphological examination of the family has been significant in Hungary due to the problem of population decline for more than three decades. In terms of theories in sociology of the family, there is room for improvement, although these notions are essential to make prognoses of processes.³⁸ However, a necessary first step is empirical research to explore *reality*, for which “no theories from ‘over the Leitha’ can be imported, regardless of Hungarian factual reality.” Hungarian sociology of the family “has to be built up step by step,” which will not be easy as it is a research area where the personal space of people is to be intruded, where operationalization is extremely difficult, although “acquired data can be ‘verified’ by means of information technology.”³⁹ In order to create theories, first it is essential to know the facts and the scene, not just in terms of sociology but psychology and demography as well.

sociologie derrière le «rideau de fer»? 1950–1989, *Revue d'Histoire des Sciences Humaines* 1 (2007): 57–86; Natalia M. Rimachevskaia and Lidia Prokofieva, “L'enquête de Taganrog, Le début de la sociologie du niveau de vie en URSS,” *Quelle sociologie derrière le «rideau de fer»? 1950–1989, Revue d'Histoire des Sciences Humaines* 1 (2007): 87–112.

³⁷ Pál Lócsei, ed., op. cit.

³⁸ In his paper two years later, Cseh-Szombathy pointed out the importance of the change in (international) literature on the sociology of the family when the significance of theories increased. Although accounts of empirical research were still dominant in publications, the sociology of the family in the 1970s was characterized by an intense theoretical interest. László Cseh-Szombathy, “Az elméletek jelentősége a családon belüli intergenerációs kapcsolatok vizsgálatában [The Significance of Theories in the Research of Intergenerational Relations within the Family]”, *Szociológia* 2 (1973): 170–186.

³⁹ Pál Lócsei, Foreword, op. cit. 10.

The first paper in the book was written by Kálmán Kulcsár,⁴⁰ who identified the effect of social forces as the sole factor that causes the transformation of the family. Somewhat surprisingly, Kulcsár cites the isolation-research in Ivád which entered a new phase in the 1950s, in which human genetic, biodemographic, and sociodemographic analysis of the population in the Bodrog region was conducted by Hungarian historians, sociologists, demographers, and doctors with West German cooperation (i.e., with researchers from Mainz and Bremen). The focus of interest in the research, that is, the genetic heritage manifest in anthropological features, clearly continued the “research” tradition of the 1930s and 40s.

The innovative nature of the book is well illustrated by the paper of Júlia Szalai, which partly tackles the problem of double burden on women in lower social groups, which renders any chance for education or mobility impossible.⁴¹ The poorer one is, the less likely one is to have access to services or equipment that ease domestic burdens, and the more one does household chores aside from their daily job. She cites

⁴⁰ Kálmán Kulcsár was the successor of András Hegedüs. He held significant positions and had influence on the sociological scene at the time. In his paper “*A magyar szociológia történetiszemléletéről. Gondolat a külső minta jelentőségéről* [On the view of history of Hungarian sociology. Comments on the significance of external model],” *Valóság* 5 (1984): 1–24, Kulcsár examined the sociology of the early twentieth century and the rural movements of the 1930s, he arrived to the conclusion that a sociology which is trying to adopt Western theories and methods and apply them to Hungarian conditions (i.e., “following a pattern”) cannot be successful, nor can one that participates in “shaping society using endogenous resources—and consequently—is in defense against external patterns” (i.e., “creating a pattern”) be successful. Only a “third way” model could succeed that combines the two approaches. Models of modernization can be successful if there is a basis for further development after the external push, and the external circumstances have changed. Hungarian sociology found the right balance in the 1960s, says Kulcsár (who had a scholarship as visiting scholar of Columbia and Berkeley University in 1965/66), which is not obviously connected to the recognition of regional characteristics of the (Hungarian and Soviet) political leadership from the end of the 1960s. (See Melinda Kalmár, op. cit., 310.) In the 1980s, with the development of the Hungarian socialist political reforms, it was not surprising to set a specific course for Hungarian sociology.

⁴¹ Júlia Szalai, op. cit.

György Konrád and Iván Szelényi's paper on the phenomenon of how workers were disadvantaged in the government scheme to provide residence to citizens. The latter provided the basis for their work *Az értelmiség útja az osztályhatalomhoz* [The intellectuals on the road to class power],⁴² for which the authors were arrested in 1974 and were offered immigrant passports.⁴³ Károly Varga's paper⁴⁴ is significant in terms of Western impact assessment, as it illustrates how many people worked in (and cited) international lifestyle research, organised by Sándor Szalai from Vienna with the help of UNESCO,⁴⁵ which was considered unsuccessful on the Hungarian scene. Based on the research of Pál Lőcsei and the German sociologist, René König, Varga surprises the readers with the fact that although German married individuals spend twice as much time with their partners than Hungarian ones, there are more divorces in Germany. The studies of Rudolf Andorka, Béla Buda, and Judit Kiss discuss the correlations of family and deviance, often introducing—today classic—Western authors.

The Demographic Research Institute of KSH outlined a research project by 1975 to examine the role of work done outside of home in the various stages of women's lives. The programme aimed at exploring the reconciliation of work and family roles and its difficulties by combining the methodology of demographics and sociological biography.⁴⁶ This project seems somewhat belated in the light of papers on family sociology

⁴² György Konrád and Iván Szelényi, *Az értelmiség útja az osztályhatalomhoz* [Intellectuals on the road to class power] (Bern–Párizs: Európai Protestáns Magyar Szabadegyetem, 1978).

⁴³ György Konrád chose internal immigration, while Szelényi left the country.

⁴⁴ Károly Varga, *Házassági kohézió az időmérleg tükrében* [Marriage cohesion in mirror of time-budget], in: Pál Lőcsei op. cit., 200–225.

⁴⁵ John P. Robinson, Philip E. Converse, Alexander Szalai, eds., op. cit.; Sándor Szalai, *Idő a mérlegen* [Time on Scales] (Budapest: Gondolat, 1978).

⁴⁶ László Molnár, "Az otthonon kívül végzett munka szerepe a nő életútjának különböző szakaszaiban (kutatási hipotézisek) [The role of economic activity done out of home in women's different life-stages]," *Demográfia* 1 (1977): 9–22.

at the time due to political concerns. Mária Márkus,⁴⁷ Zsuzsa Ferge, Katalin Koncz, and Júlia Szalai⁴⁸ raised politically uncomfortable questions: the problem of paid and unpaid (and therefore exploitative) work in connection with double burdens; the failure to make domestic work social, and growing inequality among women as a result (due to double burdens, it was the working class that lagged more and more behind in terms possibilities); “leadership positions ‘customized for men’” (later referred to as the glass ceiling or glass wall);⁴⁹ as well as the halt of female emancipation, prevailing traditional gender roles, and the negative consequences of keeping women at home (e.g., “maternity pay”). Mária Márkus diagnosed the appearance of the American female life path model in Hungary, based on parallels with American society, such as a depersonalised society, an increasing number of intimate small families, women staying at home for a long time after the birth of the child(ren), and the reproduction of gender inequalities.⁵⁰

⁴⁷ “In my own research, the problem of family is represented as one of the fundamental scenes of women’s emancipation...” Márkus looks at the problem of female roles in Hungary within the theoretical framework of habitus and dispositions, without mentioning Bourdieu’s name. “One necessary condition of successful socialization that the acquired knowledge and patterns have practical relevance for the new generation, that they could really be applied not just within the family, but outside of it, in confrontation with other people and other situations. This requires a certain stability of relationships and situations, consistency in both society and within the family. Mária Márkus, “A család szocializációs funkciójának és modelljeinek változásáról, [About the Changing Socialization Function and Modells of the Family],” *Szociológia* 2 (1974): 227.

⁴⁸ Venyige Júlia Molnárné later published papers on the history of women’s employment.

⁴⁹ At the same time, János Kádár thought it desirable to deliberately feminize certain professions. See Melinda Kalmár, op. cit., 303.

⁵⁰ Mária Márkus, “A nő helyzete a munka világában [Women’s Situation in the World of Work],” *Kortárs* 2 (1970): 126–142. After looking at the corpus of the periodicals mentioned, I arrived at a completely different conclusion than that of Eszter Bartha, who claims that the researchers of the time were (all?) totally insensitive to gender considerations. She makes this claim based on (unpublished) research material that attempted to explore the cultural interests of working women in 1973, Eszter Bartha, “Munkásnő-interjúk és munkáséletmód-kutatások az 1970-es évek Magyarországon [Interviews with and Research on Female Workers in Hungary in the 1970s],” in *A női kommuni-*

Perhaps the most outrageous theory was set out by Ágnes Heller and Mihály Vajda, also in 1970, who identified the way out of the crisis of the family through the construction of communes as a replacement for the bourgeois family.⁵¹

The project took place by higher orders and coincided with the announcement of the Year of Women, whose topic was: “Women and decision-making: a socio-political priority.” Research on women’s employment and their roles in the family was also motivated by the fact that in the Soviet Union, and also in Poland, massive empirical research was conducted in the 1960s, while in Hungary women’s employment was considered as a factor that made it more difficult to have children.

László Cseh-Szombathy wrote the work that has become a classic of Hungarian sociology of the family.⁵² It was completed in 1974, as Cseh-Szombathy’s PhD thesis, but—typical of the era—was only published in 1978 (as part of the SSC series), and the author had to choose whether it would be a textbook on family sociology or a comprehensive work. He commented upon this dilemma in the introduction of the book, as other sub-disciplines already had excellent collections of texts,⁵³ however, such a collection would not be able to represent the complexity of contemporary sociology of the family and would not help the reader get acquainted with tendencies in research, relevant problems, and the deficiencies of various approaches.⁵⁴

káció története [The History of Female Communication], edited by Balázs Sipos and Lilla Krász (Budapest: Napvilág Kiadó, 2019).

⁵¹ Ágnes Heller, Mihály Vajda, “Családforma és kommunizmus [Family Form and Communism],” *Kortárs* 10 (1970): 1655–1665. Ágnes Heller and Mária Márkus signed the declaration in Korčula in 1968, some years later with Iván Szelényi they were fired from their jobs, Heller and Ferenc Fehér emigrated to America, Mária Márkus and György Márkus to Australia finally in 1974.

⁵² Cseh-Szombathy, *Családszociológiai problémák*.

⁵³ For example: Zsuzsa Ferge, *Francia szociológia* [French sociology] (Budapest: Közgazdasági és Jogi Könyvkiadó, 1971); István Kemény, *A szexuális élet szociológiája* [The sociology of sexual life] (Budapest: Közgazdasági és Jogi Könyvkiadó, 1972); Rudolf Andorka, Béla Buda, and László Cseh-Szombathy, *A deviáns viselkedés szociológiája* [The sociology of deviant behaviour] (Budapest: Gondolat, 1974); and later, Evelyn Sullerot, *A női nem* [The female gender] (Budapest: Gondolat, 1983).

⁵⁴ Cseh-Szombathy, *Családszociológiai problémák*, op. cit., 6–7.

The author was aware of the fact that Hungarian researchers were familiar with contemporary foreign literature, but claims that the access to these was rather incidental. He emphasized that there was no comprehensive work in the field therefore overspecification was typical. He openly wrote about the difficulties in gathering information in Hungary and the lack of debates and open discussions also caused by the fact that researchers were only informed in a very limited field. Foreign results were treated with distrust and heavy criticism. Hungarian sociology of the family should examine domestic problems, for which specific approaches were necessary, but foreign theories of family sociology had to be exploited as well. “The prerequisite for Hungarian sociology of the family to examine the main problems of the family from various aspects and to provide a foundation for social politics concerning the family is to expand Hungarian research which now applies international results selectively.”⁵⁵

Cseh-Szombathy suggested Hungarian research could be connected to international research in terms of hypotheses, elaborating on one’s own conceptual apparatus as well as borrowing methods of data collecting and applying specific methods in family sociological analyses. In order to do that, Cseh-Szombathy made an attempt to provide an overview on the research field based on “the last 15 years of literature” (in fact, 25 years), interpreting more than 400 items cited in a most thorough way. His specific intention was to guide researchers in terms of research topics, approaches, applied methods, also adding an extremely useful and up-to-date methodological attachment at the end of the book.

Cseh-Szombathy selected his material carefully, and his ultimate aim was to describe major issues and problem areas. Cseh-Szombathy argued that the conventional functions of the family (e.g., the reproductive, socialising, tension-easing, religious, political etc., functions) had changed or had been lost. Therefore, he suggested the use of development

⁵⁵ Ibid., 340.

approach(es) to grasp the (changes of) the contemporary family, which advocated a dialectical approach to the family. In order to examine oppositions in the family, “the Marxist approach to the family” *could* be an excellent way, but sociology of the family was rather underdeveloped compared to other branches of sociology in socialist countries.⁵⁶ He claimed that Western conflict-theoretical approaches might prove to be useful, despite underlining that typical conflicts among Western and socialist societies were substantially different both inside and outside of the family. Therefore tensions in the socialist family should be interpreted by a modified conflict model as “the opposition of man and woman is not a typical characteristic of a socialist family.”⁵⁷ That is how conflicts—the internal dynamics of the family—can be described with the addition of what psychology has to offer on imitation, learning external patterns and gender roles, to be compared with textbooks in Hungarian, as well as anthropological research, disproving static gender roles like Parson’s model after the researches of Margaret Mead.⁵⁸

The book is divided into sub-chapters according to the development stages of the family, like socialization in childhood, choosing partners, relationships, marriage, family decisions, parent-child relationship, intimacy in relationships, (in)stability in marriage and divorce. The author raised many questions that are relevant to this day and offered theoretical explanations that are just as progressive as half a century later.⁵⁹ He openly

⁵⁶ Ibid., 28; 31.

⁵⁷ On the other hand, Marxist sociologists’ notion of function is different from the structuralist-functional approach, as the aim of socialist sociologists of the family was not to look at manifestations of “constant family functions,” but to establish functions based on empirical research of families working in socialist societies. Ibid., 30.

⁵⁸ Ibid., 34–55.

⁵⁹ Unfortunately, that says more about our time. Cseh-Szombathy wrote about John Bowlby’s influential attachment theory in 1952 and its afterlife, and he partly refuted, partly developed the original theory. The theory is still a reference point for voluntarist and pro-natalist views, whereas the deficiencies of Bowlby’s original idea and his misleading conclusions on mother-child attachment became clear in the 1970s (for example that a child deprived of the care of their mother by blood will necessarily have issues of mental pathology).

discussed various motivations to have children (after Clifford Kirkpatrick), relationships of childless women, sexuality in relationships,⁶⁰ happy marriages turning unhappy after the child is born, conflicts that trigger unhappiness and divorce, and the physical abuse of children.

In the chapter on intimate communities, the sections about authority, obedience, possessing, and the communication problems in marriages were intended for a wider audience—and they have not lost their relevance, either. In terms of marriage and living together with someone, he does not only focus on the topic of (in)stability of marriage and divorce, which is in the focus of interest of demographics and is assessed from a normative point of view, but deals with the role and function of conflicts in a relationship. So, he left behind the idea that adaptation is the key of a good marriage—which also claims that a successful marriage is long one—and proposed the need for a typology of conflicts in Hungary. Cseh-Szombathy refuted to explain the increasing number of divorces as crisis—a notion that readers came across repeatedly in debates on demographic policy in periodicals like *Nők Lapja*, *Élet és Irodalom*, and *Valóság*. He claimed that the number of divorces grew due to a change in the function of marriage (e.g., loving marriage, personal happiness), and spouses lost confidence because of each other’s ambiguous expectations as well as those of society.⁶¹ Cseh-Szombathy refuted the idea in the 1970s, which seems to prevail to this day, that divorce was the “cause” of deviance,⁶² while he made

⁶⁰ In addition, Cseh-Szombathy focuses on the question of open marriage, the exchange of sexual partners or group sex, which can be read in the Kinsey Reports (1948, 1953). To write the chapter on intimacy, Cseh-Szombathy used Nona Glazer-Malbin’s book (see footnote 12) which looked at homosexual family forms.

⁶¹ Cseh-Szombathy cites Pál Lócsei’s unique research in Budapest, which revealed the extent to which the number of divorces do not reflect reality, as many more lived separately than those who formally announced it, and the other way round: in many cases the couples had to live in the same space after the divorce. Pál Lócsei, ed., op. cit.

⁶² Cseh-Szombathy does not use the pejorative term “broken family,” either. On “unproductive psychologization,” see Cseh-Szombathy, *Családszociológiai problémák*, op. cit., 333–335.

it clear that divorce is a psychological turmoil, and highlighted the resulting vulnerability, insecurity, development disorders and bad impact on personality development in children.⁶³ He was so interested in the sociology of marital conflicts, about which he wrote his DSc thesis. The book was published more than three years later, aimed at a wider audience.⁶⁴

A year later, Péter Somlai's book *Konfliktus és megértés* [Conflict and understanding] was published.⁶⁵ Unlike Cseh-Szombathy, Péter Somlai did not focus on development theories when elaborating his family sociological approach; he was more influenced by conflict theory. Moreover, he was responsible for the introduction of another new paradigm: consensus theory, from which he highlighted the problems of integration and identity. The reader could come across literature on (and the notion of) intimacy and privacy in Somlai's book for the first time, and due to West German influences, the sociology of autocratic families. Aside from its theoretical foundation,⁶⁶ the book introduced the results of empirical research on the family, conducted with the help of students, using the method of family monograph that he elaborated after his travels in West Germany. The interviews and anthropological descriptions recorded in Budapest, Balassagyarmat, Karcag, Tiszazug, Pécs and Pécsvárad gave opportunity for mutual influencing, to make coalitions, to describe theories on transmitters of conflicts, and to provide a selection of the most interesting researches on lifestyles in Hungary.⁶⁷ Somlai's sociology of the family strived

⁶³ Ibid., 339.

⁶⁴ László Cseh-Szombathy, *A házastársi konfliktusok szociológiája* [The Sociology of Marriage Conflicts], (Budapest: Gondolat, 1985).

⁶⁵ Péter Somlai, *Konfliktus és megértés* [Conflict and Understanding] (Budapest: Gondolat, 1986).

⁶⁶ The ideas discussed include works by Durkheim, Habermas, Halbwachs, Veblen, Simmel, Berger and Kellner, Luckman, Goffman, Horkheimer, Riesman, Rapoport, Krappmann, Ariès, Parsons, and Bales. Hungarian sociology of the family is characterised by strong reference to the classics (e.g. Max Weber); the reasons for this are not discussed here.

⁶⁷ The research was designed to look at four main areas: space (common/ality, intimacy, privacy), time (spent together and alone, holidays), resources (shared budget, decisions), and network (shared or own network of

for a synthesis; he integrated psychological, pedagogical, and economic results of the time. A good example is the volume of Elemér Hankiss on zero-sum games, which became well-known: the problem of a shared pasture and the harmonization of dilemmas of game theory with conflict theory.⁶⁸

This paper cannot undertake to provide a detailed description of sociology of the family at the time, but the Western reception can hardly be discussed without some major works. Next, I intend to look at briefly Judit H. Sas’s *Nőies nők és férfias férfiak, társadalmi sztereotípiák* [Feminine Females and Masculine Males: Social Stereotypes].⁶⁹ The book offers a summary of academic results on gender roles based on the most recent literature in biology, psychology, and social psychology at the beginning of the 1980s. The section on social psychology was based exclusively on Western literature, mentioning a number of experiments on stereotypes. Sas urged a methodological turn: instead of looking at books in households, which had been a basic source for investigation, she proposed the use of time-budget research, but mostly the application of new observational techniques, for example lab experiments of social psychology.

The book was in fact the first Hungarian work in gender studies and summarized literature on pre-marital relationships on the 1950s and 1960s along with the research on sexuality in the 1970s. In connection with romantic love as a basis for modern relationships, the idea of love in modern societies was mentioned and so were the topics of the idealization of partners when entering a relationship and all its consequences,

relationships). The responses revealed the extent of family integration, but anthropological observations led to interesting outcomes as well. See Péter Somlai, *Családmonográfiák* [Family Monographs] (Budapest: Oktatási Minisztérium Marxizmus-Leninizmus Oktatási Főosztálya, 1979).

⁶⁸ Elemér Hankiss, *Társadalmi csapdák* [Social Traps] (Budapest: Magvető, 1979).

⁶⁹ Judit H. Sas, *Nőies nők és férfias férfiak, társadalmi sztereotípiák* [Feminine Females and Masculine Males: Social Stereotypes] (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1984). I hope to explore this area more thoroughly, since this paper lacks discussion of the work of Pál Lócsei, András Klingner, Zsuzsa Ferge, Ágnes Utasi, et al., in this field.

the various aspects of choosing partners and theories on that (complementarity vs. homogamy). In connection with choosing partners, a lot of attention was devoted to marital mobility, the problem of the mobility of residence, the ways of family decision-making. In a substantial part of the book she tackled the correlation of women's employment and gender stereotypes, also commenting on the misconception (prevailing to this day), which connects women's employment to the measures in the Rákosi-era. The author paid a lot of attention to the problem of gender roles in her lifestyle research in the first half of the 1970s. The top governmental leadership in Hungary was highly interested in encouraging women's employment at the time, while research proved that women were undermotivated in taking up daily jobs. Sas concluded in her book *Életmód és család* [Lifestyle and Family]⁷⁰ that undermotivation can be derived back to a lack of recognition. As gender inequality and discrimination on the labour market could only be criticized carefully, she approached the problem from another angle: employment created possibilities for women, but they received appreciation and solidarity primarily for the traditional tasks done within the family. In most cases, even if a woman took a job, she was not given a profession, knowledge, influence, or a better chance for intellectual development, whereas in the family she received protection to a certain extent, partial recognition, not to mention that these tasks had to be done anyway, which dragged women back to their domestic and childcare burdens.

As we can see, those in the field of Hungarian sociology of the family encountered the repeated problem that relationships were being transformed by enormous domestic and international social changes. The notions of the scene of the family, mentality, gender and family roles, and autonomy within the family remained rather rigid and conservative. In the 1970s, this was a characteristic both of Hungarian society and political decisions. While demographers' progressive proposals

⁷⁰ Judit H. Sas, *Életmód és család. Az emberi viszonyok alakulása a családban* [Lifestyle and Family. The Development of Human Relations in the Family] (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1976).

concerning demographic policy were mostly ignored by those in charge,⁷¹ family sociologists tried to outline directions for a smaller public. As Cseh-Szombathy noted,

Domestic research that came to the conclusion of the necessity of the family also revealed some phenomena that could be considered as malfunctions, and cannot be treated as a result of external influences, alien to the socialist society, but rather as ones closely connected to our economic-social development. We must acknowledge that social development induced fundamental changes in the structure of the family, in its mode of action, and as a result it cannot accomplish traditional tasks perfectly without the assistance that we still expect of it. A working family policy is necessary, which is by no means guided by an idealised image of the family in the past or by the idea of restoring an earlier family structure, and nor does it strive to recreate the equilibrium between society and the family. We need a family policy that acknowledges that the problematic changes concerning the family are consequences: reactions to changes in other spheres of society and that the equilibrium between family and society can only be created through modified forms, leaving the past conditions behind.⁷²

Factors enhancing and hindering reception

A number of factors enhanced and hindered the reception of Western academic and cultural influences. The possibilities of Hungarian researchers to receive information, as well as their room for manoeuvre, was greatly influenced by the receiving context, such as external pressure and opportunities and the considerations of the political decision-makers of the time,

⁷¹ Zsombor Bódy, op. cit.; Mária Heller, Dénes Némédi, Ágnes Rényi, op. cit.

⁷² László Cseh-Szombathy, *Családszociológiai problémák*; László Cseh-Szombathy, “Változások a család működésében [Changes in the Operation of the Family],” *Társadalmi Szemle* 6 (1980): 35.

namely the aforementioned decision by Moscow to encourage academic research in 1969, the Helsinki Declaration on the free flow of ideas and information in 1975, as well as exchange programmes within two-sided agreements with various capitalist countries.⁷³ In the following, I intend to highlight the hindering or enhancing factors for reception that emerged in my research into sociology of the family.

Firstly, let me emphasize the opportunities in *international cooperation*, that is, *joint international research*, not just because of their self-evidence, but for specific instances. Although Sándor Szalai was “removed” when sociology was institutionalized in the 1960s in Hungary, he built an impressive career in research management on the international sociological scene. For example, the international comparative time budget research from 1966, led by Szalai, involved 12 countries. As such, it was a great opportunity on various levels.⁷⁴ Hungarian researchers involved in the project were given much freedom in terms of research, as the Soviet Union was part of the common project.⁷⁵ The research in Hungary was led by László Cseh-Szombathy and Zsuzsa Ferge, but Szalai took care of foreign research trips for more Hungarian researchers before 1966. That is how Cseh-Szombathy could participate in a UNESCO

⁷³ Melinda Kalmár, op. cit.; Róbert Takács, “Helsinki és a kulturális cse-re Magyarország és a Nyugat között (1975–1980) [Helsinki and the Cultural Exchange between East and West (1975–1980)],” *Múltunk* 4 (2018): 160–186; Katalin Somlai, “Ösztöndíjjal Nyugatra a hatvanas években: Az Országos Ösztöndíj Tanács felállítása [To the West with a scholarship: The establishment of the National Council of Scholarships],” in *Kádárizmus: Mélyfúrások* [Kadarism—Deep Drills], edited by János Tischler (Budapest: 1956-os Intézet, 2009), 273–314; Katalin Somlai, “‘Kiutazása érdekünkben áll’: A Nyugatra utazó ösztöndíjasok és a hírszerzés kapcsolatai a Kádár-korszakban [‘Travel is Our Interest’: The Relationship of Scholars Travelling to the West and Intelligence Services in the Kadar Era],” in Gyula Kozák, ed., op. cit., 241–263.

⁷⁴ Robinson, Converse, and Szalai, eds., op. cit.; Szalai, op. cit.

⁷⁵ “Szalai gets Patruşev, and so they are given the green light.” Interview with László Cseh-Szombathy, 2000, interviewer: Gábor Kovács, in: *Cseh-Szombathy László a jelenvalóról és az eljövendőről. Emberi viszonyok: Cseh-Szombathy László tiszteletére* [László Cseh-Szombathy about the Present and the Forthcoming. Human Relations. In Honour of László Cseh-Szombathy], edited by Zsolt Spéder and Pál Péter Tóth (Budapest: Andorka Rudolf Társadalomtudományi Társaság—Századvég, 2000), 13–38.

Seminar in Oslo in 1964, and learn empirical methods from Paul Lazarsfeld, perhaps the greatest sociologist of the postwar period. He continued to use these notes and teach methodology from them even in the seventies. In other words, participation in international research meant more liberal research conditions, and even the possibility to co-publish with Western authors on multiple occasions. The research itself was a valid source for writing papers within the country for a good one and a half decades. The most dynamic part of (socialist) sociology in the 1970s was research into the quality of life, as this notion was also embraced by Marxist ideology as a useful approach in international ideological struggle, which could be contrasted to income or supplemented with consumers' goods. It seems that a lot of papers were allowed to be published as an excuse for lifestyle research, taking advantage of the international reputation of Szalai's research, and they could reach a professional audience, which otherwise would have been hardly—or not at all—reached.⁷⁶

International researches could be presented at *international conferences*, which provided opportunities for networking⁷⁷ and acquiring literature, for example copies distributed at conferences.⁷⁸ The professional audience at home could benefit from these conferences indirectly, as—otherwise hardly publishable—ideas could find their way into reports on conferences. Publishing the keynote speeches of conferences were especially suitable for that.

⁷⁶ One example is the English-language book of the lectures at the symposium of the Ninth World Congress of Sociology, in which a number of papers on comparative value research were published by Western authors (along with Elemér Hankiss's article). The book is rather far from the original questions and issues of lifestyle research. László Cseh-Szombathy, “Az élet minősége. Összehasonlító tanulmányok” [The Quality of Life. Comparative Studies.], *Magyar Tudomány*, 7–8, Special Issue edited by Sándor Szalai and Frank M. Andrews (1981): 629–630.

⁷⁷ It seems that those professional relationships worked fruitfully on the long term, which became informal and friendly.

⁷⁸ The conference in Evian might have been especially successful in this respect, as it comes up in numerous recollections.

Foreign scholarships had a significant role in enhancing the institutionalization of certain sub-disciplines and academic fields. There were instances when the foundation supporting the scholar provided them with a certain sum for buying (foreign!) books. Some of this legally acquired foreign literature was lent to other colleagues, who made notes for their own purposes.⁷⁹

I have already touched upon the role of *libraries*, evidently both the library of KSH and FSzEK made use of their acquisition potentials to the maximum.⁸⁰ When examining the Russian literature, it is apparent that cited Western authors could be accessed earlier—often much earlier—in Hungary, but they were published sooner in Hungarian than in Russian. In terms of libraries, the question arises: who could access Western literature? Evidently the researchers of KSH were able to do so, so were researchers in Budapest, university lecturers to a lesser extent; universities outside Budapest and minor research centres were in dire need of these opportunities. Only a small part of the professional audience had no problem with keeping up with significant Western academics. The lack of access, the impossibility to copy, and the limitations that followed keep coming up in interviews.

That is also why *translations and reviews* had a great significance. Review-writing was considerably more prestigious at the time than today, since reviews informed the academic community about the publishing of Western works and new ideas in them.⁸¹ When assessing the impact of Western literature, the problem of adopting terminology arises. When can we talk about loaning terms to describe domestic phenomena, and when is it

⁷⁹ Péter Somlai was surprised to see the offer of Humboldt scholarship for buying books a year after his return home. The amazing sum of 1000 Deutsche Marks was enough to cover the price of 50 books and encyclopedias.

⁸⁰ The library of KSH tried to provide information on a broad scale. In 1984, they launched a series *Reviews and Translations*, which conveyed current economic and political-economic information to the top political and economic leadership based on incoming foreign literature. István Csahók, *op. cit.*, 526.

⁸¹ Moreover, it could be assumed that the writer of a given review was in possession of the Western work.

the adoption of the research topic itself—even if the problem or area examined had not existed before? Recollections gathered through interviews reveal that the researchers of the era deliberately wanted to adopt Western concepts: “It was natural that we took foreign published material and we used them as reference, we adopted them as we could. Debates concerning ideology was a different issue, what Hegedüs, Ferge wrote about at the time. In the published items of KSH, we tried to use the categories of classes that were in Western works.”⁸²

There were practical reasons for adoptions, such as making research easier as well as providing theoretical background methodology and theoretical framework as well as comparability on an international scene. However, we can encounter examples for the adoption of Western problems or at least research preferences, such as researching old age in family sociology, which could be integrated into international projects due to increased interest around it, or the intergenerational transfers from the 1980s. Tibor Kuczi came to the conclusion, by analysing articles in *Valóság* in the 1970s, that almost all adopted concepts are English, French, or German terms, which, according to the author, signals a utopic element in the terms as they were applied to describe an unevenly modernised society.⁸³ After the political transformation, it was often the case that new terms appeared to replace old ones, especially in the border areas of sociology. Such terms were the aforementioned generation transfer in family sociology; and glass ceiling, glass wall in *gender studies*.

In terms of impact assessment, I would like to mention two factors briefly: *the transfer role of Polish sociology and Mária Márkus*, as well as the potentials of education. As for the socialist countries, Polish sociology was in a distinguished situation due to its historical traditions, its close relations with Western sociology on a personal and professional level, and to its quick

⁸² Interview with István Kemény, In: *Szociológiai Szemle*, 2 (2008): 3-21.

⁸³ Tibor Kuczi, *Szociológia, ideológia, közbeszéd*, [Sociology, Ideology, Public Talk], In: *Valóság* '70. (Budapest: Scientia Humana Társulás, 1992) 42.

(re)institutionalization.⁸⁴ The significance of Mária Márkus—who had Polish origins from her mother’s side—in transmitting the results of Western social sciences was acknowledged and highly appreciated by her contemporaries. Her oeuvre and special role in Hungarian sociology and philosophy deserves separate examination, here only one element is highlighted, the adoption of qualitative method based on biographical sources. It had been used in Polish sociology since the 1920s. William I. Thomas and Florian Znaniecki’s *The Polish Peasant* could have been known for Hungarian academics in theory; the method had been applied here for a good forty-fifty years. As Mária Márkus recalled,

In my latest research I tried to apply a method, which—like every method—has its strict limitations, and yet promises relevant positive outcomes that could not be otherwise grasped. This is the method of “personal document,” which has been widespread in sociology since Znaniecki and Thomas. [...] Sociology of the family—like other sub-disciplines of sociology—most often collects data from various questionnaire-based researches (beside statistical data). As well as its well-known advantages, this method has its—also known—disadvantages as well. Firstly, the researcher has a significant and uncontrollable influence on the answers themselves simply by wording the questions. Another disadvantage

⁸⁴ In Poland courses on sociology were available at universities since 1956 (e.g. Zygmunt Bauman’s lectures), in 1957 the Sociological Association was founded, but most importantly, Polish sociologists had close organizational relations with Western sociology: S. Ossowski was the deputy, J. Szczepański was the president of the International Sociological Association. In retrospect it is fair to say that these relations defended and reinforced the position of Polish sociology in Hungary. See: Gyula Gombos, A trivializálódás árnyékában? A lengyelországi szociológia a kilencvenes években. [In the Shadow of Trivialization? Polish Sociology in the 1990s] In: Éva Kovács, ed., *Mi újság a kelet-közép-európai szociológiában? A lengyelországi, a magyarországi, a romániai, a szerbiai és a szlovákiai szociológia a kilencvenes években*, [What’s New in East Central European Sociology? Polish, Hungarian, Romanian, Serbian and Slovakian Sociology in the 1990s] (Budapest: Teleki László Alapítvány, 2002), 12–70.– Polish sociology made use of the interest of “capitalist countries” in exotic socialist societies from the beginning of the 1960s.

is that the answers—especially if they refer to questions not asked by the person on a verbal level—can be rather random and ad hoc.⁸⁵

At the beginning of 1972, the Sociological Research Institute of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences with Hungarian Radio and *Nők Lapja* launched the research “Sikeres életek” [Successful Lives] based on the ideas of Márkus, and thousands of biographies arrived.⁸⁶ later on, more and more researchers used personal documents, for example Katalin Hanák in her research on foster children, or Péter Somlai, who—as we have seen—found this method in West German literature.

Surprisingly, the role of *higher education* for Western impact on sociology of the family has not been explored yet. It might be because it is evident, but difficult to measure—or for other reasons.⁸⁷ As it is apparent that most students of sociology do not find employment as researchers, the jargon, the integration of certain concepts, the knowledge shared cannot be overestimated—not exactly in academic context, but outside the profession. What is even more important: learning a perspective, a viewpoint, developing sensitivity to certain problems. In terms of Western academic and cultural influences, these carry more significance than certain academic works being integrated into some author’s work, although in that case, reception is apparent and can be verified.

Political and economic factors hindering reception, theoretical and practical problems were present on the scene of Hungarian sociology of the family just like anywhere else—however, the room for manoeuvre was significantly different in various sub-

⁸⁵ Mária Márkus, “A család szocializációs funkciójának,” 225.

⁸⁶ On the change of socializing functions of the family, see Mária Márkus, “A család szocializációs funkciójának.”

⁸⁷ Although a book was published in 2016 partly as continuation of the project *A magyar neveléstudomány története a szakmai folyóiratok tükrében* [The History of Hungarian Pedagogy in Terms of Professional Journals], the pedagogy in the socialist era is yet to be explored. See András Németh, Zsuzsanna Hanna Biró, Imre Garai, eds., *Neveléstudomány és tudományos elit a 20. század második felében* [Pedagogy and Scientific Elites in the 20th Century] (Budapest: Gondolat, 2016).

disciplines. Mária Márkus, who had been doing important research in sociology of the family from the beginning, was among the outcast and the banned from the early 1970s. The publishing of the relevant research result was considerably influenced by the repercussions István Kemény had to face after his research on poverty in 1968,⁸⁸ but there were other *bans, party directives, denouncement* (of research especially if somehow connected to the working class.) These losses are hard to recognize in retrospect, or they might fade away, but they did add significantly to the operation of *self-censorship* at the time—which had its mark on Western reception. *Risky forms of knowledge remained in close circles* due to political pressure and ideological conformation, which led to the development of *personal oral culture*—as mentioned before—and finally, to its disappearance. As a consequence, when an expert stopped his or her research due to a change of interest or personal reasons, the research could not be continued by others because of lack of public data or access to reports. A *close circle of researchers* is an obstacle to Western influences regardless of the political situation, and not just due to lack of capacity: discussions among an unchanging group of individuals always took place in a confined personal space; the interests, tastes, and access of the members determined Western theories and methods applied in social sciences. One of the most influential paradigm of the 1960s–70s, interactionism for example, was absent from Hungarian sociology,⁸⁹ while the network research (network analysis for a long time) that grew out of it became a popular field of research by the end of the 1980s due to the internationally acknowledged work of Róbert Angelusz and Róbert Tardos. Knowledge remaining in a close circle—with all

⁸⁸ The paper using KSH's data on income distribution was banned before its publication, but it became known within professional circles. István Kemény, *op. cit.* Kemény was allowed to publish his gypsy-survey only in part. He was fired from his job, so he was forced to emigrate in 1977.

⁸⁹ Maybe it was the coherent theoretical deficiencies that made it unattractive for qualified sociologists of the family, or the methods may have been difficult to apply in Hungarian context.

its negative consequences—was also caused by banning certain fields, e.g. demographics, from education.⁹⁰

International cooperation was hindered by a number of *difficulties on the organizational level*. Péter Somlai talked about the “total failure” of a promising project with American researchers, which had a cluster of typical hindering factors. The project *Kinship and Aging* in 1985–86 involved KSH, MTA, and ELTE. The leader of the Sociology of the Family section of the American Sociological Association initiated the cooperation, offering finance. The Americans were mainly interested in what role relatives have in taking care of the elderly beside the existing institutional possibilities.⁹¹ It turns out from the interview that even communication among the three institutions (and their leaders) caused difficulties, *data collection* was made problematic and impossible by the constant control and censorship of the questionnaires (conducted in KSH), the American research method with computerised data processing, and the slow, convoluted Hungarian ways were not compatible. Moreover, the majority of American researchers were retired from university education, so they were not motivated to publish the research, and Hungarian researchers had no lobbying potential to publish in American journals, which seemed out of reach anyway. The research was left in the drawer. *Publications in foreign journals* for Hungarian researchers of sociology of the family were extremely difficult due to the clearly-defined nature of the sub-discipline in America. This was especially significant as potential research-partners were chosen for new researches based on publications, but it involved insurmountable difficulties

⁹⁰ On the Hungarian reception of the paradigm of demographic transition, and its difficulties, see: Attila Melegh, “Az angolszász globális népesedéspolitikai diskurzusok alakulása a 20. században. Lépések a pro- és antinatalista népesedéspolitikák összehasonlító vizsgálata irányában [Anglo-Saxon Discourse on Demography Policies in the 20th Century. Steps towards the Comparative Study of Pro- and Anti-Natalist Demography Policies],” *Replika* 39 (2000): 157–175; and Erzsébet Takács, op. cit.

⁹¹ The dilemma is relevant to this day, two contradictory approaches have developed: one claims that the elderly are left alone by their relatives because of institutional solutions, according to the other one, institutions ease their burdens and they have more time to spend on taking care of them.

to get into American professional journals. That is why it was of utmost importance to maintain already existing relationships; that is why participants embedded in international academic life were important.⁹²

Due to the limitations of Hungarian researchers reaching Western countries—even if only in terms of professional publicity—the significance of *foreign experts visiting Hungary* was enormous. However, it had its strict limitations: in the 1960s it was so problematic to invite experts even with the right cadre sheet (and to have it approved), that in most cases they did not even start the process. Although it eased by the second half of the 1970s, there were financial obstacles to the invitations. What remained to resort to were internationally financed conferences and, rarely, the lectures and resources of foreign embassies.

The obstacles of receiving foreign intellectual and cultural influences listed so far are primarily external characteristics of the system. There were *obstacles concerning mentality*—to put it in a euphemistic way: “theoretical” issues which are more difficult to grasp but also carry major significance. On the one hand the question “What do we have to offer to the West?” was more rarely asked than “What can the West offer to us?” The relationship was hardly characterised by mutuality, rather than how to profit from “the other” party. At the same time, intellectual confinement and a conservative way of thinking was also an obstacle to reception. Modern tendencies associated with population decline, which are part of the theory of the demographic transition, were unacceptable for the Hungarian public—who were “informed” on the topic not by demographers/

⁹²In this respect, demographers were in a much favourable situation. It was made easier for them, when the International Planned Parenthood Federation channelled in to the United Nations and UNESCO had been in contact with KSH since the 1960s—moreover, Egon Szabady had an important position in the scheme, which provided many demographers and statisticians substantial financial resources and freedom to travel (abroad), Zsombor Bódy, *Op. cit.* 281.. The scheme of family planning was extremely important for America due to the boom in population in the third world (see also: “family planning industry”; Attila Melegh, *op. cit.*).

sociologist experts, but by journalists and self-proclaimed writers with folkish backgrounds, terrified of population decline. Public opinion—constantly under strong pro-natalist influence and not far from the political leadership—had its impact on the profession as well. The most important Western theory of modernisation could only be interpreted in terms of decline in Hungarian thinking.

In spite of the obstacles, adoption was incessant. The debate that had high stakes in the 1960s on the similarities of capitalist and socialist societies, converging (social) theories and the harmful effects of de-ideologization that followed was settled by the 1970s. Adopting the carefully-chosen Western example was represented as something evident, rather than as an aim to catch up. From the second half of the 1970s, Hungarian academic institutions saw a benchmark in the international world order, rather than the socialist one, especially because research had to be harmonised with the *vague demands of 'existing socialism'*. This meant uncertainty and constant unpredictability, as some of the research could not be made public for political reasons, and a significant part was in fact ruined. *Expertise being ignored* and results staying in drawers were frustrating especially for demographers, who had a lot of proposals about population policy—by request of the political leadership—but their proposals were finally disregarded by the political decision-makers.⁹³ A natural consequence of possibilities being closed down “internally” was that the expertise of researchers was made use of “externally”; as we can see in case of demographers, they put more and more effort in the integration into Western academic life. In the late Kádár-era there was—banned or “state samizdat”—research on the sociological scene that provided opportunity for cooperation with Western researchers and institutions.⁹⁴

⁹³ The context of the 1973 regulation of abortion is especially interesting.

⁹⁴ Ervin Csizmadia, *Diskurzus és diktatúra. A magyar értelmiség vitái Nyugat-Európáról a késő Kádár-rendszerben*, [Discourse and Dictatorship, The Dabates of Hungarian Intellectuals on Western Europe in the Late Kadar Regime], (Budapest: Századvég Kiadó, 2001), 126.