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Re-Imagining Socialist Childhoods: Changing Narratives of Spatial and Temporal (dis)Orientations

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Editorial

Re-imagining socialist childhoods: Changing narratives of spatial and temporal (dis)orientations

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The focus of attention of this special issue has both personal and professional significance for the guest editors and most of the contributors, whose childhoods were touched by either the experience of socialism or its collapse and consequences. Influenced by Foucault's (1977) idea that reporting evidence and significant moments from the past contributes to histories that are authentic and accurate, this special issue offers insights into the changing narratives of socialist and post-socialist childhoods. We are mindful of the risks associated with revisionism; that is, revisiting and, through that, re-evaluating the past in light of what we know in the present. Mitigating this risk, to some extent, is that many of the authors whose secondary research papers are published in this issue were privileged to work with original documents written in local languages. In this way, they were able to interrogate the past and reveal the nature of discourses and practices in order to make a contribution to better understand the present (Skehill, 2007).

Background to this special issue

This special issue drew inspiration and gained momemtum from participating in the international collaborative and multi-disciplinary Re-connect/Re-collect Project and from organising its 2021 conference 'Spinning the Sticky Threads of Childhood: From Cold War to Anthropocene' in one of the five physical and virtual hubs globally. Employing a collective biography methodology (Davies & Gannon, 2012), the project connected people and collected memories of childhood experiences from the politically often discreted socialist past. Weaving together memories brought the 'personal' into the 'public' in a non-binary way, and with that, affording opportunities to reconcile tensions between the past and the present in unexpectedly bold ways (Cold War Childhood, 2021, www.coldwarchildhoods.org).

This special issue attempts to expand our knowledge and understanding of how socialism was experienced by children of that era. The subject is delicate, therefore, it required careful handling as childhood experiences, bound in history and in particular geo-political contexts, were revisited and re-imagined. The topic occupies a precarious but unique space in the discipline of early education. Precarious because it has so far received limited attention, although, more recently, there appears to be a renewed interest in childhoods during the Cold War (Aydarova et al., 2016; Millei et al., 2019; Silova et al., 2016, 2017, 2018; Stearns, 2016; Szakács, 2019; Tesar 2018; Winkler, 2021).

It is also made precarious by the challenge of communicating ideas on the subject in a common language. Language is contextual and relational, and our understanding depends on our insights into the cultures, values, political priorities and their manifestations of the time, in this instance, into the workings of socialism. In some of papers of this issue, the nuances that emic interpretations afforded in one language (for example in Hungarian or Russian) proved to be difficult to communicate in another (i.e.: in English for this special issue). As we were working with authors, whose mother tongue was not English, the linguistic

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and conceptual difficulties in crossing languge boundaries sensitised us to the risks of losing meaning and/or understanding. Hence, we found ourselves in a precarious position again as we attempted to contribute to re-dressing the imbalance in knowledge production and dissemination hierarchies between the East and the West (Collyer, 2018; Demeter, 2019). Giving many of the authors the opportunity to write with authority and with authentic voices about a subject they hold an insider view of, disrupts the historical and epistemological Western paradigms and questions the long-held belief that those on the periphery of global knowledge production can only create local knowledge or voice local 'truths' (Frank and Meyer, 2007; Mignolo, 2009). This special issue, therefore, remains hopeful that it contributes to an extended community of knowers to be recognised in the global scientific world. Expression in some of the papers may be somewhat awkward or lacking fluency, which calls for linguistic tolerance towards the authors who, by writing in a language other than their first language, are 'enabled to name their own world academically' (Lynch and Ivancheva, 2015, p. 8) as they bring new perspectives on a niche topic to the surface.

The topic of socialist childhoods is also unique because it opens a window into history that is not easily captured retrospectively. With this loud silence of untold public and personal childhood experiences of socialism, our intention was to provide a scholarly space for authors who had a keen interest and a genuine curiosty in education and childhoods during the Cold War. Our call for paper invited contributions to advance conceptual and empirical inquiry by examining understandings of socialist childhood experiences, curricula and pedagogic practice. The eight papers included in this special issue give accounts of the changing narratives of socialism and its (often prevailing) influence today in Hungary, Russia, Romania, Serbia and Mongolia. The papers offer spatial and temporal orientations for today's readers as they disrupt the discourses dominant on the Western side of what Churchill called the 'Iron Curtain' (indicating the boundary between the Soviet satellite countries of Central-Eastern Europe and Western Europe) (Lénárt, 2008). As the authors in this issue suggest, our understandings are uncertain and constantly shifting for socialism as 'an unfinished business' (Jelača and Lugarić, 2018, p. 10) is not entirely obsolete, its traces are ever present, and this persistence calls for scholarly attention.

The 'unfinished business' of socialism

Socialism does not mean the same thing to everyone. As the papers here demonstrate, there are critical differences between how it is understood in the various geo-political, economic and ethno-national contexts of the Eastern Bloc, including countries from Central-Eastern Europe and East/Southeast Asia. We understand socialism to be a utopian society disinterested in materialism where a one-party state, through control over the political, economic and social systems, owns the means of production and manages the bureaucratic (re)distribution of wealth, resources and rights in a top-down fashion. In some of the papers, this is referred to as a socialist dictatorship. Communism, the ideological movement of socialism, championed an equal society with collectivism over individualism (Bihari, 2013) inspired by the Marxist theory of an almost 'messianic' classless society (Jukić, 2013, p. 50) as 'the desired final stage of … the ensuing socialist state' (Jelača and Lugarić, 2018, p. 2).

Socialism and its successor, post-socialism are referenced in the articles of this special issue highlighting their presence in discourses of education, special education and social pedagogy. These papers speak of the prevailing influence of socialism and its legacy as it continues to seep into children's everyday lived experiences.

The education of children during (post)socialism

In countries of the Eastern Bloc, early childhood had an 'iconic status' (Penn, 2011, p. s16) and children were placed in the centre of the social, political and economic re-making of society as they were viewed as an embodiment of a new social order (Silova, et al., 2017). Typical of the era is that education became a slave to party politics (Pukánszky & Németh, 1996) and extended to the education of children's morals and consciousness (Vu, 2021). Kindergartens and schools, as subjugating instruments of ideological indoctrination (Jelača and Lugarić 2018), were to nurture a new generation of Soviet citizens, who were to be shaped by socialist political ideals, values, beliefs and behaviours (Millei et al., 2019; Millei & Imre, 2016)

in order to secure fidelity to the single socialist party. The state had an expectation of extreme conformism and an active engagement in the building of a 'bright' socialist future.

Scientific research at the time led to theorisation where the Marxist concept of collectivism, for example, translated to collective tasks and taking responsibility for work (labour) that was expected of children within their communities. Similarly, Makarenko's pedagogical ideals of the collective, self-management and productive labour heavily influenced educational practice. Conformity to shared ideals, group goals and group needs were prioritised, which put children under pressure not only to self- manage their contributions to their community's work but also to learn to lead effectively. It is not surprising then that no child could be individualistic, nor fail because of a collective approach to teaching, learning and behaviour management (Millei & Teszenyi, forthcoming). The group was more important than the individuals in it (Bronfenbrenner, 1971; Kirschenbaum, 2001).

Socialist states attributed great significance to educating society's future citizens in a strictly normative and outcome driven fashion that required unconditional compliance with ideological expectations and paid no heed to children's individual needs or indeed to how individual children experienced education and care in state-funded institutions. Individualism was not tolerated and any deviation from what was considered as 'the norm' was judged unfavourably. Under the false pretence of developing group communities and helping children manage institutional daily schedules, this conformity instigated practices (such as strict daily routines, expecting every child to do the same thing at the same time) that both exploited and drew on young children's vulnerabilities and dependence on adult support.

Adult-centred socialist pedagogical approaches forfeited the rights of individual children in the name of equal rights for every child. Although the legacy of adult-centredness still circulates in curriculum documents as an aspect of early childhood pedagogy, as seen in Habinyak's paper, the collapse of socialism brought with it approaches to early education that replaced the collective with the individual. In Hungary, for example, children's rights were declared more widely in policy documents as the country had ratified the United Nation's Convention on the Rights of the Child in 1991 (Pálfi et al., 2019). As Canning, Teszenyi and Pálfi discuss, how children's rights were viewed improved considerably, even though what remained of socialism continued to cast a shadow on pedagogic practice.

Kóger's paper gives acount of the relationship between families and kindergartens in the 1950s and highlights that institutional care, with tightly controlled or no opportunities for true parental involvement, was regarded as superior to children's upbringing and education in the home. Shaped by propaganda work, the dominance and silent power of early educational institutions of the socialist era manifested in a drive to educate parents (not only children) and exerting influence on how children were brought up in their homes to secure the ideologically aligned education of the future generation.

Following immediately after decades of the socialist system, countries started to move towards becoming politically democratic states with market economies. However, this transition took longer in some contexts than in others (if it can be called transition at all for its possible non-linear nature and its contested 'expected destination' (Buyendelgeriyn, 2008, p. 237)). Nevertheless, the ensuing changes were characterised by a decline in state ownership, consequently the growth of the private and service sectors, and an increase in foreign investment accompanied by rising unemployment and poverty. One of the main instruments of these changes was the decentralisation of governmental responsibilities, financing, and decision-making (Brayfield & Korintus, 2011; Campbell-Barr & Bogatić, 2017).

These processes of decentralisation in education and de-instutionalisation of child protection are examined by Habinyák and Rákó respectively. Both papers outline the major transformations the change of regime in the early 1990s brought with it: Habinyák highlights the introduction of education reforms and the emergence of educational pluralism in Romania, and, although decentralisation led to alternative pedagogies in early childhood, she calls for a greater degree of autonomy for early education and care institutions to be able to make a real difference to young children's holistic learning and development. Rákó, on the other hand, examines the 'transition of the child protection system', that has started to pave the way for the processes of deinstitutionalisation and the emergence of alternative forms of care in

Hungary. The research findings she presents point to imperatives for further resources and a more co-ordinated approach between the services that safeguard children.

Balázs-Földi addresses the sensitive issue of how disabled children and their families were supported during the socialist regime and in the subsequent period. She highlights the paucity of empirical research and draws on the findings of three significant national surveys conducted on the living conditions of families raising a child with disabilities during the ten year period between the collapse of the socialist system and 2008 to (i) reiterate the need for empirical enquiry and (ii) to put out an urgent call for a conceptually-conceived disability strategy that could meaningfully inform the development of social policy to enable people's independent living during their life course.

Garey's paper underscores the widely experienced educational reforms also taking place in Russia after the collapse of the Soviet Union. She introduces her paper with the Russian saying "The teacher is the second parent", echoeing the powerful role of the state in the upbringing of a generation of ideologically endoctrinated socialist citizens that Kóger also discusses in her paper. Educational reforms were informed by continued theorisation that introduced new concepts of childhood and practices, some of which reached other parts of the world, such as Vygotsky's cultural historical theory of human development. Garey's paper compares the content of Russian and American teacher training manuals and draws on Bronfenbrenner's (1970, p. 26) work as she identifies *vospitanie* "upbringing" or "character education" infused with communist morality as the most important difference between American and Soviet schools. The paper suggests that just as socialism as a socio-cultural phenomenon did not disappear overnight, the examined Russian training materials continue to reproduce Soviet understandings about childhood, education and the role of the state, in turn, shapes teachers' perception of the child, their undertsanding of childhood, and their views on education.

This has synergies with the findings from Mikuska, Raffai and Vukov-Raffai of their secondary research, which also identifies strong connections between the 'socialist past' and current early childhood education and care practices. This study took place at the critical juncture of transitioning from the old to the new Curriculum Framework in Vojvodina, a northern region of Serbia, and attempted to capture the significance of this change as well as the trepidation of educators. This trepidation may reflect 'a sense of perpetual liminality (as a deeply felt, lived paradox)' as the underlying condition of everyday life in transition (Jelača & Lugarić, 2018, p. 5), which brought with it the romanticising or the silencing of socialist ideologies or indeed both. Children of that era remain bound to their particular national landscape and treat narratives of change, such as the meaning of Christmas celebrations, with ambiguity (Silova, 2018). The authors caution that such a significant transition should be a slower and more considered process and call for greater opportunities to access professional training that addresses localised culture, identity, language, and other ethnic characteristics with fully trained mentors.

Just as the definition of socialism is contextual, so are the ways in which the legacies of socialism manifest in the various geo-political, economic, socio-cultural and ethno-national contexts. Dyer, Luke and Sanjaa's paper takes us to Mongolia and offers insights into the integral part rural boarding schools, established in the socialist era to serve children in herding communities, play in national policy for ensuring universal access to formal education. As the authors suggest, shaping education policy for mobile herding children is not without its problems. Emerging fractures are highlighted as maintaining the rural culture as a central aspect of national identity begins to receeed and post-socialist modernity starts to see both a rural and urban future for Mongolia's children. Hence, the "relevance" of boarding schools in formal schooling and the inevitabilty of complicated and layered change in place and time create complex realities. The authors call for refuting ahistorical and socio-spatially dislocated, over-simplified conceptualisation of 'relevance' as an ontological imperative.

Conclusion

The notion of socialism was undoubtedly integral in understanding constructions of childhood, children's position in society, family politics or social policy in 20th century Europe and Eurasia (Bailyn et al., 2018; Millei et al., 2019). Education in the countries of the former Socialist Bloc was often presented in

'Western' literature as being conformist, overly ideologically driven and uniform across regions (Penn, 2011). However, there were also some connections across the divided ideologies of East and West for example the commonly shared view, which disregarded children as social actors in their own right (Millei, 2011). Strong state directives could be regarded as forms of authoritarianism. Yet, the extent and coherence of the Soviet early childhood education and care system was unmatched by any other non-socialist system. Kindergartens adopted a holistic approach, extending to physical health and wellbeing, which was interpreted and implemented in a vastly different way from systems in English-speaking countries (Penn, 2014). Government funded kindergartens provided a comprehensive and co-ordinated system of early education and care, which reflected a significant societal investment in children (Penn, 2011; Vágó, 2005). The diversity of childhoods and children' experiences across and within state socialist countries is undeniable and do not neatly fit the dichotomies between the East and the West (Silova et al., 2017; Tesar, 2018). In some instances, children ignored or skilfully navigated the prescribed norms, in others, they interpreted everyday realities on their own terms alongside the official authoritarian scripts (Millei & Teszenyi, forthcoming).

In the world of peer refereed scientific papers, the hegemony of English language appears to be matched by a way of thinking about early childhood that is averse to the diversity and complexity of socio-cultural and geo-political contexts (Moss, 2010). This special issue has afforded us an opportunity to increase the visibility of this unique window in history by bringing the reader research that gets up close to the experiences and memories of those who lived through socialism, and capturing the somewhat marginalised but authentic voices of those who are in the position to write with authority as they revisit and re-imagine socialist childhoods. This special issue does not aim to preserve these marginalised voices like artifacts kept in a museum. Rather, we aim to draw attention to new perspectives, to offer new knowledge to the scientific community and to galvanise us into action as we ask further questions and seek out new and unexpected ways of understanding.

Declarations

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Research Article

Are you listening to me? Understanding children's rights through Hungarian pedagogic practice

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Abstract: Hungarian pedagogues agree that children should be listened to, have their rights recognised, and their voices heard. The UNCRC recommends that children's rights should be part of early childhood education, but this is not typical in Hungarian kindergartens and there is little pedagogical material to support the education of children about their rights. This paper focuses on 5 kindergartens each typically accommodating over 150 children between the ages of 3-6 years old across Hungary. Six pedagogues worked with multi-age groups (4 kindergartens) and same-age groups (2 kindergartens). The research adopted participatory methods to gather children's views recognising them as valuable collaborators. Children provided insight into their own lives through play based creative activities that focused on eliciting children's thoughts and feelings. Pedagogues collected video data using a 'toolkit' of children's play activities during a 6-week period of the COVID-19 pandemic. Pedagogues reflected on children's play through a series of online focus groups with emphasis on how children expressed their views and preferences through play. Participants were encouraged to examine the power relationships between children and adults and analyse their role in knowledge production rather than knowledge extraction. Six themes emerged through thematic analysis, mapped to the 4 guiding principles of children's rights: participation, survival, development and protection. The findings highlight the juxtaposition between children's life-as-experienced and life-as-told by adults; the skill of pedagogues to hear and sensitively interpret children's voices based on their play and the challenge to slow down and reflect on practice.

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Introduction

The complex and multi-layered issue of children's rights and its meaningful implementation in early education practices is a widely discussed topic worldwide (Herczog, 2012; Lundy, 2007; 2012; Visnjić-Jevtić et al., 2021; Yoon & Templeton, 2019). The central concern to give voice to children and to listen attentively to their views in matters that concern them has become increasingly urgent (de Sousa, 2019; Facca et al., 2020), particularly in light of the rights of the child being fundamental in achieving sustainable development with targets to be achieved by 2030 (specifically Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) (Zamfir, 2019).

Children's rights are enshrined in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) (United Nations, 1989), which imposes an obligation to fulfil on all state parties to respect children's rights to protection, provision and participation (Murray et al., 2019). Key to realising children's rights in their everyday lives is their right to be heard, their right to have a say and their views to be taken seriously on matters that are important to them, as articulated in Article 12. Children express their views in a variety of ways and key to listening in early childhood is the ability to harness children's preferred modes of expression including verbal and non-verbal means (Clark, 2017; Clark et al., 2011; Elfström Pettersson, 2015; Palaiologou, 2013) as well as taking account of silences and dissenting voices (Spencer et

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al., 2020).

Hungary signed the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child in 1991 and pedagogues agree that children should be listened to, have their rights recognised and their voices heard (Pálfi et al., 2019). Developing practice that addresses these fundamentals is significant in contributing to children's learning and development. However, practice does not exist in a vacuum, it is rooted in the cultural, social and pedagogical values of the people and places in which it takes place and is intrinsically tied to previous histories. In Hungary, ratifying the convention came at the end of the Soviet regime, when children's rights were only understood in terms of protection, and participation was still seen as compulsory in activities that met the needs of a socialist society. In this context, due to the 'unfinished business of socialism' the rhetoric of understanding children's rights and embedding them in kindergarten practice continues to be challenging (Jelača & Lugarić, 2018, p. 1). The UNCRC recommends that children's rights should be part of early childhood education (UNCRC, 2005). Although it is claimed that every aspect of the National Core Programme for Kindergarten Education (Hungarian Ministry of Culture and Education , 1996) incorporates consideration for children's rights, implementation in practice is not typical in Hungarian kindergartens and there is little pedagogical material to support the education of children about their rights (Pálfi *et al.*, 2019).

This paper examines the issue of children's rights and voices in early childhood education and care (ECEC context) in response to the research question: *In what ways are children's rights explored and expressed in Hungarian kindergartens by children?* and *How can pedagogues and kindergartens support a rights-based approach to values and practice?* The research used thematic analysis to distinguish between how children's views are sought, expressed and understood. It was important to identify young children everyday concerns and to highlight how recognising and valuing children's meaningful communication and expressions contribute to building knowledge about them and things that matter to them. This in turn, has the potential to inform right-respecting pedagogic practices, laying the foundations for child-centred pedagogy. Consequently, this can transform practice and thinking in nurturing children's learning, development and understanding of the world.

Children's Rights in Hungary

Understanding children's rights in present day Hungary requires looking back to the past and the country's socio-cultural history. The 1990s brought with it a sharp decrease in birth rate partly due to the collapse of the socialist economy, which prompted the new government to look after its children through providing full-time, fully funded early education and care provision for three to six-year-olds, whose parents were employed (Teszenyi & Hevey, 2015). Kindergartens provided conditions for healthy development (including, nutrition, paediatric care, and specialist services on site), which aimed to acknowledge children's rights to survival and development (Pálfi et al., 2019). Rights to protection and social security dates back to the first European kindergarten established by Teréz Brunszvik in Budapest in 1828. Its emphasis on a protective function of kindergartens as an institution laid the foundations for children's rights to be understood primarily in safeguarding and legal terms today.

Children's rights to participation and play, however, reflected (and to some extent still does) the enduring influence of socialism. Early childhood had an 'iconic status' in the 1970s and 1980s (Penn, 2011, p.16). Children were placed in the centre of the social, political and economic re-making of society and they were viewed as an embodiment of a new social order, where kindergartens nurtured a new generation of soviet citizens (Silova et al., 2017). Children were perceived to be shaped by adults through instilling socialist political ideals, values and beliefs (Millei et al., 2019; Millei & Imre, 2016) including expectations of discipline, orderly and unquestioning behaviours which continued into the 1990s. Consequently, children had very limited opportunities, if any, to understand, learn and realise their rights and needs. Although children's right to play was declared with Hungary ratifying the UNCRC in 1991, the content of children's play in kindergartens continued to be heavily censored and led by pedagogues under the controversial pretext of 'teaching children to play', which inadvertently led to the 'right to play' being curtailed.

The socialist ideology, that any change to society started with the collective upbringing of children with conformity and group goals as priority, was replaced by an individualised approach in the late 1990s (Kirschenbaum, 2001; Penn, 2014). This gave way to Westernised ideas flooding the country (Millei, 2011; Molnár et al., 2015; Nagy Varga et al., 2015) and the introduction of the National Core Programme for Kindergarten Education in 1996 (Ministry of Culture and Education, 1996). It established statutory requirements for all aspects of care and education to be in accordance with fundamental human rights and with respect for children's rights (Pálfi et al., 2019). However, the social and cultural phenomenon of socialism did not disappear overnight and still has influence at each level of the education system in Hungary (Józsa et al., 2018). In this context, the rhetoric of understanding children's rights and embedding them in kindergarten practice is challenging.

Focus on Children's Play

Play is important for children; it is where they explore, try out new things, and voice their opinions. It acts as a vehicle for nurturing their interest and provides a platform for exploring curiosity and creativity (Canning et al., 2017). Children's active engagement in play supports their cognitive and physical development as they bring what they already know to the situation and build on or experiment with their knowledge through play. Children also come to play situations with experiences from home, their family, and community (Keung & Cheung, 2019). When children are able to set their own agenda in relation to how they play, who with and to some extent be able to control the environment they are able to explore new ideas, concepts and experiment with their own understanding (Canning, 2020). Children also use the knowledge and experience they already have with regard to how they approach play situations, how they act within them and how they respond to other children. Consequently, play is the ideal platform for listening to children's voice and understanding their emotional responses to what is happening around them as well as how they understand their own experiences.

A Mosaic Approach

The Mosaic approach combines reflections on a range of ways to listen to children's voices, and to gather their views and experiences through child-led methods and observations, in order to inform pedagogy and research (Clark et al., 2011). Each element of the Mosaic approach is valued and recognised as making a significant contribution to knowledge generation about children and the things that matter to them. Central to this is listening which is an 'active process, involving, interpreting, constructing meaning and responding' (Clark, 2017, p. 26). Pedagogues work with information which can be seen and heard out of context – for example, the things children say and aspects of play that reflect learning and knowledge from home. Therefore, it is important for pedagogues to step back and recognise how children feel and see the world. Rinaldi (2005, p.19) terms the development of collaborative understanding as 'interpretative theory', that ascribes significance and meaning to events and objects that are shared, layered and revised on 'intellectual, affective and aesthetic' levels. This research represents children's voice, their interpretations and views on the world, through their play and conversations, whilst recognising and drawing upon interpretations and reflections made by pedagogues who know the children. Play activities which promoted conversation, projects that produced artefacts such as drawings and models and conversations with pedagogues were the mosaic 'tools' utilized in this research.

Theoretical Framing

In this research understanding what children bring to play situations and how they interact with others or in particular spaces, draws on a socio-cultural perspective of learning and development. Sociocultural theory suggests that learning is inherently a social process mediated through interpersonal interactions (Vygotsky, 1978). For example, sharing the same cultural background means that children enter play with similar expectations of what might happen. Pyle & Bigelow (2015) consider that play, learning and development cannot be isolated from contextual influences such as the home and kindergarten. They all influence the process of playing and learning and developing a holistic picture of children's preferences and how those preferences support the expression of voice and rights. Consequently, the role of the pedagogue is significant in interpreting and supporting children's

interactions. Their understanding of the balance between social exchanges and the knowledge and experiences that children bring to play situations requires sensitive pedagogical innovations (Clark, 2017). Pedagogues have greater knowledge of social and cultural traditions within the community and therefore are not only able to impose these on children through behavioural expectations but are also able to occupy a sense of power over children because they can control the kindergarten environment and what happens in it (Burke, 2008). Therefore, in considering children's rights, pedagogues' skill in providing space, time and flexibility for children's self-expression alongside giving opportunities for new experiences, choice and preference is critical (Brunson & Vogt, 1996).

Method

The study followed a qualitative ethnographic narrative design exploring the opinions and experiences of children in kindergarten as they explored their rights through specific play from a toolkit of activities which were video recorded. It specifically looked at the way in which children expressed themselves through their play and how that play linked to the UNCRC rights of the child. A unique element of the research was that data was generated by pedagogues in the kindergartens because of the restrictions imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic. Consequently, a clear framework was in place for pedagogues generating the data to understand the purpose of the research, how a toolkit of activities could be utilised, the ethical implications, data generation procedures, the method of analysis, and potential for future research. This paper reports on the first phase of a larger project and therefore it was essential that each stage of the data generation process was carefully considered.

The research question asked: *In what ways are children's rights explored and expressed in Hungarian kindergartens by children?* and *How can pedagogues and kindergartens support a rights-based approach to values and practice?* A narrative methodology sought to understand children's 'in the moment' lived experiences and emotions (Chase, 2017). Play experiences for the children in the five kindergartens that participated was different in terms of context, yet they also had commonalities. These included a sense of freedom within their play to express views and opinions and to build on their own stories. Children's play was captured by pedagogues through video footage and electronically transferred for analysis. Their narrative contributed to a portrayal of experiences and linked with pedagogues' reflections, enabling a layered picture of children's rights to emerge. Knowledge created through this type of analysis constantly evolves and understanding is situated within a context; it is not value-free or independent of interpretation (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2019). However, there is richness in the detail and insight provided through narrative data and the nature of shared experiences.

A Toolkit of Activities

Pedagogues were asked to contribute to designing a toolkit of play activities through a series of online workshops. The toolkit not only focused on different types of play, but the ability of pedagogues to choose from a mosaic of possibilities for data generation. The activities included 9 core areas: drama/role play; talking circles; dance/movement; story making; projects; daily routines; cooking; arts and crafts; photo/drawing elicitation. Although some of the activities were familiar to children and pedagogues, the toolkit provided suggestions on how to make them rights focused and for children to lead and shape the conversations around things that mattered to them.

Once an activity was selected, pedagogues made written and/or video observations of children's engagement and participation. They provided written reflections of their observations of children's play in relation to how children expressed themselves and the potential links between play and rights. The combination of this data and artefacts produced by children provided a mosaic of experiences and a creative framework for sharing children's perspectives.

The toolkit mitigated to some extent pedagogues' subjective interpretation of the data. In Hungarian kindergartens there is an assumption that research is a judgment on practice and pedagogues generally have extensive freedom in interpreting any data generated (Pálfi *et al*., 2019). Using a toolkit provided

pedagogues with a structure and focus. It afforded a limited choice of activities but ensured pedagogues could not compare directly with others.

Participants and Data Generation

Kindergartens and pedagogues were recruited through the Hungarian National Pedagogues' Network after initial interest was expressed at an online conference. Pedagogues were introduced to the research, children's rights and the positioning of children with regard to understanding freedom of expression within play activities during an initial online meeting. After this, pedagogues were asked to make a commitment to the research and a total of five kindergartens and their lead pedagogues agreed to proceed.

Pedagogues talked to their children about the activities that they wanted to do with them as part of the research and how they would feel about participating. They explained that they wanted to find out about their views and opinions about subjects that were important to them. Pedagogues explained that through play, the children would naturally reveal what was important to them because they would want to include the topic in their game or engage in conversation about it. The pedagogues emphasised that the children were not being judged or tested, but they were interested in their views because they had forgotten what it was like to be a child and what kinds of things mattered to them. Pedagogues allowed children time to think about whether they wanted to participate and if they were happy for the pedagogue to film their play as part of the research. Pedagogues answered any questions the children had in circle time at various points throughout the weeks leading up to the generation of data. It was important that children were respected in their views on taking part in the research and that their voice was captured authentically through their play. Video was not edited by the pedagogues or researchers, play artefacts were unchanged and children's conversations in play were captured naturally as part of the game they were engaged in.

The participating kindergartens were diverse in size and pedagogical thinking. They also represented different local pedagogical programmes and were located throughout Hungary. Local pedagogical programmes are a feature of Hungarian practice. It essentially means that a Kindergarten follows a bespoke curriculum that has a particular focus on a theme or pedagogical influence. Table 1 indicates the size, scale, pedagogical programme and particular 'tool' each kindergarten used during the research:

Table 1. Research participants, focus and toolkit activity

Kindergarten	Detail	Tool used
1	109 children in 4 multi-age groups; affluent small-town location rich in cultural heritage; church run setting; Catholic faith; local programme focuses on **nurturing talent**.	Circle-time/ talking/story circles led by children
2	216 children in 8 same-age groups; affluent county town kindergarten maintained by the Local Authority (LA); the local programme is designed to develop **citizenship** with the added foci on **environmental issues and sustainability**; accredited 'Green Kindergarten'; achieved a cultural award in 2019 for nurturing old (mainly folk) traditions.	Drama, role-play Taking photos and making drawings
3	185 children in 7 multi-age and 1 same-age groups; LA run city kindergarten with mixed socio-economic background; the local programme focuses on **citizenship,** preparation for contributing to society.	Picture cards that provoke discussion amongst children
4	137 children in 5 multi-age and 1 same-age groups; LA run setting town with mixed socio-economic background; local programme focuses on the cyclical, **natural rhythm of the four seasons** and **folk tradition**.	Cooking and baking
5	186 children in 8 multi-age groups (3-6 years); mixed socio-economic background; LA run; town location; local programme focuses on **relationships** and the development of the **mother tongue** through play and stories.	Arts and crafts including model making

Video Data

Video of the toolkit play activities were considered the most appropriate way of capturing children's peer interactions and self-expression rather than relying on field notes or written observations made by pedagogues (Haw, 2008). This meant that the video data were open to interpretation. However, the advantage of using video as a non-participant observational tool was that it enabled repeat viewing and opportunities for detailed analysis and alongside pedagogues' reflections enabled a layered picture of children's lived experiences in relation to their rights to emerge. Pedagogues recorded multiple short (approximately 2 minute) video clips of the toolkit activity and uploaded the files to be shared with the researchers. Short video sequences were essential to limit the file size being shared, the upload time and internet bandwidth needed.

Pedagogue Reflections and Children's Artefacts

Pedagogues' reflections were collected in the form of written accounts of what they observed children doing in the toolkit activities and through online focus groups organised after the data had been collected. The online focus groups were necessary because of the research being conducted during the COVID-19 pandemic and the geographical spread of the kindergartens across Hungary. Reflections were linked to the artefacts that children produced whilst participating in the toolkit activity, for example, a clay model from kindergarten 5 or the cakes made in kindergarten 4. The artefacts prompted pedagogue reflections in relation to the socio-cultural understandings they attributed to children and their families. The social relationships between children prompted pedagogues to reflect on the conversations children engaged in and how those conversations could be seen through a rights-based lens.

The online focus groups to facilitate pedagogues' reflections were led by a researcher and asked pedagogues to share the toolkit activity they focused upon, how they had found filming the activities, what they found interesting or surprising in what they heard children express and how that linked to previous knowledge they held about that child or group of children. Pedagogues did not necessarily know each other, but they were willing to share their experiences and reflect on what they observed children doing and saying linked to a rights-based approach to practice.

Ethics

Ethical considerations included processes that provided pedagogues with the confidence and freedom to enable them to collect data and gain children's and families' consent. This was important, given the aim of gaining insights into children's voice through self-expression and lived experiences via specific play activities. Alongside adhering to the British Educational Research Association (BERA) revised guidelines (BERA, 2018), Hungarian ethical approval and protocols were followed (Hungarian Academy of Sciences, 2010). Families consented for their child to participate through signed consent managed by the pedagogues, and they had the opportunity to withdraw from the research before a set date. The children, aged between 4 and 6 years old, were asked for their assent rather than full informed consent (Hill, 2005). This mitigates against not knowing whether children understand the context in which the research will be presented or the implications for them later. The research was explained in child-friendly terms and children were asked if they were willing to be part of the study and help adults understand their views and opinions. They were asked several times over a period of 2 weeks leading up to the start of the research and any questions that they had were answered by pedagogues. In the planning of the study children were at the heart of the process and the motivation to action change. Therefore, it was essential they be part of the process in deciding if they wanted to participate, the level at which they engaged with the activities and if they wanted to talk about their experiences with pedagogues during or after the study. This approach also supported a rights-based pedagogy enabling children to have ownership and voice in decision making.

Parents/carers and pedagogues acted as 'gatekeepers' for children's wellbeing and gauged if they were happy to participate in the toolkit play activities. Pedagogues submitted video, reflections and children's artefacts electronically which were stored securely and all names of participants in this study are pseudonyms to protect their identity. There were no withdrawals from the research during the process.

Time before the project began was given to ensure that pedagogues, parents and children had information, time to ask questions and time to reflect on whether they wanted to participate.

Data Analysis

Thematic analysis was used for data interrogation (Braun & Clarke, 2021). From the video of the toolkit activities, pedagogue reflections and focus groups, a systematic review was conducted identifying patterns of reoccurring words and topics relating to children's rights. These were identified as the codes. From the codes themes were identified and analysed in relation to the research question, whilst reflecting on the theoretical framing of socio-cultural theory. Thematic analysis as a flexible method enabled focus on analysing meaning across the entire data set of children's play experiences and pedagogue reflections.

Findings

From the analysis, three examples are presented relating to how children explored and expressed their rights. The synopsis of video data, where children controlled and led their play, exemplify the narrative affordances of the toolkit for drawing attention to and conveying children's interests, and what is important to them. The layered approach of including pedagogues' reflections supports the sensitive need to understand children's expression and context in relation to their knowledge and understanding of their immediate environment.

Example 1: Being a television reporter

From Kindergarten 2 where the toolkit activity was role play: Sara aged 4 years is standing behind a large cardboard box with a square hold cut out which represents a television set. It is balanced on a table and Sara is framed by the 'television'. She is talking out to an audience of 3 boys who are watching as if she were on television. She starts by pretending to be a weather reporter, but her description contains a narrative of what she is thinking, feeling and wishing for:

> It could happen that the corona virus comes to an end… and … and ….and we are allowed to go everywhere… to the seaside, to Parád (an open air spa) and it will be the summer and we will be allowed to go anywhere and the sun will shine… and …and… we will be able to leave our homes and then we can go to the play park and then we are allowed to go everywhere and there won't be corona virus any more.

Pedagogues' reflection after thinking about approaching practice from a rights-based perspective and allowing children time and space to play:

> I discovered how much I am able to lead by following the children. When I have a helpful and supportive attitude, I am able to support children's self-affirmation.

Example 2: Playing with dinosaurs

From Kindergarten 5 where the toolkit activity was arts and crafts: Six children aged from 3 to 6 years are standing around an elevated plastic water tray. The tray does not contain water, but a variety of materials including fabric, cotton wool and polystyrene shapes. There is a plastic bowl on the edge of the tray that contains water and each child has hold of a small plastic animal toy. They are taking turns to dip their animal into the bowl of water and then into the tray to explore the different materials. As they do this, the conversation, initiated by one of the children explores whether dinosaurs clean their teeth.

> Ava: But what shall we dry this on?
>
> David: I am a real spring (as in, spring water)
>
> Ava: What shall we dry his hair on?
>
> Tomas: Do animals brush teeth?
>
> Bella: Animals don't brush teeth.
>
> Tomas: Animals don't.
>
> India: This has not even got teeth.
>
> Bella: So animals do not have to brush teeth then.

India: Yes, because they don't even have toothbrushes.

Tomas: Yeah…This one (dinosaur) also fits in there. We are putting them in the water. Oh… yuppy (as he dips the dinosaur into the water)

Ava: Look, this is still black.

Tomas: Me coming here…. Argghhh

Bella: I am brushing my toothie tooth

Tomas: See, this dino is not brushing teeth because it has not got any.

Pedagogues' reflection after reviewing the video:

It came as a surprise to me that a little girl who had not opened up much in kindergarten before did in this situation, and a boy from the younger children's group also revealed a lot about the things that were important to him.

Example 3: What can you see?

From Kindergarten 3 where the toolkit activity was picture cards: This activity is based on adult-child interactions with the focus on images of different situational contexts. The pedagogue asks questions to find out what the child is thinking and feeling about the situation. In this example, Elba is shown a photograph of two children pulling a teddy bear in opposite directions.

Pedagogue: I'm going to show you a picture. Can you tell me what you see?

Elba: Two boys *(He's visibly very excited and curious. He answers as soon as he receives the picture)*

Pedagogue: What are they doing?

Elba: They're pulling the teddy

Pedagogue: And why is that?

Elba: Because they're arguing

Pedagogue: And what do you think? Who could have that teddy? *(Elba thinks about this and names one of his groupmates)*

Elba: Aisha! *(A little girl from his group)*

Pedagogue: And of the two of them, who could have it? *(pointing to the picture)*

Elba: Him *(pointing to the younger child).* And he'll play with it a little bit, and then he'll give it to the other one too. *(He replies quickly, confidently, and decidedly)*

Pedagogue: How do you think they're feeling right now?

Elba: Well…they're feeling that…good, but they're arguing about the teddy

Pedagogue: Who do you think could help them?

Elba: Their Mummy

Pedagogue: How could their Mummy help them?

Elba: She could put the teddy away and give it to them later when they're not arguing.

Pedagogues' reflection after reviewing the video:

After reviewing the video and the way I was asking the questions, I think I could have done it better. It wasn't a conversation; it was questions and answers which maybe Elba thought he had to answer because I am the adult. I understand now that I need to be more gentle in my approach. Give children the time to think and speak, not question them so hard, but explore with them what they are thinking and feeling.

Assumptions

Video data was the predominant form of data generation and as such was important to remember at the analysis stage that it was not 'neutral' because it is a snapshot based on the pedagogues' decisions around what is significant to record. Pedagogues' values and beliefs influenced not only what was filmed but also when it was filmed. Consequently, understanding the theoretical framework of a socio-cultural approach, the research question and acknowledging impact of the decisions made in filming selections shows awareness of the interpretive nature of the research. These considerations are important because

within different social and cultural contexts there are many common practices that occur based on unquestioned assumptions about how things are done or roles that different people occupy. Corsaro (2018) suggests that these assumptions not only influence pedagogues' actions and decisions, but also shape children's cultural understanding and influence their contribution to the adult world. Therefore, common or taken-for-granted practices are often reaffirmed through actual experiences, for example, what has been seen or heard or emphasized through physical actions. Therefore, how children relate to the world is largely a function based on what they know of their own cultural context and the influence of wider societal norms (Greene & Hill, 2005). This is significant in relation to understanding research around children's rights and hearing children's voices so that as adult researchers we question our assumptions and are led by the data that the children have generated and have richly contributed to. This is exemplified by a pedagogue from Kindergarten 4 where cooking and baking were the toolkit activity focus:

> It was very useful for me to be part of this project because, I have started approaching our daily activities from a children's rights perspective.

Thematic Analysis

The discussion and actions initiated by the children, generated through their play, enabled the process of thematic analysis. From example 1, Sara is talking about what she wants to do with her family, where she wants to go and why she is unable to because of the pandemic. The video was coded as: play park; family holiday situations; and COVID-19. These codes were then grouped, developing the themes of 'special places' and 'events important to children'. The 'playing with dinosaurs' was coded as: personal hygiene and conributions, resulting in the themes of 'health and wellbeing' and 'caring for others'. The discussion amongst the children is important as they ask each other questions, seek clarification and different opinions alongside 'playing out' the actions of cleaning the dinosaurs teeth. This process is signifiant to the children in making sense and creating their own narrative around personal hygiene expectations as well as shared cultural experiences. Table 2 outlines all of the codes and themes generated from the research:

Table 2. Codes and themes from the data

Codes	Emerging theme
Extended family members Parents and siblings The Kindergarten pedagogue Friends Arrival of a new baby	Significant people
Play park Family holiday destinations Grandparents house Holidays	Special places
The difference between child/child and child/adult interactions Conflict Choice/own decisions vs. rules Winners being rewarded	Power relations
Medical help - COVID-19 and the effect of the pandemic Relaxation/rest and sleep Personal hygiene Nutrition	Health and wellbeing
Helping each other Acceptance Contributions Showing affection The presence of home and home life in the Kindergarten	Caring for others – community
Feeling left behind Love Being cross or angry Longing	Feelings

Discussion

Listening to Children's Voice

The examples from the findings demonstrate how children's play can open up opportunities for other topics that children are concerned about to be expressed. This reflects Article 12 of the UNCRC; yet, this was a revelation to Hungarian pedagogues who had not approached children's play from a rights-based perspective before. In the 'being a television reporter' role play, Sara had freedom within her imagination which facilitated her to have a voice. Because that particular 'snapshot' of play was recorded, it alerted the pedagogue to her anxieties. In this way, there was an opportunity for Sara's voice to be heard and this created further possibilities and generated discussion around activities that might address those concerns.

Article 12 expresses the right for children to voice their views and sets the expectation that their opinions are given due weight (United Nations, 1989). Practice in Hungarian kindergartens reflects children's voice within a particular frame of reference set by pedagogues and is limited by what they understand as a 'right'. This reflects an adult-centred view of children, where they hold power in decisions such as developing rules and boundaries without consulting or including children's ideas (Sutton Smith, 1997). Consequently, the reality of practice reflects the rights of adults more than the rights of children. The findings of the research show how children are expressing their voice through the play decisions they make and the way they communicate them, however pedagogues are at the initial stages of moving away from tokenistic opportunities to a listening approach that actively seeks, recognises and acts on children's views (Lundy, 2007).

Children's rights in Hungary are typically seen in terms of protection or safeguarding and so putting children at the centre of practice in a democratic, inclusive position of power is an alien concept. The National Core programme provides the foundations for practice that enables children to realise their rights. The programme affords a significant degree of autonomy to pedagogues in all aspects of their work with children. But respecting children's rights varies across practice. For example, physical and physiological needs are consistently met and children's rights to provision and survival is respected. However, children's social, emotional and cognitive needs are largely overlooked with development understood in relation to biological age and stereotypical characteristics.

Slowing Down Practice

Pedagogues' voluntary participation in the research induced and required a slower pace; both through participating in the research and in reflecting upon practice. Slow participatory research includes re-awakening skills and senses that may have become lost in a busy kindergarten environment (Clark, 2021). These include time to think and reflect, talk and consolidate with colleagues, listen to what children are actually saying when they play and interact with other children or adults. The pedagogues were the drivers of their own thinking with the focus on the children rather than their practice. Consequently, because they were thinking about the children, it made them reflect on their practice. The slow pedagogy employed led to 'in between time' which enabled pedagogues to process the ideas shared between them and develop a renewed understanding of the toolkit activities and their purpose.

How time was perceived and used during the data generation period was influenced by the culture and historical values of the kindergartens as well as individual personality and pedagogic beliefs. Some pedagogues experienced time and pace as pressure, whereas others as a reassuring expansion (Cuffaro, 1995). Both reflect what pedagogues consider meaningful and significant, which includes the time children need to frame their own views on matters that are important to them. Those pedagogues, who afforded children with 'experience stretches' (Cuffaro, 1995, p.58) claimed that they got to know children better as they used their chosen toolkit activity to elicit children's views. Others were governed by the deeply engrained habit of setting out time for asking children's opinions. In these situations, time was dictated by adult pacing and direction (Lipari, 2014). Embedding slow pedagogy where significance is given to time and space for children and pedagogues to develop interests and to notice details that concern children

require a 'slow lens' (Clark, 2021). Although greatly rewarding when slow pedagogy is employed, it can be challenging for pedagogues to step back, observe and allow children to lead their play.

An adult planned activity always has a hidden agenda in that there is always a planned outcome (Hughes, 2001). The adult then dictates the pace and direction of children's engagement and involvement. For the power dynamics to shift so that activities follow children's pace and rhythm pedagogues have to feel comfortable with the notion that where children undertake an activity regardless of the outcome, it is still worthwhile and valuable, even if pedagogues envisaged it differently. However, in Hungarian practice this is a challenging concept. It is hard for pedagogues to give up control and slow down. Nevertheless, pedagogues did reflect through the online focus groups that they were surprised to find out something new about their children and to understand them better. This is potentially due to having no expectations of an outcome for children's play and a realisation that children have the capacity to engage with activities without adult direction. This is the beginning of a process to learn to trust and respect children's choices.

Pedagogues have seen through participating in the research that they do not have to be the gatekeepers of the content of children's play, but if they listen to children to find out what themes dominate their play, they can plan more open-ended activities where outcomes are flexible which better reflect children's interests. This is considered a breakthrough in thinking about practice and supporting a rights-based pedagogic approach. This considers how teaching and learning can be centred around children's rights and how children can be empowered to contribute to their learning environment. It ensures that children's voices are not tokenistic, but valued as a way in which to enhance and inspire activities and teaching that children can actively participate in.

Let the Activity and Environment Do the Work

If pedagogues understand and embrace a rights-based approach, the space and resources available in kindergartens will reflect children's explorations, ideas and interests. Artefacts created will be individual and spontaneous. Children will be able to move freely in the space where they are able to express themselves through verbal interaction and non-verbal cues. The flow of the environment will be with the children, created and maintained by their curiosity and motivation for learning. The environment will respond to the continuum of children's experiences, enabling different experiences to be had for individual children within the same space.

Findings suggest Hungarian kindergartens do not reflect this ideal. The content of activities provided for children are very important to pedagogues. They see it as a personal failure if not all children want to do an activity that was painstakingly, precisely and carefully planned. The culture of kindergartens supports a tradition where the pedagogue feels that it is only them who can teach children about what is important. The term 'important' in this context relates to what pedagogues have planned through a scheme of work that is thematically designed, such as 'spring and new life'. However, this research has begun to break down some of the embedded approaches to practice. The toolkit activities forced pedagogues to tune into children's spontaneous play and leave activities open-ended. Pedagogues embraced this approach because they were taking part in research seen as significant. But through the process of championing the toolkit activities and allowing them to do the work in terms of supporting children's voice, engagement and discussion about what is important to them, pedagogues acknowledged they gained a deeper insight into children's preferences and passions, laying the foundations for meaningful interactions. This 'new' emerging approach to pedagogic practice provides foundations for honouring children's rights and for children to have the opportunity to learn and experience their rights through interactions with other children and adults. Their relationships with the environment and the way in which play and activities may be directed by children, developing a deeper connection with their interests, supports child-centred meaning making.

Creating a Layered Approach to Practice

In the same way that children are not one dimensional, Hungarian practice has many layers and functions. A holistic approach to practice requires tuning into children's expressions and patterns; the variations they create form an integral part of a listening pedagogy (Ingulfsvann et al., 2020). How and what children express is likely to have connections to the world outside the kindergarten which is reflected in example 3 in the conversation between the pedagogue and Elba. The pedagogue is learning about what Elba understands and how he makes sense of the world around him. Awareness of children's various contexts are crucial in interpreting their views. Children's uniqueness is understood in the context of their relationships with and the environments they inhabit as the codes of the themes 'significant people' and 'special places' suggest.

Building knowledge about the children within and outside kindergarten is integral to understanding their individual circumstances; their starting point in how they are empowered and how introducing the ideas of rights could support their learning, development and confidence. It is not a 'one size fits all' approach, but requires sensitive planning, putting the needs of the child at the centre of practice and building around the four foundations of children's rights: participation, development, survival and protection. The themes that emerged from the findings of this research map onto these areas and create a layered view of where issues central to children's lives intertwine with their rights. Acknowledging the themes as things that concern children, that emerged from their play and listening to their conversations demonstrates how a rights-based pedagogy, whether recognised or not, already exists in practice. Figure 1 illustrates the mapping of themes onto the 4 foundations of children's rights.

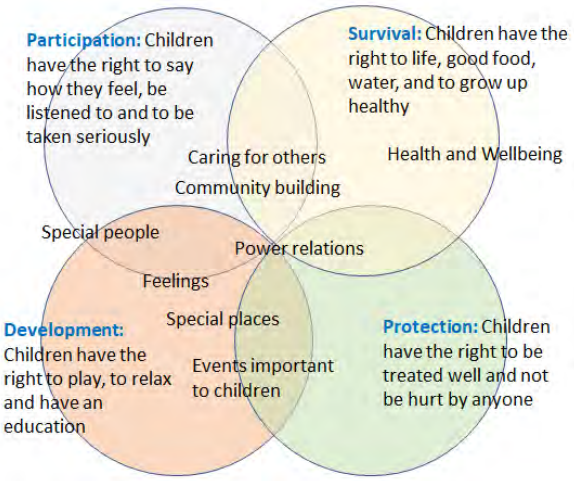

Figure 1. Findings themes mapped to children's rights

The challenge therefore is to recognise the rights-based practice that already exists and build on that so that pedagogues can view children's learning and development through a child-centred, listening lens, where rights form the foundation of pedagogues understanding.

Conclusion

This paper has argued for a rights-based approach to underpin practice in Hungarian kindergartens based on the data generated by children participating in open-ended play activities and pedagogues' reflections. However intertwined with the routine of daily practice are influential forces that present potential barriers to adopting change. These include the power relationships that exist as an underlying current between children and pedagogues and the cultural and historical weight of expectation that shapes values and beliefs.

This paper has argued that children already demonstrate their ability to articulate what they think and feel; their views and opinions when engaged in play that is open-ended without prescribed outcomes. However, there is need for greater awareness of children's rights and the articles of the UNCRC so that

rights are not seen as formulaic or offered as a tokenistic activity. It is also important that children recognise the importance of having rights and what that means in their everyday lives. Understanding their contribution to their community in terms of their rights and responsibilities supports wider ideals of cohesion, accountability and inclusive relationship building. Pedagogues require support to achieve these goals and a willingness to acknowledge that rights can be built into the foundations of their practice. Pre- and in-service training could provide a way to support pedagogues' engagement in rights-respecting pedagogic practice and raise the awareness of the need to listen to children's voices. The UNCRC articles are legally binding and in particular, Article 12 requires children's rights to be realised in their everyday lives (Lundy, 2007). Consequently it is urgent that the way in which children's rights are viewed and implemented into practice are recognised, celebrated and drive a change in approaches to acknowledging what is important and transformative for children.

Declarations

Authors' Declarations

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Ethics approval and consent to participate: Ethical considerations included processes that provided pedagogues with the confidence and freedom to enable them to collect data and gain children's and families' consent. This was important, given the aim of gaining insights into children's voice through self-expression and lived experiences via specific play activities. Alongside adhering to the British Educational Research Association (BERA) revised guidelines (BERA, 2018), Hungarian ethical approval and protocols were followed (Hungarian Academy of Sciences, 2010).

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Research Article

Social protection of children with disabilities before the change of regime and at present

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Abstract: The integration of people with disabilities and the normalisation of their living conditions appear to be a key goal in today's social approach. However, it is not enough to change the social approach alone in order to achieve integration, we need instruments which are able to support the social participation, self-determination and normalisation of people with disabilities. Such instruments can be defined as follows: a wide range of social welfare support and social services ensured by the state. It is indispensable to help, support and strengthen families which raise a child with disabilities, consequently social policy instruments should be extended to families as well. The present study aims at providing an overview of how children with disabilities and their families were supported during the socialist regime and in the subsequent period. We used a qualitative case study, for the preparation of which secondary research and document analysis were conducted. Our analysis focused on the research question whether following the change of regime there was a change of attitude in the fields of social policy which could promote the improvement of the quality of life of children with disabilities and their families. On the other hand, do the benefits and services provided by the social care system support the integration, normalisation and self-determination of children with disabilities, as well as their upbringing in a family environment? The results of our analysis show that following the change of regime a slow change guided by the modern approach to disability began, which by continuously adding an element at a time attempts to help children with disabilities and their families. A Hungarian disability strategy which would thoroughly define a social policy adapted to the needs of those concerned is badly needed.

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Introduction

International research results (Ballesteros et al., 2013; Beresford, 1995; Brennan et al., 2016; Gordon et al., 2000; Pal, 2018) point out that children with disabilities and their families are one of the most disadvantaged social groups. Out of the nine and half million citizens living in Hungary more than four hundred thousand people have some sort of disability (Central Statistical Office [CSO], 2018), of which the number of people benefiting from social services is estimated at 35-40 thousand (Kozma et al., 2020). According to the data of the 2011 census, more than thirty-five thousand children with disabilities live in Hungary, accordingly 2.3 per cent of Hungarian families have a child with disabilities (Figure 1) (CSO, 2014a). The distribution by the type of disability among children with disabilities under the age of 19 shows the predominance of children with intellectual disabilities, almost a third of them are affected by this type of disability, followed by mobility impairment in the second place, which is followed by mild visual impairment and moderate visual impairment (Figure 1).

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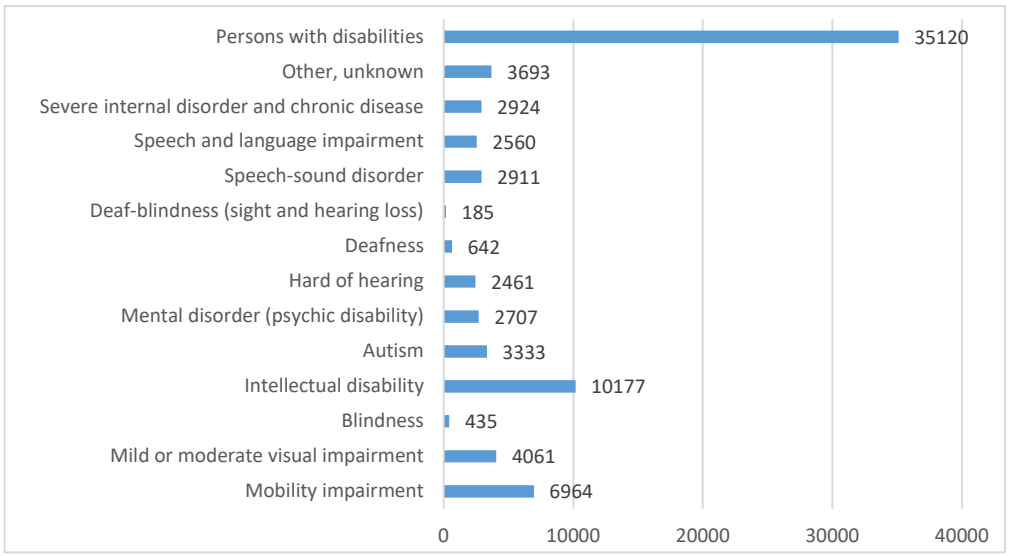

Figure 1. Distribution of children with disabilities by type of disability (persons) Source: CSO, 2014a

The census results highlight the specific housing situation of minors with disabilities and their families, which aggravates their disadvantages (CSO, 2014a). Most of them live in smaller towns and villages, the number of those living in the capital city or in county towns, i.e. in bigger towns, is low. Kereki (2010) pointed out in his research that there are inequalities in access to education and social services based on the housing situation of the child with disabilities. Inequality in education and social services puts those living in smaller towns and villages at a disadvantage. According to the census data (CSO, 2014a) a more disadvantaged housing situation can be detected especially among children under 14 years of age (Figure 2).

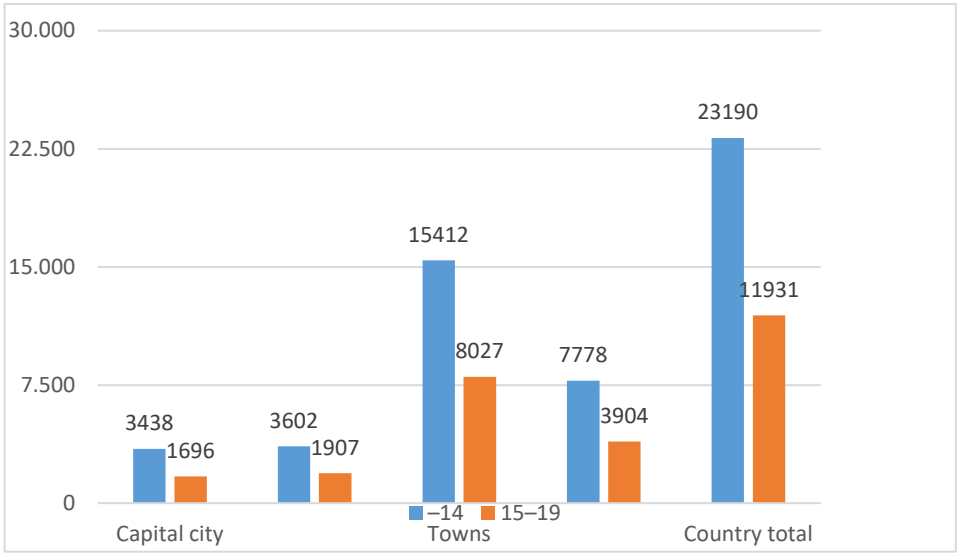

Figure 2. Distribution of children with disabilities by age and place of residence (persons) Source: CSO, 2014a

Based on these demographic characteristics, it can be stated that the assistance in the supervision and the mobility of children is important for families raising a child with disabilities, and they especially need services provided at the place of their residence. Surely, the day care supervision and travel of a child with an intellectual disability or mobility impairment can be a significant financial and mental burden for the parents.

In Hungary, there have been three researches which explore the living conditions of children with disabilities and their families. These researches were conducted between 1990 and 2008, and since the 2010s no research has been aimed at exploring the problems of this specific social group.

The first research was conducted between 1994 and 1995. According to the results of this nationwide questionnaire survey (Béres, 1997) conducted among 3200 families, financial difficulties cause the biggest problem for more than the quarter (26.5%) of the respondents. The results of the survey suggest that 39% of the surveyed families can fully benefit from the available services, and 23% can only partially use them. The main hindrance to use the services is the transportation, as well as the distance from the services.

In 2003 László Bass (2004a, 2004b) conducted a nationwide representative research on the situation of children with severe and multiple disabilities and their families caring for them. He pointed out that the families struggle with a range of complex problems that make them particularly vulnerable to income poverty, loneliness and exclusion from services. In its background, there is a great amount of support and care that children with disabilities need, which, on the one hand, means significant additional costs for the families, on the other hand, mothers can only provide a permanent supervision for their children if they give up their work. Parents place their children in residential social care as a last resort, they try to preserve the family unit, but this may lead to impoverishment, the loss of social connections and the decrease in social participation. Bass (2008, 2009) repeated five years later his previous research among children with disabilities and their families. His results pointed out that there was no difference in the lives or social welfare of the families surveyed, and the employment of mothers remained low, therefore their income situation remained unchanged.

Fónai et al. in Hajdú-Bihar County in 2004 conducted a non-representative questionnaire survey asking persons with disabilities and their families which involved 387 persons (Fónai et al., 2007). The research was aimed at exploring the living conditions of people with disabilities, but it did not only comprise families caring for minor children with disabilities. The results of the study support the findings of the nationwide research of Bass (2004a, 2004b), according to which the person with disabilities affects the living conditions and income of the family caring for him / her. Their unfavourable income situation can be explained by multiple reasons, on the one hand, due to the care of the child at home the mother has no income from gainful activities, on the other hand the disability of the child accounts for extra expenses in the family budget. Families raising a child with disabilities are more affected by interdependence and isolation therefore they require benefits and services provided by social policy. According to the conclusion of the investigation, although families receive institutional assistance, further services and support would be needed in order to be able to care for their relatives in a family environment without the deterioration of their living conditions. People with intellectual disabilities are in a particularly disadvantaged situation and their independence and growing up into an adult is especially impeded in a family environment.

Based on the above mentioned research results, it can be concluded that the living conditions of families raising a child with disabilities are worse compared to those who care for a non-disabled child. In the background may be the lower income, higher expenses arising from care needs, disadvantageous housing situation, mobility and difficulties in accessing services. At present, we do not have current information on the living conditions of families raising a child with disabilities, as since the 2010s there has been no research into the living conditions of families caring for a child with disabilities.

The conclusion of the above mentioned research results is that social benefits and services are indispensable for the social group concerned in order to maintain their living conditions. One of the main objectives of social policy is, with the involvement of the state, to reduce inequality, poverty and exclusion in the society, as well as, to accomplish the social protection and security of citizens, the integration of marginalised and disadvantaged people. The state is conducive to the social protection of its citizens by using the tools of social policy, primarily by providing social services and benefits. If needed, social services help citizens to improve their everyday living conditions, solve difficulties occurring in their lives, which can be provided as basic care, e.g. by ensuring expert help, daycare supervision or in a more serious case residential institutional care such as in the framework of residential homes. More principles (prevention, integration, subsidiarity) have to prevail in order to achieve the proper functioning of social policy (Drake, 2001). In terms of the principle of prevention, the social system has to serve to prevent the development of social problems. The principle of integration furthers the reduction of social differences and inequalities

and the elimination of exclusion. In the sense of subsidiarity, support must be provided in the closest vicinity of the residence of the person concerned, and if possible through the immediate social system (family, local community) which surrounds him / her.

The group of people with disabilities is one of the most disadvantaged social groups. Their disadvantages can be attributed to two factors, on the one hand, to the health damage of the individual, on the other hand, to the specific functioning of the society. The former aspect is the medical model, which derives the disadvantages of disability from the individual, while the latter one is the social model, according to which the barriers and hindrances originate from the external environment (Könczei & Hernádi, 2011). In the social model, the normalisation, integration and inclusion, independent living and self-determination, as well as the social inclusion play an important role (Oliver & Barnes, 1998). These principles shape the course of organising the community and social life of people with disabilities, whether it is about their lives in their homes or their participation in (educational, health, social) services. Based on the approach of the social model, the system of social policy must be created in a way that its operation may promote the normalisation, integration, independent living, self-determination, and social participation of people with disabilities (Wolfensberger, 1972).

Nirje defined the principle of normalisation in the sixties (Nirje, 1993). According to the concept of normalisation, people with disabilities should have the same living conditions and living circumstances as citizens of the given society. This means that their daily routine, lifestyle, and quality of life are the same as everyone else's in the given country. Social policy must promote that the daily life (daily routine, lifestyle, sexuality, etc.) of people with disabilities should be the same as that of non-disabled people, whether within their family or during their institutional care (Zászkaliczky, 1999). The fulfilment of the eight principles of normalisation is the basis of the integration, inclusion, and self-determination of people with disabilities. The integration means adaptation in which the emphasis is on the adaptation of the person with disabilities, whereas the principle of inclusion requires the other party's activity in the social inclusion of the person with disabilities, that is environmental factors must be changed e.g. by accessibility, by shaping the inclusive approach. The integration efforts have become generally accepted in the field of education in Hungary. In the context of disability, integration means that the housing and lifestyle of people with disabilities must be embedded in the society's life, i.e. for instance they have to receive social services in the same community as non-disabled people. Integration promotes the social participation of people with disabilities. Inclusion is a higher level of integration, it is rather an approach, in which the image of an inclusive community appears, where people with disabilities and the other members of the society are together active (work, study). The principle of self-determination is the freedom of decision-making and choice, i.e. similarly to others, people with disabilities can shape their lives according to their own ideas and plans. Supported decision-making is connected to this principle, according to which people with disabilities can determine the persons who support them in their decision-making. Living a self-determined life cannot be achieved without implementing the principles of normalisation, integration, and inclusion. The consumer principle should also be considered, which says that people with disabilities should be regarded as consumers, therefore the supply and quality of services have to be adapted to their needs (Andor, 2009).

The implementation of the above mentioned principles is highly important regarding the social participation of persons with disabilities. Social participation, already as part of the human rights model, means that persons with disabilities can exercise their human and civil rights in the same way as anyone else in the given society (Könczei & Hernádi, 2011).

Social policy has an important role, from the aspect of social participation, in compensating for the difficulties originating from health damage of people with disabilities. Social policy instruments include allowances, support in cash and in kind, as well as services. In the spirit of normalisation, allowances and subsidies supplement and compensate for additional costs arising from disability, while services facilitate the individual's daily life in his or her own living environment, on the other hand in an institutional framework they provide the individual with housing, meals or meet his or her other needs.

It is apparent that the previous studies revealed factors which determine the living conditions of families raising a child with disabilities and they did not examine the social policy possibilities which are available to support the members of the affected group. The present study examines the changes in the living situation of families caring for a child with disabilities in the light of the past thirty years from the perspective of social policy. The method of this study is a case study. Its aim is to explore what changes the social policy instruments (institutions providing long-term residential care or primary care, cash benefits) have undergone following the change of regime, whether these changes respond to problems which affect families or comply with principles of disability policy (social participation, normalisation. integration, self-determination). The present case study focuses on the examination of supports affecting children with disabilities under 18 years of age and their families. The 18-year-old age limit is relevant in the aspect of the investigation as the determination of the scope of entitlement of the social care system is linked to this age, and in Hungary those under the age of 18 are considered minors. In our study, we do not draw a distinction among children with disabilities based on the type of disability. In our analysis, we focus on cash benefits and social social services provided for children with disabilities and their families, due to the limitations of the length of the study, we do not examine the benefits in kind and reductions.

The research question at the centre of our investigation is whether, following the change of regime, there has been a change of attitudes in the areas of social policy which could promote the improvement of the quality of life of children with disabilities and their families. Do the benefits and services of the social care system support the disabled children's integration, normalisation, self-determination, as well as their upbringing in a family environment?

In the first part of the study, we present the research antecedents which explore the living situation of families raising a child with disabilities in Hungary. Following that, we review the fundamental principles of social policy and the principles of disability social policy, which must prevail in the field of social policy. Using secondary research and document analysis, through the history of the development of social policy, we explore the institutionalisation of services provided for children with disabilities and their families, the current social policy instruments and the proportion of minor claimants, pointing out the changes that have occurred in the past decades. Finally, we summarise the results of our analysis and draw conclusions from them.

Method

The method of the study is case study, which according to Yin (2018) is a qualitative method that is suitable for a deeper, longitudinal investigation of a topic and for understanding a phenomenon. The case study was carried out by using secondary research and document analysis.

In the course of the investigation, we conducted search in the MATARKA (Hungarian Periodicals Table of Contents Database) database, as well as in the database called Digital Archives of Socialist Profession (Szociális Szakma Digitális Archívuma) where a collection of articles, studies, volumes written on the topic of disability between 1990 and 2008 is available under the link titled Care for people with disabilities. From the collection of studies, we reviewed scientific publications which met the above mentioned criteria. Using the Google search engine we explored further publications and study volumes. With a simple search in the database, entering the term disabled, we found 190 results. While examining the results, we gathered scientific publications on the social care, caretaking, social policy support provided for people with disabilities, keeping the aspect related to age and living conditions of families in view. Having narrowed down the results, we found four publications on the living conditions of children with disabilities and their families, and twelve specialised literature which helped to understand the historical background and changes undergone in the institutional system. The sources collected this way were subjected to analysis, their content covers the period before and after the 1990s. Legislation on the social care system also provided a point of reference to trace the changes. The main legislations are Act III of 1993 on Social Security and Social Services (Act III of 1993); Act XXVI of 1998 on the Rights and Equal Opportunities of Persons with Disabilities (Act XXVI of 1998); Act LXXXIV of 1998 on Family Support (Act LXXXIV of 1998).

After exploring the historical background, we examined the available official statistical results, in order to compare the results of secondary research with the results of the data collection of the CSO and to look for connection and explanation for the underlying reasons (Hunkár, 2013; Smith, 2008; Onwuegbuzie, 2012). In Hungary the CSO carries out quantitative data collection concerning the disabled population and social care system. For this reason, our analysis is based on the data source collected by the CSO, on the one hand we use data collection of the census in 1990, 2001 and 2011 and on the other hand, the data of the Social Statistical Yearbook 2012-2020. In addition to these, there is no statistical data on children with disabilities. In Hungary the statistical data collection on people with disabilities began only in the framework of the census in 1990, which was followed by data collection every 10 years. In 2021 due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the census was postponed to the year 2022, therefore the latest data source currently available is the 2011 census. In addition, the central statistical office annually collects data from social institutions, which the office publishes on its website or in the Social Statistical Yearbooks. The electronic databases of the CSO are relevant, the data is collected using the same methods, thus they are suitable for conducting comparative analysis.

The main topics of the case study are: the social care system supporting children with disabilities and their families, i.e. residential care, primary care and cash benefits. Subtopics: within primary care: day care institutions, support service, family support, infant nursery; within cash benefits: child care allowance, higher family allowance, home nursing allowance for children.

Results and Discussion

After the Second World War in Hungary, similarly to other central-European countries, the communist ideology became prevailing, which was centred around the ideology of a paternalistic state. The authorities wished to resolve the situation of people with disabilities in the spirit of this ideology. From 1945 onwards, it was the state's task to provide social care for persons with disabilities (Csizmadia, 1977).

Institutions Providing Residential Care

The first residential institutions were typically in converted castles, mansions or barracks (Bencze & Pordán, 1999). So-called Residential Health Care Homes for Children were set up for children with disabilities. In this type of institution, care was provided for children with intellectual and multiple disabilities. The first Residential Health Care Home for Children which was not in a converted castle or mansion was built in 1963. In this modern institution, it was possible to segregate and look after the residents according to their gender, severity of their disability and diagnosis. In this period we cannot talk about the development or schooling of children with severe intellectual disabilities, they were said to be untrainable, therefore they were deprived of all kinds of educational services (Lányiné Engelmayer, 1996).

Act III of 1993 on Social Administration and Social Services established the institutional system which had been formed by the change of regime (Act III of 1993). The purpose of the law was to systematise and guarantee the forms and conditions of entitlement of social benefits and services which were provided by the state. The law established two types of social institutions for the housing of persons with disabilities: one type which provided nursing care and the other one which provided rehabilitation care (Bencze & Pordán, 1999). In the former one, people with severe intellectual and multiple disabilities were taken care of, while the latter one was for people with less severe disabilities who could be reintegrated in the society after a five-year rehabilitation. These institutions were named Nursing Home for People with Disabilities, whereas for minors the name of the institution remained Residential Health Care Home for Children. In her research, Mrs. Lányi tried to reveal the number of children with disabilities raised in Residential Health Care Homes for Children. She found that until 1990 the National Methodological Institute for Residential Nurseries collected data on children living in residential institutions, but the systematisation for handling and processing the reported data was not elaborate, therefore it is not suitable for determining the number of children taken care of. However, we can say with certainty that there were twenty-seven institutions for minors nationwide - one in each county and four in and around the capital city were available. Some of them also cared for adults with disabilities, especially since the person cared for as a child was provided

with accommodation after coming to age.

Following the change of regime, the principles of disability, normalisation and integration, which had already become generally accepted in Western Europe, gained ground in Hungary as well (Lovászy, 2009). New ideological trends stimulated the need to create modern forms of care. The independent living movement, which originated from the USA and later gained ground in Europe too, inspired the development of new, family-based forms of housing which supported an independent way of life and self-determination (Bencze & Pordán, 1999). The deinstitutionalisation program envisaged the normalisation of the living conditions of people with disabilities by ensuring their housing, instead of large-scale residential social institutions, in small-scale residential care facilities - in the so-called residential homes - where there were fewer residents (Allard, 1996; Ericsson, 1996). The number of people living in residential homes could be a maximum of twelve, regardless of their age, gender and the severity of their disability (Zászkaliczky, 1998).

Hungary must implement the community-based lifestyle and living of persons with disabilities between 2011 and 2041, in a 30-year period. Its implementation allows people living in residential institutions to live a fulfilling and dignified life, it eliminates their institutional isolation, hospitalisation and stigmatisation. However, this form of care only provides residential care for adults with disabilities, for minors there are only large-scale residential institutions available, so the normalisation and social participation of children with disabilities in institutional care is severely limited.

Data on the institutional placement of minor children with disabilities have been available since 2012 onwards in the statistical data collection of the Central Statistical Office. Based on this, it can be stated that the number and proportion of children with disabilities raised in large-scale residential homes show a slow but steady decrease (CSO, 2013, 2014b, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018a, 2019, 2020). While the proportion of children with disabilities raised in residential institutions was around 6% in 2010, it was only 4.8% in 2019.

Table 1. Total number of persons with disabilities receiving social residential care and the number and proportion of children with disabilities in residential social care between 2012 and 2019 (persons, %) Source: CSO, 2013, 2014b, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018a, 2019, 2020, compiled by the author.

	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Total number of persons in care	15 921	15 810	15 581	15 510	14 999	14 743	14 464	14 243
Number and proportion of 0-17 year olds	953 5.9%	880 5.6%	849 5.4%	826 5.3%	829 5.5%	798 5.4%	774 5.3%	691 4.8%

From the declining numbers, we can conclude that families are making less and less use of the residential form as a social service, they try to take care of their children with disabilities in their own homes. This suggests that families of children with disabilities try to rely on their own resources, and locally available primary social care services play a greater role in their lives.

Primary Care Institutions

In Hungary primary care services are provided to support persons living in their own home but seeking help for their daily lives. A further aim is to help service users to be able to maintain their independent life in their own homes, relying on and exploiting the client's existing resources (nuclear and distant family relationships, breadwinning ability, self-sufficiency). Social institutions providing primary care can effectively contribute to discharge residential care facilities, and to enable the person to live as long as possible in his/her own environment among people supporting him/her. At present, services to assist people with disabilities include day care institutions, support services, family support and infant nursery care. Prior to the change of regime, only day care services and the infant nursery services were available.

Institutions Providing Day Care

In the period following World War II, there were no day care services available for children, until

the 1980s. The first day care facility for children with disabilities opened its doors in Debrecen in 1980, relatively late. Later, additional facilities were established in bigger towns, mainly in county towns, but actual care needs could not be fulfilled, the service was not available for people living in the countryside, so they continued to rely on the residential institutions. In this period, similarly to residential homes, nurses took care of the clients and they also fulfilled educational tasks, although they did not have any qualifications.

Day care services provided supervision, meals, and if necessary, care for children with disability daily in an eight-to-nine-hour interval. It enabled children with disabilities during the day to keep busy, be in company, expand their social relationships and develop their skills. It enabled mothers to get a job and it discharged the family for a few hours.

From the 1990s onwards, although several day care institutions were founded e.g. by Churches, the service was still not countrywide - while in larger towns there were several day care homes, smaller settlements had none. After 1993 social legislation defined the welfare obligations of the state and the settlements. Social tasks of the settlements are differentiated by the number of inhabitants, currently it is obligatory to provide day care in settlements with more than ten thousand inhabitants. The goal is to enable persons with disability, in accordance with the principle of subsidiarity, to have access to services in the close vicinity of their home and so they are not forced to live in a residential home.

According to the legislation, day care can be used by persons with disabilities over the age of three, in case of minors compulsory education must be fulfilled as well. There is a growing demand for this service, the number of people with disabilities benefiting from day care services was 1.053 persons in 1993, 1.899 persons in 2000, 6.116 in 2010 and 7.755 persons in 2020 (Komáromi & Lendvai, 2016; CSO, 2021a) (Table 2). The reason behind this radical increase is, on the one hand, that the number of residential places has not risen, therefore people with disabilities choose day care, on the other hand, the need of families to care for their relatives with disabilities in a home environment has also increased. However, in case of minors, it can be stated that in spite of the increase in the number of users, the number and proportion of children in care is constantly decreasing, while 8.1% of children with disabilities use day care services in 2012 and only 4.6% in 2019 (Table2).

Table 2. Total number of persons with disabilities who use daycare and the number and proportion of children with disabilities receiving day care (persons, %) Source: CSO, 2013, 2014b, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018a, 2019, 2020, compiled by the author

	2012	**2013**	**2014**	**2015**	**2016**	**2017**	**2018**	**2019**
Total number of persons in care	7125	7353	7450	7468	7732	7722	7613	7742
Number and proportion of 0-17 year olds	580 8.1%	643 8.7%	529 7.1%	483 6.5%	462 6%	446 5.8%	411 5.4%	359 4.6%

The possible reason for this is that children with disabilities complete their compulsory education in the public education system and not in day care, where development education and the organisation of appropriate special education care appear as a separate additional task. It is likely that children with disabilities attend day care facilities only during school breaks, when, due to the work of parents, the day care supervision for children becomes necessary. On the other hand, it is presumed that minors aged between 16 and 18 who reach the compulsory education age use it in greater numbers. However, detailed statistics are not available to further investigate it.

Support Service

The primary goal of the support service is to facilitate the independent lifestyle of people with severe disabilities. The need to introduce a support service was stated by § 11 Act XXVI of 1998, i.e. this type of care was not available to those in need before the change of regime. It was introduced in the social legislation in 2003, as a form of basic care provided by the municipality (Act III of 1993 § 65 / C). The municipalities, however, mostly entrusted the implementation of this activity to civilian maintainers in the

framework of supply agreement. The demand for this service increased, but there were significant differences in the territorial coverage: the support service in Eastern Hungary was more available, whereas it was less available in Western-Hungary (Farkasné Farkas et al., 2016).

The main task of the support service is to facilitate the access of the affected users to basic services or public services, mainly by using personal transport. Public services include healthcare, social or educational institutions. Besides, the transport service helps the person with disabilities to access his/her workplace or any other services that ensures his/her social integration (e.g. leisure, cultural programs). In addition to transportation, the support service can provide care, counselling, information, personal assistance, home help, skill development, special education assistance, supervision and case management. The highest demand is for transportation, personal help and assistance, although the latter two service elements are less available among the support services.

Analysing the statistical results of the CSO, we can state that the number of the users of support services is declining. Although the support service met the needs of more than twelve thousand people in 2019, the number of those receiving care is decreasing. In 2012 nearly fifteen thousand people benefited from the service, by 2019 the number of users had decreased by more than two thousand (Table 3).

Table 3. Total number of persons with disabilities and the number and proportion of children with disabilities using support services between 2012 and 2019 (persons, %) Source: CSO, 2013, 2014b, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018a, 2019, 2020 compiled by the author

	2012	**2013**	**2014**	**2015**	**2016**	**2017**	**2018**	**2019**
Total number of persons in care	14 844	14 844	13 639	13 356	13 186	13 306	13 100	12 718
Number and proportion of 0-17 year olds	2904 19.5%	2749 18.5%	2601 19%	2437 18.2%	2309 17.5%	2256 17%	2220 17%	1967 15.5%

Children with disabilities under the age of 18 use the service less and less in direct proportion to the decrease in the number of users, but there is also a significant decrease in the proportions. In 2012, 19.5% of the users were minors, whereas in 2019, only 15.5% (CSO, 2013, 2014b, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018a, 2019, 2020). From this we can draw the conclusion that on the one hand, families are able to solve the transportation of their children from their own resources and they do not need institutional assistance, on the other hand, the children have the opportunity to use healthcare, education or other services in the close vicinity of their living environment and therefore they do not require support.

Family Support

The first family support centres were established in 1985 on experimental basis, primarily to address the consequences of deviations in the society that affected families and children (Gosztonyi, 1993). In this period family support mainly involved preventive and anti-crises tasks. Since the 1990s it has been supporting families and children through complex activities and with the extensive toolbox and methodology of social work. At present, the institutional system of the Family and Child Welfare Services plays an important role in social care, it has nationwide coverage, i.e. its services are available in every settlement (Rákó, 2017). In addition to services provided to families and children, they offer professional help to the members of other social groups, such as persons with disabilities or families taking care of them. In the framework of various social work, family support provides social, life and mental health counselling, information on benefits in cash and kind, the organisation of access to services, dysfunctional family management, skill development, conflict and crisis management.

The tasks of family support include the case management of persons with disabilities using supported living in order to facilitate their new lifestyle and integration in a supporting way. In addition to these, the Information and Coordination Points, which were introduced in 2022, provide additional assistance to the members of the social group concerned. Disability counsellors who work at the Information and Coordination Points provide information and advice not only to people with disabilities and their families, but also to professionals who work in family support, they also ensure the accessibility

of people with disabilities to services. It is not their task to take over the responsibilities of the family support staff, not even in the case of people with disabilities and their families who care for them, their assistance is limited to solving special problems arising from disability. The service is available in twenty-two places in Hungary, in the capital city and in bigger towns countrywide and it is intended to improve the quality of life, autonomy and independent living of people with disabilities.

Infant Nurseries

Infant nurseries provide day care and education for children aged between 20 weeks and 3 years. Infant nursery care for toddlers has existed in the Hungarian care system since 1852, but until 1945 it operated only in some bigger towns. Following World War II, the establishment of infant nurseries became a state duty, as due to the efforts to promote women's equality, children of working mothers needed supervision. In 1955 more than seventeen thousand children were in infant nursery care. From the 1970s onwards as the number of infant nurseries started to increase, more and more attention was paid to the qualification of infant nursery school teachers and the increase of the care quality (Vokony, 2002). The activity of infant nursery workers got professionalised and in addition to the caretaking duties, professional expectations relating to the education of children became more emphasised. However, from the 1980s onwards, the need for infant nursery care started to decrease, partly due to the declining number of children and partly because of the widening range of cash benefits given to families raising children as this allowed mothers to stay at home with their children until the age of three. In 1980 the number of children attending an infant nursery was around seventy thousand, but in 1990 it hardly reached forty thousand (CSO, 2012).

Following the change of regime, it became part of the social care system in 1997, as an institution which helps families and provides day care for children (Vokony, 2002). The function of infant nurseries is to provide professional caretaking for children, supplement the upbringing tasks of families, educate and develop children at their early stage of life. Infant nurseries have always cared for children with disabilities, mainly in special groups (CSO, 2012). Integration efforts which appeared in public education had an impact on infant nursery care. Since 2008 statistical data on the number of children with disabilities enrolled in nurseries have been collected, based on which it can be stated that the number and proportion of children with disabilities who are educated in an integrated framework is constantly on the rise (CSO, 2012, 2020). While 289 children with disabilities were enrolled in infant nurseries in 2010, 575 children with disabilities were enrolled in 2019 (Table 4) (CSO, 2013, 2019, 2020). It is likely that these children will continue their kindergarten education in an integrated way, following their infant nursery care.

Table 4. Number and proportion of children with disabilities enrolled in infant nurseries between 2010 and 2019 (persons, %) Source: CSO, 2013, 2019, 2020, compiled by the author

	2010	**2011**	**2012**	**2013**	**2014**	**2015**	**2016**	**2017**	**2018**	**2019**
Number and proportion of children with disabilities	289 0.8%	252 0.6%	271 0.7%	394 1.0%	457 1.2%	468 1.2%	542 1.4%	528 1.4%	583 1.5%	575 1.5%
Total number	35 782	36 685	37 163	36 819	37 269	37 906	38 123	37 977	38 223	38 611

For children with disabilities personalised developmental plans are needed and special education tailored to their abilities must be provided for them, in a group their number must be multiplied by two. As of 2010, the government has been devoting significant resources to increase the number of nursery places in order to further women's return to work before the age of three of their children. By 2020 there had been more than fifty thousand places available (CSO, 2012). In order to raise the standard of their professional work and due to the complexity of their activity, nursery teachers are trained in higher education.

Types of Family Benefits

Prior to the 1990s, families taking care of their child with disabilities were not entitled to special cash benefits which could have compensated the extra costs of caring for their child. Two most common types of family benefits are the childcare allowance and the family allowance.

Childcare Allowance

The childcare allowance, formerly known as childcare benefit, was introduced in 1927. The childcare allowance provided a financial resource for mothers for the period when they couldn't engage in gainful employment in order to raise their children. The change in 1967 brought a breakthrough, as the duration of the childcare allowance was extended until the child reached two and a half years of age (Göndör, 2012). Mothers who had been employed at least for twelve months were entitled, so the allowance was linked to an insured status. It was also extended to mothers raising a disabled child, but the duration and the amount of the childcare allowance did not differ from other families'. From 1969 onwards, the allowance was paid until the child reached 3 years of age and mothers who pursued a gainful activity of no more than 6 hours a day could also apply for it. As of 1982, families raising a seriously disabled or chronically ill child were entitled to the allowance up to the child's 6 years of age and its amount doubled. In addition to the cash benefit, the mother was allowed to work up to four hours a day (Göndör, 2012).

From 1998, the parent can benefit from the allowance to look after a child living in his/her own household until the age of three, in case of a disabled or chronically ill child until the age of ten. In addition to receiving the allowance, the parent may also engage in a paid employment after the child has reached six months of age, but the parent is entitled to the allowance even if he/she does not pursue a gainful activity (Göndör, 2012).

Higher Family Allowance

The family allowance as a cash benefit appeared in Hungary in 1912 (Kristó, 2015). The family allowance provides support to families with children from the birth of the child in order to reduce the expenses of raising a child and promote the social security of families.

As of 1990, the family allowance became a universal benefit, i.e. those raising a child could apply for it based on their civil rights, regardless of their wealth and income. Thus, no prior employment based insured status was needed. From 1998 onwards, parents raising a chronically ill or disabled child are entitled to a higher amount of family allowance until the child has reached 18 years of age, adults with severe disabilities can receive it until the end of their life. This type of differentiation of the family allowance supports the fact that disability means a significant additional burden to families and to the person concerned, which should be compensated in accordance with the principle of normalisation. The higher amount of family allowance is almost the double of the amount of family allowance given after one child (Act LXXXIV of 1998 § 10 (1) (g) (h)). The higher amount of family allowance entitles the person concerned to a travel discount as well. According to the statistics of the CSO for the period between 2005 and 2019, the number of minors receiving higher family allowance is around 80,000 persons per month, but this also includes chronically ill children (e.g. children with diabetes, asthma), therefore it is not possible to say exactly how many families raising a child with disabilities are entitled to it (CSO, 2020).

Nursing Fee (Home nursing allowance for children)

The nursing fee is a form of cash benefit which is paid to a person who provides care for his/her relative with severe disabilities living in his/her home and therefore he/she cannot pursue a gainful activity. Since 1990, support provided by local governments has been available. Pursuant to Act III of 1993 § 40-41, a close relative is eligible to the nursing fee if he/she provides care for a person with severe disabilities (regardless his/her age) who is in need of permanent and long-term care or for a permanently ill child under the age of 18. It entitles the claimant to a pension.

As of 1st January 2019 significant changes have been made, the state introduced the home nursing allowance for children for parents looking after their children reliant on care in their home (Act III of 1993

§ 38-39). This income replacement benefit can be claimed by the parents until the age of eighteen of their child and pension contribution is deducted from it. In addition to this allowance, the parent is allowed to work four hours a day. The amount of the benefit has considerably increased and equals to the current amount of the minimum wage. Due to the January introduction of the home nursing allowance for children, there are currently limited statistical data available on the number of users to make comparisons. Based on the date from 31 December, 2019, 6605 parents raising a severely disabled child under the age of 18 received this benefit that year.

Table 5. Social services and benefits in Hungary for children with disabilities and their families. Source: compiled by the author

Social Services		**Cash Benefits**
Long-term residential care	*Primary care*	Higher family allowance
Nursing Home for People with Disabilities	Infant nursery	
	Family support: Information and Coordination Points (providing advice on disability)	Home nursing allowance for children
	Day care	Child care allowance
	Support service	

As a summary of the above, Table 5 provides an overview of the services and cash benefits which are provided by the current social care system for families to raise their child with disabilities.

Conclusion

The study aims at exploring the changes which the Hungarian social care system has undergone compared to the period prior to the change of regime and whether these changes meet the aspirations of the current disability policy: the principles of integration, normalisation, self-determination and social participation. The results of the research are presented in the form of a case study, which was carried out by performing, on the one hand, document analysis with a qualitative method, on the other hand, statistical result analysis in the framework of secondary research.

In the first part of the study, we presented the research results revealing the living situation of children with disabilities and the families raising them. The research results have suggested that they are in disadvantaged situations for multiple reasons. Firstly, they struggle with a lack of income, as it is only the fathers who work in families raising a disabled child, and they have extra expenses due to the disability of the child. Furthermore, they have a particular housing situation, as most of them live in small provincial towns or villages, from which educational, healthcare and other services are only reachable using transportation. In order to compensate for their disadvantages, the support and services provided by social policy are indispensable for them, as they promote the normalisation, integration, self-determination and social participation of the affected social group.

In the second part of the study, we explored the cash benefits and services of the Hungarian social care system which intend to support children with disabilities and their families, as well as the history of the development of these tools. In order to carry out this case study, we conducted a secondary research method and document analysis, and analysed statistical results. Based on the results of the research, it can be stated that in Hungary the system of social policy services provided for children with disabilities has undergone significant changes compared to the period before the 1990s. Based on this, two well-separable periods can be identified. On the one hand, the period before the change of regime, and on the other hand, the period after the change of regime. In the period before the change of regime, only residential care provided help for families raising a child with disabilities, therefore those concerned relied on their own support system and scarce resources. That is why, the life of children with disabilities and their families probably narrowed down, they had a limited network of contacts and their everyday life was featured by isolation and impoverishment. The results of our analysis have pointed out that following the change of regime, such primary care and cash benefits appeared that helped those concerned in their home environment and supplemented their income. It can support the normalisation, integration, self-

determination and social participation of the affected social group. It can also be stated that as of the 2010s the number of services and the amount of income replacement benefits have increased, and this may result in improvement of the living condition of children with disabilities and their families and the child's upbringing in a family.

Based on these, we can state that the period before and after the change of regime interpret the social situation of people with disabilities differently, and this different approach considers different solutions to be adequate, therefore other sets of social policy instruments are created. The period following the change of regime, probably due to the effects of disability policy coming from the west, can be interpreted as a process that adds more and more elements to the social system in order to provide support for families caring for their child with disabilities. Social policy measures were clearly aimed at improving the living conditions and life situation of families raising a child with disabilities. Income supplement and replacement subsidies support the costs related to the care of a disabled child to a greater extent. The longer duration of the child care allowance and the increase in the family allowance and in the home nursing allowance for children, introduced in 2019, embody the principle of normalisation, according to which it is necessary to compensate for the disadvantages and costs related to disability. The measures which have been introduced in the area of cash benefits since 2010 may not only contribute to the normalisation, but also to the equal opportunities, integration and social participation of the affected social group because parents are not forced to place their children in residential social care due to lack of income. It also supports the fact that the number of disabled children raised in residential care is decreasing. This promotes the upbringing and socialisation of the child with disabilities in the family or local communities and enables him/her to have active contact with the members of the society, all of which can contribute to the elimination of discrimination, stigmatisation and prejudices. This can certainly improve the society's inclusive approach and sensitivity towards the population with disabilities.

It can be stated in case of all primary care that the number of children with disabilities who make use of these services is decreasing. The only exception to this is the infant nursery service, where a slow, but steady increase can be detected. It is presumable that families provide for their child's needs using their own resources, and probably the public education system (kindergarten, school) offers more possibilities for the education and development of children with disabilities in the close vicinity of the family's place of residence, which eliminates the need for social primary care services (e.g. transportation, day care services). In support of this, it would be advisable, as further research, to investigate the number and proportion of children with disabilities studying in Hungarian public education.

It is also evident that in case of minors with disabilities the social policy impacts of cash benefits prevail more than those of social services. Presumably, the services of primary social care play a more significant role in the lives of adults with disabilities. The results show correlation with the efforts of the public education system to ensure integration and full territorial coverage, i.e. children with disabilities could access special education services locally within an integrated framework.

In summary, based on the results of the research, it can be stated that social policy services and benefits have changed significantly since the 1990s. New ideological trends coming from the western countries have resulted in a new approach concerning disability, in which the image of an able disabled person with abilities is shown. The implementation of the principles of integration, inclusion, autonomy and normalisation has resulted in a slow, but steady shaping of attitudes towards people with disabilities. The currently prevailing individualistic, person-centred perspective has an impact on the social policy approach, which results in the introduction of new services and benefits supporting children with disabilities and their families.

The results of the study highlight the fact that instead of a contingently forming disability policy, a conceptually thought-out strategy which is created with the involvement of various stakeholders (parents, professionals, politicians specialised in this field) would be needed so that people with disabilities could get the adequate support for their independent life from early childhood till the end of their lives. For this, it would be necessary to carry out research from a social policy aspect in order to find out whether,

according to those concerned, the applied social policy tools effectively and efficiently support their living conditions. In the framework of the research, it would also be important to examine what kind of services would be needed in addition to the present social policy tools and whether these service elements could be integrated into the operation of the current institutional system or whether further institutions would be necessary. It is recommended to involve service providers in the investigation who could evaluate with expertise both the families' lack of needs and the demands for the expansion of services.

Declarations

Author's Declarations

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Research Article

Secondary analysis of qualitative data: Hungarian minority kindergarten pedagogues' perspectives of the new curriculum framework in Serbia

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Abstract: Secondary analysis is employed to address new research questions by analysing previously collected data. This paper reports on the secondary analysis of qualitative data where the original research investigated the preschool education reform in Serbia from the perspective of Hungarian ethnic minority kindergarten pedagogues. The choice to apply a secondary analysis fulfilled the aims of (i) investigating traces of socialism in Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) provision in Vojvodina, a northern region of Serbia; and (ii) exploring the complexity of Christmas celebrations in nurseries. In order to address the aims, a secondary analysis of 12 semi-structured transcripts was carried out. This analysis revealed important additional findings for the original study. In light of the education reforms in Serbia we found that, first, there are strong connections between the 'socialist past' ECEC practices and what these practices may look like in the future; and, second, the traditional celebration of religious holidays outside of church organizations, such as Christmas, may change in the nurseries. This paper also offers insight regarding the importance of secondary analysis which provides an opportunity to making use of existing resources.

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Socialism; Christmas; Hungarian minority; Kindergarten practices

Introduction

There is a well-established tradition of carrying out secondary analysis of quantitative research data in the natural sciences, and a more recent interest in the secondary analysis of quantitative approaches to research within social science. However, this has not been as prevalent within qualitative research, though has been recommended as a valuable strategy (Long-Sutehall et al., 2011). According to Hinds et al. (1997), secondary analysis of qualitative data is the use of existing data to find answers to research questions that differ from the questions asked in the original research. We applied secondary analysis to existing data to develop a new conceptual focus to the original research question which was 'How was the new Curriculum Framework perceived by the largest ethnic minority group, Hungarian kindergarten pedagogues, in northern Serbia?' Detailed and rich data allowed us to pursue interests distinctive from those of the original analysis.

The first part of the paper discusses the Serbian educational milieu in which the Hungarian minority group operates. This gives the background of the main study and for the secondary analysis of qualitative data. The second part of the paper reports on the methodological choice of applying a secondary analysis that fulfilled the new research aims of (i) investigating traces of socialism in Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) provision in Serbia; and (ii) exploring the complexity of Christmas celebration in the nurseries. The secondary data analysis process as well as the new findings and possible implications for future practice are discussed in the latter part of the paper.

Hungarian Ethnic Minorities

The largest ethnic minority group in the region of Vojvodina (northern part of Serbia), are the Hungarians;

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therefore, we examined the national reform in ECEC in Serbia from the perspectives of the Hungarian kindergarten pedagogues. To understand the concept of early childhood practices in Serbia where Hungarian minorities are living and working, it is important to recognise the history of this region which shaped the contemporary early years' provision and professional practices. After the breakup of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, Hungary was reduced in size, in that they lost the region of Vojvodina. Hungary regained some of its territories during the WWII, but inevitably lost them again after the war (including Vojvodina) (Chiva, 2006). This event contributed to the formation of the 'involuntary' ethnic minority groups in Vojvodina, making them one of the largest minority groups in Central and Eastern Europe (Mikuska, 2021).

According to the latest Census of Population (2011) an estimated 2.7 million Hungarians live outside of the Hungarian state, often called the motherland. In order to understand the function of the ECEC for Hungarians in Serbia, major political decisions and events need highlighting. Mikuska and Raffai (2018) identified these major political and historical key events (see Table 1). The significance of these periods for ECEC in Vojvodina was the opportunity for children to attend education using their mother tongue (Raffai et al., 2018) which is fundamental for future educational success (Lendák-Kabók, 2020). The establishment of the first Hungarian language nursery in Vojvodina can be accredited to Countess Teréz Brunszvik who opened the first kindergarten in 1828 named 'Angyalkert' (Garden of Angels) in Budapest, Hungary (Nagy Varga et al., 2015). The educational approach mirrored the principles set by the Englishman, Samuel Wilderspin, whose work 'On the Importance of Educating the Infant Poor' became increasingly popular amongst Hungarian scholars (Pukánszky & Németh, 1997). In 1836, the Hungarian Society for the Promotion of Infant Schools was founded, resulting in an increase in the number of infant schools in the country. This movement influenced the opening of the first kindergarten in Vojvodina in 1843, by Makk György from Szabadka, Vojvodina (Mikuska & Raffai, 2018). Although this was a private setting, its funding was substantially supported by the town. The ECEC field was first regulated in 1891 when the Law on Upbringing of Young Children was introduced, followed in 1899 by the development of the first curriculum, entitled Programme of Work in Kindergartens (Gavrilović, 2006).

Table 1. Key Historical events and the use of Hungarian language

The establishment of the nursery network in Vojvodina which was part of the Kingdom of Hungary and the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy; this is the time when the first nursery was opened in 1843 in Szabadka, Vojvodina.	The official language was Hungarian (1843 – 1918).
Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes (1919-1929) and the State of Yugoslavia (1929 – 1941).	The first ECEC curriculum. The official language was Serbo-Croatian-Slovenian.
Vojvodina as part of the Kingdom of Hungary during World War II (1941– 1944).	The official language was Hungarian.
Vojvodina as part of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (SFRY) (1945–1991).	The official language was Serbo-Croatian.
Vojvodina during the Milošević era and the formation of new states (1989–2000).	The official language was Serbian. Hungarian as regional language is in official use by the provincial administration and education.
Vojvodina after the Milošević era (2000 – today).	The official language is Serbian; Hungarian as regional language is in official use by the provincial administration and education.

The ECEC field continued to develop under the governance of the state which was most obviously seen during the period of industrialisation and increased participation of women in the workforce that followed the Second World War (Bankovic, 2014). Under the subsequent socialist regime, recognising the need to encourage women to stay in the paid workforce, the government invested heavily in early childhood education. In 2004, the government of the Republic of Serbia introduced the National Action Plan for Children (Savez za Prava Deteta, 2004) which defined the general childhood policy direction of the country. This document aimed to accomplish some of the country's international responsibilities arising from its 1990 endorsement of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (United Nations, 1989), Education for All (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization [UNESCO], 1990), the United Nations' Millennium Development Goals (United Nations, 2000) and A World Fit for Children (United

Nations International Children's Emergency Fund [UNICEF], 2002) (Bankovic, 2014). In 2007, a new government came into office in Serbia which initiated large-scale reorganisations of education. Spasenović et al. (2007) argued that the education system in Yugoslavia undertook major reforms, especially after the breakdown of the country into several independent states when they transitioned away from socialism as a consequence. Spasenović et al. (2007) further argued that these reforms were based on the modernization and reorganization of the school, supporting the country's international integration. ECEC was seen as part of the unified educational system (Gavrilović, 2006) which was regulated under the Law on the Fundamentals of the Education System (Zakon o osnovama sistema obrazovanja i vaspitanja, 2009) and more specifically under the Law on Preschool Education and Upbringing (Zakon o predškolskom vaspitanju i obrazovanju, 2010). These laws regulated the establishment and activities of ECEC institutions including their aims and principles, record-keeping procedures, the organisation of kindergarten pedagogues' work and role, financing, and language use in minority communities which meant that the use of the Hungarian language in early education was in place (Raffai et al., 2018).

There are three types of ECEC services in Serbia: nurseries for children from six months to three years; kindergarten for children from three to five years; and the preparatory preschool programme for children aged six (Mikuska & Raffai, 2018). Of these services, only the preparatory preschool programme is compulsory and it is free. It gives all children the opportunity to attend nursery from the age of five for a minimum of four hours a day for a minimum of six months (Kopas-Vukašinović, 2006). This rule reflects the official record of attendance specified by The National Council of the Hungarian National Minority (Magyar Nemzeti Tanács, [MNT], 2015), which claims that, in 2014/15, there were 71 Hungarian language groups in the nurseries with 1369 children attending full-day care, and 121 groups with 2041 children attending half-day care settings. The other two services are part-funded by the state (80%) with parents paying the remaining 20% of the cost. Besides the division between nurseries and kindergartens, children were further divided by their age, and language they speak (for example Hungarian or Serbian) (Mikuska and Raffai, 2018). This is also in line with the European Commission's/EACEA/Eurydice (2019) advice on the teaching of regional or minority languages in educational institutions.

Context of the Main Study and Literature Addressing Secondary Data Analysis

In 2018 a new, more inclusive, concept of preschool education was adopted in Serbia with plans to implement the change from September 2019 to 2022. The new 'Fundamentals of the Preschool Education Program' (Curriculum Framework), also symbolically named 'Years of Ascent', is a result of cooperation with kindergarten pedagogues, The Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development and the Institute for the Improvement of Education, UNICEF and the Institute of Pedagogy and Andragogy of the Faculty of Philosophy of Belgrade University (Breneselović & Krnjaja, 2021). The 'ascent' represents the quality and direction that is dependent on everyone who is involved with, and working in preschool education and care. The new Curriculum Framework focuses on children's holistic development and well-being by taking an integrated approach to learning, play, curiosity, creativity and other activities. The programme also focuses on children building meaningful relationships with their peers and adults and creating inspirational nursery places. The biggest change is the introduction of more flexible ways of working with children, which should replace the more structured, adult led, and assessment based daily practices. The new integrated approach to learning involves developing topics/projects with children. Children are encouraged to engage in the projects that are meaningful to them and where children are challenged to explore. The links between play and other activities are based on the children's freedom of choice, creativity, variability, initiative, inquisitiveness and openness (Breneselović & Krnjaja, 2021). Training courses were rolled out to encourage everyone who works with children to attend. These training courses were delivered by mentors, first in the Serbian language and, at a later stage, also in Hungarian. At the training courses the kindergarten pedagogues were encouraged to engage with the framework in such ways that it inspires and encourages 'reflexive' ways to work with children (Davis, 2006). As Breneselović and Krnjaja (2021, p. 3) explain:

> …the Curriculum Framework does not entail merely to read the document but to engage in constant, recurrent processes … [it requires] re-reading and re-thinking one's own beliefs and starting points and also to change the

practice. At the same time, this is a means of deepening the understanding of the Curriculum Framework and developing a real curriculum based on its conception.

There is a growing body of work exploring politics and education in (post)socialist societies, addressing reflexive and reflective practices (Millei et al., 2021), which highlights that the shift from being the object of the state and political culture to a more democratic way to work with children is a long process (Aydarova et al., 2016). In order to understand how the ethnic minority group sees the new Curriculum Framework it is also important to highlight the political situation and the concept of socialism in Yugoslavia. In former Yugoslavia, the concept of socialism was different to those countries which belonged to the so-called 'Eastern Bloc' (Bogic, 2021). The term 'Eastern Bloc' referred to the former Communist states of Central and Eastern Europe, including the countries of the Warsaw Pact, along with Yugoslavia. Yugoslavia (unlike countries such as East Germany, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Romania, and Hungary) was on the western side of the 'Iron Curtain', the line dividing the Soviet-dominated zone from the rest of Europe. Spasenović et al. (2007) explained that, although Yugoslavia stood outside of the Soviet Union sphere in terms of political influence, the Serbian education system was built on the example of the Soviet Union. Thus, the Soviet ECEC instruction to kindergarten educators of Uputstva vaspitaču dečijeg vrta (Instructions for kindergarten educator) was translated from Russian to Serbian in 1948, and it was in use across the country until 1966 when the government re-organised the pre-school institutions. A new ECEC curriculum was introduced called 'Osnove programa predškolskog vaspitanja 1996' (Early Years Curriculum for Preschool Children 1996) which was later altered to The General Foundations of the Preschool Programme (Opšte osnove predškolskog programa 2006). This curriculum had approaches referred to as 'A' and 'B', and it was up to the pre-primary pedagogue's discretion which one to use (Bankovic, 2014; Mikuska & Raffai, 2018).

Traces of Socialism

Elements of ECEC practices in Vojvodina reflect the practices that were in place in the Soviet Union. The promotion of the *Brotherhood and Unity* was a popular slogan of the league of Communists of Yugoslavia (Bogic, 2021). This slogan evolved into a guiding principle of Yugoslavia's post-war period of collectivism that promotes and prioritizes the good of society over the welfare of the individual (Millei et al., 2021). The principle of universal equality was expressed in the collectivisation of everything, including children. Equal rights for all children to access the same and free education was considered one of the most important achievements of socialism (Bankovic, 2014). The slogan of a socialist regime, *Brotherhood and Unity,* also meant permitting individuals the celebration and expression of their own culture, religion and language. After WWII the slogan was used as a basis for policy makers in the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, and it was part of the federal constitutions of 1963 and 1974. For the Hungarian minority population, this was of high importance as this policy ensured the use of the Hungarian language in education institutions including ECEC especially when, in 1977, a new Education Law was passed which encouraged the use of the mother tongue (Tóth, 1994; Wright et al., 2000). This law enforced not only teaching which used the language of ethnic minorities but also that the textbooks were available in these languages.

All ECEC establishments worked on the basis of a 'single approach' that clearly distinguished age groups, identifying the number and content of lessons necessary for each age group as well as norms for children's physical and psychological development such as what a child should know and be able to do at each age level (Kopas-Vukašinović, 2006). This included knowledge of the mother tongue (speaking skills), physical education, and knowledge of the environment, fine arts, music and fundamentals of mathematics. The formation of the current daily routine in early years' settings features the individual needs of each child that must be met in a way that fits into a clearly understandable routine for the entire group, so that the children know what to expect. Adult led and children centred approaches are interwoven and simultaneously exist alongside each other. The daily routine generally follows the same pattern in every setting of circle time, free play, breakfast, focused activities, lunch, free outdoor play, sleeping/resting, and tea (Tóth, 1994).

Celebration of Christmas Traditions

To achieve national unity in the former Yugoslavia, which was characterised, among other features, by religious diversity, in 1947 the Communist Party of Yugoslavia banned the celebration of religious holidays outside of the church organisation (Bogdanovic, 2018) and the state removed the traditional holidays of a religious nature (Easter, Christmas, All Saints' Day) from the list of public holidays (Rihtman-Augustine, 1990). Troch (2013, p. 233) argued that it was necessary to separate modern and secular national unity from religion, explicitly from 'secular national ideologies which relegate religion to a marginal aspect of national identity, although they rarely discard and remove religion completely'. As Troch (2013) identified, the tradition to celebrate Christmas, despite all the efforts to be banned, remained.

When the Communist Party took power in Yugoslavia after WWII, they introduced a secular Santa Claus based on Russia's Deda Mraz (Father Frost). As in the Soviet Union, but not in parts of the rest of Eastern Europe, Christmas in Yugoslavia was combined with the New Year, along with the usual Christmas festivities. This included the decoration of the Christmas tree, also called a New Year's Tree, waiting for Father Frost, and for Baby Jesus (Jezuska) who travelled the country on Christmas Eve, delivering presents to the children who had behaved well in the past year. Children are taught that it is Baby Jesus who brings the decorated tree and gifts for all on Christmas Eve, traditionally in the afternoon of Christmas Eve. While adults secretly set up the Christmas tree, children are banned from the room where the Christmas tree is erected. Rihtman-Augustin (1990) explained how gradually some of the symbols of Christmas were transferred to New Year's Day; thus, Christmas was merged into the New Year and lost most of its religious connotation. The official holiday was New Year's Day, a staunchly secular festivity (Rihtman-Augustin, 1990). Similar to other Western countries who celebrate Christmas and engage children in early years provisions (Papatheodorou & Gill, 1999), in Vojvodina, kindergartens, schools and other education institutions have all been involved in celebrating this modified version of Christmas traditions.

Methodological Approach: Secondary Analysis of Qualitative Data

The methodology underpinning the secondary analysis was driven by the quality and richness of the data collected for the main study. Long-Sutehall et al. (2011) suggested that, when doing a secondary analysis, an assessment must be made regarding the quality of the dataset available and whether the primary dataset has the potential to answer the questions of the secondary research. It is recommended that the research questions for the secondary analysis be sufficiently close to those of the primary research, as well as the data collection and analytic techniques in the primary dataset being similar to those that will be applied in the secondary analysis (Johnston, 2017; Vartanian, 2011). Whilst some authors have re-used a complete primary dataset for their secondary analysis, it is more usual that some form of 'sorting' of data takes place (Vartanian, 2011). Sorting may be applied for different reasons such as to focus on one type of data so that analysis can be selectively limited to specific themes or topics. This was the case for the secondary analysis reported in this paper. Despite having gained ethical permission for the main study from the relevant university ethics committee, it is advisable to revisit ethical considerations for secondary analysis (Long-Sutehall et al., 2011) such as whether permission had been gained from participants to reuse the data. Previously obtained consent from participants covered the possibility of reusing the interview data for publication purposes, as long as careful reference was made to the ethical guidelines of the British Education Research Association [BERA] (2018); therefore, no new application was required, and no further approach was needed to the original participants. All of the original provisos were still in place as we continued to treat traceable and personal data (including participants' names) confidentially.

For the main study, Hungarian kindergarten pedagogues were e-mailed by the researchers with the invitation to participate in the project. In total, thirty-five e-mails were sent out and twelve responses were received. Online interviews using Microsoft Teams were conducted by one researcher (one of the authors) who was not living in Serbia and who did not know the participants. All interviews were conducted in the

Hungarian language, recorded, transcribed and translated into English by the authors of this article. Each interview lasted between one and two hours. All participants had a higher education degree level qualification, they were all working in the region of Vojvodina, and came from nine different local authorities. They were all females and had substantial experience of working with children (see Table 2).

Table 2. Participants

Participants	Years of experience	Role	Programme they followed
P1	24	KP	old
P2	10	LDL	new
P3	25	KP	old
P4	30	LDL	new
P5	23	LDL	old
P6	40	KP	old
P7	19	KP	old
P8	31	KP	old
P9	40	KP	new
P10	18	KP	new
P11	13	KP	old
P12	40	KP	new

KP – Kindergarten Pedagogue
LDL - Local District ECEC Leader

Twelve transcribed texts from the recordings of the interviews were available from the main study, and each transcript was assessed for the quality of the data. As Johnston (2017) suggested, in secondary data analysis we begin with an investigation regarding what remains to be learned about the research aims. We also considered previously collected relevant and supporting literature on the topics of how the past socialist regime still influences the current practice as well as celebrations of Christmas traditions in the nurseries. The use of thematic analysis (Riessman, 2008) for the secondary analysis was based on the process adopted in the original research, and it was during this initial analytic interpretation that the ideas explored in this secondary analysis were first identified. The decision to revisit the transcripts was based on the desire to take the analysis further and expand a developing category. This meant revisiting the transcripts, and searching for paragraphs that addressed the aims of the secondary research as previously described. These sections were colour coded and notes were made on the transcripts (Riessman, 2008).

Findings of the secondary analysis

Secondary data analysis revealed that a more flexible way of working with children, that is the proposal to replace the mainly structured, adult led, daily routine, had been a concern for many participants. Although participants talked enthusiastically about the job they love to do, they explained that their main concern was how to shape and modify the practice of collaborating with children and their families especially when parents and carers had other responsibilities. Most participants had been in the ECEC sector for decades (see Table 2), and the ways in which the preschool education practices were run had not changed a great deal. The new Curriculum Framework was received with mixed feelings as participants in this project were still familiarising themselves with the change.

Use of Hungarian Language

The slogan of a socialist regime, that is *Brotherhood and Unity*, meant permitting individuals the celebration and expression of their own culture, religion and language. Therefore, it was not surprising that all participants in this study mentioned the use of the Hungarian language in the training programmes. Participants' main concerns were regarding the training they attended which was mainly available in the Serbian language. Some participants specifically spoke about their concerns, stating that:

> Language… yes language is a massive issue. There are some pedagogues who don't speak fluent Serbian and for them attending these further training courses is not beneficial. (P2)

> The further training which was in the Serbian language was about how to transit or shift from the old to a new programme; this is not necessarily an issue but when we need to express the practical element of the practice then the language nuances are really causing a concern as we may not be able to express ourselves precisely. (P4)

> I have attended two further education courses. Both of them were in the Serbian language which itself wasn't a big issue for me. But there were other pedagogues present who didn't understand everything and there was no translator available and they were very uncomfortable because it is not only that they didn't understand the speakers fully, but these speakers were contradicting each other, causing concern and posing more questions than offering answers. (P11)

These examples demonstrated the impact of the language segregation which was rooted in the 1974 constitution. The concern is not only about the language in which the presentation of the new Curriculum Framework occurred, but it was more about the future practices with preschool age children that are built upon the Hungarian culture, folk music, rhymes and the tradition of storytelling. While the Serbian and Hungarian cultures are neighbouring cultures, and both stem from a Christian civilization, they are culturally and linguistically different (Todosijević, 2008). Most Serbians follow the Serb Orthodox Church whereas most Hungarians follow the Roman Catholic Church, and the Serbian and Hungarian languages are not related. The following extract indicates how important it is for Hungarian minority kindergarten pedagogues to endorse the learning of the Hungarian language and Hungarian traditions:

> Personally, I really like the rhymes, folk tales and fairy tales as they are the basis of our communication. The trio of Hungarian folk art, folk music and folk tales is what we teach; generations grew up on these folk tales, on Benedek Elek [Hungarian great folk-tale teller]. Kindergartens act as a place to promote the language and culture, to give a good foundation for children's future and … and this is what I would like to continue to teach.

Sleeping Ritual

The new Curriculum Framework prompted participants to think more creatively about their roles and how to engage more with children and their families. While considerable attention was paid to changing the previously adult led activities, the non-individualised daily routine was generally overlooked. The daily routine represents a significant part of life for children in kindergarten. Most participants described that the daily routine followed the same pattern, starting with the circle time (registration and linguistic routine), followed by breakfast, indoor focused activity, lunch, sleep, outdoor free play and snack time. The following extract is just one of many similar stories that describe the 'sleeping ritual'. This particular participant worked across all age ranges from 6 months to children aged 7 in a rural nursery. She had 19 years of experience and holds a degree level qualification. When she was asked to talk about the daily routine, she described the sleeping ritual as follows:

> Participant 7: Every child needs a rest. Especially those small children, they need a good sleep as they are in the kindergarten from very early hours and they are very small.
>
> Interviewer: What about the 6 or 7year old children?
>
> Participant 7: What do you mean? They need a rest too.
>
> Interviewer: Would they actually sleep?
>
> Participant 7: Not everyone, but it was never an issue and they know the daily routine. Some of them are not sleeping but they are quietly resting which is also very important for their development especially after lunch. We do have our sleeping rituals, we sing lullabies, rocking some of them, or gently swaying the smaller children in our arms. Part of the ritual is to get them into their pyjamas, and by repeating this ritual on a daily basis they learn the routine and they do this willingly, they never complain. Now that you asked me specifically about the sleeping time, I was thinking whether we have had a child who wanted to go to play instead ... but I cannot think of a single case.

Santa Claus Called Father Frost

The new Curriculum Framework suggests the creation of a relationship between an adult and a child where there is a responsibility for the adult to empower the child and her/his capacities. Secondary data analysis exposed the concerns about how to involve children in continuing the celebration of the Christmas traditions in nurseries. For many participants the issue was how to engage the child if they were not

interested and how to ensure the continuing children's language development through festive nursery rhymes and stories. Participants raised their worries in relation to the change they would have to make in their practice under the new Curriculum Framework. Participant 1 for example stated:

> My understanding is that it is not necessary to celebrate Christmas in the kindergarten. Children can attend and celebrate the festive season outside of the nursery… Unless the child initiates it, these kinds of celebrations fall outside of our remit from now on. (P1)

Another participant was more concerned about the continuity of maintaining the tradition because it had been in place for decades. Participant 8 said that:

> Similarly to previous years, we organised Father Frost to come to our setting where children were able to pick up their presents. Children have learnt a short poem or a song and they were singing this to Father Frost. Although the presents were all the same and not kept as a secret we discuss home traditions too and this is what we aim to keep alive, the Hungarian traditions. My family keeps the tradition of Baby Jesus bringing secretly the tree and gifts. In our family, once the tree is set up, a small bell is played as a sign that Baby Jesus has brought the tree and gifts and then the children run to find their presents. Here in the kindergarten, all the gifts were organised by the local authority, and the bags are all the same. (P8)

Discussion

As a result of the secondary data analysis, this provided an opportunity to revisit the quality of the dataset available which had great potential to address the new research aims (Long-Sutehall et al., 2011). In the socialist regime, it can be argued that, by teaching the feel of the *collective* experience of the same events, this transforms the children's behaviour (Millei et al., 2021). The Christmas presents organised by the local authority demonstrate this very well by the promotion of a shared and similar experience for all, along with the common sleeping ritual which shows the collectiveness. While participants spoke in a gentle and caring way, focusing on children's well-being, expressing the worry about the 'fast life style' in general, they all stressed the importance of rest. The ritual of sleeping shows the notion of teaching the *collective*, and teaching children to be compliant to the kindergarten's pedagogue and through them to society. As Millei et al. (2021, p.44) argued, the political socialisation is passed on to children 'either through implicit or explicit socialisation and teaching'. At the same time, using traditional nursery rhymes (including lullabies and songs) and storytelling across a variety of early childhood education programmes encourages 'multiple domains of child development such as language and cognitive development, communication skills and emotional maturity' (Mullen, 2017, p.51). Therefore, the sleeping ritual has multiple benefits when it is practised effectively with children of different ages, yet it can be argued that, despite the benefits of this practice, it excludes the child and their views.

Songs, rhymes and storytelling play an important role in language development and can pave the way for young children to engage in the more cooperative learning of a second language, as argued by Bodden (2010). The selection of the songs, rhymes and takes and how they should be implemented in the learning process is one of the roles of the Hungarian kindergarten pedagogues (Wright et al., 2000). The use of musical tales in ECEC as a tool for teachers to learn how to communicate fluently the use of music (Mullen, 2017), literature, and drama in the same activity makes the perfect combination to help children learn and develop their native language, as it improves vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, and the communicative competence in general (Lendák-Kabók, 2020). For the child to feel safe and empowered, Breneselović and Krnjaja (2021) argue, the ECEC worker should build relationships based on active engagement, maintaining balance and respect for the child by following their interests. Not only can they help boost the linguistic development of a child, rhymes are memorable, and as such can help children retain certain pieces of information. When linked with physical actions, they encourage the development of motor skills (Mullen, 2017). Through celebrating Christmas traditions, children not only develop their culture, but also this enriches the mother tongue which is an important feature for future educational achievement (Lendák-Kabók, 2020; Wright et al., 2000). Therefore, it can be argued that the importance of language development, learning poetry and Christmas songs, and festive storytelling plays a key role in children's language development. Christmas traditions were celebrated in the pre-school education institutions for decades (Rihtman Augustin, 1990). The participants' extracts thereby demonstrate the

importance of celebrating and maintaining the continuity of Christmas traditions. All children received presents that were subsidised by the local authorities and, as Papatheodorou and Gill (1999) explained, the magical experience and the feelings of excitement and wonder to which children are exposed via the celebration of this particular festive tradition are highly rated by parents. Therefore, it could be argued that celebrating traditions has in the past and can have in the future positive effects on children and their holistic development.

Conclusion

Our aim for this article was to highlight how secondary analysis has potentially important implications for qualitative researchers especially when rich qualitative data were collected for the main project. Making existing qualitative datasets available for secondary analysis could be a way forward to gain skills in data collection, data analysis and synthesis, as well as grappling with the epistemological and ontological questions generated by the use of this methodology. The question of ethics has to be considered in terms of asking permission from participants as well as considering if there are enough data about the topic of interest. This paper aims to offer some clarification of the processes involved and to encourage researchers to consider this methodology. Furthermore, the new aims for the secondary analysis draw attention to some of the issue kindergarten pedagogues may face such as how to change the everyday practice of sleeping rituals. Therefore, nursery pedagogues have to be prepared to provide new solutions for often complex and dynamic work with children in their setting. It was evident that those who participated in the main study worked hard and reflected on their practice, seeking solutions and new opportunities to address new ways to work with children. This element manifested when we explored the connection between the 'past', such as the celebration of Christmas, with how it may look in the future.

It is important to reiterate that the data for the main study were collected in the middle of the transition from the old to new Curriculum Framework, and it was expected that some participants would experience confusion and concerns. Our plan is to conduct a second interview with each participant to see how, and if their views and experiences have changed. What we see so far is that such a significant transition should be a slower and more considered process with greater opportunities to access professional training that addresses localised culture, identity, language, and other ethnic characteristics with fully trained mentors.

Declarations

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The second parent: Ideologies of childhood in Russian pedagogy manuals

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Abstract: The collapse of the Soviet Union saw deep reforms in the educational system and, with the new market economy, in the presuppositions about training and employment that underpinned it. But this article argues that contemporary Russian teacher training materials nonetheless reproduce Soviet understandings about childhood, education, and the state. Comparing discourses about teaching in Russian, Soviet, and American resources for prospective teachers reveals that differences between Russian and American teaching practices stem not from economic differences, but different conceptions of the social purpose of education. Discourse analysis identified patterns in representations of children and teachers in widely-used Russian teacher training textbooks, mainstream American teacher training textbooks, and Soviet pedagogical writings. This analysis revealed that contemporary Russian textbooks, in contrast to their Soviet counterparts, represent the function of education as helping prepare a child to enter society qua capitalist workforce. But the materials differ from American textbooks in their depictions of the responsibilities of teachers, the role of the state, and the rights of children in primary schools. In these respects, Russian textbooks sound much like Soviet ones.

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Introduction

A Russian saying goes, "The teacher is the second parent" (*"uchitel' — vtoroi roditel'"*). This view blurs the lines between government onus and family sovereignty, and echoes Soviet calls for the state to play a central role in moulding emergent citizens. The collapse of the USSR (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) saw deep reforms in the educational system and, with the new market economy, in the presuppositions about training and employment that underpinned that system. But this article argues that contemporary Russian teacher training materials nonetheless reproduce Soviet understandings about childhood, education, and the state. While American teacher-training manuals discuss curriculum planning and how to conduct lessons, Russian manuals, like their Soviet predecessors, characterize these tasks as only half of a teacher's responsibility. Teachers must also guide *upbringing*—a word the Oxford English dictionary defines as, "The treatment and instruction received by a child *from its parents* throughout its childhood." In Russia, upbringing remains a sphere where experts, licensed by the state, manage a child's overall conduct, moral orientations, and worldview.

I used discourse analysis to identify patterns in representations of children and teachers in three popular Russian teacher training textbooks, mainstream American teacher training materials, and Soviet pedagogical writings. Contrasting Russian with American textbooks helps throw what is unique about the Russian approach into sharper relief; comparing Russian and Soviet textbooks reveals taken-for-granted assumptions that have remained constant. This analysis revealed that contemporary Russian textbooks, in contrast to their Soviet counterparts, represent the function of education as helping prepare a child to enter society qua capitalist workforce. But the materials differ from American textbooks in their depictions of the responsibilities of teachers, the role of the state, and the rights of children in primary schools. In these respects, Russian teacher training textbooks sound much like Soviet ones.

These findings indicate that the end of the Soviet regime did not signal the end of Soviet-era

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influence, at least not in all spheres. They also illustrate how perduring cultural commitments can remain, even in the face of changing economic incentive structures. As Alexei Yurchak observed, Soviet citizens did not experience life in the binary categories Western analysts often foist upon them—pro-state vs. anti-state, repression vs. freedom, propaganda vs. truth (Yurchak, 2005, p. 5). Instead, people found meaning in practices that held value for them and found ways to skirt or subvert activities they would not have chosen. So, they may have listened half-heartedly at Komsomol[2] meetings while still believing in Soviet ideas about right and wrong, proper and improper, civilized and savage (Yurchak, 2005, p. 24). Ending aspects of a political and economic system people did not like, then, did not mean individuals had to change their overall value systems (cf. Garey, 2020). In a world where Russian pedagogical theorists can choose not to hew to Soviet understandings about the function of education, they instead reinforce them. These ideas, then, must still hold importance, at least for textbook authors.

Russian education comes from a different place, historically, than that in much of the U.S. The Soviet state wanted literate, creative, educated builders of socialism. Whatever Soviet pedagogy was, it was not capitalist. Whatever Russian public education is, now, approaches training young minds with different objectives than American systems. Investigating these differences offers insight not only into representations in teacher training textbooks, but into the way state-run institutions reproduce discourses about morality—the rights and wrongs of educating children.

Scope and Context

I discuss key ideological differences about childhood and education imparted to teachers training to become public school educators in Russia and the United States. I chose these two countries because I have worked as an educator of school-age children in both places. Thus, I could draw on contextual knowledge beyond the texts themselves in thinking about how pedagogy might be practiced in classrooms. I do not present any observational data here, but having this professional experience provided a check on left-field conclusions about the two educational systems.

I also chose Russia and the United States because pedagogical mismatches struck me as fiercely as January wind gusts when I was working in Moscow, for many of the same reasons that developmental psychologist Urie Bronfenbrenner observed in the 1960s (Bronfenbrenner, 1970). Bronfenbrenner wanted to investigate how the two most powerful countries in the Cold War world trained subsequent generations, and discovered key differences in educational approach. I sensed alterity first, as an instructor working in Russia, and began this project to pinpoint where ideas diverged and why. My analysis shows that contemporary Russian and American textbooks present perpendicular, if not exactly opposed, presuppositions about the relationships between children, teachers, parents, and the state in these two countries. There is no guarantee, of course, that teachers in either the U.S. or Russia believe what they're told or incorporate state-mandated perspectives into their practice. However, standard curricula help set the bounds for a teacher's normative understanding of duty. These findings matter not only for those seeking to understand the contemporary Russian educational landscape, but also those interested in the political economy of ideological commitments; in this case, long-held beliefs about state responsibility for child development.

This approach draws on the observations of Silova et al., who argue that researchers on education in post-socialist countries often cast socialist educational methodology as part of a more primitive stage that will someday lead, as all things must, to Western-style neoliberal models. Silova et al. instead advocate viewing pedagogy in former socialist countries as tensions between value systems that became prominent, often through state intervention, at various points in time (Silova et al., 2017). Though Russia did undertake educational reforms designed to turn a Soviet cash sink into a market in the 1990s, attempts to "bring schools in line with European and American practices" saw little success (Eklof, 2005, p. 1). Elena Minina, further, has demonstrated that a historically-conditioned clash of values accompanied reform pressures on education. For many Russians, moving education from a public good to a for-profit commodity profaned

[2] All-Union Leninist Young Communist League

the educational process (Minina, 2013, 2018). As Minina quoted one pedagogical theorist as saying on the talk radio program *Moscow's Echo* (*Ekho Moskvy*) in 2005, "…if education is to be a service market, as has been imposed on us recently, then [the model] is that of a grocery store…cash for product" (Minina, 2018, p. 442). Many Russian teachers and parents, instead, view moral upbringing, or *vospitanie* as the foundation of education in Russia. As a call-in parent on the same radio program put it, "…one cannot compare education with an assortment of sausage…we are talking about the human soul here, how can one not understand this?" (Minina, 2018, p. 442). In a cultural imagining that remains largely hegemonic in Russian society, money and the soul can't mix (cf. Pesmen, 2000)[3].

While Minina (2018) and Alexander (2001) identify *vospitanie* (moral upbringing) as specifically Russian, a contrast between upbringing (*vzgoja*) and mere education (*izobraževanje*) also underpinned pedagogical theory in Slovenia from 1945 to 1990, when Slovenia was part of socialist Yugoslavia (Lesar and Ermenc, 2017). Lesar and Ermenc locate the shift from a politics-free, radically child-centered Slovenian theory of education to one that stressed the ability of a society to shape a child's moral and political outlook in Marxist thought and sociological research (Lesar and Ermenc, 2017). For as Marx said, "Men make their own history, but they do not make it as they please; they do not make it under circumstances chosen by themselves, but under circumstances directly found, given and transmitted from the past" (Marx, 1978). Socialists wanted to dictate the circumstances that would create proletariat subjectivities-qua-subjects of the future (Etkind, 2005; Fitzpatrick, 1999; Lunacharsky, 1928).

Though socialist countries cannot all be lumped together like tokens of a type, Soviet pedagogy, also influenced by Marxist theories of socialization, began to pay systematic attention to methods of moral upbringing after the 1917 revolution (Dzhurinskii, 2011, Lunacharsky, 1928). Schools, in concert with Soviet youth organizations like the Oktobrists, Pioneers, and Komsomol, were meant to create an environment of *vospitanie* where the Soviet child would learn how to be a Soviet person (Gilev, 1973; Koldunov, 1969).

In his seminal research about the differences between education in the United States and the USSR during the Cold War, Urie Bronfenbrenner identified *vospitanie* as the most important difference between American and Soviet schools. In addition to teaching "subject matter," Soviet educators explicitly sought to provide "upbringing" or "character education" (*vospitanie*) (Bronfenbrenner, 1970, p. 26). "*Vospitanie* has as its stated aim the development of 'Communist morality,'" Bronfenbrenner wrote. When the need to train the New Soviet Man disappeared in the collapse of the Soviet Union, *vospitanie* lost some of the prominence it had previously held in Russian curricular models (Alexander, 2001, p. 77). But the concept still organizes pedagogical thinking in Russia. In an observational study of Russian schools in the the 1990s, for instance, Alexander found that teachers still thought of *vospitanie* as foundational to educational practice. He identified the following common educational goals across interviews with teachers and school directors: "education as the development as the person and the citizen; the school as a self-governing community in which both teachers and pupils have responsibilities as well as rights; the fundamentally moral purpose of both education in the classroom and the school beyond it" (Alexander, 2001, p. 217).

The Russian concept of *vospitanie* bears surface resemblance to the German educational idea of *Bildung*, translated into English as "education" or "formation." Like *vospitanie*, education as *Bildung* seeks to prepare students for life in society instead of merely imparting information. But *vospitanie* is development of the social self; *Bildung* is development according to a personal inner core (Horlacher, 2016, p. 3; Hotam, 2019) or, as Horlacher phrased it, "inward ennoblement of the soul" (2016, p. 5). The goal of *Bildung* is for individuals to understand commonly-accepted values, but then to transcend moral prescriptions laid down by others through self-knowledge (Anderson, 2021, p. 40; Hotam, 2019, p. 619). *Vospitanie* is socialization to adopt certain moral orientations; *Bildung* represents a questioning.

Leo Tolstoy, who pioneered his own schools in the mid-19th century, outlined a similar, though more negatively-valenced, understanding of *vospitanie*. He described *vospitanie* as a violent process to bend

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[3] Russian people tend not to directly hand each other money. Instead, even in stores, shoppers place their money on a tray in front of the teller, who then picks it up, makes change, and returns money to the tray. Forgetting this habit momentarily, I once went to hand my landlady rent money. "No, no," she corrected me. "Put it on the table. Like we do" ("*Kak u nas*"). She would no sooner accept a wad of bills I'd handed her than a clod of dirt.

an individual to the moral codes of another and education (*obrazovanie*) as a free exchange of ideas. "Education," he wrote, "is a free relationship of people [who gather] to acquire information, while [*vospitanie*] is communicating what has already been acquired (Tolstoy, 1936, pp. 215-216).

Soviet pedagogical theorists latched on to *vospitanie's* shades of Marxist determinism: change the conditions, transform the person (Boldyrev et. al, 1968, p. 6, p. 24; Koldunov, 1969). As long as schools (and youth organizations, and clubs, and parents) created the correct upbringing environments, young people would develop appropriate moral dispositions. "Soviet pedagogy," wrote Boldyrev et al., "is the direct extension and development of Marxist-Leninist teachings about the commuist upbringing (*vospitanie*) of the person" (Boldyrev et al., 1968, p. 18).

Russian pedagogy, to be sure, no longer aims to train young socialist selves (Alexander, 2001; Halstead, 1994). Contemporary legislation instead seeks to instill qualities that will make students successful in contemporary Russian society. But the Russian government's emphasis on moral training, not just teaching subject matter, remains significant. Current Russian educational standards list *vospitanie* and the development of students' social selves (*lichnost'*)[4] as explicit aims of the national curriculum (Ministry of Education 2020 [2009]).[5] And just like their Soviet counterparts, Russian textbooks distinguish between upbringing (*vospitanie*), education (*obrazovanie*), and instruction (*obuchenie*), with upbringing cast as the most important piece of the educational process (Boldyrev, 1968; Bordovskaia and Rean, 2006; Il'ina, 1968; Kraevskii, 2003; Krivshenko et al., 2010). The American textbooks analyzed here don't mention upbringing at all.

Vospitanie's content has changed in post-Soviet Russia, but its form has not. Russian pedagogy shows continuity with Soviet pedagogy because in both cases the state, not parents, bear responsibility for upbringing. A few fundamental oppositions between U.S. and contemporary Russian approaches have emerged so far: neoliberalism vs. the soul, commodity vs. nurturing, control vs. development. These representations come from researchers working with a variety of kinds of data, from mass media to government documents to classroom observations. But Russian and American textbooks, the core statements defining what teaching is and what teachers do for pre-service students, do not reproduce these dichotomies. Instead, tracing representations across these texts reveals different points of tension and contrast, ones framed not polemically but in taken-for-granted understandings about children and the state.

Data and Methods

I tracked representations of teachers and teaching across three types of texts: (1) post-Soviet Russian pedagogical textbooks; (2) training materials in the contemporary United States (textbooks and the Praxis K-6 licensing exam); and (3) Soviet pedagogy textbooks. What follows is discourse analysis of depictions of obligation, authority, and rights in three educational contexts (Russian, American, and Soviet). Here, I take discourse analysis to be the systematic analysis of patterns that emerge across texts, time, and social contexts (Paltridge, 2008, p. 1). I used coding, or assigning categories to various chunks of discourse, as part of this interpretive process.[6] First I excerpted out passages in the textbooks that discussed childhood, the function of education, teachers, and parents, then overlaid secondary codes about morality, responsibility, and rights of various stakeholders onto these passages. The codes, rather than bounding pieces of text objectively, served as tools to help me analyze representations; that is, the labels I applied to the data allowed me to spot areas of overlap, variation, and contradiction. Coding can be done in a Word document, or index cards, or any number of software programs. I used the qualitative analysis software

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[4] *Lichnost'* is best translated as "personhood" or "social self" (cf. Bird, 2009). Personhood, as opposed to "personality," refers to a culturally-conditioned self (cf. Rosaldo 1980). Alexander (2001) rendered *lichnost'* as "personality culture."

[5] Russia's Federal Government Education Standards for General Primary Education, Order of the Ministry of Education No. 373 (2020 [2009]), describe the fundamental goal of the educational standards to be "… [The] upbringing and development of qualities of the social person (*lichnost'*) that meet the requirements of the information society, innovative economy, the the tasks of building a democratic civil society based on tolerance, dialogue of cultures and respect for the multinational, multicultural and multi-confessional composition of Russian society."

[6] Qualitative methods theorist Johnny Saldana defines codes as "a word or short phrase that symbolically assigns a summative, salient, essence-capturing, and/or evocative attribute for a portion of language-based or visual data," further noting that codes operate as "invitations and openings" rather than definitive categorizations (Saldana, 2021, pp. 5-6).

Atlas.ti to organize my data.

The first editions of the Russian textbooks analyzed here were all published after 2000, and the first editions of the American textbooks were published in the 1990s. I tried to approximate the influence of given textbooks by choosing those that had gone through a number of reprints. The American textbooks are in their 8th and 11th editions, respectively, with first editions published in 1998 and 1992. Of the Russian textbooks, Kraevskii went through four editions between 2003 and 2008 (and is still in print); Bordovskaia and Rean went through at least four reprints between 2000 and 2015; and Krivshenko et al. has gone through two editions and eleven re-printings between 2004 and 2017. All of the Russian textbooks, then, circulated with minor changes for between (at least) five and fifteen years in the post-Soviet era. Though not an exact one-to-one match for publication dates, the Russian and American textbooks chosen have been circulating concurrently for the past ten years.

Since Soviet policies fluctuated depending on the leader in power, all the Soviet materials selected come from the Brezhnev era (1964-1982). This period also represents the time when the teachers of current teachers would have received their professional training (those who were university students under Brezhnev are nearing retirement age now). Many of those writing textbooks now could have also written textbooks or other pedagogical materials as Soviet educators.

The corpus for analysis, then, consisted of the following texts:

Russian textbooks

- V. Kraevskii. (2003). *Obshchie osnovy pedagogiki. Uchebnik dlia studentov vysshikh pedagogicheskikh uchebnykh zavedenii.* [*General foundations of pedagogy. A textbook for students of pedagogical higher education institutes*.] Akademika.
- N. Bordovskaia and A. Rean. (2006). *Pedagogika: Ychebnoe posobie* [*Pedagogy: A textbook*]. Piter.
- L. Krivshenko et al. (2010). *Pedagogika: uchebnik dlia studentov vysshikh uchebnykh zavedenii, obuchaiushchikhsia po pedagogicheskim spetsial'nostiam*. [*Pedagogy: a textbook for students of higher education institutions studying in pedagogical specialties*.] Prospekt.

American textbooks and materials

- S. Wynne. (2010). *Praxis principles of learning and teaching (K-6) 0522*. XAMonline Inc.
- P. Burden and D. Byrd. (2019). *Methods for effective teaching: meeting the needs of all student*s. 8th Edition. Pearson.
- F. Parkay. (2020). *Becoming a teacher*. 11th edition. Pearson.
- Educational Testing Service. (2022). "Principles of Learning and Teaching: Grades K-6 Study Companion." https://www.ets.org/s/praxis/pdf/5622.pdf

Soviet textbooks

- N. Boldyrev et al. (1968). *Pedagogika: Uchebnoe posobie dlia studentov pedagogicheskikh*
- *institutov* [*Pedagogy: a textbook for students of pedagogical institutes*]. Prosveshchenie.
- L. Dodon. (1968). *Zadaniia po pedagogike. Posobie dlia uchashchikhsia pedagogicheskikh uchilishch i studentov pedagogicheskikh fakul'tetov* {*Pedagogical exercises: a textbook for students in pedagogical schools and departments*]. Prosveshchenie.
- T. Il'ina. (1968). *Pedagogika. Uchebnoe posobie dlia studentov pedagogicheskikh institutov*. [*Pedagogy: a textbook for students of pedagogical institutes*.] Prosveshchenie.

Teacher Responsibilities

> So give [the teacher] great resources, confess that with his hands you are growing that healthy branch for which we are fighting, for which we exist, without which it would not be worth living and fighting. This is the most important thing in our struggle. We do not yet have this consciousness. We must have this consciousness. Only then will it be possible to develop the new [Soviet] person. Anatoly Lunacharsky, "Upbringing of the new person," 1928

Contemporary Russian pedagogy textbooks describe two goals of education: instruction (*obuchenie*)

and upbringing (*vospitanie*). Sections on instruction address the content, methodology, and organization of courses (Bordovskaia and Rean, 2006; Kraevskii, 2003; Krivshenko et al., 2010). Near the end of their textbook, Krivshenko et al. define "teaching" as "a purposeful activity of a teacher to shape students' desire to learn, to organize their perception, to [help them] comprehend the facts and phenomena presented, to give students the ability to use the knowledge they acquired, and to [help] students use that knowledge independently" (Krivshenko et al., 2010, p. 166). On the face of it, this description aligns with the responsibilities American educational theorists describe for teachers: "planning, implementing, and assessing" curriculum mastery (Burden and Byrd, 2019, p. 2). That is, both Russian and American understandings of teaching assume that a teacher should teach students skills and information. But "teaching" (*prepodavanie*), or instructional delivery, makes up only half of a teacher's responsibilities in Russian manuals—and a lesser half at that. Rather than steering students to meet learning objectives, the Russian teacher must manage *vospitanie* (upbringing); they must train students' social selves. Kraevskii defines *vospitanie* as, "…activities associated with the formation of value orientations of schoolchildren—their emotions, the world of feelings inherent in humans, attitudes towards life, people, nature, and the world as a whole" (2003, p. 20).

Vospitanie, as a concept, organizes the constituent categories of instruction (*obuchenie*) and schooling (*obrazovanie*) in Russian textbooks (Bordovskaia and Rean, 2006, p. 25; Kraevskii, 2003, p. 19; Krivshenko et al., 2010, p. 183). If teaching guides students to obtain and use information, *vospitanie* focuses on the overall socialization of the child. The teacher-instructor (*prepodavatel'*) tracks students' cognitive development and helps them gain knowledge and skills (Krivshenko et al., 2010, p. 166). But as an upbringer (*vospitatel'*), the teacher must

> (1) transfer knowledge accumulated by [generations] of mankind
> (2) introduce students to the world of culture
> (3) encourage self-development
> (4) help students understand difficult life situations and find a way out of those circumstances
> (Bordovskaia and Rean, 2006, p. 25)

The student, in turn, "(1) masters interpersonal relationships and the fundamentals of culture; (2) works on themselves; (3) learns ways of communicating and manners of behavior" (Bordovskaia and Rean, 2006, p. 25).[7]

The importance of culturedness, development, and "working on the self" show clear continuity with Soviet ideas of becoming a cultured person, or *kulturnost'*. Becoming cultured meant actively learning, developing the mind, and re-fashioning the self into a politically aware, bureaucratically capable Soviet political subject. As described by Sovietologists Vera Dunham and Sheila Fitzpatrick, *kulturnost'* began as a Stalinist emphasis on manners, to include basic hygiene and not spitting in public (Dunham, 1990; Fitzpatrick, 1999). Eventually, though, *kulturnost'* came to denote the educated individual, not just the "civilized" one (Fitzpatrick 1999, 82). Schools, then, played and play a vital role not only in *exposing* students to the "world of culture," perhaps imparting information about art and literature (instruction), but in *socializing* students into a milieu that values continual personal development (*vospitanie*).

Vadim Volkov included the following competencies in his definition of *kulturnost'*:

> To become a cultured person one must read classical literature, contemporary Soviet fiction, poetry, newspapers, works by Marx-Engels-Lenin-Stalin, as well as attend the cinema and exhibitions with the purpose of self-education. A cultured person must have a broad cultural horizon (broad within the frame set up at a given historical moment) and a cultured inner world (Volkov, 2000, p. 225).

Periodicals even featured "Are you a cultured person?" quizzes (Volkov, 2000, p. 224). If questions on a quiz stumped a reader, the magazine *Ogonek* offered this advice: "Remember, if you are not able to answer any one of the ten suggested questions, you, apparently, know very little about a whole sphere of science or arts. Let this compel you to WORK ON YOURSELF (*porabotat' nad soboi*)" (caps in original; cited

[7] In his 1990s observational study, Russian teachers described being "cultured" (*kul'turniy*) as an educational goal (Alexander, 2001, p. 217).

in Volkov, 2000, p. 224). *Vospitanie*, unlike instruction, has this sense of training the entire person for life in society—not the student for academic achievement.

Like contemporary Russian texts, the Soviet teacher training textbooks analyzed here draw clear distinctions between upbringing (*vospitanie*) and instruction (*obuchenie*), with discussions of *vospitanie* making up half or more of chapters. Comparing the tables of contents of Russian, Soviet, and U.S. teacher training textbooks is one way of illustrating how Soviet/Russian and American systems treat instruction and upbringing differently. To compile Figure 1 below, I tallied the number of chapters devoted to instruction, surveys of educational theory, and upbringing in two Soviet, two Russian, and two American textbooks (Boldyrev, 1968; Bordovskaia and Rean, 2006; Burden and Byrd, 2019; Il'ina, 1968; Parkay, 2020; Krivshenko et. al, 2010). Books from all three countries describe instructional techniques and the history of pedagogical theories. But only Russian and Soviet textbooks include chapters about upbringing or moral training at all, and they devote more chapters to these, proportionally, than to instruction.

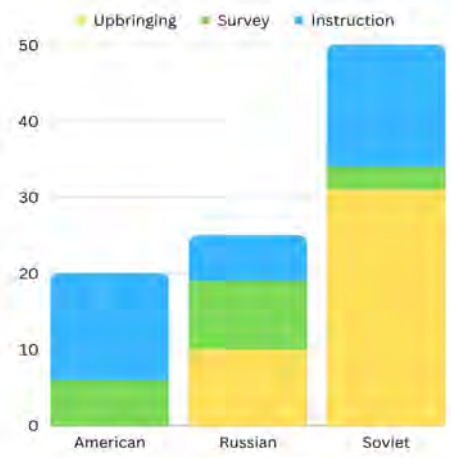

Figure 1. Comparison of tables of contents in russian, soviet, and american teacher training textbooks

What Soviet and Russian textbooks considered upbringing to consist of emerged as remarkably similar, as well. Krivshenko et al. listed the following five aspects of upbringing under the Russian teacher's purview: moral upbringing and worldview; civic upbringing; labor upbringing and professional competency; aesthetic upbringing; and fitness upbringing (Krivshenko et al., 2010, pp. 78-88). Il'ina's Soviet manual named four of these five categories exactly. Krivshenko deviated from the Soviet model in re-labeling "upbringing in Soviet patriotism and the international proletariat" as "civic upbringing," however. The Soviet manual also included "intellectual upbringing" and "scientific-atheist upbringing," both left out of Krivshenko's description (Il'ina, 1968, pp. 570-571).

Despite these rhetorical similarities, the Soviet and Russian texts orient towards different ultimate outcomes for upbringing. Il'ina, for instance, defines the goal of communist upbringing as "the preparation of fully developed citizens capable of building and protecting communist society" (1968, p. 54). The state wanted to create *Homo sovieticus*, the New Soviet Man (Etkind, 2005; Fitzpatrick, 1999). To do this, they needed to train not only laborers—as, in Il'ina's characterization, capitalist societies did—but a well-rounded and comprehensively-educated working class (1968, p. 47). Russian textbooks kept the Soviet emphasis on teaching the entire person instead of just relaying skills, but portray self-realization as the ultimate goal of *vospitanie*, not building socialism. In this model, students need *vospitanie* so that they can function as accepted and effective members of society (Bordovskaia and Rean, 2006, pp. 33, 171; Kraevskii, 2003, p. 47).

The Russian curriculum for *vospitanie* has now expanded beyond its borders. Residents in occupied Melitopol, Ukraine, for instance, were told they could be "stripped of parental rights" if they do not send their children to Russian-run schools (Devlin and Korenyuk, 2022). Contemporary Russian "civic

upbringing," then, has increasing relevance for both Russians and Ukrainians living in Russian-occupied territories. "The upbringing [*vospitanie*] of patriotism," write Krivshenko et al., "is a traditional task for Russian pedagogy and schools…content about patriotism in school includes study of history, the culture of their country, and activities to preserve the culture of their people" (Krivshenko et al., 2010, p. 82). Ukrainians would be taught Russian versions of history, Russian culture, and love for the Russian motherland. One young Ukrainian boy said before the start of the school year in 2022, "I'm more scared of the fact I'll have a new [Russian] teacher than of the war" (Waterhouse, 2022). Instead of moral education to build the Soviet state, *vospitanie* may well play a role in constructing the Soviet nation.

One of the American textbooks analyzed here does briefly discuss teachers' responsibilities to teach moral principles. Parkay writes that, "Although promoting students' academic progress has always been their primary responsibility, teachers are also expected to further students' social, emotional, and moral development and to safeguard students' safety, health, and well-being" (2020, p. 16). Parkay does not elaborate on these kinds of development beyond that sentence, but, in a later discussion of the "character development" movement in American education, cites teaching children empathy and the ability to control impulses as the keys to preventing violence, not least gun violence, in schools and in the wider society (2020, p. 299). This seems like moral upbringing of a very different kind than the Russian examples; it's geared not towards the development of the self, but towards preventing the most extreme forms of aggression towards others.

The more salient facet of moral training in American materials, and one not prominent in Russian textbooks, is social justice. According to the authors, teachers have a responsibility not only to adopt principles of social justice in their teaching practices, by, for instance, creating safe and equitable learning environments, but they have a duty to teach students tolerance for various categories of social diversity (Burden and Byrd, 2019, pp. 25-33; Parkay, 2020, pp. 17, 76). U.S. author Parkay even quoted a statement by the Southern Poverty Law Center that said, "If you aren't teaching social justice and tolerance, you aren't really teaching at all" (2020, p. 76). All three of the Russian textbooks mentioned tolerance, as well, but generally in the context of interpersonal differences rather than diversity of ethnic, national, religious, or sexual identity (Kraevskii, 2003, p. 36; Bordovskaia and Rean, 2006, p, 180). Krivshenko et al., for instance, address nonviolence in general terms:

The culture of peace should be understood as a global school in which everyone learns to live together in peace and harmony, to root in people's minds the idea of protecting peace, not to use violence, to assert justice and democracy. The upbringing of such qualities as tolerance, non-violence, conflict-free communication skills, the ability to listen and hear, to argue with an opponent without turning him into an enemy, should be brought up from early childhood (2010, p. 143). This position, unlike social justice approaches, glosses over historic, systematic, and structural disadvantages. The Russian and American texts come to the same conclusion: teach tolerance. But the U.S. textbooks also acknowledge societal conditions that undergird discrimination.

In addition to American textbooks, I examined the contents of a standardized teaching certification exam, the Praxis Principles of Learning and Teaching: Grades K-6[8] exam (PLAT K-6), which eighteen out of fifty states (plus the District of Columbia) require prospective teachers to pass. States outside of these eighteen either require subject-specific Praxis exams (e.g., language teaching, mathematics), their own, state-developed standardized tests, or choose to count only coursework and teaching practica towards certification. Together, the teachers required to take the PLAT K-6 teach over nine million American schoolchildren per year, or 18% of the public elementary school population (U.S. Department of Education, 2022). Since this exam assesses core pedagogical competencies, it offers a good representation of what, according to the U.S. government, teachers need to know and do.

Like the other American materials analyzed here, the PLAT K-6 only deals with knowledge about instruction and professionalism, not what Russian theorists would call upbringing or moral training. The

[8] Kindergarten through the 6th grade, or students from around five to twelve years old

first section, "Students as learners," tests overall knowledge of human development and educational theory, from Freud to John Dewey. The next two sections cover lesson and curriculum planning, classroom interactions, and assessment. The last section asks about professional development opportunities, school and community resources (speech therapists, social workers), and laws relevant to teachers (confidentiality, liability, child abuse reporting) (Educational Testing Service, 2022; Mometrix, 2021; Wynne, 2010). The exam, thus, assesses whether someone can effectively teach students content. This summative pedagogy exam focuses entirely on what Russian teacher training textbooks cast as the least important responsibility of a teacher. Rather than bringing up the child—morally, civically, professionally, aesthetically, and physically—an American teacher's only responsibility is to help students achieve content objectives. This likely suits American parents well, as most would be loath to cede their child's moral upbringing to the state.

Role of the State

> "A human stream flows, muddy and dirty, a fetid stream, but powerful at the same time. It flows in generations, and new generations perceive the experience of the old, they stand on the shoulders of the old, perceive everything valuable acquired by many thousands of generations, but at the same time they perceive prejudices, and diseases, and vices - all the dirt, all the filth and stench. Somewhere you need to put a filter, somewhere you need to put a net that would allow everything of value to pass through, all the mighty flow with all its skills and acquisitions, but would not let through turbidity, dirt and stench. This filter can only be a school." Anatoly Lunacharsky, "Upbringing of the new person," 1928

It's often said that Russian has no word for "privacy." It's true. You can speak of "confidentiality" or "secretiveness," or "isolation," but these words imply either withholding information or acting antisocial, not simply freely minding your own business. In the same way, when upbringing becomes a social concern rather than a family one, parents do not get to cordon off home life as a sphere of private activity. One Russian textbook maintained, "The function of education, and in everyday life this is closer to upbringing, lies in every person, regardless of education or profession. Upbringing is a mission for parents and for everyone who has relations with the younger generation" (Bordovskaia and Rean, 2006, p. 17). If for American feminists "the personal is political," these pedagogical theorists claim that "the personal is public." As Gal and Kligman argued, the division between public and private, and negotiations over its boundaries, carries enormous social power. The public/private binary can "recurse" to larger or smaller scales of discourse—from the institutional to the interpersonal—as people assign obligations to themselves and others (Gal and Kligman, 2000, pp. 40-41)

Hewing to the notion of *vospitanie* changes understandings of the relationships between schools, parents, and the state—between personal and collective responsibility. One of the Russian textbooks analyzed here (Bordovskaia and Rean, 2006) and one of the American textbooks (Burden and Byrd, 2019) feature "what would you do?" sections that present pedagogical situations and ask readers to reflect on possible responses. The selection of problems in these texts, and their implied solutions, point to different degrees of state involvement in students' lives outside of the classroom. Bordovskaia and Rean introduce their section on what teachers do ("Teaching in Practice") with the following scenarios:

> (A)
>
> A child is rude and does not study well. How will the teacher change the student's attitude towards learning and make sure that the child is not rude to the teacher, parents, and comrades (*tovarishcham*)? (Bordovskaia and Rean, 2006, p. 15)
>
> (B)
>
> A child has fallen under the influence of a bad crowd. Who will help them get away from this influence, and how? (Bordovskaia and Rean, 2006, p. 15)
>
> (C)
>
> The school learned that a group of young men and women often gathers at Tatiana R.'s apartment overnight: they drink, play cards, smoke, and stay over. Tatiana's parents are on a long business trip, and her grandmother is sick and cannot come check on her granddaughter. What can teachers do in this situation? (Bordovskaia and Rean, 2006, p.16)

Bordovskaia and Rean present all of these situations as pedagogical problems that the teacher must solve ("What kinds of problems and tasks are called pedagogical?") (2006, p. 15). They are pedagogical precisely because they involve upbringing, even if not instruction directly. The authors do not tell us what they see as possible solutions. But even framing these problems as the teacher's responsibility crosses a line between state and family prerogative that is differently drawn in the United States. In the U.S. a teacher only seeks to regulate in-class behavior. So, an American teacher might address rudeness directed towards other students by deploying focused methods of behavior modification and error-correction, but they would not try to change the child *themselves*, such that they would also not be bratty to their parents. *Vospitanie* means bringing up the person (*lichnost'*), in all aspects of their social selves. The state, then, in the person of the teacher, gets to intervene when developmental processes go awry (wherever that may occur). In situations like B and C, above, American textbooks recommend getting in touch with the parents and contacting "community resources" like social workers or the police if a child is in danger. Ultimately, the American teacher has a duty to help students meet curricular objectives and a duty to report neglect and abuse. But they aren't tasked with raising, transforming, or morally bringing up young people.

One of the reasons Russian teachers have authority to act as "second parents" is because, unlike parents, they've been trained in upbringing. "Of course, parents carry out upbringing, solve problems of upbringing," write Krivshchenko et al., "but not as professionals (alas, even if they are teachers by profession)" (Krivshenko et al., 2010, 63). But a teacher's dispassionate professional gaze can attenuate a non-optimal family pedagogical environment. In a section called "Interrelation between families and schools in the upbringing process," Krivshenko et al. talk about the need for schools and parents to work together in educating children. Then, though, after pointing out that pedagogical attention can focus on the family as well as students, they write, "Assistance in learning is aimed at preventing problems that arise in the family and due to the formation of the parents' pedagogical culture" (Krivshenko et al., 2010, 156). The parents' "pedagogical culture," or upbringing environment, might not serve the student's best interests. Parents may, for instance, employ "incorrect" upbringing strategies, like overprotection, undue pressure to perform, or emotional coldness (as well as neglect and abuse) (Krivshenko et al., 2010, pp. 153-154). By law American parents can do anything they would like in the child's pedagogical environment as long as a child isn't verifiably harmed; overprotection does not meet that standard.

I cannot imagine a U.S. teacher stepping in and informing parents that they were raising their kids "incorrectly," but that is what Krivshchenko et al. propose. They argue for a school-parent partnership, yes, but one in which the teacher knows best. They continue, "In the process of mutual communication, not only should teachers draw parents' attention to shortcomings in the methods and content of family upbringing, but parents should also point out similar 'failures' in the work of the school" (2010, p. 156). This sentence assumes that teachers should correct parents. That parents should advise teachers represents a move towards cooperation, not deference to parents who, after all, are ill-equipped to identify 'failures.'

A case study called "Challenges with Homework" in an American textbook provides an example that resonates with Russian moves to address issues in the home learning environment, but the authors ultimately locate both the problem and the solution in home life, not with the school.[9] Burden and Byrd describe a situation in which a student, DeShawn, finds himself living in cramped quarters with his brothers, sisters, and cousins, and his homework grades have begun suffering. Ms. Hutton did not initially reach out to DeShawn's family when his grades dipped, but learned about his changed home situation from a casual conversation with DeShawn's track coach. Then Ms. Hutton took the initiative, as Russian educational theorists would advocate, to get in touch with DeShawn's mother and offer advice. However, Ms. Hutton did not call as someone authorized to correct a home pedagogical environment, but as a teacher

[9] "When talking with DeShawn's track coach, Ms. Hutton learned that DeShawn's aunt and cousins recently moved in with his family, which includes his mother and four brothers and sisters. DeShawn now shares a bedroom with two of his cousins, and he has complained about how crowded his home is now. Ms. Hutton called DeShawn's mother to confirm the home living conditions and to tell her that DeShawn is talented and bright but struggling with his homework reading assignments. DeShawn's mother was concerned and asked how she could help her son. First, Ms. Hutton recommended that a consistent time each day be set aside for homework. Second, she suggested that DeShawn find a favorite spot in the house where he can comfortably complete his reading without distraction. Third, she recommended that DeShawn's mother have a brief conversation with DeShawn once a week about the books he is reading. In fact, DeShawn's mother asked for the reading list and said that she might read some of the books along with DeShawn" (Burden and Byrd, 2019, p. 178).

concerned about a student's grades. In this hypothetical scenario, the teacher also did not give recommendations until the mother asked for them (Burden and Byrd, 2019, p. 178). Both American and Russian textbooks discuss how home situations can affect students at school. But the American pedagogical concern stops with helping children reach curriculum objectives. American teachers—in the idealized discourses about teaching analyzed here—do not try to influence a child's upbringing, especially if the philosophy of the teacher conflicts with that of the parents. American teachers work to create classroom environments that help children develop academically; Russian teachers work to create environments that help children develop social selves.

Pupil's Rights

> "If you take a closer look at this old type of person that dominates the bourgeois world, you will see that he has an incredible narrowness. He is connected with big questions through the newspaper, which he receives daily, reads with indifference and then throws away. And in this short hour in which he reads a newspaper, the man comes into contact with the rest of the world, and then again goes into his shell—into his jacket, as obligatory for him as a house for a snail, and there he lives out his narrow daily interests." Anatoly Lunacharsky, "Upbringing of the new person," 1928

In the educational discourses examined here, Russian textbooks represent teaching as a process of training the entire child and American textbooks focus on helping students meet grade level objectives. The converse of these positions is the assumption that American students have the *right* to reach their academic potential and that Russian students have the *right* to develop their *lichnost'*, or their "social person." To ensure that those things can happen, teachers in both countries must take particular kinds of action that aren't directly tied to teaching course content. But the recommended actions look very different in the Russian and American cases because teachers pursue different ultimate objectives. American teachers are told to alter variables in the classroom environment to make sure students can learn, while textbooks instruct Russian teachers to influence a child's entire pedagogical environment—school life, home life, extracurricular life—to make sure students can develop (properly).

U.S. textbooks therefore discuss how to make opportunities to learn equal. Some children speak English as a foreign language. The ordinary subject teacher, therefore, must learn—and prepare to be assessed on—special methodologies for teaching this population, such as the Cognitive Academic Language Learning Approach (CALLA) or the Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP) models of lesson planning, delivery, and observation (Burden and Byrd, 2019, pp. 16-17). Students may also have any number of "special needs:" physical challenges such as paralysis or blindness; intellectual disabilities such as Down syndrome; speech impairments; or unusual talent in reading, analysis, and memory tasks (Burden and Byrd, 2019, pp. 30-33; Parkay, 2020, pp. 309-315). The teacher should integrate these students as fully into courses as possible and refer them to specialists within the school when they reach the limit of their expertise. If students live in poverty, the teacher must adjust classroom activities and assignments to make sure they have the resources to learn effectively (Burden and Byrd, 2019, p. 34). American students also have the right to study without discrimination due to a variety of social categories. Parkay writes that, "Providing an equal educational opportunity to all students means that teachers and schools promote the full development of students as individuals, without regard for race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, religion, abilities, or disabilities" (Parkay, 2020, p. 270). To ensure this, teachers must (1) educate themselves about inequality and (2) constantly monitor their teaching process to make sure their actions don't contribute to discrimination (Burden and Byrd, 2019, p. 27; Parkay, 2020, p. 270). While many of the problems these authors describe are social, even structural, the American teacher faces these challenges by changing their instructional practices, not society or, more importantly, the socialized person of the child.

Instead of equality of opportunity to learn, Russian textbooks talk of equality of opportunity to develop—to be "brought up" as a social person. Children have a right to self-actualization, a right to fulfill their "cultural needs," a right to develop their creative potential, and a right to develop a spiritual world (Bordovskaya and Rean, 2006; Kraevskii, 2006; Krivshenko, 2010). They have, in other words, the right to develop a *lichnost'*, a social self, that will allow them to be successful in life, not just in school or employment

contexts (Bordovskaia and Rean, 2006, p. 171). Kraevskii, for instance, argues that education should mirror social experience in "structural completeness." Since life requires people to employ creativity and build relationships, writes Kraevskii, classes should include training in these skills as well as "ready-made knowledge" (Kraevskii, 2003, pp. 43-44). This, he argues, "allows a person not only to function successfully in society, to be a good performer, but also to act independently—not only to 'fit' into the social system, but also to influence it" (Kraevskii, 2003, p. 44).

This is not to say, of course, that Russian teacher training programs as a whole do not attend to teaching students with special needs or issues of discrimination. But these topics do not factor into the textbooks analyzed here, core statements about what teaching is and what teachers do. Managing accommodations for academic success is a subset of effectively teaching content, after all, which these texts represent as a task secondary to upbringing.

The American pedagogical materials represent students as having rights to measurable kinds of resources with clear success-failure metrics. In practice, students who speak Spanish as a first language often get slotted into clasess for those with intellectual disabilities, students face discrimination from teachers and other students, and gifted children get bored. But in the ideal classroom depicted by the textbook authors, every child has a right to fulfill their academic potential, and teachers have a responsibility to adjust their instruction to make sure this happens. Administrators or other observers can assess what students learned, what teachers did, and evaluate the performance of both teachers and learners. The Russian textbooks, in contrast, spend many hundreds of pages describing the importance of upbringing, possible approaches, and example cases, but there is no discussion of upbringing assessment. Activities and rubrics could easily be designed to test students' growth in social-emotional development over the course of a year. I doubt this will happen. *Vospitanie*, as Minina pointed out, is linked to the soul in the Russian imagination (Minina, 2018, p. 442). *Vospitanie* cannot be bought and sold, like sausages, and teachers and parents may also object to reducing it to a score.

Conclusions: Reproducing Ideology

The Russian focus on upbringing, like the Soviet one, gives public school teachers authority over more aspects of a child's development than American textbooks recommend or, in most cases, than parents and local legislation would allow. It is not just that Russians and Americans organize educational experience differently; in these textbooks, education's purpose is conceived differently. But if the Soviet state championed upbringing (i.e., developing the new Soviet person) so that students could go on to serve the communist project, Russian textbooks advocate upbringing for the good of students themselves—so that they can lead successful lives as competent members of society. Discourses about communism, the proletariat, and the importance of atheism no longer feature in teacher training manuals, either. But the fact that contemporary textbooks repeat so much of the rhetoric associated with *vospitanie*, even down to lifting most of the types of *vospitanie* word-for-word (moral upbringing, aesthetic upbringing, etc.), means that pedagogical institutions emulate Soviet-era discourses about the rights and wrongs of educating children even if they are not advancing Soviet political ideology.

Russian *vospitanie*, like Soviet *vospitanie*, aims to socialize the child into a worldview, not promote academic achievement. While the contents of political *vospitanie* has changed in the post-Soviet era, the responsibility of the teacher to provide moral upbringing remains constant from the Russian to the Soviet contexts.

This may represent an institutional carryover rather than a conscientious ideological or values-based choice, but that fact still matters: institutions' taken-for-granted emphases socialize people into moral worldviews—or at least present them as normative. People could have decided that teachers no longer have the right to intervene in parenting, just as "comrade's courts" no longer have the right to reprimand Party members about adultery (cf. Cohn, 2009). The public/private, child/state, parent/expert divisions could have been redrawn, but they were not. State *vospitanie* experts manage *vospitanie.* In instructing prospective teachers how to mould young moral selves, these textbooks, in turn, shape teachers' outlooks

on children, childhood, and education.

Nearly twenty years ago Caroline Humphrey revised her classic Soviet-era ethnography, *Karl Marx Collective*, under a new title: *Marx Went Away—But Karl Stayed Behind* (1998). The book describes changes to collective farm life after socialism, but notes structural continuities, as well. At least in 1998, there were no good alternatives to collective farms in the rural areas Humphrey studied. Tradition persisted because it was economically easier. It is possible, too, that it is easier to make surface-level changes to educational doctrine created in the Soviet Union, perhaps by replacing "upbringing in Soviet patriotism" with "civic education," but leaving much foundational theory intact. The writers of Russian textbooks were likely trained in the Soviet Union, so it makes sense that they would express ideas fairly close to what they themselves were taught. This means, though, that key ideas about what childhood is and what childhood is for in contemporary Russian education are rooted in Soviet conceptions about developing *lichnost'*, or the social self. A theory of *vospitanie* is, after all, a theory of socialization. Russian students may now be socialized to consider different kinds of moral calculations and to make different kinds of aesthetic judgments than they would have in the 1960s. But they are still taught about some spheres of things not considered the American teacher's responsibility. The socialization of children aside, the textbooks examined here reproduce the Soviet perception that upbringing is the teacher's duty and the state's domain.

Declarations

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Research Article

Deinstitutionalisation in Hungarian child protection: Policy and practice changes in historical contexts

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Abstract: The aim of the study is to present the historical changes in child protection in Hungary and the process of deinstitutionalisation, which is still shaping child protection work in this country. The research seeks to answer the question of how the process of institutionalisation and deinstitutionalisation was implemented in Hungary in the socialist era and after the introduction of Act XXXI of 1997 on the Protection of Children and on the Directorate for Guardianship (Act XXXI of 1997), which was a milestone in the Hungarian child protection for the 0-3-year olds. The study employs a case study methodology with secondary data corpus including legislation and data provided by the Central Statistical Office in Hungary. The scientific approach of the study is mainly historical, presenting the main features of child protection in three distinct periods 1950-1970, 1980-1995 and 1996-2018. The findings indicate that the socialist era has had a prevailing influence on child protection for many decades, but the years following the transition into democracy brought major transformation in child protection, a "transition of the child protection system", paving the way for the process of deinstitutionalisation and the emergence of alternative forms of care.

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Introduction

Different models of child protection have developed throughout history. One of these is the model of Western European countries, where the transformation of large institutions, the development of small group homes and the strengthening of foster care began in the late 1960s (Gottesmann, 1991; Petrie, 2006; Trede, 1993). In contrast, the countries of Central and Eastern Europe constitute the other model, which was characterised by the belief in the socialist era that institutional community placement was the best solution for children in care. The Western European model only began to appear in Hungary in the late 1980s (Rákó, 2014). The study illustrates the changes in Hungary mainly through the history of the development of infant homes, the institutions that provide protection for children aged 0-3 years. The choice of the age range can be justified by the fact that all international research draws attention to the fact that institutionalisation is particularly harmful for 0–3-year olds (Browne et al., 2006; Finelli et al., 2018; Zeanah et al., 2017). The study is a descriptive case study of Hungary in terms of analysing the road it took from institutionalisation to deinstitutionalisation the years (Yin, 2018). Its main contribution is to a more nuanced understanding of present policies in Hungary and other countries in similar socio- and geo-political contexts, which can help and guide researchers in the field of Early Childhood Education (ECE) to focus their attention to similar processes within their native countries.

Nevertheless, we have not undertaken a detailed description of the entire child protection system, as this would go beyond the scope of this study. Instead, the focus is on the factors that influence deinstitutionalisation of the processes of child protection over a sixty-five year period spanning across the socialist era and what followed in its wake.

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Historical Background

Institutional care is referred to care that is in (often large) residential settings that are not built around the needs of the child nor close to a family or small-group situation, but display the characteristics typical of institutional culture (Michela, 2012). It is hard to outline a common definition of 'institutions' applicable to the wide diversity of national contexts across Europe. However, a few recurring features seem to characterise institutional care and constitute what has been referred to as 'institutional culture', like depersonalisation, rigidity of routine, block treatment, social distance. Dependence, lack of accountability and social, emotional and geographical isolation are also typical of this kind of care. Size and number of residents are not the only elements to classify a residential care facility as an institution, although they do appear to be proportionally related to the presence of an institutional culture: "the larger the setting, the fewer the chances are to guarantee individualised, needs-tailored services as well as participation and inclusion in the community" (European Commission, 2009, p. 9).

In 2009, the United Nations General Assembly drew attention to the serious gaps in the application of the Convention on the Rights of the Child to children living outside their families or at risk of being separated from their families. Therefore, the international community has come together and developed the methodological guideline, called "Guidelines for the Alternative Care for Children". The Guideline distinguishes the following forms of alternative care: 1. kinship care or family-based form of care within the child's extended family; 2. foster care, when the child cannot be cared for in the family and is placed in a foster family prepared for the task for alternative care; 3. other forms of family-based or family-like care; 4. residential care, provided in a non-family-based, group setting, such as care that provides safe accommodation and care in crisis situations, temporary residential care, and other types of short- and long-term residential care, including residential care homes; 5. Supervised, independent housing for children (United Nations General Assembly, 2010).

In Western European child protection models, alternative forms of care are implemented in the context of deinstitutionalisation. The concept of deinstitutionalisation in the field of child protection encompasses several factors. It is not only about transforming large institutions and placing children in family-like settings, but also about strengthening family education and developing community-based services at the same time and helping young people, who have come of age in the child protection system to leave institutions and integrate into society (Michela, 2012). Policy-driven process of reforming a country's alternative care system, which primarily aims at: Decreasing reliance on institutional and residential care with a complementary increase in family and community-based care and services; Preventing separation of children from their parents by providing adequate support to children, families and communities; Preparing the process of leaving care, ensuring social inclusion for care leavers and a smooth transition towards independent living (Michela, 2012). Deinstitutionalization has been defined as a change in the organization of the provision of services that is implemented in three stages: (a) release of service users from residential institutions, (b) directing potential users to alternative institutions, and (c) development of community services (Baghragh, 1996). Davidson et al. (2016), in contrast to Baghragh (1996), distinguish two dimensions of deinstitutionalisation. De-institutionalisation policy focuses on two broad areas: (a) developing family support measures to prevent the separation of children from their family; and (b) developing family-based care placements in order to move children out of the institutions, and to provide options for children who will need 'alternative care' placements in the future (Davidson et al., 2016).

Our study focuses on the factors of deinstitutionalisation identified by Baghragh (1996) and Davidson et al. (2016) and does not examine the third element identified by the Michela (2012), which is the facilitation of social integration of young people as they reach adulthood. The child protection aspects of institutionalisation-deinstitutionalisation are summarised in Table 1, based on the literature.

Table 1. The child protection aspects of institutionalisation-deinstitutionalisation*

	Institutionalisation	**Deinstitutionalisation**
Physical environment	large institutions of 100-200 people, isolated environments often on the outskirts of the municipality	small-scale, family-based care, placing children in foster or adoptive families integrated housing within the municipality
Place of care	the place of care may vary more often according to age or other factors	striving for permanence, avoiding unnecessary changes in the place of care
Educational services	meets the child's basic needs but does not focus on individual needs	family and community-based services, according to the individual needs of the child
	characterised by a focus on community education, moving children around in a group at the same time, performing daily routines (eating, dressing, etc.) at the same time, uniformity	community education is implemented, with children meeting their needs on a flexible schedule, similar to family life
	rigid agenda, house rules, rigorous rules, sometimes over-medicalised approach, on-site kindergarten, school may also operate in the institution	typically flexible daily schedules and rules, but these can be adapted to individual needs; separation of residence, education and leisure activities according to the principle of normalisation
	frequent hospitalisation and its various manifestations, impersonal treatment, attachment difficulties	personal, differentiated treatment, less hospitalisation, attachment patterns
Experts	difficult to ensure the stability of carers, educators, educational attitude	striving for permanence of carers and educators
Keeping in touch with family	strive to work with the family, but it is sporadic	intensive efforts to foster contact with the family

*Own adaptation based on literature, source: Michela (2012), European Commission (2009), Majoros, (2015)

During the era of socialism, the Hungarian child protection system was based on total institutions, where the specific features of institutionalisation were clearly visible. Among the total institutions, Goffman (1961) includes children's homes for orphans and children in need. The specific functioning of total institutions is characterised by the fact that they operate according to formal rules, and institutional functioning is governed by institutional bureaucracy and it is also characterised by strict order.

In the design of children's homes from the 1950s onwards, there was a tendency to operate them mainly in mansions and manor houses located in the outskirts of cities. The buildings themselves were not suitable to accommodate children. The peripheral location reinforced the isolation of the children, and the isolation was further increased by the operation of the so-called on-site kindergartens and schools. The on-site schools were an integral part of the child protection institutions, but the school requirements often lagged behind those of the external schools. There was a wide variety of child protection institutions, both in terms of accommodation and educational provision. However, all institutions have two aspects in common: a low standard of living compared to the national average and poor pedagogical quality. The main criterion for selecting teachers was not professional performance but political credibility. The foster homes mainly employed staff with teacher training, nevertheless the educational conditions were not favourable for the children. Conditions for differentiated work based on children's needs were not provided (Gergely, 1997).

Since the 1950s, in Hungary there were a number of large children's homes with total institutional characteristics. The era was characterised by the placement of children in foster homes according to age. That means that there were infant homes, homes for pre-school children (3-6 years), homes for primary school children (6-14 years) and youth homes for children over 14 years (Rákó, 2011).

Following the outline of the methodology in the subsequent section, the findings of the secondary data analysis are presented, which provide a more detailed overview of child protection as part of the institutionalisation-deinstitutionalisation processes of the period, and present the child protection provision for 0–3-year-olds through providing an overview of the history of the development of infant homes.

Method

The paper takes a historical approach to understand the current policy and processes of institutionalisation and deinstitutionalisation in child protection in Hungary, informed by Foucault's (1977) idea of interrogating the past in order to illuminate the present. Interpreting and evaluating past policies of child protection and practices of institutionalisation is informed here by knowledge and understanding of the present, which reveal key features of discourses and practices regarding out-of-home, alternative care for the youngest of children. The risk of revisionism – revisiting and re-evaluating matters of the past from a present perspective- is to be acknowledged here (Foucault, 1977). Attempt are made to minimise the risk, therefore, a mixed-methods approach was adopted working with both qualitative and quantitative data (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2017; Onwuegbuzie, 2012). Qualitative data (policy and legislation documents) was interrogated corroboratively with statistical data from the Central Statistical Office in Hungary for the examined period. Secondary analysis of child protection statistics, as well as the analysis of the statistical data and content analysis of relevant legislations took place (White & Marsh, 2006), using statistics to aid the interpretation of policy and legislation. This enabled a clear focus on the question that frames this paper: how did the alternative forms of care develop in Hungarian child protection for 0-3-year-olds during socialism and in the following years. Interrogation of the data corpus helped identify three distinct historical periods of child protection, each with features that are identified as typical during those years. These are presented in the next three sub-sections.

Child Protection in the 1950s-1970s: The Proliferation of Children's Homes and the Decline of Foster Care

The socialist era of the 1950s and 1960s was characterised by the strengthening of institutional education. This is illustrated by the data in Table 2. Children were mainly placed in institutions. The year 1955 was the first year in which the proportion of children in foster care fell significantly compared to the proportion of all children in state care. At that time, the proportion of children in foster care had fallen to 39.2 per cent compared with 50 per cent in 1954. By 1958, the decline in foster care service was even greater with only 25.2 percent of children in foster care, 30 percent fewer than in 1953. From 1960, the number of children in state care increased steadily. While in 1960 there were 23,408 children in state care, by 1968 the number of children living in residential care or foster care increased to 35,396, an increase of 50 per cent in just eight years. This trend continues throughout the 1960s, so that the proportion of children living in foster care compared to all children in state care was 27.2-33.9 per cent in the period 1960-68. In the socialist era, the institutionalist tendencies intensified, and it became a general trend to create as many orphanages and children's villages as possible, because of the bad experiences in foster care and in the spirit of the ideology of community education. It was felt that the foster care network was not beneficial, and that the best solution for children's education was a children's home. There was an unprecedented proliferation of children's homes (Veczkó, 1990).

Table 2. Child and youth protection institutions*

Year	Child and youth protection institutions	Total number of children in state care	Of which		
			In children's home	In foster care	
				children placed in care as a proportion of the total number of children in care	number of children placed
Number of people in hosted in state care					
1953	15	25 055	11302	54,8%	13753
1954	15	23314	11644	50,0%	11670
1955	15	19327	11748	39,2%	7579
1956	15	19153	12368	35,4%	6785
1957	14	19931	14455	27,4%	5476
1958	14	21542	16107	25,2%	5435
1959	14	22600	17038	24,6%	5562
1960	14	23408	17213	26,4%	6195
1961	14	25340	18537	26,8%	6803

1962	17	27277	19844	27,2%	7433
1963	18	29365	21150	27,9%	8215
1964	19	31380	21243	32,3%	10137
1965	19	33420	22181	33,6%	11239
1966	19	33584	22175	33,9%	11409
1967	19	34483	22939	33,4%	11544
1968	20	35077	23710	32,4%	11367
1968	20	35396	24076	31,9%	11320

* Own adaptation based on literature, source: Central Statistical Office (1961) (1970). Statistical Yearbook 1960. p. 331, Statistical Yearbook 1969. p. 396.

For children removed from their families, priority was given to institutional care, and these children could only be placed in foster care if there was no room in institutions.

> "The five-year plans included efforts to create child protection institutions. NGOs have not been given any form of child protection functions, which have been primarily provided by the state. The government's efforts were characterised by the creation of large institutions, children's towns, where hundreds of children were placed. The development of children's homes became increasingly important. At the same time, the foster care network is being eroded." (Rákó, 2011, p. 47).

During the period of socialism, education in the children's homes was based on the documents Programme for the further development of foster care education I and the Programme for the further development of foster care education. The programme included the main content elements of community education, education for a healthy life, moral-political-ideological education, education for work and also leisure and cultural education (Bábosik, 1976). Typically of the period as a whole, the process of moral-political-secular education was implemented in all levels of institutional education, including child protection. In ideological education, considerable emphasis was placed on moral social orientation, the development of the moral-political-ideological qualities of the child, education in socialist humanism, socialist patriotism, a socialist attitude to work, and education to discipline (Bábosik, 1976).

Institutional education for 0–3-year-olds was provided in infant homes. The first infant home in Hungary was established by Emmi Pikler in 1946 in Budapest, on Lajos Lóczy Street, and was therefore often referred to as "Lóczy". The number of infant homes in Hungary increased steadily, while in 1951 24 infant homes accommodated 1,288 persons with an occupancy rate of 87.1 per cent, in 1961 there were 43 infant homes with 3,591 places and an occupancy rate of 98.4 per cent, higher than in previous years (Central Statistical Office [CSO], 1961).

The Ministry of Health was responsible for running infant homes. The infant homes were managed by a paediatrician, which in some cases reinforced the excessive medical approach and the relative rigidity of the infant homes. In infancy and toddlerhood, the daily routine is much tighter, and keeping to the children's daily routine is essential. Because young children are more susceptible to infections, they need to be protected more carefully than older children to safeguard their health (Révész, 2007). Infant homes fulfilled several functions within the child protection system. On the one hand, they were responsible for the care and upbringing of children under the age of three, whose parents were temporarily or permanently unable to take care of them, or whose environment endangered their development. On the other hand, they also allowed the mother to be present during breastfeeding. A pioneer in the field of institutional childcare, Emmi Pikler (1976) has developed a unique approach to infant and early childhood education based on her experience collected as a paediatrician and in the nurseries, which has made her internationally recognised. The essence of his approach is that the children's needs should be taken into account when designing their life, providing maximum autonomy and autonomy for the children to develop their abilities.

> "When designing the structure of the institution, it was important for her from the beginning that the children stayed in the same room (group), where they were placed when they arrived until they left, and that they were always looked after by the same carers. Although she did not yet know the results of Bowlby and Spitz's studies, she instinctively felt, knew, that babies needed a lot of personal attention and care, and that only adults who knew them well could provide it" (Majoros, 2015, p. 131).

In spite of the predominance of institutional education in the period under study, innovative ideas appeared as early as the 1970s - although they were not implemented in practice in many places - which drew attention to the dangers of institutional education and the need to transform institutions.

In the 1970s, Pikler's research in infant homes drew attention to another form of over-hospitalisation, the lack of volitional manifestations:

> "More than once you see whole groups of children around two years old building with the same movements, the same blocks, the way they've been shown. If they are given the string in their hands and prompted, they pull the toy. The child is a passive puppet in the hands of the adult, acting only on explicit command, not on his own initiative. Even a child who is able to sit still will allow himself to be fed with arms dangling, passively lying down, until the adult puts him on a bench or chair, hands him a spoon and tells him to eat alone" (Pikler, 1976, p. 442).

The period of socialist child protection between 1950 and 1970 is primarily characterised by institutionalisation. It is typical that foster care has declined alongside large institutions of 100-200 children. For many decades, foster parenting was not seen as professional work, work in the home and family was devalued, in contrast to the family large communities were considered the primary socialisation arena, and the need for specialised educational skills for children who were removed from their families was emphasised (Homoki, 2011).

Care for 0–3-year-olds was also provided mainly in institutional settings, in nurseries, rather than in care. The basic needs of the child were met in the institutions, but individual needs were not the focus. Community education, the uniformization of children, the movement of children in groups were all characteristic of the era and also the emergence of classic and newer forms of hospitalisation. Alternative forms of care were not common in this era.

The 1980s and 1990s Rudimentary Forms of Deinstitutionalisation and Renewed Emphasis on Family Care

The 1980s brought new changes in child protection. The changes were opened up by the fact that it became clear that socialist society could not eliminate the factors that disrupted children's development. Thus, the political attitude towards child protection issues became more "permissive". In 1979, as a result of the social crisis phenomena, national research was launched as an interministerial research priority under the title "Complex study of social integration disorders" (hereinafter referred to as "SID"). This then played an important role in all the efforts to modernise child protection before the political regime change in 1990. The results of the SID research provided a theoretical background and reference for the reform efforts of child protection workers, which "legalised" these efforts (Domszky, 1994).

The research on Social Integration Disorders was launched in 1981 on 6 themes and nearly 40 topics. The aim of the research was to explore deviance, although this term was not used. The rationale for the research was that these social phenomena were occurring on a massive scale, causing significant harm to both individuals and the society. And the institutions to deal with the problems were not in place during this period (Rákó, 2011).

In 1978, 8.9% of the population aged 0-17 years received some form of public care. This year, 33,411 children were in state care, placed in various institutions. The data show that, in terms of living conditions, most of the children concerned lived in state foster care, with around 12048 children, and a further 8995 children in foster care (Miltényi & Münnich, 1980) thus institutional placement was still preferred to foster care. Institutionalisation of children in state care did not only mean placement in state foster homes. There were also a significant number of people placed in infant homes and special educational institutions, totalling more than 3,000.

In the 1980s and 1990s, the number of infant homes and the number of children living in infant homes decreased. While in 1980 there were 3,759 children in infant homes in nurseries, in 1989 there were 2,376. The number of infant homes had fallen by six by 1989 (31) compared with 1980 (37). The situation of these infants is well illustrated by a study carried out by the National Association of Infant Homes, founded in 1990, which involved 134 children in 35 infant homes. According to the research, children were placed in a

children's home for a variety of reasons, including neglect, poor physical condition and malnutrition. They came mainly from their own biological families. As a problem in the functioning of the child protection system, they highlighted the slow administration of the authorities in settling the fate of these children, and in the case of placement in foster care the lack of preparedness of the whole process. The research has explored the ambition to expand the scope of activities of infant homes. For example, the admission of mothers to the infant home regardless of the duration of breastfeeding. Hevesi et al. (1993) found that there was a growing push to extend the age of placement in infant homes to six years of age to avoid placement in another institution and to place children with their biological family or in foster care instead (Hevesi et al., 1993).

From the 1980s and 1990s, the elements of institutionalisation began to change, and deinstitutionalisation efforts began to appear, albeit in a rudimentary form. In the 1990s, the number of institutions and the number of children in their care continued to decline. In 1990, 31 institutions cared for 2147 children, by 1996, 27 institutions were operating and caring for 1670 children.

From the 1980s onwards, there was a renewed emphasis on family care. In Hungary, until the second half of the 1990s, the placement of children in foster care was determined by MT Decree 2111 of 1954 About some organizational issues of child and youth protection and the placement was only possible if there was a shortage of places in educational institutions (boarding schools). Professional foster parents were introduced in 1986 and their position was already regulated by law. Professional foster carers were employed by the Child and Youth Protection Institutes. The working hours of a full-time foster carer are 6 days a week, with a part-time or retired professional foster carer or childcare worker on days off. Professional foster carers look after a minimum of five and a maximum of ten children in their own home. The number of children to be accommodated is determined by the employer on the basis of the age, condition and development of the children. If they are caring for a child with a disability or a serious behavioural problem, they must be responsible for at least three children. – In professional foster care families, the mother became a full-time employee of the Child and Youth Care Institute, while the father or a family member became a part-time employee. Professional foster carers may also work part-time, in which case they are assisted by a child carer if the number of children is at least eight. Once the child reaches the age of adulthood, he or she can stay in the professional foster carer's household (MM Decree XXVIII of 1986 On the Employment Relationship of Professional Foster Parents).

In addition to professional foster parents, there were so-called traditional foster parents, who were not paid for their work, and who had an agreement with child and youth protection institutions. In contrast, professional foster carers were employed and carried out their work on a salaried basis. Innovatively, in Hajdú-Bihar County, a crisis programme was launched in 1995 as a tender programme, which was integrated into the system of foster care services. As a result of the initiative it became a practice that newborn babies, who used to be placed into infant homes from the hospitals, were placed with foster parents until they were reintegrated into the family or adopted (Rákó & Bagdács, 2011). Initiating radical change has also been difficult in the field of institutional education. Towards the end of the 1980s began the development of the so-called family models within the foster home, children's city structure and the organisation of family-like groups (Veressné Gönczi, 2002).

The socio-economic-political changes of 1990 contributed significantly to the transformation of the child protection institutional system. The socio-economic processes that developed in parallel with the end of the socialist era had an impact on the living conditions of children, and the existing care and institutional system could no longer deal effectively with child protection problems. Hungary committed itself to renewing child protection by being among the first countries to ratify the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child [UNCRC], 1989, in 1991. It states that a child who has been temporarily or permanently deprived of his or her family environment is entitled to special protection from the State. The Convention sets out the possible forms of substitute protection, which may be placement with a family, adoption or placement in an appropriate children's institution (UNCRC, 1989).

In terms of child protection, the period 1980-1995 is still characterised by a strong institutionalisation,

although by the end of the period some elements of deinstitutionalisation appear, including the creation of smaller residential units within large institutions to provide family accommodation, and the emergence of professional foster parents. The UNCRC (1989) emphasises the importance of deinstitutionalisation for the child protection systems of signatory countries, including Hungary. During this period, the first steps were taken to prepare for deinstitutionalisation. Among the alternative forms of care, the possibility of professional foster care emerged.

Child Protection Between 1996-2018: The Increase of Placement in Foster Care?

The Act XXXI of 1997 brought significant changes to the Hungarian child protection system, and at the same time the living conditions of children living in institutions also changed. In the case of placement of a child removed from the family, the law gives preference to placement back in the biological family, foster care or adoption, and lastly, placement in a children's home. The aim is for children to live in a family environment, rather than an institutional one, even if this is not possible within their own family. Another important aspect for children is to spend as little time away from their families as possible. The existing network of child protection institutions was also modernised in 1997. In the context of deinstitutionalisation, large institutions have been continuously restructured, smaller, more family-oriented residential homes have been created, and foster care has been expanded.

In the remaining part of the paper, we present a comparative analysis of the characteristics of child care before and after 1997. We will focus on the main stages of deinstitutionalisation and present the changes/trends affecting children aged 0-3 at each stage. After 1997, the first phase of the process involved the creation of small residential homes to provide family-like conditions for children. The second phase of deinstitutionalisation started in 2004, when more children were placed in foster care than in children's homes. The third phase of the process started in 2014, when more than 90 percent of children under 12, two-thirds of all children in specialised care, were placed in foster care.

The 1st phase of deinstitutionalisation dates back to the years after 1997. At that time the infant homes, homes for pre-school children (3-6 years) and school-age children (6-14 years) which provided age-appropriate care for children, have been discontinued. After 1997, 3-6 year olds were placed in foster care, special children's homes and residential homes. 6-14 year olds were mainly living in foster care, residential care homes and children's homes in co-educational mixed-age groups in the years after 1997. The high-capacity children's homes have been constantly transformed, replacing them mainly by residential homes, which provide continuous care for 12 children. The general children's home accommodated up to forty children in a small community. Children's homes and residential care homes have differentiated according to the needs of children, and children's homes and residential care homes specialising in the care of children with special needs and specific needs have also appeared (According to Act XXXI of 1997 No 53 §). There are two categories of residential care in Hungary: One category includes children with severe psychiatric or psychosocial symptoms, children who use psychoactive substances and children suspected of being victims of human trafficking - this category is called "*special*" in this study. Another form of special care must be provided for children under three years of age and who are chronically ill or disabled - this category is called "*specific*" in the study.) The special children's homes and residential care homes are for children aged 0-3 years with a persistent disability. Children with antisocial behaviour, psychoactive substance abuse, delinquent behaviour, dysfunctional behaviour and severe behavioural integration difficulties were placed in special children's homes and special residential care homes. The aftercare home can provide additional care if the child has reached the adult age but still meets the conditions (Act XXXI of 1997)

Support for the foster care network was already growing in the 1980s and after 1997 this was the preferred form of accommodation to ensure family accommodation. In these years there were traditional, professional and special professional foster parents. The system was restructured in 2014, with new categories of foster carers, special and specific foster carers, better adapted to the needs of the children, and all foster carers now working on an employed basis.

Table 3. Number of places and children by type of care in 2005*

Title	Number of places authorised	Temporarily placed	Transitional foster care	Permanently fostered	Total	Recipient of aftercare	Temporary care	In total
		number of children						
		Children's home						
Children's home	3651	376	2429	107	2912	392	29	3333
Residential home	4608	105	3019	291	3415	832	2	4249
Special Children's Home	384	2	270	26	298	19		317
AID and Children's home	1032	16	603	83	704	177		879
Aftercare home	571		2		2	449		451
Specific Children's Home	607	58	334	67	459	62		521

* Source: Central Statistical Office (CSO) (2006). Information on family, child and youth protection. SZMM Department of Child and Youth Protection. p. 53.

The placement options for children are illustrated in Table 3. The data clearly show that in 2005, residential homes provided the largest number of places for children in need - 4608 in total. Accordingly, the majority of children (4,249) were placed in this type of institution, i.e. many more children were placed in institutions providing family-like conditions.

After the introduction of Act XXXI of 1997, foster care became more preferred. Up to the second half of the 1990s, the number of foster parents showed a decreasing trend, according to CSO (2004), in 1990 there were 5373 foster parents, in 1997 there were 4809, while in 2002 there were 5020.

Between 2002 and 2005, there has been a small but steady increase in the number of people taking on the task. The number increased from 5020 in 2002 to 5323 in 2005.

Table 4. Number of foster parents in 2005*

Number of foster parents with		Professional foster parent	Traditional foster parent	Total
0	**child in need of child protection**	2	474	476
1		16	1867	1883
2		31	1189	1220
3		40	783	823
4		57	384	441
5		84	167	251
6 or more		17	59	229
Total		400	4923	5323

*Source: Central Statistical Office (CSO) (2006). Information on family, child and youth protection. SZMM Department of Child and Youth Protection. p. 59.

Table 4 shows that in 2005 there were 400 professional and 4,923 traditional foster parents in Hungary. Typically, foster carers were most likely to foster 1-2-3 children. Fewer took on the task of fostering 5 or more children, with 480 foster parents in 2005. The national study, which also covered foster carers, found that foster parent networks cannot be developed indefinitely due to a lack of suitable foster carers. Between 1999 and 2002, the number of foster carers increased from 4789 to 5020, according to the survey. The slow growth in the number of foster carers is due to the low number of applicants and the ageing of foster carers. The survey shows that many people apply to become foster parents in order to solve their existential problems, for lack of other options (State Audit Office of Hungary, 2004).

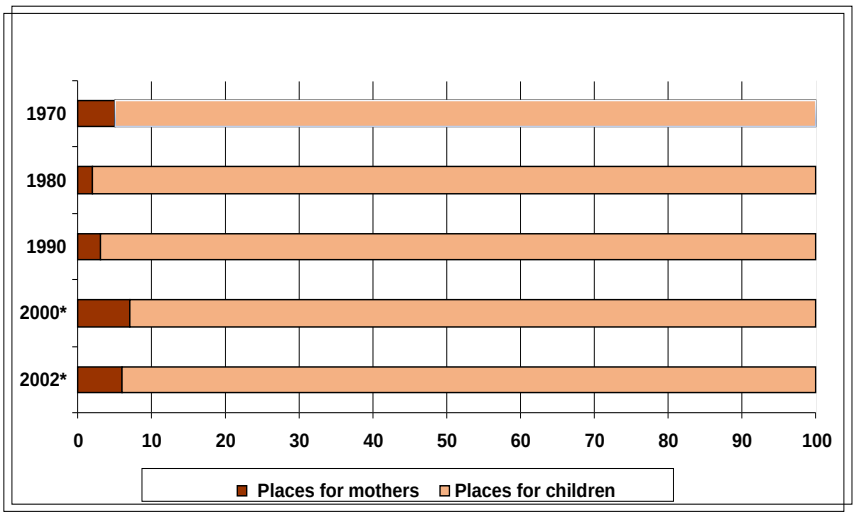

Figure 1. Changes in the number of places in infant homes (Source: Tóth J. N. (Ed.) (2004). The state of child protection specialized care in the 20th century. CSO, p. 18.)

According to Révész (2007), the Act XXXI of 1997 "forgot" about infant homes. The previous division of children's homes according to age has been abolished, with children aged 0-18 being placed in children's homes until the age of 24, subject to certain conditions. Children are placed in co-educational, mixed-age groups in different types of homes.

After the introduction of the Act XXXI of 1997, the number of infant places decreased and the number of maternity places increased (Figure 1). According to the data in the Figure 1 while in 1990 there were 3,690 places for infants and 144 places for mothers, in 2002 there were 1,399 places for infants and 94 places for mothers. Placing mothers together with their children helps to strengthen the mother-child relationship, and in many cases it is the only option for the mother, as some mothers have been institutionalised themselves.

> "It is mainly under-age mothers, in need of state care, who are placed with their newborn babies in special children's homes and residential homes. In some places, it is also possible for an adult mother, who may be working, to be admitted to the children's home with her newborn or one- or two-year-old child. In this case, the children have a place in a group for their age group, but spend all or most of the day with their mother." (Majoros, 2015, p. 151).

Until December 2005, infant homes in Hungary were under continuous restructuring. Special children's homes have been set up to accommodate children who need special care because of their age (0-3 years old), children who are permanently ill and children with disabilities, who are defined by law as having special needs. The special children's home also provides early development, care and education for children under the age of 6, with disabilities and developmental delays. Children's homes can accept children aged 0-3 if they can provide the necessary conditions for their placement. The average number of people in these homes was 8.4 at its highest and 7.1 at its lowest in the period 1980-1997. The Child Protection Act capped the number of children in these homes at 8.

Foster care, which would be particularly appropriate for children under three, could not always be provided. "For foster parents, fostering a small child is not a general task, but one that requires very specific knowledge and skills. In addition, some social work professionals stress that for a significant proportion of children, who are placed in specialised care at a young age, if the mother or parents receive special help and support during their visits to the nursery, they are more likely to be able to take the child home after a relatively short period of time" (Révész, 2007, p. 38).

The year 2004 was a milestone in terms of deinstitutionalisation, when for the first time more than half (51.3 per cent) of the children in child protection care were placed with foster parents. This proportion has steadily increased every year according to Table 8, and by 2018 the vast majority of children, 68.3 per cent, were living with a foster parent (CSO, 2019). Efforts to place children in families have steadily increased, with the creation of foster parent networks and intensive recruitment of foster parents. In 2018,

49 foster parent networks were operating in Hungary. A network brings together ten foster parents and is supported by a variety of professionals - special needs teachers, psychologists, development teachers, etc. Foster parents - who look after children under three years of age or children with long-term illness or disabilities, i.e. children with special needs - are included in the special foster carers group.

There are significant inequalities in the distribution of foster parents across counties, some of which result from inequalities in foster parent networks. 4% of settlements with more than 30 000 inhabitants had foster parents. Two-thirds of the foster carers lived in small settlements with fewer than 5,000 inhabitants. In certain counties and regions, the "population density" of foster parents is high in the North-East Regions in Hungary. The vast majority of these regions and municipalities are considered to be at high risk of poverty and are correlated with the presence of a Roma population (Babusik, 2009). There are therefore significant differences in the number of foster parents between counties and regions. The capital and the counties in the North-east regions have a high number of foster parents, nearly 60 percent of all foster parents are living here (CSO, 2019).

In the public sector, from 2013, specialised care was placed under the responsibility of the Directorate General for Social Protection of Children, part of the Ministry of Human Resources. As well as being run by the state, church and non-governmental organisations are also involved in running the foster care networks. In terms of proportions, there is a tendency for state involvement to decline, with civil society networks only participating to a small extent, while church involvement has increased significantly in recent years (Boros, 2021).

In 2000, there were 4,858 foster parents, rising to 5,753 in 2013. This is partly due to the recruitment of foster parents. The number of traditional foster carers is significantly higher than that of professional foster carers. While their number is only a fraction of that of traditional foster carers, the number of professional foster carers - as mentioned earlier, they are employed - is on the decline. While there were 400 professional foster carers in 2005, there were only 293 in 2013 (CSO, 2014).

The third major phase of the Hungarian deinstitutionalisation process started in 2014. This year has seen a number of significant changes in child protection, which have helped to achieve deinstitutionalisation. One such change is the restructuring of foster care. The foster parents are employed, for which they receive a salary, and this is accompanied by the deduction of length of service, sick pay entitlement and family tax allowance. Foster parents can be special or specific foster parents depending on the needs of the children they care for.

The number of foster parents decreases in the years after 2013, except in 2018, when the number of foster parents increased minimally, 20 persons compared to 5753 in 2013. The number of special foster parents is much smaller in relation to the total number of foster parents, between 17 and 21 per cent. The exception is 2020, when the number of special foster parents increased by 278 compared to 2019 (CSO, 2021). This increase in numbers could be due to the introduction of a cash benefit for foster parents, the childcare allowance in 2020, which foster parents can claim up to the age of two of the children. This is another way the government is trying to help increase the number of special foster parents.

Caring for children with special needs is no small task for foster parents. Based on the literature, the most significant problem is the foster care of children under three years of age with a permanent illness or disability.

> "Foster parents rarely take on the care of young children with a severe disability, permanent illness or health impairment because they lack the material resources and specialised skills to provide for them safely and professionally. A further problem is the difficulty of access to development and therapy services in the area" (Gyarmati et al., 2018, p. 79).

In a study conducted by Gyarmati et al. (2018), they found that most of the children with special needs aged 0-6 years in the study were directly introduced into the foster care network from the biological family, and secondarily directly from the hospital. The move from foster care to institutional care is usually triggered by a deterioration in the child's condition. And in the case of a transfer from another foster family, the most typical is the difficulty of care in that foster family. In institutions for children under three with

special needs, 60% of children come from the hospital.

Foster parents are less willing to take care of children with disabilities or long-term illnesses, and it is often only at the foster parent's home that it is discovered that the child has a problem or developmental delay.

> "By disability, the largest number of children in foster parent networks are those who show a lag in healthy development. Second in the order of frequency is persistent illness, and third is mental or psychological impairment. Children with sensory and locomotor disabilities are the least numerous. In 76 per cent of cases, the child's disability is diagnosed after placement in foster care, and in more than half of the children (51 per cent) the disability was first noticed by the foster parent" (Gyarmati et al., 2018, p. 83).

The number of children aged 0-3 living in child protection care has been steadily increasing since 2013. In 2013, there were 2512 children aged 0-3 living in foster families or children's homes, a number that increased by almost 1000 to 3464 in 2018. In 2013, the proportion of children aged 0-3 years was 13.4% of the total number of minors under 18 living in child protection, rising to 16.3% in 2018. This tendency is less prevalent among 4-5 year olds, but is also very strong among 6-9 year olds, who are not in our target group. Overall, it is also true that the number of children entering child protection has been steadily increasing since 2013. In 2013, there were 18674 children under the age of 18 living in child protection by 2018, rising to 21,210 (CSO, 2019*).* This is despite the fact that Act XXXI of 1997 aimed to reduce the number of children living in institutions and foster care.

The "Hintalovon" Child Rights Foundation's 2019 report on children's rights states that not only is the number of children in specialised care increasing, but also the number of children under 3 years old entering children's homes (306 in 2018). The report states that the idea that all children under 12 admitted to specialised care should be placed in foster care by 31 December 2016 has not been achieved (there is a module specifically for special and particular foster parents) (Balogh et al., 2021).

A higher proportion of parents give up children with severe disabilities and special needs. Children's homes have more children with special or specific needs, persistent illnesses and children aged 0-3 than foster families. Few children are placed in foster families, because the number of applicants for special and specific foster parent status is even lower and is steadily decreasing. An important shortcoming mentioned in the report is that the current foster parent training does not include a module specifically designed for special and specific foster parents (Balogh et. al, 2019).

Among the alternative forms of care, family placement would be absolutely justified for 0-3 year olds. A number of studies (Browne, 2006; Finelli et al., 2018; Zeanah et al., 2003) have shown that children's development - both physical and mental - is significantly affected by being raised in a family rather than in an institution. One of the basic studies, which started in 2000 is the Bucharest Early Intervention Project (BEIP), which is the only study to use a randomised controlled design to study the benefits of deinstitutionalisation. Following an extensive baseline assessment, 68 of the 136 children in institutions (aged 6-31 months) were randomly assigned to a high-quality foster care programme that was developed and financed by the investigators. The other 68 children were randomly assigned to care as usual, which initially meant that these children remained in institutional care. All children were followed up at 30, 42 and 54 months of age, and also at the age of 8 and 12 years. The development of children living in foster care was compared with that of children randomly selected to stay in the institution.

The foster care intervention was broadly effective in enhancing children's development, and for specific domains, including brain activity (EEG), attachment, language, and cognition, there appear to be sensitive periods regulating their recovery. That is, the earlier a child was placed in foster care, the better their recovery. Although the sensitive periods for recovery vary by domain, our results suggest that placement before the age of 2 years is key. Quality of caregiving, which was objectively coded from videotaped observations, was higher in the children in BEIP foster care than children who received care as usual (Zeanah et al., 2017). In Hungary, the number of foster care placements for 0-2 year olds has increased in line with the changes required in 2014 - which provided that children under 12 must be placed with a foster parent - and by 2018, nearly 90 percent of 0-2 year olds were living in foster care (Lux & Sebhelyi,

2019).

The process of deinstitutionalisation started in the period 1996-2018 and has continued steadily, and is still ongoing today, 25 years on. From 1997 onwards, three significant periods of deinstitutionalisation emerged. A particular feature of the post-1997 period has been the transformation of large institutions into smaller-scale, family-style residential care homes, which has promoted the spread of alternative forms of care. In residential care homes, the principle of normalisation is applied, which provides for the separation of living, education/work and leisure. The normalization principle also implies a normal routine of life. Most people live in one place, work or attend school somewhere else, and have leisure-time activities in a variety of places (Nirje, 1994).

Discussion

In this research we sought to answer the question of how did the alternative forms of care develop in Hungarian child protection for 0-3-year-olds during socialism and in the following years. Taking into account the features of institutionalisation and deinstitutionalisation in the historical approach, three periods emerged: 1950-1970, 1980-1995, 1996-2018.

Institutionalisation Strengthened by Socialist Ideology

The socio-economic determinants of child protection are well reflected in the overview of the three periods. The socialist ideology of the 1950-70s had an impact on child protection. The socialist system of plan guidance and central prescription also prevailed in child protection, which further strengthened institutionalism. The period was characterised by the regression of foster care, given the socialist era's lack of trust in foster parents. It relied much more on institutional, community education, where children received a uniformed, ideologically expected moral-political-ideological education. Socialist-style education also had an impact on the 0-3 age group we studied. Among other things, the children were given uniform clothes and performed routine activities in groups at the same time. The impact on children's development, in addition to hospitalisation, is that the individual needs of the child were ignored.

The Beginnings of Deinstitutionalisation

From a socio-economic-political point of view, the period 1980-1995 was characterised by a significant "softening" of socialism in Hungary. The economy has started to move from a planned economy to a market-based economy. Various studies were published to draw attention to social problems, and it was no longer possible to hide the existence of difficulties such as poverty, disadvantage, etc. The changes have also affected child protection, with the first cautious attempts at reform, such as the introduction of professional foster parents. This gave foster carers a choice, as they were also allowed to work as employees. However, institutional education continued to dominate child protection - institutions were the most trusted partners of the paternalistic state. The ideological upbringing of children, the socialist ideal of man, could still be realised in institutional education, where ideological education could presumably be better controlled and kept under control than in a foster family. However, towards the end of the period, reforms were also introduced in the institutions, with small family groups being set up in children's homes as an experiment. The living conditions of children in institutional education continued to be characterised by communal education and a disregard for individual needs. The isolated location of the institutions outside the settlements created a sense of isolation for the children, which was further aggravated by the operation of on-site kindergartens and schools within the child protection institutions. Institutionalisation remained strong in this period.

Reforms in Child Protection and Care Practices

The transition to democracy has significantly transformed the socio-economic structure in Hungary, the multi-party system and the transition to a market economy were established. A number of social problems also needed to be solved during these years. Parallel to the change in the social system, there has also been a significant change in the approach to child protection, with the beginning of the “change of the

child protection system". More and more innovations have been introduced and after many years of preparatory work and summarising practical experience, the Act XXXI of 1997 on the Protection of Children has been introduced, which forms the basis of the deinstitutionalisation process. When the law was introduced, the expected impact of the targeted programmes was to reduce the number of children living in institutions and foster care by half in the first instance and by two-thirds in the longer term (Herczog, 1997). To achieve this, child welfare services to strengthen families were regulated by law.

However, even in 2018, an unjustifiably high number of children were still in need of institutional care, especially children with disabilities and children with long-term illnesses. Unfortunately, in recent years, the number of children in child protection care in Hungary has increased, despite the original objective of reducing the number of children in care. This may be due, among other things, to child poverty, disorganised family backgrounds and the fact that primary child welfare services have few tools to strengthen families.

Among the alternative forms of care, first residential care and then, gradually since 2004, foster care have played an increasing role in the protection of children. In addition, the forms of placement that take better account of the needs of children, like residential care, foster care and, in particular, special forms of foster care have been further strengthened the emergence and effectiveness of alternative forms of care. The working conditions of foster carers have also changed since 2014, from this year onwards they are working on an employed basis. In addition to this, child protection care has seen the emergence of deinstitutionalisation features such as the tendency to have stable care places, flexible daily schedules, a family atmosphere, individualised and differentiated treatment, stronger attachment to the foster parent or carer and the development of a system of private carers in institutions for 0-3 year olds. Contacts with biological parents are regulated and every effort is made to help the child return to his or her biological family. Following the amendment of the law in 2014, children under the age of 12 were mainly placed in foster care. The proportion of children in foster care is currently close to 90 per cent among the 0-3 age group we studied.

Deinstitutionalisation has brought significant changes for the institutions. With the restructuring of the institutions, their location has been integrated within the municipality. The institutions are smaller and more open. In line with the principle of normalisation, the place of residence, the place of education and the place of leisure are separated. On-site kindergartens and schools have been abolished. The individual needs of children are taken into account more than before. Children's sense of security can be enhanced by seeking stability of the staff, carers/caregivers and promoting contact with the biological family.

It is clear from the above that socio-economic changes have a significant impact on the development of child protection. The socialist are has had an impact on child protection for many decades. The years following the democratic transition also brought a major transformation in child protection, a "transition of the child protection system", paving the way for the deinstitutionalisation process and the emergence of alternative forms of care.

Conclusion

The study findings suggest that the process of deinstitutionalisation is underway in Hungarian child protection, but it is not yet complete. Hungarian child protection has been trying for a long time - at least 25 years - to use alternative forms of care and to strengthen deinstitutionalisation. The ratification of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, which took place in Hungary in 1991, was a major step forward in the process. Looking at the different eras, it is clear that a number of laws and amendments have been passed, but some of these are still to be implemented. Legislation alone is worth little, the implementation is the key issue.

Hungarian child protection was significantly influenced by the ideological aspirations of different periods, which affected the social policy of the time and the child protection system within it. This article highlights the development of alternative forms of care, which has made significant progress, particularly in the recent period, i.e. 1996-2018 including the Pikler method, which gained early recognition

internationally whereas its spread in Hungary came later.

Alternative forms of care emerged mainly after the introduction of the Child Protection Act in 1997, but their potential has not yet been fully exploited. Right now in the Hungarian system alternative forms of care are clearly characterised by a preference for foster care. At the theoretical level, there is a need for comprehensive research that could explore the current situation of foster carers. In general, empirical research is scarce in Hungary, despite the fact that foster care has become a widespread form of care in recent years. There is a need for more research into the coping skills and training of foster carers and the stability of this form of placement. A further research topic could be the emergence of a significant role for church-based providers in alternative forms of care, including foster care, and their impact on the child protection system. The research findings could be used to develop intervention guidelines and policy decisions that could lead to the improvement of practical work within a complex child protection approach.

The limited number of places in foster care is still a challenge, while the number of children in need of child protection is increasing, especially in the 0-3 age group. A sobering fact is that the number of foster carers cannot be increased indefinitely. There are several reasons for this: on the one hand, not everyone is suitable for foster care, and on the other hand, our study shows that foster parents find it more difficult to care for children aged 0-3 years and children with long-term illnesses and disabilities. Various legislative and social policy measures have tried to change this situation in recent years, such as the possibility for those, who work as full-time foster parents to also receive childcare allowance for children aged 0-3. More favourable working conditions, employment opportunities and benefits as well as specialised training could potentially increase the number of foster carers. More attention should also be paid in their training to the care and education of children aged 0-3 years and children with long-term disabilities. In addition, recreational leave can also influence the effectiveness of foster parenting.

As regards the alternative forms of care, taking into account the theoretical, practical and policy aspects, it would be worthwhile to develop a complex child protection concept based on the needs and age of children, which would help practical work based on research. As an element of the concept, primary prevention should be emphasised, i.e. the prevention of children being removed from their families. Intensive family preservation services (Bányai, 2015), which means intensive social work and assistance with the family, would be one way to do this. This includes educating parents about child-rearing and the needs of their children. This service is currently underused in Hungarian child welfare services, mainly due to a lack of human resources. The next element of this concept is the development of foster parent networks and the training of foster parents, based on the research presented above. Among the alternative forms of care the family-based, family-like care could be improved, which is already an applicable method in Hungary. The law allows children to be placed with a third person, who is not necessarily a relative. This solution is not widespread now, but could bring a significant increase in capacity, especially for 0-3 year olds. However, to do this, it would be necessary to make this opportunity more widely known, and to raise public awareness. The concept could include a presentation of the role of NGOs and churches in child protection, as well as a presentation of international good practices and an analysis of their potential for adaptation in Hungary.

This paper also argues that all types of alternative care may be needed, to varying degrees, bearing in mind the needs of children. Thus, in some cases, placement in a children's home or in a residential home may be just as necessary as foster care in order to ensure that individual needs of the child are catered for. The effectiveness of child protection work can be improved by increasing the resources allocated to child protection and by expanding the range of services that strengthen families (thus avoiding the use of foster care and institutionalisation), which could be made even more effective by inter-professional cooperation and a more co-ordinated approach between services.

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Research Article

Relationship between families and kindergartens in Hungary in the 1950s

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Abstract: Partnership working and co-operation between parents and early education and care settings is a widely researched topic worldwide. However, little is known about how the relationship between families and kindergartens developed in the historically significant period of the 1950s in Hungary, which marks the beginnings of socialism and a period of rapid expansion of early childhood education and care. This study aims to explore how the expectations of raising 'socialist citizens' was incorporated into educational and policy documents and other written resources relating to kindergarten and family education. Purposive sampling selection identified 80 documents as data sources, which were subjected to qualitative content analysis. Intra-frame coding was done by hand using a combined inductive and deductive approach. Employing a constructivist theoretical lens, the analysis focused on both the manifest and latent content of the selected documents and resulted in seven main themes. The findings confirmed that the ideologically driven policy decisions not only influenced the relationship between families and kindergartens but also legitimised the efforts to build a socialist system of early education through organised collaboration and related propaganda work. This study is significant as it offers a more nuanced understanding of the relationship between kindergartens and families in the '50s and with that provides foundations for further analytical work of the socialist pedagogical past.

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Introduction

In the history of the soon-to-be 200-year-old Hungarian Kindergartens, expansion of early childhood education started in the 1950s. This was the time when political, economic, and social changes made more and more parents enrol their children in kindergartens (Vág, 1993).

The scope of this research is to assess whether the traditions related to the relationship between families and kindergartens in the '50s can be considered as the antecedent of early childhood education of today and whether the pedagogical past is still influencing attitudes in the present. One of the cornerstones of early childhood education is still the creation of the balance and collaboration between the two scenes of nurturing a child: the family and the kindergarten. The relationship between these two environments influence every family in Hungary because of early childhood education being compulsory from the age of three as laid down in the Act on National Public Education (2011).

The fledgling socialist system of the '50s started to collectivise and institutionalise the care of preschool age children in order to exert influence on future generations and bring them up according to the then new values and norms (Komlósi, 1977). This suggests that the communist leadership recognised that they could exert influence on the upbringing of 'socialist citizens' of the future through the family and the role kindergartens as an institution of early education and care fulfilled (Molnár et al., 2015; Szerepi et al., 2018).

The focus of this study is on the nature of the relationship between families and kindergartens and the study aims to explore how the expectations of the socialist state was present in documents relating to

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kindergartens (e.g. regulations), in other written sources (such as early child education schoolbooks, professional association of kindergarten pedagogues, publications for parents), specifically, to explore the role of families and kindergartens as reflected in kindergarten policies of the day. The sources this study focuses on have not yet been analysed by researchers of the history of Hungarian kindergartens with the specific focus on the relationship between families and kindergartens. Hence, existing knowledge of how kindergartens operated in the '50s can be further differentiated.

Background to the Study

Writings on the Pedagogy of the 1950s

The second half of the 20th century is not 'ancient history' (Koselleck, 2003). There is a generation whose experiences go back to the 1950s' Hungary. However, they are underrepresented compared to younger generations. For these newer generations, the inhomogeneous period of the country's Sovietisation, the Stalinist dictatorship and socialism, when politics had a major influence on everyday life and culture, is history (Szabolcs, 2006). In most countries of the world, interest in research exploring the immediate and recent past is avid and growing. Fewer and fewer people have direct experience of this era (Romsics, 2008, cited by Kolosai, 2012).

Setting the time dimensions for this study was based on the analysis of events relating to kindergartens and prevailing concepts within kindergarten policies. The '50s cover the decade between 1948 and 1959, when kindergartens were placed under government control. Earlier childhood pedagogical traditions were discontinued, and an early childhood education based on the Soviet model was implemented (Kövér, 1987). This was a centrally governed, comprehensive and co-ordinated system of early education and care, design to echo the dictatorial and command-driven socialism, characterised by rigid hierarchies, conformity and uniformity (Silova et al., 2017). The 1959 end date was set by the significant milestone of the socialist kindergartens' 'heroic age' as this was the year when early childhood pedagogy became part of tertiary training. Work analysing the pedagogy of the '50s present varied interpretations of the past. On one hand this is due to the difference in the values, intentions and interpretation of past historians and pedagogy experts. On the other hand, this is due to the uncertainties in understanding the past (Golnhofer, 2006). Historical research of the recent past aptly demonstrates that the period in time that lasts until the present can be described by different coexisting histories and sometimes fundamentally different interpretations of the past (Szabolcs, 2006).

In the past decade or so, more and more researchers have tried to explore and describe this era and its the 'socialist pedagogy'. Examples of this are a series of the 'Library of Socialist Education' which promoted the development of a pedagogy based on the Soviet model (Szabolcs & Golnhofer, 2018) or the review of education policies which had an influence on lower primary teacher training (Donáth, 2008). The authors' analysis was based on the publicly available pedagogical and political discourses of the field. There were works of analysis that described the upbringing of children in the '50s including care and nurturing within kindergartens. There were pieces of writing that delved into the history of workplace kindergartens (Aczél, 2012), which were regarded as politico-sociological benefits, especially within state-owned companies of the socialist era. The history of European social policy is also discussed in the anthology of 'Children, Families, and States' (Hagemann et al., 2011).

Teaching and learning approaches were constrained by having to replicate the Soviet model, whereby earlier traditions were replaced by forced its pedagogical concepts as analysed in a former kindergarten publication, 'Organised Activities in the Kindergarten' (Pálfi, 2010).

The Presence of the Relationship Between Families and Kindergartens in the Discourse on Pedagogy

From the second half of the 20th century, an increased interest is noted in partnership working between parents and pedagogues, and the relationship between families and public education institutions (e.g. Bedmar & Palma, 2011; Bersan, 2021; Hryniewicz & Luff, 2021; Podráczky, 2012). The Hungarian specificities on the subject ware covered by Sándor Komlósi (1981) and Sándor Füle (1989), the former focusing on nurturing within the family and the latter on the relationship between the two environments.

However, the publications of both authors concentrate on schools, and only touch on kindergartens. The various facets of the relationship between families and kindergartens also attracts analysis, specifically what influences parents when choosing a kindergarten. Research conducted in this area suggests that human factors, such as the kindergarten pedagogue as a person and pedagogue's loving, kind attitudes influence parental choice (Kim & Fram, 2009; Rose & Elicker, 2008; Teszenyi & Hevey, 2015; Török, 2004). The role of loving relationships and how families and society look at early childhood education and the partnership between early childhood educators and parents have also been examined (see Murray, et al., 2018; Varga, 2020).

In a seminal piece of writing, Tamás Kozma (1974) discusses research directions and possible approaches to examine the public relations of educational institutions, including their relationship with families, which he outlines as:

- An educational theory and sociological approach whereby education is defined in a broader sense, as a social process in which different groups collaborate in the processes of socialisation, one of the most important groups being family and educational institutions.
- A pedagogical approach found in educational theory coursebooks, widely known and accepted by pedagogues. In other words, nurturing takes place in different environments, e.g. family and kindergarten. Collaboration between these environments is desired and is led and managed by the kindergarten.
- An educational system management approach based on the general and local management of education and kindergarten system.

The study presented in this paper is also based on the above approaches. It also considers it fundamental that one of the most important responsibilities families and public education institutions (including kindergartens) undertake is the integration of each new generation into society (Háber & Sas, 1980). A key tenet of the era under investigation is the nurturing of the new 'type of socialist man' who accepts and strengthens the structure of the socialist society (Millei, 2011). The objective pursued by the 1950s' kindergartens was to co-ordinate the educational work in the family as well as in the kindergarten in order to successfully bring up children. With this in mind, the influence of kindergarten policy was extended significantly: regulations at different levels aimed to establish a systemic unity in the relationship between the two environments (family and kindergarten) (Komlósi, 1965).

Methodological Background

This sub-section discusses the methodology employed in this study, including the theoretical framework, the sample and the analysis of the data.

The study adopted an educational history methodology (Kéri, 1997, 2001), specifically an early educational history methodology, which explores the development of kindergartens as educational institutions in Hungary (Báthory & Falus, 1997), and with this, setting its spatial dimensions. The focus is on its specificities and typical characteristics in the 1950s (temporal dimension), an era when political leadership claimed ownership of education both in the institutional and the private sector, which meant that the nurturing of young children both in kindergartens and within family was regarded as the prerogative of the state (Kozma, 2012).

In developing the historical synthesis, the objective was to construct historical realities of the relationship between families and socialist kindergartens along the constructivist epistemology, which recognises that there is more than one reality, hence individual realities also exist and they are constructed within a social context and time-bound (Denicolo et al., 2016). Working from this stance leads to a kind of subjective knowledge that is shared via language. The researcher is an active part of this process of subjective knowledge production by negotiating the multiple realities represented in the selected documentary sources (Berger & Luckmann, 1967; Given, 2008; Searle, 1995). These interpretations were based on self-experience and is now ready to be tried by the scientific community.

Educational history research is deductive and analytical as it analyses the experiences of sources from various disciplines, it interprets and describes ideas and phenomena using a cyclical process (Szabolcs, 1996). Interpreting sources of education history requires the researcher to have a vivid imagination, artistic perception and creativity (Kéri, 2001), therefore, historical narration cannot completely eliminate the researcher's subjectivity. This is in accordance with the characteristics of qualitative research where the emphasis is on the exploration and the uncovering of the phenomenon under investigation (Szabolcs, 2001). Although, there are a growing number of studies employing educational history methodology in Hungary, it is still in its infancy, therefore this paper also offers a methodological contribution.

Documentary Sources – Establishing the Sample

Establishing the study sample was informed by a structured set of criteria (topic, geography and time) which included several dimensions (Molnár-Kovács, 2015, 2019). They have circumscribed the primary and secondary sources of the research. Identifying and explaining the so-called source dimensions helped group together all written sources relevant to the topic of investigation (relationship between parents and kindergartens) used in this study:

- *kindergarten policy dimension:* in the 1950s, the state's growing influence on public education institutions, through regulations, was documented. This is why decrees and coursebooks on early childhood education were be looked at, with the later ones having been published by the National Textbook Publisher, governed by the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Public Education (Kóger, 2019).
- *press dimension:* the products of the Hungarian press included various publications: the practice-focused magazine that provided practice guidance for kindergarten pedagogues (Children's Care and Education – Kindergarten Care and Education [Gyermeknevelés - Óvodai nevelés]) as well as unrelated press read by parents (newspapers at the top of press hierarchy, their regional counterparts, other weekly prints, magazines). These non-professional press products of the 50s were also selected as they were the focal point of the discourse forming the opinion of the majority of the public, and they also provided an impression of the public's opinion (Lukacs, 2004). Involving such press products in educational history research is usually linked to the works of Kéri (2009) (Baska, 2018). The constitution of the People's Republic of Hungary guaranteed the freedom of press during socialism. However, the multidimensional control mechanism of the governing party never provided the circumstances for the freedom of press. Press products became the tools of state authority. Newspapers could not survive as collective agitators to publish content without approval by someone at the highest level (Somogyvári, 2018).

Although the number of sources available was high, they were all 'unilateral', which explained why there was, in actual fact, a lack of sources that could be identified for selection. The sources only present the official, often propagandistic rules and criteria. Therefore, the corrupting influences of the party's ideology, reflected in the language used, had to be taken into consideration. The style of these texts suggests complete control (Jessen, 1997 cited by Apor, 2008; Judt, 1997 cited by Apor, 2008). Considered with this caveat, these sources were still utilised to reconstruct the past of kindergarten.

Across the two dimensions explained above, the search for literature revealed a high number of documents, from which the text corpus was selected. Time-related selection criteria reduced the sources to those kindergarten regulatory documents and practice guides (laying down the expectations by the state) that were from between 1948 and 1959. Included in the text corpus from this period were the issues of the practice-based magazines, Children's Care and Education and its successor from 1953, Kindergarten Care and Education, which were both designed to reach a kindergarten pedagogue audience, as well as newspapers and weekly prints (N=80) read by parents to keep them up to date. The former were drawn from the files of the National Educational Library and Museum, the latter from Arcanum Digitheca. Research data was drawn these by targeted, selective sampling based on their titles as related to the topic.

As for non-professional newspapers, the selection was initially made using the keyword 'kindergarten' ('óvoda'), then the text corpus was narrowed down for research based on the content relating to the topic of the study.

Analytical Framework

Content analysis was carried out, which focused both on the manifest and latent meanings conveyed in the selected texts. Content structuring served as the central objective of the qualitative data analysis (Kuckartz, 2012, 2019; Mayring, 2019, Sántha, 2021, 2022; Schreier, 2014). The process started with familiarisation, followed by the identification of main and sub-themes (Kuckartz, 2012). In order to avoid data loss, inductive and deductive coding approaches were combined, and all text segments were processed. The first step was to use a priori coding as a coding type related to theory-driven logic (Sántha, 2015, 2022). The main categories to code the data corpus were created before the analysis. By theoretical consideration, they were created based on the expectations ['*Az óvoda feladata a szülők felé*' - '*Duties of Kindergartens for Parents'*] of the first regulatory document describing the relationship between families and kindergartens in the '50s ['Rendtartás az óvodák számára' - 'Kindergarten rules and regulations' (1951)]. The manifest tasks expressed in this document were considered as the main content units entered into the coding list in advance. Hence the initial coding structure follows a deductive coding logic. The goal was to find concepts that described how kindergarten politics of the time defined the roles of the two educational environments of the future socialist citizens in early childhood education. Subcategories linked to the main categories were created when the document was divided into further subunits. The texts were further coded using data-driven inductive logic. Further levelling was possible in some subcategories as the subcodes had new subcodes within them.

In order to achieve reliability, intra frame coding was used. This meant that the texts were coded twice by the researcher manually using a colour-based visual aid (Maietta, 2008) with a ten-day gap using the same coding system. Then results were compared (Dafinoiu & Lungu, 2003; Sántha, 2015, 2021, 2022). Rather than aiming to achieve inter-coder reliability, this analytical approach aligned the study with its subjective epistemological design. Differences and similarities as the coding task was repeated afforded the rethinking and fine-tuning of categories, hence providing conceptual congruence for the analysis (Hennink et al., 2020).

Table 1. Coding frame

Super themes	Themes	Sub-themes
collaboration between parents and kindergarten: parts of texts and statements that cover activities related to improve the operation of kindergartens and children's education	**collaboration framework** (its indications)	• Parent-Teacher Association • other mass-organisations (e.g. MNDSZ (Democratic Association of Hungarian Women)) • supporting bodies
	helping kindergartens (indications of financial or affirmative contribution)	• competition movements • charity work • afternoon work • evening shows
confidential relationship: text parts and statements related to building a relationship with parents based on trust	occasions for networking (individual and group occasions to network)	• parent-teacher conference • personal conversation
aligned education: text parts and statements related to the creation of unified education within kindergartens and families (based on socialist pedagogy)	**pedagogical control/propaganda** (indications of convincing or 'indoctrinating' parents)	
	forums of pedagogical information (its indications)	• School of Parents, parents' conferences, • parents' visit to kindergarten, ceremonies (introduction to the rules and

		practices of early childhood education), • 'Parent Corner' - noticeboard • media: newspapers, radio
family-related circumstances: text parts and statements related to the living conditions, profession of the parents of children in kindergarten, and the quality of family education	**ways of getting to know the families** (indication of family visits)	
care for parents: text parts and statements related to advice and help from the kindergarten pedagogue to parents		
enlightenment (propaganda): text parts related to the kindergarten pedagogue's awareness (political, cultural, economic) that is used to convey the (political) message of the state to the parents influencing their opinions	**the kindergarten pedagogue as social worker** (indications of motivating to participate in relevant activities required by politics (e.g. buying bonds to fulfill the five-year plan, participating in the elections))	
leading by example: text parts and statements related to how the kindergarten pedagogue should set a standard both as a pedagogue and as a member of society	self-instruction (eliminating imperfections)	

Analysing content is a two-step process in which the steps are not completely separated. Categorisation and coding are followed by interpretation and explanation, i.e. data set into context and conclusions drawn (Szabolcs, 2001)

Apart from the manifest messages, attempts were made to explore latent meaning, which suggest underlying messages. This can be the basis of a classification in a conceptual framework (Babbie, 1996). The coding of these was not straightforward as they were not phrased transparently and directly but indirectly and insinuatingly (Podráczky, 2007). Written documents giving an account of the 1950s had to be managed carefully, requiring special attention as their value as a source was assessed. Those wanting to know about the pedagogy of the era must face the fact that most documents at the researchers' disposal were created from the political authority's perspective. This fact imposes limitations on the results (Golnhofer, 2006).

Analysis and Interpretation of the Results

The era under investigation was characterised by the ambition to homogenise and totally centralise all areas of life which led to 'Sovietisation' (Kozma, 2012). This resulted in new principles and objectives for the relationship between families and kindergartens. Expectations and messages to be conveyed were set by politics and education/kindergarten policies, forcing both parents and early childhood educators to accept and accommodate them.

The contents of analysed texts from the various sources were used corroboratively as they substantiated one another. Press products reflected the decisions on kindergarten policies and informed the interested parties about them. These put the emphasis on how the Soviet model was an example to follow and the need to implement it. The unique tone of these texts provides today's reader with a taste of the era's atmosphere which has now been quite forgotten. Apart from this, euphemistic phraseology (sugar-coating hard facts) was also present when it came to the kindergarten pedagogues' 'personal' experiences and newspaper articles on children. The official socialist communication would often not supply information, rather ideologically phrase certain values for the future society (Jensen, 1997, cited by Apor, 2008). Children were the antitype of the imagined collective future therefore they played a major role in the politics of socialist states (Apor, 2008).

The image of kindergartens published in the press, in the main, was to encourage parents' acceptance of their children's institutional care and education, hence driving them to join the workforce. Kindergartens

were described as 'fairy gardens' for children and were supposed to be the children's second home whilst the parents were at work, since '*Our country cares for the hopes of the future with solicitude, so they do not lack anything. Their destiny is to have a happy childhood, so that they can grow into happy workers.*' (Lőke, 1952, p.4.) Meals were provided for children, which was great help for parents as reported by an 'independent' national newspaper: *'The table is always laid in kindergartens, thanks to democracy*.' (Independent Newspaper, 1948, p.7.) Occasionally, the reality, i.e. the imperfections, problems of meals and equipment were also published in the papers.

Parent-Kindergarten Relationship

Through the expansion of kindergarten education and care, an increasing number of parents became consumers of the kindergarten. The state aimed to influence the relationship between the famiy and the institutions through legislation that reflected its main aims. Kindergarten pedagogue training provided preparation for the implementation of these legislations as the theoretical underpinning for practice was laid out in text books sensored by the state. The 'age old' topic of parent-pedagogue relationship also appeared in journals and practice-oriented professional publications, always reflective of the changes and directions of early childhood policies in its themes and content .

Published in 1951, 'Kindergarten rules and regulations' ['Rendtartás az óvodák számára'] controlled the relationship between families and kindergartens for the first time. Among the tasks outlined, which define the main categories of this data analysis, the most important one in the sources detailing the official expectations was the need for collaboration between the two nurturing environments. As a consequence, emphasis is also put on the need for the co-ordinated upbringing of children and, as a basis for this, on the effort to form close relationships. To achieve this, it was crucial to be familiar with the families' living conditions which was strongly related to caring about parents. However, according to the analysis, this task is emphasised less compared to the other ones mentioned earlier. The need for propaganda was constantly present, although in the articles analysed it was only enhanced following the socialisation and the Early Childhood Education Act 1953. In the chosen text corpus, the least preferred area was the kindergarten pedagogues' leading by example. Within this, the importance of self-instruction is only mentioned occasionally.

Opportunities for Co-operation between Parents and Kindergartens

Upon entering the new decade, the '50s, focus shifted onto the parent-teacher association (PTA) as following the socialisation of educational institutions, the relationship between families and kindergartens was organised by regulations. Between 1948 and 1950, three decrees were issued by the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Public Education in relation to the foundation and operation of the mass-organisation aiming to bring parents (and pedagogues) together. The 1975 book, (Parents and Educators) [Szülők és nevelők] by Révai, Gál & Majzik presents the history of the PTA, and evaluates it from a socialist perspective. As the organisational framework of collaboration between parents and kindergartens, the duties of the PTA were closely related to certain concepts of the coding frame above, such as helping kindergartens and alignment of upbringing within the forums of pedagogical enlightenment. As propaganda for parents to become active members of this organisation, the professional journal of kindergarten pedagogues, still called Child Education [Gyermeknevelés] at the time, started a new column called Parent-Teacher Association in 1949 to host news related to the work of the organisation. The PTA had its own journals too (e.g. (Parents' Journal [Szülők Lapja], Family and School [Család és Iskola]), although these did not reach the parents involved, and they were not read by many people either. The organisation brought to life to strengthen the relationship between families and kindergartens was mentioned in the articles throughout the decade in relation to making contributions but these themselves were greatly influenced by the political objectives. Sometimes emphasis was on helping kindergartens financially or with charity work, sometimes on propaganda for parents.

The main forum of the PTA was the parent-teacher consultation. As per the expectations of the day, kindergarten pedagogues were charged with building close relationship with parents. Therefore parent-teacher consultations were intertwined with PTA meetings. Their times and agendas were set by the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Public Education ['Rendtartás az óvodák számára' - 'Kindergarten rules and regulations' (1951)].

Parent-pedagogue consultations were the prime forms of parents going into the institutions. These gave them an opportunity to have a look at the life of their child's kindergarten. In fact, one of the kindergarten pedagogues' tasks was to set an example of nurturing children according to the socialist values. Parents would also have a chance to visit kindergartens during ceremonies and parents' evenings. Parents were advised of these via newspapers.

PTA took part in the propaganda/educational work for parents in several ways, such as family visits, afternoon work, organising ceremonies, competition movements (e.g. Let's build and beautify our kindergartens (Gernyó, 1952), social cooperation/help for kindergartens (Cultural Gazette, 1958)). Newspapers regularly delivered reports on these and other PTA events (e.g. dances, afternoon shows) in the '50s. It was probably the PTA's mandatory status and its role to influence the masses which caused revulsion in parents. This is something that can still be experienced today. Decades after the PTA was dismissed, it is still difficult to get parents to play an active part in any parent organisation's 'committee' in kindergartens. However, they are still happy to participate in organising afternoon work or community events related to festivities and feast-days.

Getting to Know the Families – Propaganda Work: A co-ordinated Approach to Children's Upbringing

The 1950 party decision, which is considered the criticism of educational affairs, mentions the kindergarten aspect of combatting dropout several times. Family visits, the main forum of getting to know families, was also used to encourage children attending kindergarten (and, as mentioned earlier, to ideologically influence parents). This was continuously present in the 50s. First and foremost, their objective was to dispel misconceptions about kindergartens that stopped children attending in rural areas even in 1959. Even newspapers drew society's attention to this: *'Another, even more dangerous barrier of women's infringement is obscurantism. The old and ordinary does not let women go and explore the new.'* (Free People, 1951, p.1.) *'Women belong in the house.'* (Sági, 1955, p. 2.) Family visits are still part of early childhood education today. The primary emphasis is on getting to know the family before children start kindergarten, just like it was done in the '50s. Kindergarten pedagogues are still very much expected to organise it with care so that parents do not consider it a burden and they do not feel that it is an unpleasant obligation.

One of the most important organisations of pedagogical propaganda work to align family and kindergarten education was Parents' School. The party referred to it as a tried and tested tool to educate parents, however, in reality, it had to be constantly promoted. One of the reasons why, was that there had been no similar, organised collaboration before. Pedagogical enlightenment was launched in the 1948-1949 school year as a trial but the next year attendance was made mandatory. The fact that instead of pedagogy, its main focus was on ideological education, i.e. political education of the masses based on the Soviet model, did not make it popular (Komlósi, 1965). Kindergarten trade press hardly ever mentioned it, however, the presence of propaganda for Parents' School in papers for parents was strong until 1952. Following that year it was put to an end but the forum aimed at politically enlightening parents was later 'reborn' in a different context.

In 1954 a party decision was announced on the situation and tasks of public education affairs, highlighting its imperfections too. Focus was given to the alignment of family and kindergarten education, the cooperative upbringing using modern Marxist methods (Free People, 1954, p. 2.). This was assisted by Soviet literature which meant that following the Soviet model was still apriority. During the decade, issues of Óvodai Nevelés (Kindergarten Education) showed several examples of the alignment of education. Non-professional papers also started columns on educational counselling. Relationships were built between kindergarten pedagogues and an increasing number of parents. The party leadership was striving for keeping these relationships under its control and influence in order to form and reform family and

educational values to serve socialism. It is for that reason that the methodology books for colleges teaching kindergarten pedagogues, in line with official party communication, encouraged future kindergarten pedagogues not to just work with children but also do political enlightening work for parents related to the objectives and methods of socialist upbringing and affairs of cultural politics. They were supposed to become real social workers, loyal assistants and tireless colleagues of the party government, strengthening socialism.

Approaching the end of the 50s, publishing the manual called Educational Work in Kindergartens [Nevelőmunka az óvodában] in 1957 was a significant milestone. This manual gave detailed instructions, unifying and systematising the work of Hungarian kindergartens, ensuring for them to become the scene of socialist upbringing. It provided thorough, accurately calculated parameters for the education of children to unquestioningly follow, eliminating the need to think about the questions of education (Szerepi et al., 2018). Similarly, to rules and regulations, there is a subchapter in the manual on the relationship between families and kindergartens. It emphasises the unity of the two educational spaces and the importance of one learning from the other. This means that kindergarten pedagogues had to learn a lot from parents, however, where there was a need, they also had to educate the parents. The leading role in this relationship is that of the kindergartens. Pedagogues had to convince parents to help their work. Built on its history, the relationship between parents and pedagogues was further shaped in the 'heroic age' of socialist kindergartens, based on the Soviet model but adjusted to local circumstances (see Füle, 1988).

Latent Meaning from the Themes of the Analysis

Parents and Kindergartens Working Together

The emphasis here is on improving the operation of kindergartens. The text analysed touched upon whatever kindergarten pedagogues needed to provide for the children and ensure their needs for activities were met. Imperfections were published as cartoons or humorous stories in satirical magazines or disguised as 'readers' letters'. These mainly made fun of the bureaucracy of the socialist administration. The analysed text corpus had a latent content claiming that although the socialist planned economy's three-year plan, later five-year plan, had generously envisaged the expansion of kindergarten network, its conditions were not ensured. Rooms in kindergartens could not keep up with the increasing demand caused by the demographic fluctuation and the labour exchange measures of the era.

The social demand for kindergartens depended on several factors. Decrees influencing the possibility of having children and, as a result, kindergarten affairs were adopted starting in 1948. That year the parliament accepted law Article 43 on the equality of rights of women terminating women's disadvantages. Technically, this gave women the opportunity to work in any profession. This was confirmed by the Constitution of the People's Republic of Hungary which ensured the conditions of equal opportunities. The system of mother and child-welfare institutions served this purpose. The most popular explanation of the need for more kindergarten places was a decree by the cabinet of the People's Republic of Hungary on the increase of the number of women in the workforce. Researcher M. Schadt, expert on the '50s, gives detailed account of the hidden objectives of slogans promoting the equality of women coming from the official ideology (2003).

The number of children attending kindergartens was constant until 1955. Then, between 1956 and 1958, it increased significantly. According to the party leadership, population growth meant the legitimation of the system. Therefore, encouraging people to have children was a priority within the objectives. Mother and baby-welfare measures put into effect starting in 1953, drastically limiting the opportunity for abortions, and propaganda resulted in the birth rate reaching its highest of the second half of the 20th century in 1954. This was outstandingly high within Europe too. The extent of social demands related to kindergarten services did not become overstretched, however the demographic peak of the Ratkó era (baby boom) reached the kindergartens. Population growth became a burden for the performance of the institutional system of kindergartens. Although planned estimates constantly exceeded earlier decisions, the reality and failures could not completely be swept under the rug (Aczél, 2012; Kéri, 2003; Léderer, 1991; Schadt, 2003).

The competing movements of socialism were disguised as offerings for the greater good. In reality, they forced parents to support the building and equipment of kindergartens, something the state was supposed to take care of. *'Everyone who loves their country and its people has to do everything to the best of their knowledge to build socialism and help our country prosper.'* (Róka, 1949a, p. 2.)

Close Relationships – Insights into the Lives of Families – Kindergarten Pedagogues as Educators of the Nation

Close relationship between pedagogues and parents in the '50s was not only important from the aspect of educating children. Earning the trust of parents was almost an expectation held by the state's leadership whilst building a system in which attempts were made to even tightly control the thoughts of citizens. The possible latent objective of getting to know the circumstances and living conditions of families is also strongly related to this. Family visits or guided dialogues unveiled parts of private matters, e.g. housing conditions or religious affairs. This was usually carried out, especially at the beginning of the 1950s, using the so-called home agitation which provided a much more effective opportunity for personal persuasion. All this was done in order to politically enlighten, mobilise, and ideologically educate population outside the party. Social workers carried out their job of political enlightenment door-to-door through entering private spaces outside state control and mining information. Their 'responsibilities' also included political education, agitation, mobilisation, control and familiarising themselves with how communities lived, although the level of importance of each of these was different. The system considered kindergarten pedagogues as social workers who were to lead by example in accordance with the values set by the state authority. *'The work of kindergarten pedagogues in villages, who are constantly in connection with the working peasants because of family visits, related to enlightenment and persuasion can be very serious and valuable.'* (Róka, 1949b, p. 4.). During these visits homes became public spaces as citizens were required to make statements in front of a party representative. In spite of this, sometimes statements would not meet the expectations of the party. In certain cases, solidarity with the community and their problems overcame the ideology (Huhák, 2020).

Co-ordinated Upbringing of Children – Propaganda Work

The state expectations of families and kindergartens working together as pedagogues educated families almost directly led to the latent content of the texts which was to align family and kindergarten education in order to stop 'double (contradictory) education' from happening. These related to education influencing attitudes, the differences in parents' educational strategies and the values they passed on and nurturing across the two spaces contradicting one another. This is what is meant by the concept of double education still today (Fenyő, 2017). According to this concept, the socialist society set the same educational objectives for parents, and schools and kindergartens. It was a shared responsibility to nurture children according to the communist educational principles both in the family and at school/kindergarten. The goal was to bring up a brave, self-conscious, cultured generation who would believe in materialism, would be loyal to their socialist homeland, and ready to make sacrifices for the people. This upbringing could only be fruitful if the educational work of families and that of schools/kindergartens were aligned. Therefore, according to the official intentions, kindergarten and school pedagogues teaching to the socialist-communist educational principles were a dominant factor in education. Families were different in nature, and could only be controlled and influenced to a certain extent, therefore were only considered a secondary factor (Donáth, 2000, 2008).

A way to reach this goal was propaganda work also expected from kindergarten pedagogues. This was the ideological indoctrination of society through parents, disguised as pedagogical enlightenment. A forced growth in several areas of life was typical of the era between 1948 and 1956. This was generated by the radically centralised planned economy, taken from the Soviet economic model. Life conditions in the countryside were greatly influenced by the change of ownership in agriculture and forced collectivisation launched several times. Those in towns were influenced by the intensified industrialisation (Tomka, 2011). Collectivisation was achieved by the mandatory appropriation of goods. The safest way to stay away from continuous inspections, penalties and despoliation was to enter a sovkhoz (collective farm) (Romsics, 2010).

Extensive propaganda would encourage people to do so. These latent contents infiltrated into educational work as part of the official approach of the party leadership. Their real presence could be determined in analysed sources, hence the acknowledgement of how unilateral the sources were.

The analysis both the manifest and latent content leads to the conclusion that the forms of developing relationship between families and kindergartens were tools of the socialist system to legitimate itself. This was why state authorities were trying to make the relationship of the two educational environments aligned using mass-organisations. The party leadership was trying to expand the educational influence of kindergartens, which affected parents through their children. The tool to implement this expansion was propaganda although conditions of extensive kindergarten network expansion were not available.

Conclusion

The sources written at the time show the requirement of enforcing the new, binding, socialist values set by state leadership. These values were different to the previous traditions of kindergarten pedagogy, and appeared to leave those traditions behind. Given the unilateral nature of the sources, all this study was meant to do was to analyse the official expectations of the period's state authority. The party leadership of the era had the ministry supervising kindergartens, schoolbook publishing and the press under strict control. As a consequence, the sources used in this study were supposed to convey state expectations and nothing else. This set certain limits on the research.

Kindergarten policies were an attempt to influence the private matter of how families were bringing their children up with the objective of legitimating the prevailing social structure. To achieve this, the relationship and its various manifestations between families and kindergartens were utilised. Kindergartens of the '50s were influenced by policies and legislation infused by political ideologies (e.g. fight against 'double education' in order to accepts socialist values and norms). Although their content and role have significantly changed by today, they (can) still have negative connotations for parents which is a sign of the prevailing influence of the socialist pedagogical past. The sources analysed spoke of the importance of parents' visit to kindergartens; however, this was not the kind of openness we know today, nevertheless, it still created an opportunity for parents to gain an insight to how kindergartens worked. There is still a demand for this today. Kindergarten pedagogues of the '50s were a tool for the state authority used in the process of manipulated socialisation. This is why, kindergarten pedagogues were expected to take the lead in co-ordinating the two nurturing environments. Kindergarten pedagogues of today are still expected to be active, assertive and creative in their relationship with families in order for the relationship to be fruitful. This is presumably why the relationship between kindergartens and families is an ever-emerging topic of discussion between experts and researchers of educational sciences and across European models of early education.

As the findings suggest, the expectations of raising 'socialist citizens' was incorporated into educational and policy documents as well as non-professional publications relating to kindergartens and family education in the 1950s. This study offers a more nuanced understanding of the relationship between kindergartens and families in the '50s and with that provides foundations for further analytical work of the socialist pedagogical past. Examining where the emphasis lay in kindergarten pedagogue training coursebooks from after 1959 would offer further possibilities for research.

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Research Article

Boarding schools in transition: A post-socialist analysis of "relevance" as an education policy problem in Mongolia

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Abstract: The rural boarding schools that were established in the socialist era to serve children in Mongolia's herding communities remain integral to national policy for ensuring universal access to formal education. Education policy actors demonstrate commitment to the socialist legacy of the schooled herder child, while at the same posing legitimate questions as to boarding schools' quality and contemporary relevance. This questioning is framed with reference to a globally-orientated discourse of standards, outcomes measurement and skills for employability. The paper argues from a post-socialist perspective that this orientation forecloses a nuanced, contextualised understanding of "relevance" as a complex educational policy problem. Drawing on policy documents and secondary literature, it develops and applies a post-socialist conceptual framework to explore the temporal and spatial orientations of rural boarding schools and their "relevance". The analysis evidences multiple, intersecting layers of change which situate the schooled herder child and constitute Mongolia"s "unfinished business of socialism" in education. The paper concludes that the layering revealed in this analysis needs to be more visible to educational policy; and that to resist oversimplifying the complex problem of education"s relevance is an ontological imperative.

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Introduction

Mongolia has changed in many ways since the early 1990s, when the economic and political structures that underpinned socialism were dismantled to make way for a democratic, marketised modern economy (Bat-Erdene et al., 1996; Morris and Bruun, 2005). Its ongoing national transition to a market-driven economy is characterised inter alia by fiscal and political crises, rapid urbanisation, hollowing out of rural areas, demise of nomadic herding collectives, and high rural-urban migration. Despite the diversification of land use, employment and opportunities, the heritage of nomadic herding remains a key co-ordinate of national identity. Herding continues to be the main livelihood for at least 20 per cent of the population (Batkyuyag and Dondogdulan, 2018) (while other sources e.g. Mongolia Institute of Educational Research [MIER], 2019 claim 30 per cent), and plays a major role not only in food security, income and employment (Morris and Bruun, 2005), but also as a cultural signifier which links the traditions of the past with the socio-political cultures of the future (Ahearn, 2020; Ahearn and Bumochir, 2016).

Mongolia has nearly universal rates of primary and lower secondary school enrolment (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization [UNESCO], 2020). National commitment to ensuring that children in herding communities are able to access formal schooling is a socio-culturally embedded socialist legacy, which has been facilitated by rural boarding schools. These schools remain integral to Mongolia's approach to schooling for all (MIER, 2019). In 1970, Unesco awarded Mongolia the Nadejda Krupskaya prize for the achievement of near total literacy (Yembuu and Munch-Erdene, 2006), a

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figure that remains a unique achievement for a country with a high proportion of herders in its population (Dyer, 2014). Schooling is, however, producing cultural change within herder households and in social constructs of "respectable identities" which are creating "new difficulties" for livelihoods as herders (Ahearn, 2018, p. 90); and it is contributing to unsustainable trends of rural-urban migration (Morris and Bruun, 2005), often resulting in poverty among herding families (Sanjaa, 2015; UNESCO, 2020).

In in-depth discussions with Dyer and Sanjaa (authors) and other team members, held between 2018-2020 in the preparation of the 2020 Mongolia Education Policy Review (EPR) (UNESCO, 2020), supported by Unesco, national policy actors demonstrated ambivalence towards herding as livelihood in future, and favoured promoting economic growth and stability via industrial expansion and urban-based formal employment (see also Ministry of Education, Culture, Science and Sports [MECCS], 2020a; UNESCO, 2020). At the same time, however, they showed strong commitment to the rural boarding school provision that predominantly serves children in herding families. Such provision, albeit now costly to staff and maintain, continues to be seen as a practical form of education delivery in sparsely populated rural areas (UNESCO, 2020). Alongside these pragmatic considerations, boarding schools emerged in a somewhat different light: as being integral to the social imaginery of a rural childhood in what is often termed the "herding nation" (MECCS, 2020a). For all these reasons, boarding schools are, and will remain for the foreseeable future, central to the tradition of inclusive formal education for herding children in Mongolia.

While clearly committed to continuing boarding school provision, policy actors nevertheless articulated concern over their "quality" and "relevance", framed in terms of their aspirations of benchmarking (and improving) Mongolia's schools' performance in global rankings of learning outcomes, and improving the fit between education and employability outside the herding sector (MIER, 2019; UNESCO, 2019, 2020). While we see these as legitimate policy concerns, we find the increasingly dominant global use of performance ranking and outcomes measurement as proxy indicators of "quality" schooling generally problematic; and the more so if takes precedence over deeper reflection on schooling's "relevance" in a specific social - and here post-socialist – context (Marzluf, 2017).

Our objective in this paper, then, is to investigate the challenging question of "relevance", raised in the education policy review process, with a historical sensitivity. To do this, we use a post-socialist lens, which enables us to tease out continuities and contradictions that reflect a layering of change that characterises what we see as the "unfinished business of socialism" (Jelača and Lugarić, 2018, p. 1) in Mongolia. We focus on the case of rural boarding schools, to examine the spatial and temporal dimensions of change and continuity; and we will argue that in the layering which this examination reveals lie the foundations of a much deeper and complex notion of schooling "relevance" than that which a decontextualized, ahistorical global framing assumes. Moreover, whilst accepting that the periphery and peripherisation are contested terms, we posit that this paper explores a doubly-situated otherness: firstly within post-socialist studies, Mongolia is usually sidelined from the dominant Central and Eastern European lines of analysis (as is still the case in Kojanic, 2020, but refuted by Shore and Trnka, 2015) and therefore brings a valuable case to bear. Secondly, nomadic herding children are peripheral within studies of the experiences of schooled children, and generally often unschooled (UNESCO, 2010) (if not uneducated (Dyer, 2014)), but Mongolia presents us with a multi-generational exception to this, crossing the period of transition.

Section 2 draws on post-socialist literature to build the idea of "layered" change and to argue for analysing change and continuity on a temporal *and* a spatial axis, in order to understand and deconstruct the education policy problem of "relevance". It foregrounds the social construction of the "schooled child" in socialist modernity, which remains central to post-transition education policy and therefore to interrogating issues of relevance today, and explains how boarding schools emerged within the socialist tradition and still continue. Section 3 explores Mongolia's transition to a pluralistic, multiparty democracy and market-orientated economy, and then focuses on the historical positioning of herding as a livelihood and national emblem, and post-transitional changes to herding: it centres the idea of the schooled *herding* child and education's "relevance" in a spatial and temporal perspective. Section 4 examines the spatial and

temporal dimensions of change and continuity of rural boarding schools, teasing out the layers that shape "relevance" in transition and constitute it as a tension. We place spatial dimensions on one axis, as boarding schools move from symbolising the peak of aspirations of socialist modernity due to their rural situation, to contemporary struggles to meet urban-facing demands and the aspirations of neo-liberal modernity and new social relations. On the second axis, we place the temporal dimensions that see boarding schools as economic-cultural legacy of socialism and its construction of childhood, of which the boarding schools and their rural development ethos were central, but which continue today as a practical means of educating rural herder children in the light of global discourses of quality and relevance. The paper concludes that political, economic and social change since 1989 does not mean the wholesale erasure of multiple constructions, discourses and materialities: the complex but intractable continuity of the Mongolian boarding school, alongside the notion of a herder child who can also be schooled, shed light on the erasures that global universalised policy language and its concerns around "quality" and "relevance" produce - and which in our analysis, must be resisted.

(Post)socialism and Childhood

Why choose a post-socialist frame in which to analyse the apparent conundrum of "relevance" that policy makers express in relation to boarding schools as a cornerstone of education policy in Mongolia? And what exactly do we understand by post-socialism conceptually? We approach post-socialism on two axes: temporality and spatiality. Firstly, to avoid "dead ends created by linear conceptualisations of post-socialist transformations" (Silova, 2018, p. 199), we opt for Stenning and Horschelmann's (2008) notion of a post-socialism borrowing from the theoretical tools of post-colonialism to develop our temporal axis. We agree that the "shadows [of the socialist past] are multiple, sometimes unpredictable; they are not linear – post-socialism does not simply come after socialism, but also against it, reflected through it" (ibid: 325; see also Ahearn, 2020). From their conceptualisation we accept that there are multiple post-socialisms and multiple histories at play in the present day, thus heightening policy-makers' bewilderment over cause, effect, quality and relevance, but allowing us to see the layering of past, present, history and memory in our analysis here. History, in this framework (which itself draws from post-structuralism), is deconstructed in its linear or teleological sense, in order to make space for "multiple histories with uncertain determinisms" (ibid).

Despite its sensitivity to temporality, we see also some limits to Stenning& Horschelmann's theorisation, in its lack of spatial analysis and, within that, a lack of consideration of material cultures and the role of the physical and built environment that other scholars of both post-socialism (Pohrib, 2016) and childhood (Kraftl, 2020) have emphasised. For this reason, we deliberately add a second axis, of spatiality, to our analysis to add a deeper inflection to our understanding of what we call post-socialist modernity in Mongolia. Insofar as *socialist* modernity could be seen to have been "materialized in its objects and embodied in its subjects" (Golubev, 2020, p. 11) we see boarding schools in Mongolia as fulfilling these functions, as well as functioning as representative and discursive spaces that may look unchanging but are, in terms of a broader cultural understanding of space, "often uncertain and shifting, or perpetually in transition" (Jelača and Lugarić, 2018, p. 10). The continuity of those material elements into the post-socialist era forms a site of fracture, meaning-making and tension as education policy takes up the now well-known and rehearsed global/neo-liberal discourses of quality, and policy actors wrestle with the notion of relevance. The schools have their own afterlife as a form of communist artefact (Pohrib, 2016), whilst housing their own evolving cultural and social meanings.

Prior to 1989, multiple constructions of childhood co-existed across the socialist world as cultures, discourses, histories and materialities weaved and interacted (Hendrick, 1997; Prout and James, 1997; Wyness, 2012), thus necessitating a divergence from suggestions of a universal socialist model. However, certain commonalities co-existed - of which the most important was the focus on education. Accounts of childhood in modernity that speak of the "schooled child" often implicitly assume this development to be a precursor to the regulated child of the modern capitalist economy (Hendrick, 1997; Wells, 2021; Wyness, 2012), but often overlook that the "schooled child" was the central tenet of socialist modernity in the

twentieth century socialist world (Marzluf, 2017; Stearns, 2021). Despite the variable motives behind the creation of mass, free, compulsory schooling for all, it was celebrated in both socialist and capitalist worlds as a necessity to create productive and duly skilled workers for the future, and, to differing extents and in different ways, for the public good. Under socialism, the schooled child was collocated with a happy and moral child in representative form and pedagogical practice (Stearns, 2021). Thus, the emergent social construction of childhood at the point of transition saw the purpose and characteristics of childhood as deeply dependent on schooling as well as contingent upon multiple local variables across the erstwhile socialist world. Within Mongolia"s education system, socialist ideologies and values instilled an idea of the "happy child" held in the embrace of helping/caring for others and the public good, making contributions to the community and living a good moral life (Demberel and Penn, 2006; Marzluf, 2017; Penn, 2001). This aligns with the commonalities of socialist construction of childhood mentioned above, but our focus on boarding schools comes into play as a means of analysing the interaction of local cultural and socio-economic realities with this overarching construction, and what this tells us about the contemporary policy question of "relevance".

Boarding schools emerged in various locations across the socialist world, seeming to be a physical manifestation of the strong focus on, and investment in, childhood and youth under socialism. A key impetus behind this development derived from an expectation that youth would be key players in the construction of the new societies which were being built (Stearns, 2021), but there were other motivations. Whether it was due to a suspicion of the ability of families to do the job of bringing up these precious bodies appropriately (Kelly, 2007), whether children and young people were simply too important to be left predominantly in the care of the family, or whether (as in Mongolia's case) boarding schools presented the only route towards producing a schooled child due to socio-economic structures, or indeed various combinations of these motivations, the policy proposal remained the same – the boarding school. New methodologies emerged, such as Makarenko's approach to schooling as an education in integrating the individual personality within the collective, that dominated educational science (Caskey, 1979).

This broad overview, though, hides national stories that tell multiple tales of the boarding school; how those boarding schools in Cuba aimed to instil the rural ethos into children which was so important to a socialist revolution launched by a rural guerrilla army (Luke, 2018); how those in Soviet Lapland gave children of the indigenous Sami population opportunities for social mobility but imposed "ethnic depreciation" (Allemann, 2018); and of course, how those in Mongolia were created with the needs of children in mobile herding families in mind. Herder children in Mongolia grew up as fully integrated members of the family production unit, caring for animals and in close proximity to nature. They learned to walk and to ride at about the same time, and absorbed the values and skills associated with being a good herder via situated learning – watching and imitating more experienced others. Once old enough to go to school, they returned from boarding schools to herding for the long summer vacation, timed to enable children to combine schooling with their informal education in herding traditions (Steiner-Khamsi and Stolpe, 2005). Even as these socio-cultural traditions adapt to the post-socialist landscape, there is a (necessary) continuity in their imaginary and practices - how else can herding be learned? – which boarding schools, themselves both constant and adapting, both encounter and (re)shape.

Whilst its political systems were transformed by the transition, the histories and memories of the socialist era and their associated histories of childhood were and are not deleted. The post-socialist analytical lens enables us to see this, and to recognise change as a process of layering, rather than as an abrupt switch towards an alternative. It may be imperfect, but the post-socialist lens denotes "an intellectual space that has the potential to disrupt the hegemony of dominant globalisation narratives, while enabling us to see, experience and interpret ongoing post-socialist education transformations through the lens of pluralities" (Chankseliani & Silova, 2018, p. 8; see also Ahearn, 2020). To this we would add tranformations in childhoods and, to illustrate this point, that one of the key elements of the socialist experience is related to the predominance of the "schooled child" in socialist modernity. This means that children in herding families in Mongolia today are themselves children of formerly schooled children, which not only attests to the socialist legacy but is also a stark point of difference between Mongolia and

countries across South Asia and Africa, where high proportions of children in herding families are, and will remain for the foreseeable future, "unschooled" (Dyer, 2014; Dyer and Rajan, 2021; Krätli and Dyer, 2009).

The Layerings of Mongolia's Transition

Mongolia is one of the world"s mostly sparsely populated countries. Its land area of 1.56 million km^2 is populated by about 3.2 million people (49.2 percent male, and 50.8 percent female) (MIER, 2019). By 2017, the average population density in rural areas stood at just two persons per km^2 (32 percent of the population) (ibid).This figure starkly contrasts with the situation in the capital Ulaanbaatar, where waves of post-transition migration and urban-focused development have seen the population rise to 311.3 persons per km^2 (ibid). People under 35 years of age comprise nearly two thirds of the population, which grows at an annual rate of 1.9 percent.

Mongolia's ongoing process of transition from a socialist country in the Soviet sphere to an internationally facing, pluralistic, multiparty democracy and market-orientated economy began in 1990 (B[4]at-Erdene et al., 1996). The national commitment to human rights, democratic governance and private ownership was written into the new Constitution of 1992. Extensive structural adjustment reforms were undertaken, as advocated by the international agencies who have ever since remained prominent actors, and influential globalisers, in Mongolia's development (Steiner-Khamsi and Stolpe, 2005; UNESCO, 2020). Controls on the movement of people, imposed to meet the needs of industrialisation and collectivisation within the command economy, were found to contradict new notions of rights, and lifted. In-migration to urban areas, where better markets, job opportunities and higher education provision were available, became a prominent trend (Ahearn, 2018; United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund [UNICEF], 2017).

In the education sector, the Education Law of 1991 (cit MIER, 2019) set out the basic principles of a democratically functioning education system underpinned by legislative rights: the administration and financing of public schools were decentralised; school governance was transferred to local educational boards in the *aimag;* and private schooling was authorised. This changing of educational structures away from the socialist centralised model marked a change at the macro level: but despite its high visibility, to overstate this as a "transformation" would be to erase, or at the very least to undermine, the continuities onto which these changes were layered.

Herding as a Livelihood and Emblem of the Mongolian Nation

The socialist state had invested massively in modernising rural society, through resource inputs, subsidies and favourable pricing policies. Livestock collectives (*negdels*) were set up, with compulsory membership from the 1960s, to institutionalise efficient management and ensure production. The *negdel* production unit was matched to the size and location of the administrative unit of the *soum,* an alignment that enabled *negdel* and *soum* to function jointly. *Negdels* developed processing, manufacturing, service, storage and trading facilities (Morris and Bruun, 2005, p. 6). *Soums* built stadiums and cultural palaces, marketing stations, public libraries and power stations, etc. through the 1960s-70s, and added larger schools with dormitories to the network of schools built in the 1950s. Herding was integral to the rural economy, and provision of boarding facilities for school-going children from remote rural districts further affirmed schooling's instrumental role in the state project of rural modernisation and industrialisation.

This thirty year long "golden era" (Morris and Bruun, 2005, p. 5) came to an end when, in the first transformation decade, *negdels* were dismantled and collective assets privatised. Some 75,000 nomadic herding families rapidly transitioned into private livestock ownership. The *soum* was de-linked from pastoralist production and placed under an elected governor: some 100,000 workers and *negdel* staff lost their employment when *soum*-based manufacturing and agro-processing units were closed down and assets were stripped. The services provided to livestock production as a modern agro-business vanished.

[4] An *aimag* is a province, within which the major settlement is the "aimag centre"; we will also refer to the *soum*, a district within an *aimag*, the major settlement within which is the "soum centre".

In the instability that followed, the number of households in herding more than doubled in one decade (from 75,000 to 192,000 by 2000) as herding was largely reformed as subsistence household production, characterised by small individual livestock holdings and many "new" herders, who had previously worked in other sectors. The changing economic structures imposed uncertainties which were unknown to herders during the socialist era - privatisation, inexperience of herding, breakdown of traditional seasonal pasture use, the cash economy and loss of transport - all of which contributed to overgrazing of pastures, soil degradation and a drift to urban centres (Morris and Bruun, 2005). The high vulnerability to stress and shock that these conditions created was manifest in extensive loss of livestock in the 1999-2001 *dzud*[5] (Ahearn, 2018). Since then, recurrent *dzud*s, reflecting climate change and a lack of mechanisms at household and governance levels to manage them, have led to animal loss. Such loss engenders household-level distress, which may precipitate rural-urban migration that, in turn, exacerbates socio-economic problems in urban settings. Herding nevertheless remains a significant livelihood and sector of the national economy.

As well as new uncertainties around herding as a secure livelihood, a counter-discourse of herding is emerging. While nomadic herder identities are still celebrated in nationalist discourse (Marzluf, 2015; UNESCO, 2020) they are now also subject to being appraised as uncultured (Ahearn, 2018). Although the socialist tradition of associating formal education with holding cultured and skilled worldviews still pertains, formal education in post-socialist times is also becoming instrumental in disassociating these favoured attributes from rural spaces, and contributing to deficit discourses that inaccurately conflate herding with unskilled work (Ahearn and Bumochir, 2016; Dyer, 2014). Successful herding requires not only applied skills about animal management, but also depends on deep knowledge about the interrelations of humanity, nature and sustainability, which children learn from family members through oral traditions that pass on their culture and heritage, accompanied by hands-on experience in daily life. Increasingly, however, neither the education system - nor indeed herding families themselves – seem to validate this as knowledge that has important contemporary standing (Ahearn and Bumochir, 2016; UNESCO, 2020).

The dimensions of transition that we have outlined in this section inform our argument that the policy concern over the relevance of boarding schools must be seen in the historical and spatial perspective that a "post-socialist" analytical lens affords, rather than as an abrupt contemporary "problem" for policy. The state funded boarding schooling as a model of education provision that is uniquely suited to herder children is a signifier that post-socialist modernity is an urban *and* rural modernity and incorporates the tenets of the "schooled child" - even amidst a questioning of longstanding cultural narratives and norms pertaining to rural and herder lives. We provide further evidence for this claim in the next section.

Boarding Schools in Spatial and Temporal Perspective

As we have argued, provision of boarding schools represents both a symbolic and practical state commitment to ensuring that a herder child can also be a "schooled child". The state's current positioning is clearly demonstrated in its national development policy "Towards Mongolia"s Long-term Development Policy Vision 2050" (MECCS, 2020a). The following paragraphs from its section on "general education" (MECCS, 2020a, pp. 46-47) illustrate:

> 2.1.19. Create an enabling environment for educational institutions as per required standards by improving the school dormitory, green development facilities, sports and art halls, canteen, and information technology classrooms following the specific rules, provide an accessible learning environment for those students with disabilities, and make the child and user-friendly, safe water, toilet, hygiene facilities available in schools.
>
> 2.1.20. Improve the quality of education from the primary and secondary schools and the teaching contents and methods reflecting the Mongolian history, language, culture, national heritage, customs, patriotic views, personality formation and development, dual language, and universal values of humanity.

[5] *Dzud* is caused by a sequence of summertime drought, followed by extreme cold and/or deep snowfall in winter.

> 2.1.24. Improve the management of the school dormitory system and child protection at the dormitories, setting the regulations that up to 10 teaching hours of those teachers who worked in the pieces of training and other activities for dormitory students to include in teachers' overall workload.

The second paragraph cited here clearly sets out the qualities and values that the current government wants to be promoted in the schooling of children, which give us an insight into broad parameters of "relevance" in policy discourse. With regard to the "quality" it invokes, and which is implicit in the other two paragraphs: no studies have so far compared the "quality" of the boarding schools under and post socialist period, although once the socially and temporally constructed nature of "quality" is recognised (Penn, 2011), this would seem a problematic undertaking. We know, however, that during the socialist period the teachers who worked in rural areas were well paid and had a good reputation, and that rural children had the same access to "quality" education as children in urban areas. This is no longer the case (Sanjaa, 2015; UNESCO, 2020), reflecting a post-socialist layering of rural structural disadvantage (Sanjaa, 2015; Maruyama et al., 2019). Highly teacher-directed learning of substantive content was, however, everywhere characteristic; and shifting this to enable "21st century education" (typically, evaluating and analyzing information and thinking creatively about how to solve real-world problems) is a dominant policy preoccupation (MIER, 2019; UNESCO, 2020). The discourses of standards, quality, management and child protection that can be read in, and from, the paragraphs of policy above comprise a further temporal layering of what "relevance" means.

Boarding Schools in Transition

The story of the creation and trajectory of boarding school provision before and after 1990 merits some attention. Education provision in Mongolia is founded on a Soviet-inspired model of secular education that displaced pre-socialist traditions prevailing when the Mongolian People's Republic was formed in the early 1920s (UNESCO, 2020). Decision-making, planning and policy formulation were the prerogative of the Party. Educational institutions were run by the government in a highly uniform system that operated under the oversight of the Ministry of Education, which directed regional and local agencies (Bat-Erdene et al., 1996). Formal schooling was made compulsory in the 1950s, and under socialist state policies, it was well funded and reached the majority of the population (Steiner-Khamsi and Stolpe, 2005; UNESCO, 2020). The education system expanded quickly in the 1970s and 1980s, as the idea of the "schooled child" took hold in Mongolia. Via its provision of secondary education for those in *negdels*, state farms and rural industries, the socialist regime established being educated as a social norm among the rural population. The school dormitory system, supported since 1982 by special provisions in the Education Law (Maruyama et al., 2019), played a crucial role in enabling schooling and rural childhoods to be integrated by offering accommodation at school to all children who needed it, including those of workers, civil servants, employees, and members of agricultural farms and *negdels* (Steiner-Khamsi and Stolpe, 2005, p. 26).

This was particularly important for families in herding, leading Steiner-Khamsi and Stolpe (2005) to identify Mongolia's boarding schools as a "best practice" model in nomadic education (with which more recent scholarship concurs, see Dyer, 2014; Krätli and Dyer, 2009; UNESCO, 2010). Integrative, child-friendly, and geographically close to the family, these schools ensured that "children did not emotionally distance themselves from the life of nomadic pastoralists and continued identifying with the parents' lifestyle" (Steiner-Khamsi and Stolpe, 2005, p. 26).

When the Soviet Union broke up, the Soviet subsidies that had supported free education for every child ceased (Engel et al., 2014). Between 1990-92, public spending on education as a share of GDP almost halved (ibid). Fiscal deficits constrained public spending on education, the *negdels* that had contributed some 10 per cent of capital costs for school and dormitory buildings had dissolved (Steiner-Khamsi and Stolpe, 2005), and families had to absorb education costs that the state had previously borne, despite the changed and difficult circumstances of economic transition and widespread unemployment. Many rural schools went bankrupt and teachers were either not paid, or paid in-kind with flour or meat, resulting in many teachers leaving the profession (UNESCO, 2020). The secondary school Gross Enrolment Rate, which had grown to 87% by the mid-1980s, declined to a 30-year low of 61% in 1997 (Engel et al., 2014). While

withdrawing children from school was a common response to the economic collapse of the 1990s, many more girls than boys stayed in school (71% against 50% (ibid)), as boys were more likely to be withdrawn to work. The boarding school model managed to withstand this tide of change, although costs negatively affected enrolments and teacher attrition was high.

Although Mongolia's education decline was the most rapid and deepest of all the Central Asian transition economies, recovery was spectacular (UNESCO, 2020), and by 2003, enrolment for both genders had returned to pre-1990 levels. Fees for dormitory services had been introduced in 1995, but state funding was reinstated in 2000 to arrest the decline in enrolment, retention and dormitory use (Maruyama et al., 2019; Batkhyuyag & Dondogdulam, 2018). The will to maintain the schools – and with it, to ensure universal access to schooling – remained, and still does. Yet there is a persistent post 1990s trend of boys dropping out of secondary schooling, usually to help with herding (MIER, 2019), which problematizes the contemporary relationship between herding and schooling. There remains, too, a marked trend of higher female retention throughout secondary schooling, and of higher female enrolment and graduation from tertiary education (MIER, 2019; UNESCO, 2020) which fuel a pattern of "winters without women" (Ahearn, 2018) among herders, to which we will return below.

We pause here to note that this is another argument for a post-socialist analytical lens, which sees beyond the narrative associated with a lens of globalisation. International initiatives are heavily focused on the "global" problem of ensuring girls" education at least becomes at par with that of boys' (on which the UN-commissioned Global Education Monitoring Reports regularly report). Mongolia's history and specifics of its socialist trajectory are at odds with this trend. This is evidence that local specificities need to be articulated and not subsumed into an assumed "global" position. Indeed, the global neoliberal model might lead to a celebration of Mongolia's very evident gender "counter trend" (UNESCO, 2020) in education, and obscure the boys who are withdrawn from school – at the cost, we propose, of probing what both trends might reveal about the policy question of schooling's "relevance".

Boarding Schools - In Decline?

By 2018-19, official statistics show that the vast majority of those applying for a dormitory place were from herding families (76.1 percent - 5,492 applicants of which 4,182 were from herder families (MIER, 2019)); for the 2016/17 academic year, herders" children comprised over two thirds of all children using dormitories. To give some spatial contours to this, we note that 80 percent of Mongolia's 341 *soums* are located more than 100 km from the *aimag* centres and herder households live well outside the *soum* centres (MIER, 2019). Sanjaa (2015) reminds us, too, that distance from the nomadic *ger* [tent] home to school in the *soum* centre is not fixed, but temporally variable - from 30-200 km, depending on the season and influences of weather on pasture availability.

Between 2014-17, 37 new dormitories were built and there are plans for 19 more (UNESCO, 2020). Demand continues to outstrip the supply of dormitory places - in 2018-19, only 87 per cent of those who applied gained a place. This demonstrates their continued importance and relevance as a form of rural provision that can enable herder families' access to schooling, sustaining the progress made both pre- and post-transition in universalising enrolment. This spatial stability is, however, now intersected by a contemporary discourse of concern over "quality" and child protection (Sanjaa, 2015). International reports have highlighted that the "chronically low" level of capital investment in the post-command economy's education sector (Maruyama et al., 2019) has been insufficient to ensure either that there are enough dormitories, or that they are fit to accommodate students. Many were built in the 1970s and 1980s (ibid) and despite renovations, by 2016/17, of the 513 functional dormitories, 99 (19 per cent) did not meet national standards for school buildings (ibid; MIER, 2019), nor provide adequate protection from precipitation and wind, or have adequate heating systems.

We see a further layering of global discourses in reports interrogating the material inadequacies of the dormitories themselves, which are now cast in terms of child protection. This is a constituent part of the move towards a new construction of "global" childhood influenced by the concept of risk (Prout, 2005) and rights. The post-socialist funding model excepts dormitory staff salaries and dormitory meals, but

places other funding requirements for dormitories in competition with calls on a school budget. Dormitories are often not only structurally poor, but deficient in material conditions. Although national norms for WASH in school, kindergarten and dormitory facilities were established in 2015 (MIER, 2019), there are many reports of provision that is substandard (MIER, 2019; UNESCO, 2020). The Asian Development Bank's 2019 baseline survey, which sampled 78 of the country's 158 dormitories, found that fewer than 40 per cent had indoor latrines (and nearly two thirds of those lacked individual doors, and less than one third had locks). For many children, this means having to use outdoor latrines at all times, in extremely harsh winter weather - including during the night - which is now interpreted as intimidating for early-grade students, girls, and students with disabilities (Maruyama et al., 2019). A shortage of beds means that one fifth of sampled children have to share; about a quarter of dormitories had enough chairs and less than a third had enough tables (ibid). Dormitories almost everywhere are a far cry from the "home from home" they are supposed to be (Sanjaa, 2015).

Other studies show that children who use dormitories are exposed to intimidation, bullying and abuse that includes corporal punishment, and to group discrimination that targets herder children (Save the Children Japan, 2015). Another study (NLM and MECSS, 2017, cit Batkhyuyag & Dondogdulam, 2018) found that 25 per cent of 6-8 year old children in dormitories were in poor facilities and on their own. Calls for a child protection system to safeguard all potentially vulnerable children using dormitories are not new (cf. Sanjaa, 2015; Save the Children Japan, 2015). The Asia Development Bank-commissioned study (Maruyama et al., 2019) also notes that in 2015, less than one third of primary students in dormitories regularly participated in study, reading, and extracurricular activities in dormitories, which it attributes to high student–staff ratios and lack of appropriately qualified and skilled dormitory teachers and staff. There is no system for preparing dormitory teachers: generally, one teacher is made responsible for dormitory operation under the supervision of the school principal, and teachers take turns to engage in extracurricular, dormitory activities.

All the studies cited here conclude that these issues act as disincentives for parents to send children to boarding school, especially very young children. But, returning to the matter of "relevance", we find that this globally orientated discourse around "quality" tends to overshadow the locally significant problem, for herding families, of lowering the age of compulsory schooling in the early post-socialist period. This is insightful in relation to considering "relevance" when we juxtapose the construct of the "at risk" child with other temporal dimensions that affect herding children's take-up of dormitory places. First, reflecting globalisation, came the national political aspiration of international parity around the temporality of being a "schooled child". Two laws, passed in quick succession, lowered the age for compulsory enrolment: from eight to seven years in 2004, and then to six 2008. These brought Mongolia in line with international norms regarding the starting age and duration of schooling (UNESCO, 2020) but displaced the norm, established in socialist times, of enabling children to gain a solid foundation in herding skills before adding formal schooling, and of starting school at an age when parents felt they were ready to live away from the family setting. In response, to deal with the earlier age of enrolment, parental coping strategies have included withdrawing a young child and re-enrolling him/her when parents feel s/he is physically and emotionally more mature. This practice contributes to the presence of "over-age" children (MIER, 2019) in the system, which is now a global signifier of an inefficient education system (and hence interpreted as a dimension of poor "quality"), rather than understood to reflect norms about age-appropriate initial enrolment that have become misaligned.

As an indication that the socialist schooled-happy child may well have been rather more of a discursive construct than a material reality, Steiner-Khamsi and Stolpe (2005) found that parents' own unhappy memories of boarding schools prompt them to seek an alternative for their own children. Among herders, Maruyama et al., (2019) report (as, earlier, did Sanjaa (2015)), that most parents place their children in dormitories by necessity and despite concerns over school quality, etc.:

> "In Erdenedalai, a good dormitory was noted by participants as one of the reasons why children are sent to the school. "Children are quite comfortable in these dormitories. Sometimes I ask the children how they are. They say OK. Children have iron, water boiler and TV. They eat 3-4 times a day. Sometimes teachers visit the kitchen. Food was

> good. The dormitory has electricity 24 hours. 3-4 children live in one room. Children like to live in dormitory. Nobody escapes or wants to leave" (Parents' focus group, Dundgobi, Erdenedalai). Other areas tell a more mixed story. In areas like Khalkhgol, families preferred to place children within the houses of relatives or other people. Their *soum* school's dormitory was only accommodating 15 children at the time of the research, much less than its capacity of 300. One expert from one of the sites told us: "Food quality at dormitory is very low. The current cook is not a professional cook. When we visit the dormitory, children say 'uncle, we are hungry'". (Maruyama et al., 2019, p. 39)

Conceptualising the dormitories in terms of risk, as the reports cited do, highlights an important children's right deficit whilst also demonstrating a new social layering that stems from the fractures in the boarding model that we have drawn out, and that acts to the disadvantage of herder children. This deficit must be attended to, but we would argue against allowing this layering to contribute to an under-representation of the persisting importance of boarding schooling to national commitment to sustaining the norm of the schooled herder child. Nevertheless, the positive discourse of education for all children combined with the negative discourse of low quality material culture makes the boarding school an uneasy and complex policy proposition. This is reflected in policy actors' concern over "relevance" in the context of a post-socialist modernity which shares with its socialist antecedents a future orientation, but does not share with socialist modernity the commitment to rural development. Then, the notion of high levels of investment in a highly costly educational product such as the boarding school is a difficult policy call if the argument for "relevance" (as relevance is understood) cannot be strengthened. Since it is now predominantly herding families in financial hardship who rely on them, dormitories also embody post-socialist social stratification, the beginnings of which Steiner-Khamsi and Stolpe's (2005) study reported.

Changes in Herding Catalysed by Schooling

The at-once changed and unchanging materiality of boarding schools in the production of a "schooled child" in post-socialist transition also contributes a layer of change in how herding households are organising and practising herding (Ahearn, 2018). In 2016/17, only about one fifth of herder children enrolled in Grade 1 were staying in dormitories (MIER 2019; Batkhyuyag & Dondogdulam, 2018). This phenomenon is produced by "household splitting" (Ahearn 2018; Batkhyuyag & Dondogdulam, 2018): the adult male(s) remain in the rural area for the winter to herd animals; the mother / adult female(s) migrate in the autumn with children to the *soum* centres, preferably to live with urban-based relatives (Sanjaa, 2015). In-migrating women establish a "home" from which young children can attend school, and/or access early childhood education. This strategy enables children to benefit from urban advantage: to access schools whose quality is perceived to be higher than in rural boarding schools, and early childhood provision that is less available in rural settings (UNESCO, 2020). Splitting a household between remote seasonal winter pastures and school locations in the winter months is a spatio-temporal strategy that enables a family to sustain the tradition of schooling within new parameters set by the state in the post-socialist period, but the resulting "winters without women" (Ahearn, 2018) in rural areas are re-shaping childhoods. Long parental separations can contribute to decisions to divorce (ibid), undermining the family structure; material poverty increases for the family when mothers cannot gain employment in semi-urban areas (International Organization for Migration, 2018); mothers working in the urban economy offer role models for income generation that are no longer closely linked to herding; and urban living may undermine children's desire for a rural livelihood in the increasingly urban-oriented frame. Education policy communities are highly aware of these socio-economic dynamics, which inform their questioning of boarding schools' "relevance".

Schooling and boarding, while nominally free, have associated costs that can undermine herder livelihoods by changing how households invest time, labour, and financial resources, and hence the prospects for children's futures. While a herding household has a composition and life cycle that will change over time, its wealth is mostly in animal assets. Combining schooling with herding in the contemporary market economy may require a household to hire in labour to avoid withdrawing older boys from school. In the likely absence of other economic capital, livestock has be used as collateral for a bank loan to cover costs, which "financialises" a household (Ahearn and Bumochir, 2016) but avoids having to sell off livestock to raise cash in the short term, with the potentially enduring consequence of reducing reproductive capital. This has impoverishing effects which are reflected in national measures of rural

poverty which – with nearly 30 per cent of households below the poverty line - remain high (Sanjaa, 2015; UNESCO, 2020).

Temporal and Spatial Intersections in Rural (Herding) Perspective

Tensions of these intersections play out in the persistently gendered trend of boys dropping out of secondary school to return to herding (UNESCO, 2020), and, as we noted earlier, an emerging public and private discourse of herding as "uncultured" and "unskilled" (Ahearn and Bumochir, 2016), rather than as dependent on people whose skills in herding derive from a substantial informal knowledge base that is not augmented by the contents of the formal school curriculum (Sanjaa, 2015).

The curriculum itself has acquired a post-socialist temporal layering, from which we pick out two dimensions for consideration here: the alignment of curriculum policy with global discourse, and the subtle, simultaneous (re)positioning of herding. Prior to 1998, secondary schools followed a "lesson programme" which listed the items to be studied within a certain subject. Global terminology began to make itself visible in the "standard of primary and secondary education content", approved in 1998, which was renewed and overlaid in 2004 by the Mongolian "competency based education standard". Amidst the policy level discourse of curriculum standards and competencies, textbooks include content about herding traditions and life skills which reflects an idea of herding as national heritage - rather than of formal education as a means of sustaining herding in the future. This same discourse shapes a notion of schooling "relevance" that, located within the post-socialist economic transition, is prominently associated with employability and which, in turn, drives the current emphasis (on which donors exert considerable influence) on improving technical and vocational training programmes that stress industrial and professional occupations - and hardly mention herding (UNESCO, 2020).

The newly published Education Sector Mid-Term Development Plan (ESMTDP) 2021-2030 (MECSS, 2020b), developed with external agency support, exemplifies the shifting post-socialist national-global imaginary of children's life trajectories that are caught up in concerns of "relevance". This core policy framework erases herding entirely from its pages (neither herding nor boarding schools are mentioned at all). It frames a view of education as central to shaping the citizens of the future, which is familiar from the socialist tradition and now presents in a global temporality:

> The aim of the ESMTDP is to ensure the holistic development of Mongolian citizens, with competencies to work and live in the digital era, actively participate in knowledge-based society, and engage in lifelong learning through quality, open, inclusive and flexible education services that meet their development needs. The Plan envisions the continuous development of the human being from birth throughout life by keeping pace with the Industrial Revolution 4.0, while considering the fact that new technologies such as the Internet of Things, Big Data and Artificial Intelligence are concretely influencing the industrial sectors (MECSS, 2020b, p. 46).

Across the education sector, then, the temporal dimension of post-socialism intersects with a spatiality that is framed in relation to the urban / industrial, and neglects rural futures (including the decimation of fragile rangeland ecologies by relentless expansion of extractive heavy industries, on which national economic development is predicated (UNESCO, 2020)). This intersection is reflected in the new, globally-referent discourses of schooling standards and "quality", and the relationship between learning outcomes, certification and employment – all of which are contemporary indicators of educational "relevance" in contexts of urbanised modernity. Out-migration and demographic decline in rural areas are accompanied by overcrowded schools in urban centres and such low student numbers in rural areas that subject-specialist teaching is compromised. This further reinforces the negative perceptions of rural boarding school quality that already surface in repeated demands to improve the supply of textbooks and, indeed, of teachers, alongside calls for training to update rural teachers' knowledge of content and pedagogical approaches (MIER, 2019; UNESCO, 2020). This is a particularly challenging cycle for schools in the *soums*, the erstwhile spatial anchors of rural life, for whom the de-registration of children that enables them to attend school elsewhere cannot do other than reduce their own budget (Batbaatar et al., 2005, p. 30).

Meanwhile, in urban school settings, in-migrating children from herding families who have been

attending school in rural settings have been able, by virtue of dormitory provision, to embark on being "schooled children". Their re-registration in urban schools marks parental success and capacity to source an alternative that is now associated with better quality provision; yet these children are widely found to be behind in their studies and subject to a identity-related discrimination against herders (Batbaatar et al., 2005, p. 37) that conflicts with the projection in policy discourses of herding as Mongolia's distinctive national emblem.

Conclusion

By focusing on the boarding school as a case study that was both somewhat typical within the socialist world and unique for mobile herding children, we have uncovered not only the complexities of the policy problem of "relevance", but also the potentialities of a theoretically and historically sensitive approach to education policy in one of many post-socialisms. The exploration of tensions in the spatial and temporal orientations of Mongolian schooling has shown that the alignment of socialism with national identity was writ large on the rural landscape in the form of boarding schools; and they remain a material legacy and a space of national identity. As a policy proposition to attain full schooling for the herder child, the rural boarding school remains pragmatic and viable (if not uncomplicated) and enjoys policy support. But, as we have shown in our analysis of boarding schools and what they tell us about formal schooling's "relevance" in place and time, change is layered in ways that create complex realities. The meaning of both the boarding school and the herding nation continue to evolve, and through our exploration we have shed some light on those changes in meaning and the ways in which these intersect with social relations, cultures and policy.

Our analysis worked with the reality that there are clear fractures emerging in herder childhoods in Mongolia. The "schooled" rural child, comprising the education of herder children whose future is to maintain the core rural culture that is central to national identity, begins to recede as post-socialist modernity sees both a rural *and* urban future for Mongolia's children. Yet simultaneously, the rural boarding schools remain to educate the children of herders. While their material force stays and is expanded, they act as spaces of fracture and encounter where long standing ideologies and cultures meet - but do not necessarily integrate with - globalised forces and discourses and new material and socio-economic realities, as we have shown.

The case presented here, of how herder children in contemporary Mongolia continue to be schooled, kicks back against global-dominated policy initiatives that invoke "relevance" as a means of suppression or erasure of the realities and localised identities of everyday lives (MECSS, 2020b). The deep complexity of layered change, revealed through our post-socialist lens, is largely foreclosed from scrutiny in the neo-liberal, globalised frame of reference that now exerts a strong influence over national education policy actors (UNESCO, 2020). In the education sector, that frame lends itself to a perhaps convenient, yet ahistorical and socio-spatially dislocated, over-simplification in how schooling's "relevance" is conceptualised. Our analysis refutes this simplification: indeed, we would argue that it is an ontological imperative to refuse this pressure.

Declarations

Author's Declarations

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Research Article

The impact of education reform in Romania between 1989-2020 on the regulation and decentralization of early childhood education

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Abstract: Romania inherited a tightly controlled and strictly regulated mass education system from socialism, which inevitably has gone through a systematic reform. However, transformation or change of any education system does not take place for its own sake, but it is intended to meet certain social and political challenges and requirements. Therefore, the present study investigates the significant changes that have taken place in early childhood education (ECE) in Romania since the collapse of the Ceausescu regime in 1989. Specifically, the impact of the reform measures on ECE provision is examined in relation to curriculum content and structure. Explanation of how to investigate education have been central to the present research. The analysis of documentary data corpus identified three main themes reflecting the changes that took place: (i) the introduction of education reforms, (ii) the emergence of educational pluralism, (iii) the various iterations of the early childhood curriculum. Findings suggest that decentralisation processes led to the spread of alternative pedagogies in ECE add the findings about curriculum content change our investigation offers a detailed picture of the educational processes of decentralization and the changes it has brought in the early childhood curriculum.

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Introduction

The dominant political and economic views of a society are reflected in the education policy of the country. Romania was no exception. The political changes of December 1989 opened the way for democracy, which resulted in confusion and anachronism in the educational system that was built on communist ideals (Papp, 1998). The communist education system operated under strong centralization until the beginning of the 1990s. Activities in support of democracy and reform measures opened the door for decentralization processes, nonetheless, the Romanian education system, including early childhood education, has retained its centralized character to this day. The main focus of the present study is not on processes in education policy and the sociology of education, but rather on how regulations, value construction, and processes related to change in the early childhood curriculum have impacted early childhood education. Although preschool education is part of public education in Romania, the literature in the field is rather scant and incomplete. On the one hand, this can be attributed to the fact that during the *period* of the *Communist regime,* kindergartens operated attached to schools; on the other hand, until 2020, the first level of institutionalized education was not mandatory and early childhood education received little attention. Therefore, in what follows, I will focus on the reform measures and decentralization processes that took place at the level of public education following the political transition.

Background to the Study

Quality of education, innovation and the use of alternative *preschool programs* play a particularly important role in Romanian preschool institutions of our time. In order to reveal the source of these, we focused our attention on the period following the regime change. In the communist era, the unified mass education introduced after industrialization can be considered the industrialization of knowledge transfer. The aim was to impart the same knowledge to all children within the framework of a centralized education system. The system was based on the principle that all children are the same and they were not deemed as

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individuals. It was easier to treat everyone equally, using a uniform curriculum, similar schools and place a priority on factual knowledge. The education system during Communism instilled discipline, obedience, and patriotism in the citizens. In order to achieve this, wearing a uniform, doing community service, and respecting teachers was mandatory (Rădulescu, 2006). This study presents the economic, demographic, legal and educational changes that characterized the post-communist period, it also discusses how emerging preschool programs shaped preschool education in space and time, and the way educational pluralism gained ground**.**

The Regime Change from an Education Policy Viewpoint

Under socialism, the main goal of the eastern Soviet-style system was to establish total control over the upcoming generations. This trend could be observed in education policy through the nationalization of parochial and private schools (Sáska, 2016). In the eastern part of Europe, including Romania, education was highly centralized. Pre-transition education policy in Romania was rigid, lagging behind and obsolete (Bârzea, 1993). Following the regime change, the aim of renewing and reforming education became apparent through decentralization processes. This change took place not only in Romania but also in other Central and Eastern European countries, through faster or slower decentralization processes. Nevertheless, the steps taken towards decentralisation in Romania show great diversity (Radó, 2013). In what follows, we shall focus on the contents and processes entailed by this phenomenon in the education system. One can speak of a completely decentralized education system if all functional governance subsystems, i.e. funding, content regulations, quality assessment, system of service providers, etc., are decentralized (McGinn & Welsh, 1999). Decentralization solves old problems and creates new ones (Cheng, 1997). One of the main aims of decentralization programmes is to provide more favourable conditions for the development of the system. Partial decentralization does not necessarily improve governments' ability to implement an education policy (Radó, 2013). We fully agree with these claims as the process of decentralization did not solve all educational problems in any of the Eastern European countries. Romania was no exception as decentralization processes in the country further aggravated the problems and processes of the system. Though the education policy in Romania set off on a path of decentralization, the process has not been completed. Investigating the phenomenon, we find that the initial period was not characterized by unified, straightforward efforts. Comprehensive systemic changes appeared much later, starting from the mid '90s. After the regime change, a paradigm shift could also be observed in institutionalized education. While *under the communist* rule, the demand on the education system was to form well-educated, loyal, communist individuals following the political transition, the reform processes gave rise to such expectations as the comprehensive, free and harmonious development of the individual, and the development of an independent and creative personality.

Methodology

The study has adopted a qualitative interpretive theoretical stance, where the researcher made sense of the documentary texts to develop an understanding and give meaning to the content of educational documentary materials through a close reading in a systematic way (Punch & Oancea, 2014). It is to be acknowledged here that the researcher is not separate from this process, rather, the meanings constructed are socially and culturally conditioned and they inevitably influence the researcher's interpretations of the documentary content (Krippendorff, 2019; O'Donoghue, 2007). The main sources of data were educational laws and regulations from 1987 to 2019 providing official sources of data on educational matters in Romania in the post-soviet era. Subsequently, Romanian early childhood curricula were also examined in a chronological order, in which the variables were highlighted that enabled the reform of preschool education to be tracked. Altogether, twelve documents were selected for analysis: three documents of educational law, five regulatory documents and four iterations of the early childhood curricula between 2000 and 2019. The diachronic approach of the document analysis made it possible to examine the phenomena in the history of education in a chronological order. Through the internal analysis and subjective study of the documents, the researcher highlighted the changes in legislation and education laws. During the external analysis, the social context of the documents and the changes in the reformed

curriculum in early childhood education were examined. The study employed qualitative descriptive content analysis, through which the researcher interacted with the selected documentary materials (Krippendorff, 2019; Kurkatz, 2012). Through the multi-phase analysis, during which the 'messages' extracted from the documents were analyzed, thematic patterns were identified in the examined texts according to the combined deductive (a priori coding frame) and inductive logic**.** The aim was to identify relationships between the variables. The analysis resulted in three main themes, which reflected the changes that took place and also their chronologies: (i) the introduction of education reforms, (ii) the emergence of educational pluralism, (iii) the various iterations of the early childhood curriculum.

Presentation and Discussion of the Findings

This section presents the educational reform processes that took place after the regime change. These were investigated in a systematic order, considering three different aspects: the introduction of the first reforms after the regime change, the emergence of educational pluralism, and changes in preschool curricula.

There are a number of national and international approaches to educational reform, yet we can speak of a unified approach in terms of change, shift and restructuring. From a different point of view the democratization, modernization and development of the education system (Kondakov, 1987). Modern approaches take into account various factors [2] quantitative education reforms are replaced by qualitative ones. Preparing an education reform entails the clarification of the following basic problems (Murvai, 1998):

- how much time is objectively devoted to developing and applying comprehensive ideas;
- what assumptions and belief system serve as the foundation for the transformation and redesign of the education system;
- is there a need for a complete reform or only certain components of the system need to be changed. Any of the above basic questions can only be fully clarified if we also consider the dimension of time.

A Multi-Perspective Analysis of Post-Regime-Change Reform Processes

The three decades after the regime change, dedicated to the democratic reform of the Romanian education system, can be examined and divided into different periods by using various indicators. Under this aspect discusses three well-defined and structured periods (Papp, 1998):

a) The *proclaimed reform period* (Dec. 1989 -1992) was characterized on the one hand by a sense of freedom promoted by the collapse of Ceaușescu's regime and on the other hand by the lack of a comprehensive legal framework. The education system remained centralized during this period as many previous provisions remained in force. The chaos resulting from the collapse of the regime led to both ad hoc ministerial decisions and institutional initiatives. Ministerial decisions, i.e. at the national level, mostly urged the discontinuation of the most obvious features of the communist education system, such as forbidding teacher mobility, the overwhelming number of compulsory working hours, the high number of students per class, compulsory uniform, the participation of pupils and university students in agricultural work, the politicization of textbooks, the strict inspections, etc. Given the lack of legal provisions, a kind of individualization has developed at the institutional level. During this period, education was regulated by the Education Act, 1978, still in force and various government decrees. Preschool education was also based on the *Preschool Education and Training Program* published in 1987. An interesting feature of the documents is that it plans and prescribes in detail every game and activity for the preschool teacher. It lacks creativity, child-centeredness, and freedom of choice, while it contains a strict routine of daily activities, very elaborate descriptions of games, and a weekly schedule. This preschool program consists of three distinct parts. The first part is an exhaustive presentation of the educational content and its implementation in the small, middle and big groups. The second part lists the party-political education of children, and the compulsory "*Șoimii Patriei*" [*Homeland Hawks*] activities and requirements, while the third part contains a collection of

[2] http://learningportal.iiep.unesco.org/en/glossary/educational-planning

socialist songs and poems. In the early 1990s, the issue of education lost ground to economic and political problems, and what is more, the urgent reform of the system was not put into practice for a very long time (Bartha et al., 2011).

b) The *populist reform period* (1992-1996). The long-awaited Education Act is published in 1995. Everyone expected this to bring about the education reform. There are at least two reasons why this has not happened: on the one hand, education reform is not limited to one or two laws but is pushes through by a more comprehensive, coherent chain of actions and decisions. On the other hand, the laws mentioned above contained many provisions that were incompatible with the objectives of the reform. While the reform is aimed at making educational structures as flexible and open as possible and making the education system adapt to challenges easily and be able to meet local needs, the Education Act confers too much power to the Ministry of Education by authorizing it to coordinate and control the national education system. Thus, characterizing the reform as being populist means that an institutional framework had already been established for it, however, implementation is rather poor, concrete changes in the system are rather scarce and as Rita Fóris-Ferenczi argued about the reform as a concern of the ministry, the school inspectorates and advisory bodies is veiled in secrecy as opposed to being public as rightly expected (Fóris-Ferenczi, 1996). It was in the interest of the authorities of the time to commit to the reform as the country could receive financial assistance from the World Bank on condition that it creates a democratic education system.

c) *Extending the reform* (from 1996). The reform of pre-university education was primarily aimed at bringing changes to the management and financing of public education. The main objective of the reform was to bring changes to the central administration, more specifically to decentralize it. The Ministry of Education would serve as a strategic decision-making body, while the inspectorates would ensure the quality of education as a tactical level of decision-making. At the same time, the autonomy of schools would increase and local authorities could be more actively involved in the financing of the schools in their area. When the government fell in 1997, Andrei Marga became the new Minister of Education in Romania. He argued that the education reform must be implemented in six areas: 1. curriculum reform; 2. reforming university entrance examination, nationalizing the baccalaureate and taking into account the result for admission; 3. rethinking specializations and promoting academic and scientific achievements; 4. rethinking the relationship between schools and economic-administrative units; 5. the financial autonomy of higher education institutions; 6. a better, fairer distribution and use of foreign scholarships (Papp, 1998). On January 21, 1998, the National Education Reform Commission was established within the Ministry of Education. This marked the beginning of an amplification of the concrete reform processes at the national level. Although the reform was based on top-down restructuring, the core curriculum shifted towards multipolar regulation, which presupposed the start of decentralization processes. Progress in professional development (in-service teacher training, the training of trainers, the accreditation of in-service training programs, the reform in vocational training, the reform in internal, school-level evaluation) was complemented by regulations promoting the infrastructural development of schools, the decentralization of education management and financing as well as creating the conditions for school autonomy. These reform efforts strengthened the belief that the opportunity for institutional autonomy and local educational management provides a flexible framework for minority education as well in order for it to adapt to specific educational situations. In a European historically perspective, ECEC attendance in Romania was high, similar to many other countries in the region. Provision was predominantly public and based on a centralised model. Reforms in the early 1990s saw much of the public infrastructure dismantled and provision declined significantly. Aware of the importance of ECEC attendance for improving learning outcomes and in particular addressing inequities, Romania is seeking to improve access to modern high-quality ECEC. While discussions about adopting a multi-sectoral strategy have been on-going for years, no such strategy is in place yet.[3]

[3] Improving Access to quality Early Education in Romania http://www.oecd.ro/oecd3ro.html

The Rise of Educational Pluralism in Romania

The second theme from the documentary content analysis addresses the concept of educational pluralism, the rise of which manifested in adopting alternative approaches to education in general and specifically in early education. What is alternative education? How could it materialize in a centralized education system that followed rigid rules? In pedagogy, the term 'alternative' is associated with instructional and educational alternatives. In what follows, we are going to discuss the emergence of the concept, the modifications it has undergone, its connotations and the meanings associated with it. The meaning of the concept offers two optional, unusual, non-standard options. This meaning, however has significantly extended and enriched over time. The term 'alternative' has become very common in today's public discourse, in fact, it has lost its original meaning derived from Latin, i.e., 'one of the two options' (Brezsnyánszky, 2004). In everyday use it can be replaced by the words 'other', 'new', 'more interesting', conveying the sense of 'better', 'more modern' and 'more efficient'. The pedagogical connotation of 'alternative' is 'optional, chosen way of action". It is determined by two factors: alternativity, which offers the optional path, and *autonomy*, a subjective condition of alternativity entailing the possibility to choose (Falus, 2013). Those institutions can be considered alternative which provide an actual possibility for teachers, students and the education system to choose between pedagogically significantly different alternatives (Brezsnyánszky, 2004). What they share is the focus on the child's personality, striving to satisfy the child's interests, needs and demands. As a result, the role of sheer knowledge transfer, the usual interpretation of knowledge, the intellectual, verbal effect is diminished in these institutions and the focus shifts primarily to affective and effective goals (sociability, empathy, tolerance and autonomy) (Ballér et al., 2013).

By contrast, in *Reform Pedagogy and School Reform* Németh and Ehrenhard (1999) describe the goals and characteristics of traditional pedagogy as follows: teacher-centred, the prevalence of frontal instruction and corresponding classroom layout, homogeneous classes, same level of achievement, grade repetition, repetitive assessment, evaluation by grades, and using the carrot and stick method. In the years following the regime change, there was already a need to implicitly introduce alternative pedagogical programs from the West. Within the Ministry of Education, initiatives for alternative education had already taken place after the regime change, yet these efforts became more structured in 1996, when the Organization for the Provision of Services in Private Pre-University Education was established. A year later, this organization was divided into subunits, one of which is called the Education Alternatives and still exist today. It has to be noted that the regulations and legislation in alternative education do not distinguish between different stages of pre-university education and the same regulations apply to education at all levels. The reform process gave rise to the first Waldorf institutions; however, official regulations were introduced only several years later. Cuciureanu distinguishes three well-defined periods along the provisions introduced with reform measures:

a) *A period of anomie* between 1991 and 1995, before the Education Act was passed. In the years following the regime change, alternative educational institutions developed and operated without a regulatory framework. This period of turmoil led to the establishment of alternative kindergartens and schools not authorized by the Ministry of Education. In 1994, the first Step by Step kindergartens began to operate, and these brought forth the reformation of the norms of preschool education. They promoted child-centred education, i.e., considering the individual nature of each child and their own pace of development. Great emphasis was placed on maintaining contact with parents and involving them in everyday educational activities. It took a decade for this child-centred approach and paradigm shift to enter the public consciousness and the national curriculum.

b) *The period of temporary operations* - the Education Act, 1995 and the "*Regulation of the Establishment and Operation of Private and Public Alternative Education Institutions in Romania*" introduced by the Alternative Education Committee, established in 2000. The institutions that started operating after the regime change obtained their operating license from the Ministry of Education in this period. Key implementations include the procedures and expectations for alternative educational institutions. The

accreditation and inspection process of alternative educational institutions was influenced by cyclical and other long-term factors. The former includes educational institutions established in a chaotic way after the regime change, the growing number of students, and the large number of schools and kindergartens offering alternative programs without a legal framework. Long-term factors include the creation of competitive situations in education as a result of educational pluralism, the increase in financial resources and the performance-based allocation of resources to institutions, the creation of opportunities for students to study abroad and the homologation of degrees, as well as ensuring the quality of education in all schools in Romania.

c) *The period of accreditations* - consolidation of alternative education, legalization of institutions. The accreditation of private and public alternative education institutions that met national requirements began in the 2000s. All alternative groups, classes, or educational institution that were authentic, efficient, and recognized were entered in a register. The turn of the millennium was a watershed for alternative educational institutions as well. The accreditation took into account the established system of criteria; thus, those institutions continued their activity which were viable and met the evaluation criteria. Unlike other Western European countries, Romania did not enable alternative education to function on its own, but integrated it into the national education system. Sections 16 and 59 of Education Act 2011/1, still in force, provide more detailed regulatory provisions on educational alternatives. Accordingly, alternative institution can be established at any stage of pre-university education, provided they are licensed by the Ministry of Education and meet the established criteria. Accreditation and continuous monitoring of institutions are carried out in accordance with the relevant laws and ensure their operational and organizational autonomy.

Since 2007, Romania has been a member state of the European Union (EU) and has been making efforts to harmonize and adapt legislations and standards to European regulations. In 2020, Romania recognized the fundamental importance of the quality of early education in the development of society and took part in the European program "First Years - First Priority" whose aim was to build a strong community of supporters in the European Union and at a national level.

Representatives of alternative institutions compile the curriculum which is then approved by the Ministry of Education. All kindergarten groups and elementary classes have to have a teacher qualified for implementing the given alternative method (Cuciureanu, 2011).

Two opposing directions were observed in the introduction of alternatives: one of them was represented by non-conventional alternative education, promoting freedom and the independence of children, the other one was the initiative of governmental organizations seeking to use traditional education and the traditional canon in alternative education. Eventually, a compromise was reached, namely educational alternatives accepted the forms of assessment and examinations used in public education, and government organizations granted organizational and functional autonomy to alternative institutions. Nonetheless, the biggest contradiction comes from the fact that in Romania any alternative trend has to be integrated into the national curriculum. Although in recent years, most county seats and small towns in Transylvania and Partium saw a rapid increase in the number of Waldorf, Montessori, and step by step kindergartens, schools, or even groups, or classes, not to mention home-education communities, these still account for a very small proportion, hardly 1 per cent of children enrolled in public education in Romania.

Changes in the Early Childhood Curriculum After the Regime Change

Following the regime change, the education system in Romania saw structural and attitudinal changes, nevertheless, it retained its advocacy as well as its performance-oriented and controlling nature through a unified, nationally imposed curriculum. In Romania, one can speak of a unified curriculum framework for early childhood education, to which all public, private or alternative institutions must adapt. In the years of socialism, the role of parents in early childhood education sank into insignificance. The development of children was left entirely to educators and professionals in the field. After the regime change, the Ministry of Education acknowledged the fact that parents, caregivers, nannies and early

childhood teachers play an equally important role in the physical and mental development of children. In order to achieve this, more and more emphasis was placed on the development of early childhood education. At the beginning of the 1990s, early childhood education was carried out based on the program left behind from socialist period. Temporary Educational Program based on Areas of Development (PETAS) the first pilot program for preschool children was launched in 1992, with the support of United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF). Its novelty lay in the fact that it established a closer relationship with parents, and education was carried out in smaller groups according to areas of development. The alternative program used in PETAS shows similarities to the one used in the Step by Step Program launched in 1994. Both programs introduced the implicit involvement of parents in preschool education and both used activities and games that contribute to the child's individual development (Preda et al, 2011). The next two decades saw the emergence and implementation of four national early childhood curricula.

Early Childhood Curriculum, 2000

After the regime change, the education policy in Romania started to align with the European education policy. As a result, continuous curriculum development, adjustments and changes had to be carried out. The first early childhood curriculum was developed at the turn of the millennium, which can be considered a transitional period in the light of reform processes in Romania. When it comes to examining the early childhood curriculum in Romania, attention must be drawn to the terminological diversity found in the literature. Immediately after the regime change, the official document used by early childhood teachers as a curriculum was called '*preschool education and training program*'. In the early childhood curricula used after the turn of the millennium, the terms '*curriculum'* and '*syllabus*' were used interchangeably. The international literature provides different interpretations for the term '*curriculum*', some of them more straightforward, others more complex. According to Mialaret, the curriculum indicates the educational content (Mialaret, 2018), while according to Walker, it also includes educational goals and organization (Walker, 2021). There is no consensus in the pedagogical literature on the definition of the concept, yet some common features can be pointed out. It is the sum of the educational content of the educational activities carried out in educational institutions, which integrates teaching and learning processes and presupposes a systematic approach to educational processes (Bocoș & Jucan, 2019). The term curriculum was introduced into the Romanian pedagogical literature only after the regime change. This change can be observed not only in the terminology used but also in terms of content. As part of the decentralization processes, the national curriculum was renewed and the curriculum was constantly reformed. According to the national curriculum published by the Ministry of Education, the term 'curriculum' is a key concept in education and it encompasses contemporary educational practices. The new approach was implemented within -*''The organization of early childhood education'* program. Preschool children learn and develop through play, the driving force behind preschool activities. The second most important actor in early childhood education policy is the early childhood teacher, their personality, style and behaviour patterns, which serve as an example for children. It is the responsibility of the early childhood teacher to create an environment for pre-schoolers that arouses their interest and by the introduction of external objects makes them feel at ease. We find several innovative changes in this curriculum. The number of activities was reduced and was divided into two levels, which are still used today. The first includes children aged between 3 and 5. At this level the focus is on creating the necessary conditions for socialization. The second level includes children aged between 5 and 7, these need to be prepared for school and social life. The number of activities was made dependent on the type of the institution and afternoon classes were introduced in institutions with a long-hours programme. Optional activities, adapted to the needs of the children, were introduced in early childhood education. New programs were developed and long-term goals were set covering the entire period of early childhood education. The new curriculum also formulated some basic principles: creating a playful learning environment, development based on spontaneous experiences, laying the foundation of reading, the introduction of integrated activities and the introduction of projects. In September, the first two weeks of the new school year focus on assessment. The new curriculum also imposed some new regulations:

interdisciplinary introduction of activities, reducing the number of worksheets, workbooks, exercises teaching writing, avoiding the excessive use of visual aids, organizing activities in smaller groups, eliminating homework, ensuring creativity through aesthetic activities and crafts and giving children the freedom to choose between optional activities. This curriculum already contained several innovations that have been part of early childhood education and the individual and free development of children to this day.

Early Childhood Curriculum, 2006

The year 2006 can be considered a milestone in the Hungarian early childhood education in Romania as this was the year when the Curriculum for Preschool Education Activities, approved in September 2000 by Decree No. 8/4481 of the Ministry of Education and Culture and revised in 2003, was published for Hungarian-medium groups. This was an important stage of the early childhood curriculum reform. In addition to the curricula for different fields of education, the Hungarian version also contained the curriculum for mother tongue teaching. The innovative part of the document is the curriculum for teaching Romanian in Hungarian early childhood education institutions. This sets out the requirements for learning a second language and details the skills a Hungarian-speaking pre-schooler needs to successfully learn a second language, in the present case the state language. Mother tongue serves as a foundation for acquiring Romanian language, taking into account the transfer and interference between the two languages. The early childhood curriculum specifies the types of activities to be carried out and lists the proposed optional activities. For each type of activity, it determines the number of weekly activities corresponding to the groups of children aged between 3 and 5 and between 5 and 7 and to the short- and long-hour programmes.

Early Childhood Curriculum, 2008

The next early childhood curriculum was published in 2008, reflecting current trends in pedagogy, the positive and negative experiences of early childhood teachers, the current level of development of preschool children as well as modern communication and information technologies. The introduction of areas of experience, learning activities and topics to be covered during the school year, as well as reducing the number of activities also counted as important innovations. The introduction of the areas of experience made it possible to take an interdisciplinary, integrated approach to the proposed content and to ensure the freedom of the early childhood teacher to plan daily activities. The revised curriculum emphasized the importance of interactive methods, play, family, and the appropriate atmosphere for early childhood education. Although this curriculum introduced several changes, it can still be classified as a performance-based curriculum. This allows for a synthesis of expectations by stages. The development requirements relate to the competencies that have to be developed during early childhood education in the following five areas of experience: language and communication, human and social sciences, aesthetics, creativity as well as psychomotor skills. These areas should be closely interlinked and grouped around integrated themes (Stark, 2020).

Learning activities are a set of planned, organized, methodical activities led by the early childhood teacher in order to meet requirements. These activities can be carried out using the frontal teaching method or in small groups or individual work. Despite the fact that teachers are given complete freedom in this respect, the majority opt for frontal instruction. The main reason for this is that teachers have to deal on their own with a group of 20-25 children.

Early Childhood Curriculum, 2019

Based on the European education policy, this new curriculum offers a pedagogical framework for early childhood education that allows children to fully develop their personalities, and gives teachers the possibility to tailor the activities to suit the personal interest and needs of each child. In this new scenario, the nursery school age group forms an integral part of the curriculum, despite the fact that at the time the Ministry of Education was not yet responsible for the administration of nursery schools. The curriculum is structured based on developmental areas, developmental dimensions and behaviour patterns, of which developmental areas serve as a starting point for teachers. When planning learning activities, teachers first

choose the dimensions of development, they adapt the behaviour patterns to the age group, and then they design the appropriate learning activities (Stark, 2020).

The introduction of the new curriculum encouraged innovations in terms of terminology and content. Previous 'preschool teaching activities' were replaced by the concepts of 'early childhood education and care' and the intertwining of these two. This was the first curriculum in which 'preschool education' was replaced by the term 'early childhood education` (Vargáné, 2017). Changes were made to the number of instruction hours per week, and the emphasis shifted from lexical knowledge and information transfer to the social and emotional development of children.

Conclusion

In the communist era, the unified mass education introduced after industrialization can be considered the industrialization of knowledge transfer. The aim was to impart the same knowledge to all children within the framework of a centralized education system. The system was based on the principle that all children were the same and they were not deemed as individuals. It was easier to treat everyone equally, using a uniform curriculum and schools placing priority on factual knowledge. After the regime change, it was a real challenge to change this attitude Liberalization processes took place in most areas. However, in the field of education, this has not been accomplished to date. The state exerts such ~~a~~ high-level control that traditional, public education has very little competition and this minimizes development. The introduction of educational pluralism has led to an increasing interest in alternative curriculum approaches, nonetheless, a strong vertical structure and a high degree of bureaucracy still prevails. This trend can also be observed in the field of early childhood education. The use of alternative pedagogies in early childhood education is permitted by law on the condition that these are integrated into the national curriculum. Innovations can be observed in curriculum changes, which have been partly aligned with European standards, yet early learning is still rigid, uniform and mandatory for all children in early childhood education in Romania. However, there appear to be signs of positive development: formal learning is replaced by play, the focus has shifted from the community to the individual, free play and activities designed for personal development have also become more important in the daily programme. This, to some extent, has reduced the gap between the rhetoric and reality, theory and practice in early childhood education and care~~.~~ Although the current curriculum reflects several reforms, it can still be regarded as an outcome -based curriculum. Educational institutions were not given a sufficient degree of autonomy as the Ministry of Education transferred most of the decision-making responsibilities to the school inspectorates inherited from socialism. Hence the influence of socialism lives on still today. In the past thirty years ~~the~~ education policy has been shaped by twenty Ministers of Education and education regulations have been amended more than sixty times, nonetheless the long-expected full reform and de-centralization has not been implemented.

In conclusion, I would argue that centralized systems of early education are no longer sufficient. Preschool institutions should be given autonomy and more freedom to employ alternative approaches, so that they can create their own pedagogical program in accordance with their local circumstances, environment and needs. The study contributes to broadening our knowledge and understanding of the reform processes in education in Romania. It also offers a systematic analysis of the processes that have been taking place in the past twenty years. The fact that the Romanian public education system still bears the marks of centralization raises further research questions.

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