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Family Allowance and Recent Socialist Population Policy Trends

Introduction

The regulation of the population is a determining element of the phylogeny of humanity and its forms have changed several times during history. In the beginning the harmony between the number of the population and the life possibilities was regulated by the "laws of nature" exactly as in the animal world. The primitive communities increased the territory assuring their supply by changing their domicile, by making the surplus population wander away, or by any other means, if "overpopulation" took place. With given knowledge of the mechanism the communities directly tried to regulate their multiplication (with delaying the marriage, sexual tabus).

A new era began in this respect, when the individual realized, that the number of his children influences his living conditions, his economic and social possibilities. From then on it was the family, which tried to determine the number of the children. The family planning, which originally had been collective and served the interests of the society, became gradually the mean of realization of individual interests. Thus demographic processes arose in the community partly as fundamentals, partly, however, as the object of deliberate population policy.

In Hungary the land reform, the industrialization and the socialist reorganization of the agriculture started a real demographic revolution.

The occupation, domicile, education, qualification, family structure of population, and — resulting from this — all phenomena of the population movements have changed, although the listed economic processes did not have population policy objectives. Their economic effect is of a general type, as they exercise an influence on the material, intellectual and cultural development of the whole population, and through this (or within this) they have influence on the reproduction of the population and on the labour force. As only the effects, but not the objectives of these measures were of a demographic type, they can be considered as indirect economic means of population policy.

According to the experiences of the last decades these changes had a moderating influence on population growth. The society as well as the family needs children, but as long as this need of the family can be satisfied with one child, this is not enough for the society: it cannot exist durably without its own reproduction. The realization became more general, that the decreasing of the birth-rate can have negative consequences in economic as well as in political respect. The society has to accept, that the bringing up of children necessary for reproduction cannot be considered as the private business of parents, because it is a — socially inevitable — service and above the normal task.

As the society cannot exist without this, it is its primary requirement to increase the prestige of motherhood and fatherhood with every means, by wider acknowledgement

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of the parental "call" and by the compensation of the purely economic expenses of the bringing up of children — to save the family. The basic solution of the problem would be, if for example the families with three children would not live worse because of their fertility than those without children.

As this seems to be impossible under present circumstances, we should at least realise in family planning, that the desire for a child should be the decisive factor and not the fear of the increasing material burdens.

If the population development is considered as desirable, particular direct economic means have to be used. These means are "direct", because they appear on every such level of the population reproduction process, where a certain material obstacle has to be eliminated: for example in case of marriage, maintaining the number of children desired by the family, or employment of the mothers. As the demographic attitude of the individual is less and less instinctive, the external motives play a very important role in his decisions. With the giving of material advantages the society tries to influence this decision so, that it practically grants the freedom of the decision-making of the individual. It obtains this by diminishing those disadvantages, which can occur as a result of the increasing burden of children.¹

The Economic means of the expansive population policy

If the formation of the small family model spreads because of economic considerations, the most varied material means have to be used for the inversion of this tendency considered as disadvantageous for the increase of fertility.²

One of the most important theoretical and practical problems of population and social policy is therefore the determination of the amount of money what the state should set apart for these objectives.

If we express the population and family policy expenses in the percentage of the national income or the budget, it can be determined from the change of rates, what importance the government attributes in a given year to the increase of fertility or to the economic means of population policy. However, a certain part of the allowance does not reach the family through the budget, but through the framework of the social policy of the enterprises.

In our country for example the sum set apart for the family allowance grew continuously and significantly in the 1970's, as it increased from 5.2 thousand millions (1974) to 10.8 (1979)³ and in 1983 it surpassed 16 thousand millions. This means that from the budget of 1974 1.9 and from that of 1983 already about 3.0 percent served this objective. When the task is "only" the realization of some given social policy objectives, this amount informs us about the possibilities and in what measure the government wants to improve the essential conditions of the families.

Another approach is necessary, if the realization of the expansive population policy has to be realised by economic means. In this case the task is not so easy: such an amount

¹ If we consider the per capita income of the childless couples as 100 units, than that of the families with two children is 62 in Hungary and that of the families with three children 50 units. In the last decades the income of the childless families and the families with children has widened from each other. The social allocations reduce these differences: in Hungary the average monthly sum of the family allowance was 1034 Ft in 1982, which represented 22% of the average income (4641 Ft).

² The number of the services, material subsidies or financial allowances given under different pretexts is about 40. *Molnárné Venyige Júlia: A szociálpolitika néhány kérdése gazdasági nézőpontból. Közgazdasági Szemle, 1977. 10. sz.* (Some questions of social policy from an economic point of view.)

³ *Klinger András: A népesedéspolitikai határozatok eredményei, 1973—1979. I. rész. Társadalmi Szemle, 1981. évi 3. sz.* (Results of population policy decisions, 1973—1979)

of the provision has to be determined, which can efficiently motivate the parents to arrive at the family size considered as desirable. Certain demographers and politicians mean that "every man has his own price", and if the families get this, the fertility could be satisfactory even in those societies, in which the family planning is already widely popular. In reality, however, we do not know, how many percent of the national income can be set apart for these objectives without the violation of the economic laws.

The efficient forms of the allowances helping the bringing up of children

The material burdens of the family connected with the bringing up of children are composed of the following items:

- the money expenses connected with the child (food, clothes)
- additional "general expenses" resulting from the greater number of children (bigger apartment, more heating, etc.),
- the falling out of the mother's income,
- additional work of the parents connected with the bringing up of children.

The society tries to reduce these expenses in different ways. Although it is a basic question how large amount is set apart for the counterbalancing of these, it is not less important how these amounts have to be or can be used the most efficiently. Not only economists and sociologists, but also demographers debate and search for those allocation methods, which are the most advantageous and serve the aims to the best. It is important to decide, whether the grants in kind (allowances) or the subsidies paid in money are more efficient.

Certain goods and services have to be partly or totally excluded from the circle of the distribution according to work, partly because they are also necessary for those — to assure basic living conditions — who otherwise would not be able to pay for them, and partly because the individual and social value of the expediency of certain expenses do not fall together (a good example for this is the necessity of the education). These allowances originating from the social consumption fund appear either in the form of free goods and services (health provision, education, etc.), or at the disposal of the population at a reduced price (infants' nursery, day-nursery, recreation). The gratuitousness of the educational, cultural and health services (or their reduced prices) makes them theoretically accessible for every member of the society — independently of their property and income situations.

Quite a number of persons mean, that the social organization of these consumption funds is more efficient, than those of the individuals, because the resources at disposal are used directly according to their allocation, facilitating the bringing up of children within the family, the house-work of the women and are helping the physical and intellectual development of children. In the COMECON-countries the proportion of the free goods and services within the population income is estimated between 10 and 15 percent.⁴

The disadvantage of the purchasable goods and services got in kind or at a reduced price is usually in the fact, that their supply cannot keep up with the demand which is often artificially broadened. A significant part of the population is not fully aware of the financial attraction of the social policy or the health provisions because of the misleading usage of the concept of "gratuitousness".⁵

⁴ Szocializmus és közegészségügy. (Válogatott tanulmányok); Kossuth Könyvkiadó, Budapest, 1974. 44. p. (Socialism and public health. Selection of studies)

⁵ Kozma Ferenc: Emberi tényezők a gazdasági fejlődésben. Kossuth Könyvkiadó, Budapest, 1981. 349. p. (The human factor in the economic development)

Thus they can raise unjustified claims for these allowances (the wasting of medicines proves this).⁶

The other vulnerable point of the services in kind is the fact, that they cannot be assured on the same level for every person entitled, moreover certain type of allowance cannot at all be obtained by a certain part of the population.

Theoretically every mother can choose, either she takes her child under three years to the infants' nursery, or stays at home on child-care allowance and cares herself for her child. However, these alternatives are only open for a small part of the mothers, because for example there is no any infants' nursery at their domicile.

In 1981 in average throughout the country 63 infants' nursery centres were allotted to 10.000 inhabitants. However, the deviations from the national average were very large according to the type and size of the settlements. In the majority of the villages with a population under 2000 there is no infants' nursery. The monthly expenses falling upon one child in the infants' nursery are estimated at 2200—3000 Ft. The parents, however, often pay less for the provision, than the sum of the family allowance. Thus the parents of the children going to infants' nursery get the infants' accomodation from the society — beside the family allowance — as a grant in kind (that is the difference between the infants' nursery expenses and the pay-in expenses), and get the possibility, too, that the mother can engage herself in a gainful employment. From the comparison splitting of the expenses of the infants' nursery and of the child-care allowance it is clear, that the parents of the children going to infants' nursery get a social subsidy of some 2000 Ft more, than the parents of the others.⁷ These great differences, however, do not rest upon the number of children or the financial situation of the family, but upon the domicile of the family. These forms of the social allowances not only represent a discrimination against the population living in smaller villages, but also influence their willingness to get children unfavourably and hinder the engagement of the mothers to work. It is not a negligible problem either in what degree the beneficiaries are actually gaining from the amounts serving as grants in kind, and how great a part of these expenses has to be assigned for the functioning of the distribution system. The bureaucratic and complicated administration can consume a great part of the amounts serving for this objective without promoting the realization of the set objective.

As the needs of the bringing up of children are multiple, vary in time and differ from family to family, the grant in money permits a greater individual freedom and a more elastic adjustment to the circumstances. Therefore it seems, that — under equal financial possibilities — the demographic efficiency of the grants paid in money can be greater than that of the grants in kind or by price reductions.

If it happens, however, that the parents do not use the money received in the interest of their children, or do not use it for the determined purpose, the further granting of the subsidy can be stopped by administrative means. It is not a negligible practical aspect either, that the management of the money allowances is much simpler and more clearly arranged. An important disadvantage of these allowances is, however, the fact, that — because of the changes in prices — their purchasing power changes, too. (usually decreases),

⁶ The free allowance of the health provisions raises claims which are not and cannot be covered financially and produces shortage conditions artificially kept up. *Levendel László: A közegészségügyi reformról. Valóság, 1982. 5. sz.* (About the public health reform)

⁷ In the GDR it was found that in 1970 those who got into the infants' nursery got 180 M, and those, who did not got 30 M (at this time the expenses set apart for a child under 3 years were between 115 and 240 Marks). The yearly expenses of the accomodation of children before the school-age in children's institutes is estimated in the Sovietunion at 400—500 Rubels, from which only 20% is paid by the parents. Approximately 50% of the urban children are accomodated in such institutes. *Lukovin, I.: Nyekatorije problemi voszproizvodstva i ispolzovanyija trudovogo potenciala. Szocialiszticeszkij Trud, 1981. Nr. 8.*

which cannot occur in case of the free allowances (at least apparently). The social and population policy of the families is represented not only by one or two types of allowances. The assistance coming from various channels forms such a homogeneous system, which is composed of grants in kind, financial subsidies and grants in money. Under such circumstances the debate is not about the question of either-or, but about the possibility of establishing the most favourable shares. In this respect the differences between the countries are really great.

The share between the grants in kind and in money was 1:6,6 in France, 1:2,7 in Sweden⁸ and in Hungary the income resulting from the national funds was split up in a rate of 1:1,4 (in 1980). Though the situation existing in several countries is determined by the ensemble of the local possibilities and objectives, greater attention should be paid to the study of the reasons of the international differences and by identifying these, to the formation of the shares assuring the most favourable and the greatest efficiency.

About the family allowance

We do not deal in these framework with the debated questions of all economic means in the service of social and population policy. Therefore we concentrate our attention on the different methods of the distribution of amounts serving for family allowances and on the bases of the solutions.

The most important and most general form of the financial subsidy for population policy aims is the family allowance. Although it has been paid for decades in every European socialist country, the opinions are still divided in numerous theoretical and practical questions connected with it.

The family allowance and the number of children

The basis of the paying of the family allowance is determined by the number of children living in the family. From the practice of the different countries it appears, that neither the demographers, nor the politicians agree on the question, for how many children, or from how many children on it is expedient to pay. The social aim would justify that the society should aid the bringing up of every child, as already the birth of the first child reduces the per capita income. If, however, the primary aim of paying the allowance is the increase of fertility, the optimal usage of the amount being at disposal cannot be considered as unequivocal. The majority of the demographers maintain, that the family allowance has to be paid already for the first child, because it also decreases the income of the parents, and because the hardships and economic burdens connected with the bringing up of the child can discourage the parents from getting further children. For lack of the allowance the couples can postpone the birth of the first child until their financial situation improves (until they get a flat, or furnish it, etc.). The postponing can have the consequence that they do not even get any child, or they get only one. Therefore from paying the family allowance for the first child we expect not only the decrease of the economic burdens of the family, but also the increase of their readiness to get further children.

The experts of certain countries, however, start from the supposition, that every couple wants at least one child, therefore the bringing up of the "singleton" has not necessarily to be aided. Others approach the question from the distribution side: if they do not give allowance for the first child, then from a given amount they can give much more to the fami-

⁸ See Note 3

lies with more children (as a significant part of the families have only one child). Where the allowance is paid already for the first child, the strata with low fertility (for example those having an intellectual occupation) can also benefit from the social assistance. If the state cannot give every family a subsidy, than it should assist those having many children. Therefore many think it as sufficient to pay the family allowance from the second child on. According to certain soviet economists and demographers the task of the family is the assurance of the biological reproduction. The society promotes this already with the income from work, not only with the different social subsidies. Therefore an extra assistance is only due to the family with reproduction on an increasing scale. As this begins with the birth of the third child, those approaching the question from this side consider the paying of the family allowance as justified only for families with three or more children.

In the countries of an active population policy the amount paid usually increases parallelly and progressively with the number of children until the desired number of children is reached (for example till three children). In this regulation the intention is implied that the society overtakes an increasing part of the support of children, but it does not consider the extremely high number of children within the same family as desirable.

In respect of the reproduction of the population and the undisturbed development of the society most of the socialist countries consider the family with two-three children as ideal. Therefore the amount paid is determined so, that it should motivate the raising up of the second and third child. These countries concentrate the financial resources on the assistance of the family-type considered to be ideal.

The optimal amount of the family allowance

An often debated problem is the determination of the desirable amount of the family allowance and its social-demographic consequences to be expected. Elaborating the answer given to this question we have to take several aspects into consideration.

The determination of the measure of the contribution can depend on the financial situation of the family or can be independent of it. If every family gets the same amount paid for children, than this is equal that the society supports every child in the same measure and considers them as having the same potential value. But as the incomes of the families (and thus their expenses connected with the bringing up of children) are different, the assistance can have — strictly from the economic aspect — various demographic consequences:

— In the families, where the amount of the family allowance is equal to the expenses of the support of the child, the allowance compensates the decrease of income ensuing from the birth of another child. In these cases the subsidy can promote the increase of the number of births, or at least it can moderate the opposition because of economic reasons.

— In the families, where the family allowance is less than the expenses of the bringing up of the child, the economic mobilizing force of the subsidy is limited, or does not at all present, as the allowance is not equal to the effective expenses.

— The family allowance furthers the increase of fertility only in case of those families, where the amount of the allowance exceeds the expenses of the support of the child. For these families the birth of every child increases the income. Thus the motivating role of the system is the strongest in case of the low income families, and gradually decreases moving towards families with higher living standards.

Taking the society globally it is certain that a higher amount is the more successful for the system of the family allowance when it compensates the expenses of the bringing up of children for the greater part of the families. Thus, however, a stratum can emerge for which the per capita income is less than the amount of the family allowance. Therefore the wealth of these families is more influenced by the increase of the number of children, than

by the development of their income from work. In the case of these families the supposition is justified: they do not use the relatively significant allowances to satisfy their childrens needs.⁹ If the amount of the allowance is adjusted towards the lowest incomes, it loses its fertility increasing effect for the other strata and goes over into a kind of a social assistance.

Unfortunately there are neither domestic, nor international data to show, how great part of the families belongs to one or the other group. This makes the analysis of the efficiency of the family allowance rather difficult.

The pay of a family allowance with a uniform amount seems to solve the social problem in the way that it establishes another aid, as the families standing at one end of the society get an amount greater than their expenses of bringing up of children, while those belonging to the other get significantly less. In case of these latter the motivating and differentiating role of the incomes resulting from the work decreases — eventually even ceases, because (beside the higher wages due to the greater performance) the living standard of the families become lower due to the higher number of children. The consequence: the personal consumption level of a chief engineer with three children will be lower than that of a childless pay-roll clerk.

Even the demographic interests require that the quantitative and qualitative differences in the social division of labour of the wage-earners should predominate in the determination of the living, namely so that the level of living of the families of employees providing roughly the same performance should also be roughly the same ("same earning — similar level of living"). It is evident that we cannot fight successfully and permanently against the economic disadvantages of the bringing up of children with such economic allowances, which are less in value, than the numerically equivalent sum of the mentioned disadvantages. The effect of the family assistance measures serving the active population policy appears there and in such amount as it is capable to counterbalance the factors working against the increase or even the fact of the births.

The system built upon the uniform family allowance — consciously — or involuntarily — does not influence the number of children in every stratum of the society, but promotes the formation and maintenance of differential fertility.

Nowadays — I think — it is not justified to maintain such a system as a mean of population policy, which aims at differential fertility in case of the strata with different occupation, domicile, income, etc. These kind of systems are especially not justified, when the birth are reduced to a very low level. A steady population development can only be realized, if every stratum of the society is interested in the reproduction of the population on an increasing scale. The interests of the population policy do not require the equality of the amounts of the allowance, but rather the equality of the chances of the childless families and those having children.

We can reach various conclusions in connection with the assistance system, if we compare the amount of the family allowance with the support of the children, or with the salary of the supporter, and determine it appropriately.

Probably the rate of the support of children compared with the allowance shows the most precisely the stress, the measure of the state contribution, with which the society wants to lessen the economic burden of the families connected with the support and bringing up of children.

Such a comparison can often be more convincing than the broad scale of the free or preferential allowances. But we also get an important index, when we compare the allo-

⁹ This question is already at present considered as timely in Czechoslovakia in case of a certain part of the gipsy population. The local councils have the right in these cases to stop the payment of the family allowance partially or totally for a certain time.

wance to the salary of the father, because this rate shows in what measure the state assistance increases the income of the wage-earners.

Whether we determine the amount of the family allowance in the rate of the supporter's salary, or in the rate of the expenses of the bringing up of children, this has the important consequence, that one child costs more for the society, than the other: therefore the opinion of the experts is also divided concerning the expediency of this allowance principle.

Those who propose the adoption of the conception of a differential assistance of children, primarily keep in view the interests of a satisfactory population growth. They mean, that the groups with low fertility are only motivated by an allowance, which is proportional to the expenses of bringing up of children in the family. In the birth-control societies of today it can be expected from less and less population groups, that they continuously recover themselves, unless other circumstances promote the maintenance of their socially desired fertility.

Others¹⁰ mainly on the basis of ideological arguments, sharply oppose the acceptance of such a system, because they consider it as disadvantageous in respect of the building of a socialist society. According to their opinion, if the amount of the family allowance is determined by the level of the income of the parents, that is by their education, position, material possibilities, the result would be, that in every family a labour force with a social and occupational status corresponding to the level of the family would be reproduced. This kind of assistance would not assure the social mobility between generations. In socialism, however, it is a fundamental principle, that for every child — independently of the social and occupational status of his parents — equal possibilities have to be given.

As a matter of fact both systems have differentiated assistance forms, as the first version tries to facilitate the bringing up of children in a different way, and the second one with different amounts.

According to my opinion, if this tool of population policy is placed in the service of ideological, economic objectives, or in the safeguarding of required interests, it is to be feared, that exactly the desired demographic results will fall out.¹¹

The pay of the family allowance usually begins after the birth of the child, and ceases after the termination of his obligatory education. In the international practice, however, there are many variations.

In certain countries the payment already begins during the pregnancy, namely in the same amount, which corresponds to the amount due after the birth-order of the awaited child. The introduction of this solution — I think — should also be considered in our country, at least in the case of those pregnant women, who already have one or two children. The assistance of the society would thus arrive in the critical period, when the parents have to decide between the acceptance of another child or the abortion of the pregnancy.

Table 1 shows the scale indicating the consumption needs of children according to their age (considering the consumption of the average adult consumer as 1). The consumption-needs according to age-categories are the following:

¹⁰ *Piszkunov, V. P. — Sztesenko, V. S.*: K teoreticheskomu obosnovaniju demograficeszkoj polityiki razvitogo szocialiszticeszkiego obszcestva. Demograficeszkije Tyitragyi, 6—8. Kijev, 1972.

¹¹ I guess the following lines of Lajos Császi have to be considered also in this respect: "It is not realized successively enough, that the explanation of the originally different interests can be more important, than the emphasizing latter case one can only choose between the apology and the utopy." *Császi Lajos*: A közegészségügy államosítása Magyarországon. Valóság. 1982. 5. sz. 86. p. (Secularization of public health in Hungary)

Table 1

Age-category	Consumption compared to the average adult consumption as unit
Children between 0-3 years	0,4
Children between 4-6 years	0,5
Children between 6-10 years	0,6
Children not learning between 7-13 years and old people supported after the working age	0,7
Pupils between 11-13 years and pensioners	0,8
14 years old and older pupils, wage-earners, being on child-care leave and working-age dependents	1,0

Source: *Drechsler László—Kupcsik József* (ed.): *Gazdaságstatisztika. Közgazdasági és Jogi Könyvkiadó, Bp. 1982.* (Economic statistics)

In spite of the relatively significant differences in the majority of the countries the same amount is paid for every child — independently of his age (in Austria for example this has changed). Probably, neither for the parents, nor for the realization of population policy aims it is not unimportant, whether the increase of the supporting expenses of children is taken into consideration — parallel to the increase of their age.

Table 2 contains the amounts of the family allowances paid around the 80's in the European socialist countries. Although the amounts are given in national currencies, a certain comparison is still possible. It may be striking, that — except the Soviet Union — the allowance received progressively increases in every country till the third or fourth child. The progressivity, however, shows quite great extremities. In Bulgaria the rise is very strong up to the third child: the second child gets 67% more allowance than the first, and the third

Table 2

The amount of the family allowance in the socialist countries around the 80's according to the number of children

Country	According to the number of children				Sum of the average allowance in 1980
	1	2	3	4	
	In national currency units				
Bulgaria	15	40	85	110	193
Czechoslovakia	140	530	1030	1480	2642
Poland	160	410	750	1440	5789
Hungary (1985)	410	1420	2520	3360	3987
GDR	20	50	100	160	1030
Rumania	135	285	455	625	2238
Soviet Union	12	24	36	48	169

gets already threetimes as much as the first. The fourth child gets less allowance than this, because primarily the family with three children is assisted. A similar system has been established in Czechoslovakia, but there the amount paid for the second child shows the greatest leap (the second gets more than two-times the allowance paid for the first child), but the rise still continues up to the third child. In Poland the amount of the assistance rises up to the fourth child, who gets more than two-times the amount of the third child. The Hungarian population policy also wants to propagate the family with three children, as it pays a higher allowance for the third child than for the first two. In the GDR the difference between the allowance of the second and the third child is also greater than between the first and the second and between the third and the fourth. In Rumania the amount of the allowance paid for the children is also increased — parallely to the number of children — but the differences are not so great as in the other countries.

The disposable data, however, do not show the important qualitative differences, which exist in the family-allowance system of certain countries.

In the last decades in every country a smaller amount has been paid for the same number of children to the parents working in cooperatives, than to the worker- and employee families. This differentiation has already been revoked in several countries (in Hungary on 1st July 1975). In Bulgaria, in Hungary and in the GDR the parents get an allowance with the same amount, independently of their incomes (a parent bringing up a child or children alone gets a greater amount), in case of equal number of children. In the other countries the parents are ranked in different categories of income, and the amount of the family allowance is determined by the income, namely usually in such a degressive way, that the allowance got after an equal number of children decreases parallely to the increase of the income.

In Poland — in the sense of a regulation issued in 1981 — the families were divided into three groups on the basis of the per capita income. Within each group the allowance were determined with different amounts (Table 2 contains the amounts given to the families belonging to the middle group (1). In the first category for example 600 Zloties were paid for two children, and in the second category 400. Within the categories the rising of the allowance goes parallely to the increase of the number of children.

Among the established systems in the countries examined the Rumanian family allowance system has the most particular characteristics: beside the population policy aims it emphasizes the social character of the allowance, and at the same time it takes into consideration the attitude and work of the beneficiaries. On the basis of the monthly incomes it was formed five groups and within these it was differentiated between the domicile (town, village) and environment (three categories) of the parents (Table 2 contains the amount of the allowances of the families living in town and ranked into the medium income category). The allowances paid to the families living in villages are smaller, and the families having higher income get less allowance, than those having lower income (3). The members of the agricultural cooperatives get their allowances according to a different system. The father is not entitled to get the family allowance in those months, when he has been unjustifiedly absent from his working place, or when he is on non-paid holiday, etc.

In the Soviet Union only those families get the family allowance for every child (uniformly 12 Rubels monthly for every child), where the monthly average per capita income is under 50 Rubels. In Yugoslavia the regulation of population policy belongs to the authority of each republic, therefore the amount of the family allowance differs from republic to republic. For children of families with higher incomes they do not pay allowances everywhere according to the social policy character of this allowance.

The importance of the family allowance is more realistically expressed by its relation to the average income of the father, than by its absolute amount. As the data concerning

the average income of the workers and employees are regularly published in the countries examined, this index can be calculated and internationally compared in case of every country, where the income of the parents is not taken into consideration. In Hungary the amount paid for three children was approximately 50% of the income of the head of the family in 1980¹². In Bulgaria a similar rate existed (54 percent), and in the GDR a significantly lower one, than in Hungary. The strongly differentiated systems of the other countries do not permit a realistic comparison of the data. Nevertheless we have to refer to the fact, that in every country the family allowance is only one among others of the economic means of population policy, the importance of which is changing. Therefore one cannot draw general conclusions concerning the entire system of tools of population policy from these data.

As we have already referred to, the family allowance does not cover the support of a child in neither country. This usually is not an aim, because the society supposes the natural desire of the family for a child. Nevertheless the development of this rate cannot be causal, because significantly influences the efficiency of the allowance.

In Czechoslovakia the monthly sums falling upon a child between 1 and 3 years were determined in 313 Kr. in 1959, and the family allowance was 260 Kr. for the third and the further children. In 1967 the share of the state contribution was estimated at 50 percent, in 1978 (up to the age of five of the child) it was estimated appr. at 80 percent. In Hungary this rate could be about 10 percent in the 1950's. In the second half of the 1960's the family allowance covered almost one-third of the fundamental needs of the bringing up of children for the families with two children, and almost 50 percent in case of families with three or more children. In 1975 the average amount of the allowance (appr. 290 Ft) totalled to 23 percent of these expenses (1240 Ft monthly), and in 1978 it could be about 20 percent¹³, and in the second half of 1980 it already rose to 27 percent. (The reservations, which have already mentioned in case of the comparison of wages concern also the international comparability of the data). According to my opinion the importance of the high interest of the maintenance of the real value of the family allowance has to be emphasized also in this respect. The state can change the aims, the means of population policy, or the amount of the different allowances, but the families, however, do not have the possibility to correct the number of their existing children. Only the value-constancy of the different allowances gives a credit and a long-distance effect to the government population policy.

Conclusion

The European socialist countries have been pursuing an active population policy only since some decades. Therefore they still do not have the appropriate experience to their policy, and do not have an appropriate perspective for the measure of its effects. In favour of the reproduction of the population on an increasing scale the theoretical research work has to be continued. One of its goal can be the revealing of the sources and the extension of the economic tools of population policy and another one the elaboration of such distribution principles and methods, which can favour in every stratum of the population the interest for the socially desired number of children.

¹² *Klinger András*: Népeség — népesedéspolitikai és eszközei. Társadalmi Szemle, 1981. 3. sz. (Population — population policy and its means)

¹³ *Huszár István*: Ifjúság és társadalom. Látóhatár, 1982 November (Youth and society)