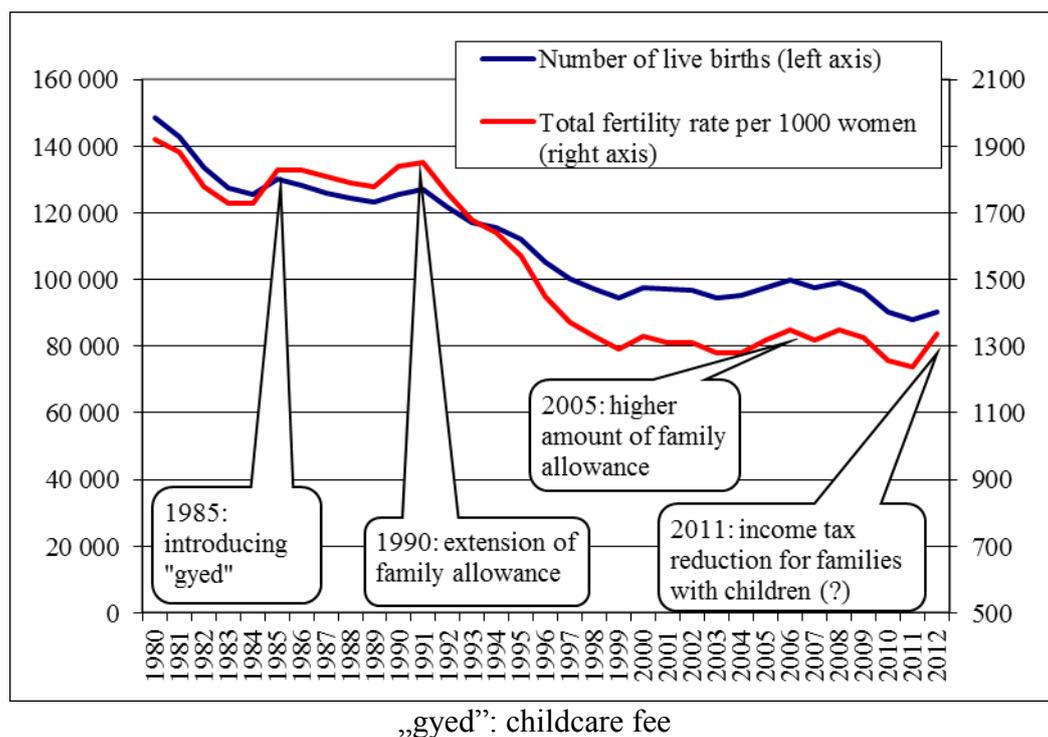


Realisation of birth intentions and its effect on population of Hungary in the next 50 years

The population of Hungary has been diminishing ever since the early 1980s. The reduction is the joint consequence of the low fertility and high mortality; effects of these factors has been moderated by positive net migration. Since then significant improvement has occurred in mortality, but the fertility has remained in a very low level.

Investigating the fertility trends from 1980, it can be seen that both the number of births and the total fertility rate (TFR) has been decreasing, but there has been some small increase. These rising periods were short, showing the effect of family policy measures occurred in that period.(Fig.1.) The fertility decreased rapidly from 1990 until the beginning of 2000s, and until then it fluctuates in low level, around 1,3 total fertility rate. The fertility reached its historically deepest point in 2011 at 1,24 level, but it was higher in 2012 again with 1,34 TFR. This latest improvement in fertility may be the consequence of income tax reduction for families with children, but it is only a hypothesis in this moment.

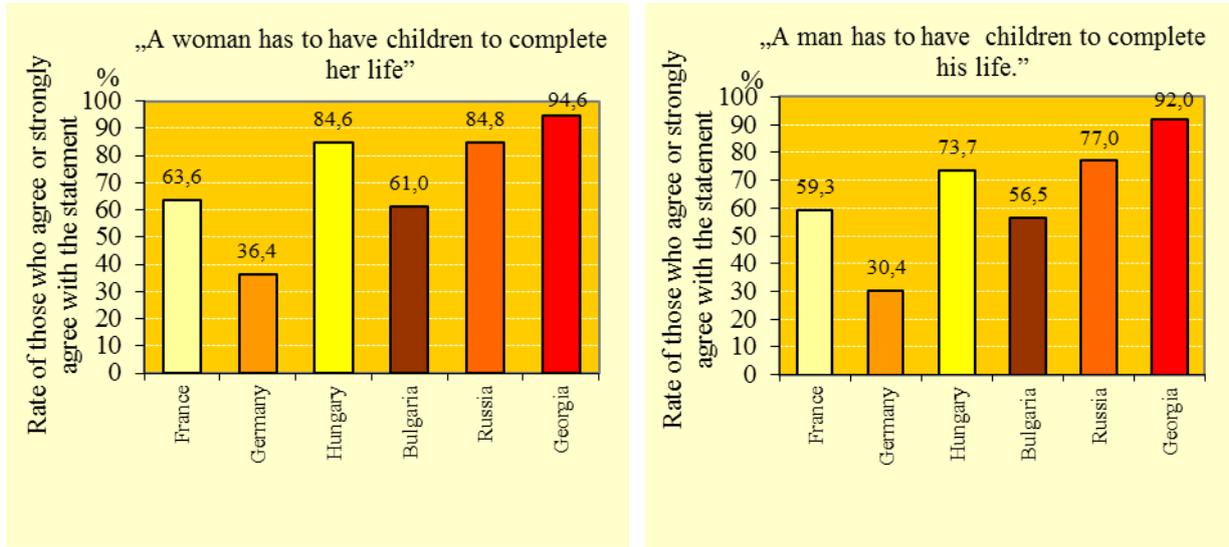
Fig. 1. The total fertility rate, the number of live births and the most important family policy measures in Hungary



Source: Demográfiai évkönyvek 1990-2011 (Demographic Yearbooks 1990-2011), Hungarian Central Statistical Office

At the same time the researches concerning to values and attitudes show constantly the high importance of family and child in Hungary. People consider as very important to have children to complete the life both for men and women: in case of women 85 percent, respectively, for men 74 percent was the rate of acceptance of this opinion in the beginning and middle of 2000s. (Fig. 2.) Compared to some European countries, Hungary shows one the highest rate. These facts are in accordance with previous research results that people have conservative family values in Hungary.

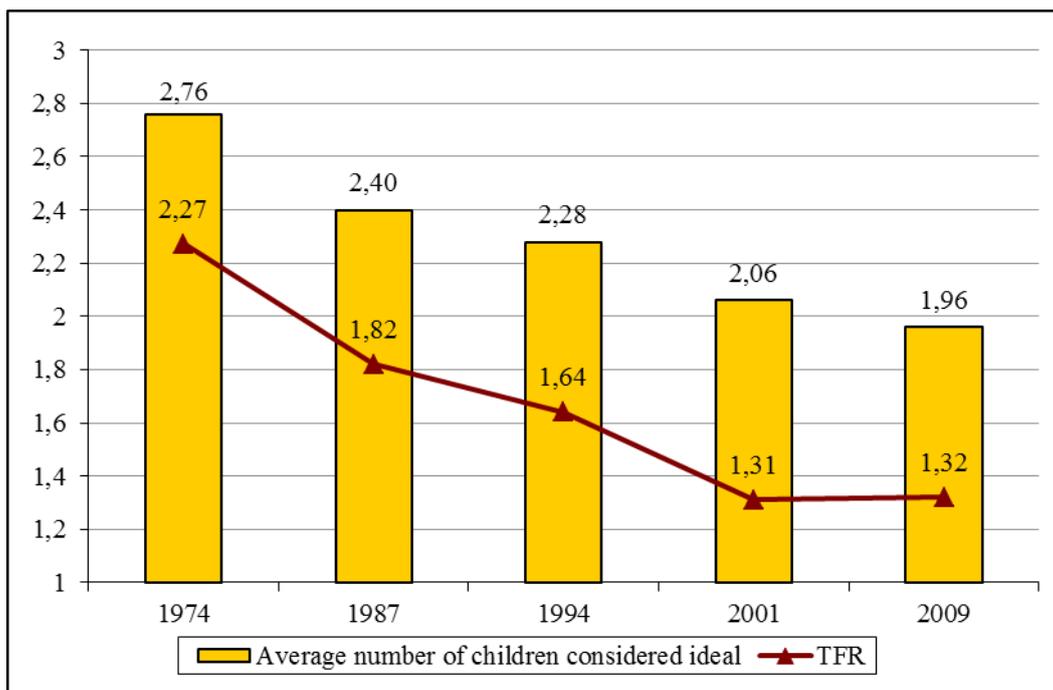
Fig. 2. Rate of persons agreeing with allegations as to female and male gender roles in six European countries, 2001-2005



Source: Kapitány – Spéder 2009.

The ideal number of children is relatively high in Hungary (Fig. 3.), but there is a relatively big difference between ideal and real number of children: this difference is about 0,6-0,7 taking into consideration more than three decades.

Fig. 3. The average ideal number of children among persons below 50 and the TFR for the given years

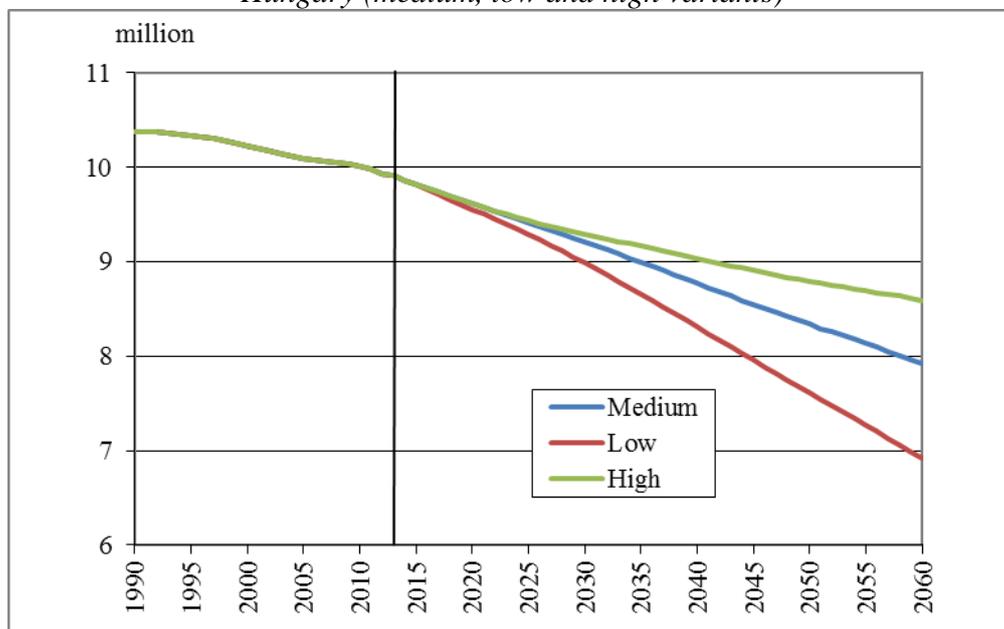


Source: Kapitány-Spéder, 2012

As researches show, the intended and ideal number of children are close to each other: the intended number of children was 2.03 among people under the age of 45 in 2004/2005 (Spéder-Kapitány 2007), and this number is somewhere between the ideal number of children in 2001 and 2009. This means that the intended number of children is significantly higher than the number of births. If the family policy could reach to realise the birth intentions, the result would be an improvement in number of births and in fertility.

The research question is that if it would take place – that is, birth intentions would be realised – then how it would have influence on the number and age structure of population in Hungary in the next 50 years. The starting point is the last national population projection which was made using the final data of 2011 census. Population change due to happen as a consequence of a higher level of fertility will be compared to the medium scenario of population projection.

Fig. 4. Population between 1990-2013 and projected population between 2014-2060, Hungary (medium, low and high variants)



Source: Néesség-előreszámítások (Population projections), HCSO Demographic Research Institute

According to the medium variant of the latest population projection the number of population in Hungary will be less than 8 million after 50 years. In 1990 the number of births was 126 thousand, but in 2012 this number was 90 thousand only. As the population projection shows, about 80 thousand children will be born in 2030, and respectively 66 thousand children in 2060 – it means that the number of births decrease about by half amount during 50 years. In order to maintain about 90 thousand births, the TFR has to be risen to 1,44 until 2021 and, respectively, 1,77 until 2031 (Kamarás 2012). The intended number of children is higher than these previous numbers; the question is how this higher fertility can change the dynamics of population processes in long term.

Realising the higher birth intention has a favourable effect on aging and decreasing the number of population, but it is not enough to stop or reverse these tendencies, because the planned number of children does not reach the level of 2,1 total fertility rate which is necessary for reproduction of population. This is why I investigate the question that which level of fertility

would be necessary not only to reduce but to stop the population decrease in Hungary in the next half a century.

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