TANULMÁNYOK 2024/1. Bölcsészettudományi Kar, Újvidék
STUDIJE 2024/1. Filozofski fakultet, Novi Sad
STUDIES 2024/1. Faculty of Philosophy, Novi Sad

ETO: 314.33
314.336.6
364.326
ORIGINAL SCIENTIFIC PAPER
DOI: 10.19090/tm.2024.1.87-105
A kézirat leadásának időpontja: 2024. május 31.
Közlésre elfogadva: 2024. június 7.

János I. TÓTH

University of Szeged
Department of Philosophy
Szeged, Hungary
ORCID: 0000-0002-0023-0530
jtoth@philo.szeged.hu

A POSSIBLE SOLUTION FOR THE DEMOGRAPHIC WINTER: RAISING MANY CHILDREN AS A JOB

A demográfiai tél egy lehetséges megoldása: a főállású anyaság bevezetése

Jedno moguće rešenje za demografsku zimu: odgajanje više dece kao posao

Public concern about population growth has persisted since Malthus. However, the situation is gradually changing. The pandemic-like spread of population decline is reversing this global trend. Human population growth is expected to halt at 10.4 billion in the second half of the 21st century, marking the era of global population decline. Global fertility rates are falling continuously. This trend benefits high-fertility regions such as Africa and West Asia but poses significant challenges in low-fertility regions like Europe, North America, and East Asia. Today, the developed world faces a new and serious problem: demographic winter, leading to issues such as an ageing population, a decreasing number of women of childbearing age, rising dependency ratios, and demographic decline. Addressing these demographic challenges requires new approaches and measures. Current pronatalist policies that encourage 2-3 children per family are insufficient. This study proposes the introduction of a radical pronatalist institution: full-time motherhood. This initiative aims to employ voluntary couples and mothers willing to have 5 or more children per family. It is the best way to achieve replacement-level (2.1) fertility. This pronatalist solution is efficient and aligns with Western values, being voluntary, free, and democratic.

Keywords: low fertility rate, very large family, pronatalism, full-time motherhood

Introduction

Today, a new demographic challenge is emerging: aging populations and population decline. As Elon Musk stated, "I think one of the biggest risks to civilization is the low birth rate and the rapidly declining birthrate" (Gleeson, 2021). Pope Francis has urged Italian politicians to address their country's declining birth rate, warning that young people must make a "titanic effort" to form a family under such precarious circumstances (France Media Agency, 2023).

The implications of these demographic shifts have been widely discussed in numerous articles and books (WHO, 2022; Bloom & Zucker, 2023). Thus, this paper focuses not on diagnosing the problem but on proposing a potential solution. It is widely recognized that modernization and progress reduce birth rates. As Karan Singh, an Indian politician, famously said in 1973, "Development is the best contraceptive". This anti-natalist effect of development offers hope for high-fertility developing countries but poses a risk for low-fertility developed countries. This means that in high-fertility developing countries, the situation will spontaneously improve, whereas in low-fertility developed countries, the situation will spontaneously worsen.

This paper aims to explore the feasibility and implications of implementing full-time parenthood as a public employment strategy to address low fertility rates in developed countries. The study will provide a detailed description of this proposal and evaluate its potential impact. Furthermore, the paper will address broader issues, emphasizing that the choice of full-time motherhood as a career should always be free and voluntary for women.

The methodology involves a critical review of demographic data, socio-economic analysis, and policy evaluation. Data were sourced from international organizations such as the United Nations, the World Bank, and national statistical offices.

A New Problem: Low Fertility Rate

Worldwide fertility has fallen significantly, from an average of 5 births per woman in 1950 to 2.3 births per woman in 2021, reflecting the increasing control individuals can exercise over their reproductive lives. Overall fertility is projected to fall to 2.1 births per woman by 2050 (UNFPA, 2023). The Western world and East Asia now face a new and very serious problem: low fertility rates. With the exception of Israel, where the fertility rate is 2.8 children per woman, no other developed country achieves the 2.1 fertility rate. France, Bulgaria, and Montenegro have the highest fertility rates in Europe at 1.8, while Spain and

Bosnia-Herzegovina have the lowest, at just 1.1. East Asia has the lowest fertility rates in the world, averaging 1.1 children per woman, with South Korea at 0.8, Taiwan at 0.9, and Singapore at 1.0. In absolute terms, Hungary (1.5) and Serbia (1.6) have low fertility rates, but both are higher than the European average of 1.4 (PRB, 2023).

It is important to note that a persistent fertility rate of 1.1 children per woman means that each generation is half the size of the previous one. Thus, all else being equal, such a country is heading down a demographic slope that is almost impossible to recover from after a while. *Replacement level fertility* is the level at which a population exactly replaces itself from one generation to the next. In developed countries, this level is typically considered to be an average of 2.1 children per woman (Craig, 1994). This means that 1,000 women give birth to roughly 1,050 female children. By contrast, the developed world has fertility rates of 1.5, meaning that 1,000 women give birth to only 750 female children (PRB, 2023). Approximately two-thirds of the world's population lives in countries or areas with sub-replacement fertility, defined as a total fertility rate below 2.1 births per woman (UNFPA, 2023).

Globally, the demographic winter is most severe in Eastern Europe due to the combined effects of low fertility rates, high mortality, and emigration. For instance, Latvia's population decreased from 2.6 million in 1990 to 1.9 million in 2023, and it is expected to fall below 1.4 million by 2050. If this trend continues, the country will lose 46% of its population within 60 years (PRB, 2023). The old-age dependency ratio (the number of persons aged over 65 divided by the number of those aged between 14 and 65) in Latvia was 16% in 1960, but by 2016, it had reached 30%. This ratio increased from 15% to 30% in the European Union and from 9% to 44% in Japan, which has the highest old-age dependency ratio in the world (The World Bank, 2017).

Hungarian society has been suffering from a demographic crisis for decades. The population is aging, resulting in a rapid decline in the number of women of childbearing age (15-49). In 2000, 2.5 million women of childbearing age lived in Hungary, while by 2023, this number had fallen to 2.1 million (Hungarian Central Statistical Office, 2024). Another serious consequence of aging is the increase in the old-age dependency ratio. Over the last 40 years, Hungary's population decreased from 10.7 million to 9.7 million, and the outlook is not encouraging: without effective intervention, the population will decrease to 7.9 million by 2060 and further shrink to a mere 4.5 million, mostly elderly people, by 2100 (United Nations, 2017). This means that by 2100, only four out of ten Hungarians will remain (HVG, 2015). The old-age dependency ratio in Hungary was 14% in 1960 and increased to 31.6% by 2023 (Trading Economics, 2023).

These changes will lead to diminished creativity, productivity, and competitiveness, resulting in reversed economic growth and declines in GDP, respectively, and increased taxes. Population decline and aging also entail the economic agony of developed society, making it a new form of common bad. It is therefore necessary to seek pronatalist solutions that are both effective and essentially Western.

General Remarks

It is crucial to acknowledge the ideological basis of this proposal. Any natalist policy must respect the autonomy and rights of women. To address the demographic winter, family policy must balance encouraging higher birth rates with respecting individual freedoms. Pronatalist measures should support families without coercing individuals, particularly women, into roles that limit their autonomy. The proposal for full-time motherhood should be voluntary and supported by comprehensive social policies.

Pronatalist policies must consider women's different views on work-life balance and work-family conflict. The majority of women strive for balance between work and family, and society must help them achieve this through classic family support measures (for 2-3 children). However, society must also support those who prioritize family exclusively. Surveys indicate that a notable percentage of women find fulfillment in being full-time mothers. For instance, a Pew Research Center study found that only 12% of Americans believe that the ideal situation for both mother and child is for the mother to work full-time. Additionally, 43% of at-home mothers rate their parenting job highly (Pew Research Center, 2007). Furthermore, approximately 15-20% of Western women prefer being mothers as their primary role. In Hungary, this preference is even higher, with 25% of women aged 35-45 favoring this role (Benda & Báger, 2020 p.151). For these women, full-time motherhood would provide significant support.

The traditional view posits that every woman's primary role is to have children and care for the family, while the modern perspective suggests that every woman should earn money and achieve success professionally. These universal expectations are flawed because of their universality. Even in traditional settings, some women seek fulfillment outside the family, just as some in modern conditions find fulfillment within it. Full-time motherhood provides this option, enhancing women's freedom of choice.

Changing social and cultural attitudes towards large families and full-time parenthood is crucial. Public campaigns and educational programs can play a significant role in shifting perceptions and encouraging broader acceptance

of diverse family choices. These efforts should aim to create a supportive environment where full-time parenthood is seen as valuable and respected. Pronatalist policies must also consider the economic implications. Removing approximately 10% of women from the primary labor market could result in minor macroeconomic disruption, addressable through economic planning and technological innovation.

In conclusion, the proposal aims to offer a balanced and ethically sound approach to addressing the demographic winter, ensuring alignment with contemporary values of individual freedom and gender equality. The goal is to create a supportive environment where full-time parenthood is one of many viable options for families, enhancing both personal fulfillment and societal well-being. Three critical aspects related to natalism and full-time parenthood need further analysis: overpopulation, reproductive responsibility, and the extended concept of work.

1. Overpopulation

Many argue against implementing pronatalist measures due to concerns about global overpopulation. However, this simplistic view is flawed. From a demographic perspective, humanity consists of diverse communities, and this diversity must be considered to gain real insight into current demographic processes (Sauvy, 1990). Fertility rate figures typical of various continents and subcontinents can be listed in decreasing order: Africa: 4.3; Western Asia: 2.5; Northern America: 1.6; East Asia: 1.1; and Europe: 1.4, with Eastern Europe at 1.4 and Southern Europe at 1.3 children per woman (PRB, 2023).

These data show that Africa and Western Asia are still experiencing rapid population growth (the second or third stage of the first demographic transition), which primarily drives the overall population growth of mankind. For example, if a country's fertility rate remains at 4.2 children per woman, each generation doubles, leading to exponential population growth, which is environmentally unsustainable. In such high fertility contexts, Malthus' conclusions remain valid. The radical decrease in fertility rates in these areas is the only way to ensure environmental sustainability. Conversely, Northern America, Europe, and East Asia are in a sub-replacement fertility situation (second demographic transition). The demographic winter is particularly severe in Eastern Europe and East Asia, where populations are already rapidly decreasing. The continuous aging and decline of the population are socially unsustainable. Fertility rates need to be significantly increased in these regions to ensure demographic

sustainability. From a demographic perspective, only a constant population size and age composition are sustainable. A continuously growing population is environmentally unsustainable, while a declining population is unsustainable from social and economic perspectives.

At a theoretical level, replacement migration can also be considered as an alternative solution to the demographic winter, but it raises several problems. First, it is not in harmony with the desires of Eastern European and Asian nations; second, migrants do not wish to live in Eastern Europe; and third, "a solution through massive immigration is illusory – a temporary remedy that would leave bigger problems in its wake" (Demeny, 2016, p. 119). Demeny refers to the issues caused by radical changes that would affect the social, cultural, ethnic, and linguistic composition of the population. This is why Demeny and many other demographers reject replacement migration as a viable solution.

2. Reproduction freedom and responsibility

Many argue that having children is a private choice and, therefore, reject costly government family policies. While I agree that childbearing is a personal decision that can only be made by individuals and couples, and that the state should not exercise coercion, it is also true that achieving stable populations or reducing the pace of population decline is a crucial public interest. Consequently, society and the state are entitled and obliged to implement family policy incentives to achieve these goals. This dilemma can be resolved only if the community seeks efficient natalist solutions that ensure replacement-level fertility without bureaucratic coercion.

The phrase "childbearing is the most personal public matter" is not widely recognized as a common saying in English, but it encapsulates a concept well-discussed in both demographic and sociological literature. The ideological basis for this phrase stems from the intersection of individual reproductive rights and societal demographic needs. A more widely accepted term that encapsulates the idea that childbearing is a deeply personal decision with significant public implications is "reproductive rights and responsibilities." This term is frequently used in discussions around family planning, demographic policies, and public health. It emphasizes the balance between individual autonomy in reproductive decisions and the societal impacts of these choices.

This thesis was first formulated in the Proclamation of Teheran (1968): "Parents have a basic human right to determine freely and responsibly the number and spacing of their children." The Bucharest Conference (1974) and the World Health Organization (2009) endorsed the same view. It is important

to clarify what "responsibly" means in these statements. Two interpretations are possible: a narrow and a broad perspective.

According to the narrow interpretation, the parent has a responsibility towards the children already born, but this responsibility does not extend to the issue of having children. Thus, family planning is viewed as a private and morally neutral decision, similar to having a pet. According to the broad interpretation of responsibility, family planning has social aspects as well. This means that individuals, couples, and society should all be engaged in the reproduction of the community.

In a demographic crisis, especially during a demographic winter, responsible individuals and couples should undertake to have at least two children. At the same time, communities must provide conditions that help individuals contribute to achieving replacement-level fertility through their decision to have two or more children. From the perspective of the survival of nations, fertility rate control is one of the most important challenges. My position aligns with the principle of subsidiarity: every political community should strive to achieve replacement-level fertility at the national level because this is the best way to achieve replacement-level productivity globally. The current situation is dire because there are significant demographic and fertility differences within humanity. Thus, two demographic crises are weighing on nations: population explosion and population decline.

3. The changing concept of work

Historically, the concept of work was closely tied to the production of goods. Today, however, this concept is evolving. Society now uses the term "paid work" in an increasingly broad sense, encompassing activities such as caring, nurturing, and helping. My proposal aligns with current social tendencies to expand the interpretation of what constitutes work. To effectively counter the demographic winter affecting many developed countries, I believe that additional resources should be allocated to encouraging childbearing and increasing fertility rates by financing full-time parenthood.

Technological advances, such as Industry 4.0 and the rapid development of artificial intelligence, are expected to free up a significant amount of labor, making full-time motherhood a viable alternative. In developed countries, childbearing is an extremely costly endeavor, imposing significant financial burdens on parents without providing them with any income. This economic reality plays a significant role in the declining number of individuals willing to have children in these countries.

Recognizing this problem, many European countries (including France, Sweden, and Hungary) have begun providing financial support to families who have children. I advocate continuing this path by offering parents with many children the opportunity to choose parenthood as a form of full-time public employment. Implementing such a structure would align with the evolving process of labor distribution, making having many children a viable job and career path.

Insufficiency of Three Child Policy

For simplifying the analysis, the fertility rate that I propose to focus on here is 1.4, a rate achieved in many countries, including Austria, Belarus, Norway, Portugal, Russia, Switzerland, and even more in Europe and the European Union (PRB 2023). "Such a level, if maintained indefinitely, would result in a population loss of one-third from generation to generation, that is, roughly over each period of some 30 years." (Demeny, 2011, 265) The question arises: how are women who have 0, 1, 2, etc. children distributed across a society characterized by this 1.4 fertility rate? The typical distribution is as follows: the proportion of childless women: 20%; 1 child per woman: 35% 2 children per woman: 34%; 3 children per woman: 8%; 4 children per woman: 2%; 5 children per woman: 0.7% 6 children per woman: 0.2%; 7 children per woman: 0.1%, the sum of the above percentages being 100. Hungarian statistical data also show a similar distribution of women who have different number of children (Hungarian Statistical Office, 2011). This distribution means that 1000 women have 1404 children:

> 20% (0 child) + 35% (1 child) + 34% (2 children) + 8% (3 children) + 2% (4 children) + 0.7% (5 children) + 0.2% (6 children) + 0.1% (7 children) = 1404 children/1000 women. (1)

Examining the distribution of female groups, we find that the ratio of women who are childless or bear only one child is too high, while the ratio of women who give life to 3-8 children is disproportionately low. In this case, 55% of women belong to the first category and 11% belong to the second group. The desired ratio of 2.1 can be achieved if the weighted average of the two sides is balanced.

To be able to move on with the argumentation, we must differentiate between bearing 3-4 and having 5-8 children. The two-breadwinner family model that is currently prevailing in developed countries allows couples to manage the upbringing of 3 children, provided that the husband and the social environment are sufficiently supportive of the mother. However, the model makes it very difficult to have more than 4 children, because families of this size typically

require one of the parents to stay home as a caregiver. I consider having 4 children to be the border-line between the two previous scenarios – some women and marriages are capable of coping with 4 children even with both parents working full-time, but it is not at all typical.

Logically, if we are to increase the fertility rate, the proportion of women who stay childless or have only one child needs to decrease, while the number of the women who undertake 3-4 and 5-8 births needs to increase. Let us now consider these options one by one.

(a) Childlessness or the decision to have only one child is often motivated by individual, existential factors such as infertility, career, the lack of a relationship, financial problems, homosexuality, delayed childbearing, etc. Developed societies, especially the ones shaped by Western values have only limited authority to influence these factors. The number of childless women is continuously increasing in Europe (Miettinen et al, 2014). For example, according to a Hungarian demographic survey, 41% of the women in the 35-44 years old age group are childless (KDNP 2017). Let us be optimistic, though, and let's assume that powerful and innovative family-friendly pronatalist measures could stop or even decrease the ratio of childless women and the ratio of women who have only one child. Let us forecast a decrease of 5% in the number of childless women and of 10% in the group of the women who have a single child. In this scenario, the proportion of childless women in childbearing age will still be 15%, respectively 25% of the women will have only one child, but the process will bring about the increase of the fertility rate to 1.53 (=1304 children/ 850 women).

(b) Currently, the ratio of women who undertake 3 births rarely rises above 10%. There are a few countries in Europe where the government promotes the three-child family model. In my opinion, however, this path can no longer lead to the achievement of the 2.1 fertility rate. To achieve the desired fertility rate, the sum of the proportion of women that have 3 children would have to be equal with the double of the proportion of childless women plus the proportion of women that have only one child. The following formula illustrates this relationship:

1 woman (0 child) + 1 woman (1 child) + 3 women (3 children) ➔
10 children/5 women = 2 children/woman. (2)

Using the aforementioned distribution rates (1), the proportion of women that have 3 children should reach (25% + 2*15%=) 55%. In this scenario, the 3-birth per woman ratio would have to be equal with the 25% one-birth per

woman proportion and two times the 15% ratio of childless women and the target of achieving a seven-fold increase in the number of women who have 3 children is also unrealistic.

The situation is not getting any better if we consider the 4 births per woman group. Let us set the social target to compensate the ratio of childless women with the ratio of the 4 births per woman group and the compensation of the ratio of 1 birth per woman with the 3 births per woman group:

1 woman (0 child) + 1 woman (1 child) + 1 woman (4 children) + 1 woman (3 children) ➔ 8 children/4 women = 2 children/women. (3)

Based on the above-mentioned distribution (1), the ratio of the 4 births per woman group needs to increase from the current 2% to 15%, while the ratio of the 3-birth group needs to increase from the current 8% to 25%. It is hard to imagine a modern society built on the two-breadwinner family model in which 40% of the women decide to have 3-4 children.

(c) Taking into consideration the above aspects, the only realistic solution to achieve the ideal fertility rate is to encourage a part of the couples to have very many (at least 5) children.

3 women (0 child) + 2 women (1 child) + 2 women (6 children) ➔ 14 children/7 women = 2 children/woman. (4)

If we rely on aforesaid distribution associated with the 1.4 fertility rate (1), but supposing the number of women who have 5, 6 or 7 children increases by 5%, the ratio of birth-order groups would be distributed as follows:

15% (0 child) + 25% (1 child) + 34% (2 children) + 8% (3 children) + 2% (4 children) + 5.7% (5 children) + 5.2% (6 children) + 5.1% (7 children) = 2204 children/1000 women= 2.2 children/woman (5)

In this scenario, 1,000 women will give birth to a total of 2,204 children, which means a fertility rate of 2.2, significantly higher than the target set at 2.0. The contradiction between the difficulty of raising so many children in a two-breadwinner family and the reliance of European societies on this two-breadwinner model can be reconciled by implementing a system that defines bearing and raising very many children as a special form of public employment (full-time parent). The position could efficiently address the problems arising from the low fertility rate characteristic of developed countries and will also solve the problem of the natural decrease of the population or population decline.

Full-time Motherhood

The only strategy that I consider suitable for encouraging people to have more children is by convincing society to accept the role of the caregiver in a very large family as a position that deserves to be considered a form of employment and, subsequently, one that deserves a payment. I propose to assign a special term to this type of reproductive activity: *full-time parental work*. I suggest using public employment structures to serve as the framework for the elaboration of this new type of employment. The process would be handled by the state (or the municipality), with the position made available for couples *raising a high number* of children of their own (≥5). The proposed position would be available to young married couples that either have children of their own already or are intent on having children and it would provide a salary for one member of the employed couple, a wage that would be calculated in proportion with the number of the children raised. The proposed form of full-time parenthood raises numerous further questions – the most important aspects are outlined below.

1. The Number of Children Required for Eligibility

Demographic and budget-related interests obviously call for the highest fertility rates (7-8 children per woman), but there are not only biological limits to female fertility and child-rearing. I believe that the position of full-time parenting would be easier for society to accommodate if the number of the children to be undertaken by eligible couples were higher. Making the position available for couples rearing two children would probably lead to the state's financial collapse, but if the target were set to 8 children, the desired fertility rate could be achieved with only a low rate (i.e. 4-8%) of the population participating in the program. However, having 8 children would excessively burden the participant families, therefore the threshold I propose should be 5 children, accompanied with strong incentives to encourage having 5+ children.

2. Full-time Motherhood – the Career Path

In my paper, I use the terms "full-time parent" and "mother" interchangeably, as a full-time mother can only fulfill this role with her husband's support. According to my proposal, for a woman to qualify for such a position, she must be married and already have two children. Therefore, when analyzing the career path of a full-time mother, this phase must also be considered. In what follows I would like to provide a more detailed outline of the model.

The period *preceding full-time mother*: the woman gets married when she is 22, for example. The couple will have two children by the woman's age of 28. With her husband's support, the wife then chooses to apply for the position of full-time motherhood and gets the job.

(i) In the *fertile period*, she gives four more children and rears 6 children at all. If the births come at intervals of 3 years on average, the 6th child is born when the mother is the age of 41. This fertile phase was characterized both by the birth and upbringing of children. Presumably, this period of life is the biggest challenge for a mother. If necessary, you should get external help during this period.

(ii) The period of *pure caregiving* begins following the birth of the youngest child. Since raising 3+ children is very hard work, it is fair to say that the mother works very hard between the ages of 31 and 53. Let's say that the children are at home until they are 18 years old and need care. In this case, the oldest child leaves the parental home when the mother is 43 years old, while the youngest child leaves the parental home when she is 59 years old. After that, as her children become independent, mother's caregiving duties will decrease.

(iii) The *support period* begins when all the full-time mother's children become independent. At this point, the nearly 60-year-old woman is too young to retire but too old for entry-level employment. The decades spent as a mother make reentering the labor market difficult, necessitating ongoing income support during the transition. The state must provide income during this period, potentially influenced by the taxes paid by her grown children. If the mother's six children each have two children, she can become a full-time grandmother to twelve grandchildren. If her grandchildren live elsewhere, she can assist other full-time mothers.

(iv) The *retirement period* begins at the age of 65, marking the final phase in the full-time mother career model.

The age of woman	Age of the first child	Age of the second child	Age of the third child	Age of the fourth child	Age of the fifth child	Age of the six child	The status of the woman
17							pre-ceding full-time mother
20							
23							
25	0						
28	3	0					
31	6	3	0				Births as a full time mother
34	9	6	3	0			
37	12	9	6	3	0		
41	15	12	9	6	3	0	
43	18	15	12	9	6	3	Pure caregiving period
47	21	18	15	12	9	6	
50	24	21	18	15	12	9	
53	27	24	21	18	15	12	
56	30	27	24	21	18	15	
59	33	30	27	24	21	18	Support period
62	36	33	30	27	24	21	
65	39	36	33	30	27	24	Retire-ment period
68	42	39	36	33	30	27	
71	45	42	39	36	33	30	
74	48	45	42	39	36	33	
77	51	48	45	42	39	36	
78	54	51	48	45	42	39	
81	57	54	51	48	45	42	
84	60	57	54	51	48	45	
87	63	60	57	54	51	48	
90	66	63	60	57	54	51	
93		66	63	60	57	54	
96			66	63	60	57	
99				66	63	60	

Table 1. **The ideal career for a full-time mother**

The implementation of the institution of full-time parenthood requires a very lengthy, approximately 40 years long commitment from the individual as well as from society and state, but the system allows the individual to freely decide whether to continue being employed within this framework or to return to the labor market and seek employment elsewhere as a breadwinner for a large family. The unilateral termination of the employment by the state would be possible only in justified cases, but the recruitment of new candidates can be halted, modifications and corrections being possible on the side of the employer and of the employee alike.

3. Participation - the Number of Full-Time Mother Needed

The number of mothers that should ideally be employed within the proposed framework depends on current fertility rate figures. Calculating with a current average fertility rate of 1.4 and with a scenario in which full-time parents have an average of 6 children, 15% of fertile women would be needed to achieve the desired 2.1 fertility rate. The following simple formula illustrates the scenario:

850 women x 1.4 children/woman + 150 women x 6 children/woman = 2090/1000 ~ 2.1 children/woman. (6)

Columns 3, 5, and 7 in the table below illustrate the required proportion of full-time parents in a population with average fertility rate ranging between 1.3 and 1.9 and the fertility rate of women employed as full-time mother varying between 5 and 7.

Average Fertility Rate	Fertility Rate of Full-time Mothers (F5) child/woman	Ratio of Full-time Mothers (R5) %	F6	R6 %	F7	R7 %
1.3	5	21	6	17	7	14
1.4	5	19	6	15	7	12
1.5	5	17	6	13	7	11
1.6	5	15	6	11	7	9
1.7	5	12	6	9	7	7
1.8	5	10	6	7	7	5
1.9	5	9	6	5	7	4

Table 2. **The ratio of full-time mother in the case of 2.1 children/woman**

With an average fertility rate of 1.3 (row 1, column 1) and a fertility rate of 5 required of full-time mothers (column 2), ideal fertility rates could be achieved

with the participation of 21% of the female population in the full-time parenthood program. If the fertility rate of average of women is 1.9 and full-time mothers have 7 children on average, 4% of the female population (row 7, column 7) would be sufficient to reach the target. Whatever the fertility rate of average women, if the fertility rate of full-time mothers reaches 7 children per woman, the ratio of full-time mothers needed will always be under 15% (column 7).

4. Eligibility

In terms of the selection process of full-time mothers, there are two possible approaches: full-time parenthood can be considered a form of employment that provides the full-time mother salary for reproduction work performed or it can be considered a pronatalist benefit available as a subjective right. The most important difference between the two approaches is that the first system allows the state, as employer, to evaluate applicants and to select the most suitable candidates, while the second approach removes the right to perform such selection. Couples applying for the job must meet certain general conditions (marriage, fertility, working and earning husband, adequate housing).

The selection process applicable in the case of foster parents being, in many ways, analogous with the process that should be followed in the case of full-time parents, I suggest that states should rely on the protocols they already have in place for the selection of foster parents when evaluating and selecting full-time parents as well.

5. Social Expenses

The factors that determine the social expenses of the institution of full-time parenthood include the number of the participant full-time parents and the salary they receive while employed within the structure. The proportion of full-time mothers in the total fertile female population could be 10-15%, while the proposed salary would be equal to the wage earned by kindergarten or primary school teachers. The payment provided to full-time parents would increase fast, in parallel with the growing number of the children supported, reaching its peak when the woman is around the age of 40 and gradually decreasing afterwards.

6. Social Implementation

Being such a complex process, the complete implementation of the institution of full-time parenting can be expected to be slow. Let's use the example of a country where the fertility rate has been recently 1.4 children/woman, that is,

the demographic situation is not yet critical. If 0.4% of fertility women join the program per year, the rate of women employed as professional full-time mothers reaches 4% in 10 years and 8% in 20 years. Birth numbers in the system stop increasing after 20 years, but social expenses continue to increase for 20 more years, peaking after 40 years, after which they stay level. The program reaches full capacity after 40 years, with 8% full-time parents in fertile age and 8% of them older than that. Provided that the fertility rate of full-time parents is 6 children/woman, this program in itself would be able to increase fertility rates from 1.4 to 1.77 in 20 years.

920 women*1,4 children/woman + 80 women*6 children/woman = 1288/920 + 450/80 = 1768 children/1000 women ➔ 1,77 children/ woman (7)

In the situation of demographic crisis in Eastern Europe, this program could take shorter to be implemented. If 0.75% of fertile women could join the program each year, the proportion of full-time mothers would increase to 15% within 20 years. The program would reach full capacity after 40 years, with 15% full-time parents in fertile age and 15% of them older than that. This program itself will have raised fertility rates from 1.4 to 2,1 in 20 years (see table 1.)

To summarize, the institution of full-time parenthood can be relied on to secure the fertility rate of 2.1 over 20 years and is therefore an excellent solution to stop population aging, growing dependency, and population decline in Eastern Europe and East Asia as well as the natural decrease of the population in Western Europe and Northern America.

Bibliography

Benda József & Báber Gusztáv. Jövőnk a gyermek. Adalékok a népességgyarapodás társadalmi programjához I. [Our Future is the Child: Contributions to the Social Program of Population Growth I.] Veszprémi Humán Társadalomtudományokért Alapítvány. 2020.

Bloom, David E., & Zucker, Leo M. "Aging Is the Real Population Bomb." IMF, July 11, 2023. Retrieved from https://www.imf.org

Craiq, J. "Replacement Level Fertility and Future Population Growth." *Population Trends 78*, (1994 winter): 20-2

Demeny, Paul. "Europes's Two Demographic Crises: the Visible and the Unrecognized." *Population and Development Review* 42 (1) 111-120 (march 2016)

Demeny, Paul. "Population Policy and the Demographic Transition: Performance, Prospects, and Options." *Population and Development Review* 37 (Supplement) 249-274 (2011) p.265

France Media Agency. "'Demographic winter' in Italy worries Pope." *Curto News*, May 12, 2023. Retrieved from 'Demographic winter' in Italy worries Pope Francis (curtonews.com)

Gleeson, Scott. "Elon Musk says there aren't 'enough people,' birthrate could threaten human civilization." USA Today, December 7, 2021. Retrieved from Elon Musk sees falling birthrate, population collapse as global threat (usatoday.com)

Hungarian Central Statistical Office,2024. „Interactive Population Pyramids." https://www.ksh.hu/interaktiv/korfak/orszag.html. [Accessed June 11, 2024.]

Hungarian Statistical Office (KSH). *Population census, 2011.* Women Aged 15 and Older and the Number of Live-born Children. KSH, Budapest, 2011, Available at http://www.ksh.hu/nepszamlalas/tablak_teruleti_00 (Accessed: November 02, 2017).

HVG, "Ha így folytatjuk, 2100-ra tíz magyarból négy marad." [If We Continue Like This, by 2100 Only Four Hungarian Will Remain Out of Ten]. *HVG*, 10 August 2015

KDNP research, "Miért nem születnek meg a kívánt gyerekek." [Why do not the children who are wanted are born?] Available at https://csaladhalo.hu/hatter/kdnp-kutatast-keszittetett-hogy-megtudjuk-miert-nem-szuletnek-meg-kivant-gyerekek/ [Accessed: May 30, 2024]

Miettinen, A., Rotkirch, A., Szalma, I., Donno, A. and Tanturri, M. L. "Increasing Childlessness in Europe: Time Trends and Country Differences." *Väestöliiton Väestöntutkimuslaitoksen työpaperi 2014 Working paper*, no. 5, pp. 1-55

Pew Research Center. The Harried Life of the Working Mother. 2007,Retrieved from Available at https://www.pewresearch.org [Accessed: June 10, 2024]

PRB. Population Reference Bureau, "2023 World Population Data Sheet." Available at http://www.prb.org/Publications/Datasheets/2017/2017-world-population-data-sheet.aspx [Accessed: May 30, 2023]

Proclamation of Teheran. Final Act of the International Conference on Human Rights, Teheran, 22 April to 13 May 1968, U.N. Doc. A/CONF. 32/41 at 3 (1968)

Sauvy, A, "»Le faux problème« de la population mondiale", *Population*, vol. 4, no. 3, pp. 447-462. [English translation: „Alfred Sauvy on the World Population Problem: A View in 1949", Population and Development Review, vol. 16, no. 4, 1990, pp. 759-774.

The World Bank, "Age dependency ratio. 2017 Revision." Available at https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.POP.DPND.OL?locations=LV [Accessed: May 30 2024]

Trading Economics. "Hungary Old Age Dependency Ratio 2023." Available at https://tradingeconomics.com/hungary/old-age-dependency-ratio-eurostat-data.html [Accessed: May 30 2024].

UNFPA. The Problem with 'too few'. United Nations Population Fund. Available at SWP Report 2023: The problem with 'too few' | United Nations Population Fund (unfpa.org) [Accessed: May 30 2024].

World Health Organization (2022). "Ageing and Health." Retrieved from https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/ageing-and-health

World Health Organization. Rights on having children 2009. Available at Rights on having children (who.int) [Accessed: May 30 2024]

United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs Population Division, 2017. World Population Prospects. Available at https://population.un.org/wpp/Publications/Files/WPP2017_KeyFindings.pdf [Accessed: May 30 2024]

TÓTH I. János

A DEMOGRÁFIAI TÉL EGY LEHETSÉGES MEGOLDÁSA: A FŐÁLLÁSÚ ANYASÁG BEVEZETÉSE

A közvélemény Malthus óta aggódik a népességnövekedés miatt. Azonban a helyzet fokozatosan változik. A népességfogyás járványszerű terjedése megfordítja ezt a globális trendet. Az emberi populáció növekedése várhatóan megáll a 21. század második felében, 10,4 milliárd főnél, ami a globális népességcsökkenés korszakának kezdetét jelzi. A globális termékenységi arányok folyamatosan csökkennek. Ez a trend előnyös a magas termékenységű régiókban, mint Afrika és Nyugat-Ázsia, de jelentős kihívásokat jelent az alacsony termékenységű régiókban, mint Európa, Észak-Amerika és Kelet-Ázsia. Napjainkban a fejlett világ egy új és komoly problémával néz szembe: a demográfiai téllel, amely olyan kérdéseket eredményez, mint az öregedő népesség, a szülőképes korú nők számának csökkenése, a növekvő függőségi ráta és a demográfiai hanyatlás. Ezeknek a demográfiai kihívásoknak a kezelése új megközelítéseket és intézkedéseket igényel. A jelenlegi, családonként két-három gyermeket ösztönző pronatalista intézkedések nem elegendőek. A tanulmány egy radikális pronatalista intézmény, a főállású anyaság bevezetését javasolja. Ennek az intézkedésnek a célja olyan önkéntes párok és anyák alkalmazása, akik hajlandóak családonként öt vagy ennél több gyermeket vállalni. Ez a legjobb módja annak, hogy elérjük a helyettesítési (2,1-es) termékenységet. Ez a pronatalista megoldás hatékony, és összhangban van a nyugati értékekkel, mivel önkéntes, szabad és demokratikus.

Kulcsszavak: alacsony termékenység, nagy család, pronatalizmus, főállású anyaság

Janoš I. TOT

JEDNO MOGUĆE REŠENJE ZA DEMOGRAFSKU ZIMU: ODGAJANJE VIŠE DECE KAO POSAO

Još od teorije T. R. Maltusa javnost je zabrinuta zbog rasta stanovništva. Međutim, situacija se postepeno menja. Epidemija opadanja stanovništva menja ovaj globalni trend. Očekuje se da će se rast ljudske populacije zaustaviti na 10,4 milijarde u drugoj polovini 21. veka, što će označiti početak ere globalnog pada broja stanovništva. Globalne stope rasta nastavljaju da opadaju. Ovaj trend odgovara regionima sa visokim natalitetom kao što su Afrika i Zapadna Azija, ali predstavlja značajne izazove u regionima sa niskim natalitetom, kao što su Evropa, Severna Amerika i Istočna Azija. Danas se razvijeni svet suočava sa novim i ozbiljnim problemom: demografskom zimom, koja za posledicu ima probleme kao što su starenje stanovništva, pad broja žena u reproduktivnoj dobi, rastuće stope zavisnosti i demografski pad. Rešavanje ovih demografskih izazova zahteva nove pristupe i mere. Sadašnje pronatalitetne mere koje ohrabruju 2-3 dece po porodici nisu dovoljne. Studija preporučuje uvođenje radikalne pronatalističke inovacije: materinstvo sa punim radnim vremenom. Svrha ove mere je dobrovoljno angažovanje parova i majki, spremnih da imaju petoro i više dece po porodici. Ovo je najbolji način da se postigne pozitivan (2,1) prirodni

priraštaj. Ovo pronatalističko rešenje je efikasno i u skladu sa zapadnim vrednostima, jer je dobrovoljno, slobodno i demokratsko.

Ključne reči: nizak natalitet, velika porodica, pronatalitet, materinstvo sa punim radnim vremenom