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Education Policy and the „Tanító” Journal in the Sixties in Hungary

Theses of Doctoral (PhD) Dissertation

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## **I. The aim of the research**

The first aim of the research is to examine what education political groups were present in the Hungarian educational field in the sixties, what sociological features these interest groups had, and what professional, political and ideological views they had. Although more and more publications on educational history are dealing with it, especially with the fifties, it seemed to be necessary, because the Hungarian profession of the education science lack the sufficient amount of the happenings of educational administration in the sixties, thus we are trying to reduce it with our research.

The second aim of the research is to unveil a journal from the sixties, namely the “Tanító”. In its case we have been examining what education political groups were present in it and what professional, political and ideological views they had. If we say that few researches examine the educational policy of the sixties, then this is of multiple truth for the pedagogical journals’ researches in the socialist era. In our research we argue that the less-known publication by the Ministry of Education, dealing with the questions of teaching and education, helps greatly to complement the researches of educational history in the socialist era with new findings. Moreover, based on our results we daresay that until we examine this special segment of pedagogical journalism, we cannot map and only can have hypotheses about how the educational groups, supporting the Ministry’s directives, were thinking, what views they had about junior schools, the teachers there, forming a significant group of the pedagogy profession, as well as the professional-pedagogical unions connected to them, such as Teacher Training Colleges and supervision.

## **II. Theoretical framework, questions, methods and sources of the research**

### **2.1. Theoretical framework of the research**

During our research we used the political science’s approach (Nagy 1997) applied for the history of educational policy to examine the education political groups in the sixties, their professional and ideological views, and the interest groups present in the “Tanító” journal. We have chosen the political scientific approach applied for the history of educational policy as a method for our thesis, because this perspective not only strictly deals with the history of educational policy, but also with how the education political groups (educational leaders from the Ministry, grammar school headmasters, teacher trainers, economical experts, teachers etc.)

were thinking; that is, fighting for gaining and maintaining power in the educational arena. Another reason for our choice was that our thesis mainly analysis the professional-pedagogical groups' ideology, which forms a significant part of the political sciences' approach applied for the history of educational policy.

Analysing especially the education political groups' professional and ideological views, we have also used the sociology of knowledge's approach in our research; since the ideologies and professional-pedagogical views are also sociologically defined and depend greatly on the particular groups' "being embedded in sociological existence", hence the sociology of knowledge's approach seemed to be the most obvious.

From the two main socio-scientific paradigms we used the conflict theory in our thesis, because according to our view the social reality can be better described on the basis of interests and conflicts of interest of social groups than with the help of functionalist approach, which is based on the functions in society.

## **2.2. Questions of the research**

Examining the education political groups and the "Tanító" journal in the sixties, we have formed the following research questions:

- 1. What professional-pedagogical and ideological views were present in the sixties in education policy and in the "Tanító" journal? How can the sixties' political changes be described with the help of ideology concepts in the dissertation?*
- 2. Were there any changes due to the transformations in education policy, and if so, in what: the represented ideologies and professional-pedagogical views?*
- 3. What role did educational psychology, a special part of psychology rehabilitated in the middle- and end of the fifties, have in the sixties' science of education and in the "Tanító" journal?*

## **2.3. Methods and sources of the research**

During our research we basically used qualitative research methods to answer the questions. In the dissertation we analysed education political texts with a qualitative method, examining both the Hungarian education policy and the "Tanító" journal. The analysis of education political texts was implemented by the classical text analysis-philological methods. Figure one shows the process of text analysis in the following steps:

1. First we examined who the author of the article was. What important events happened in the author's life? Which education political group did he belong to? What were his qualifications?
2. What was the given education political text (article, directive, act) about? What was its main claim and how was it supported by ideological, political and pedagogical arguments?
3. Following that we examined where the given education political document took place in the education policy's field. As for the "Tanító", we analysed whether the article in question was a headline, a publication to start or to close a debate.
4. In the next step of the analysis we studied how the given text fitted, if at all, in the author's concept we had already known.
5. During the texts' examination we utilised other education political texts as control variables.
6. As a second control variable we did not only involve publications on the history of education policy, but also all scientific results which were connected to our dissertation's topic. Therefore we paid attention to researches on political history, economic history and state administration history.

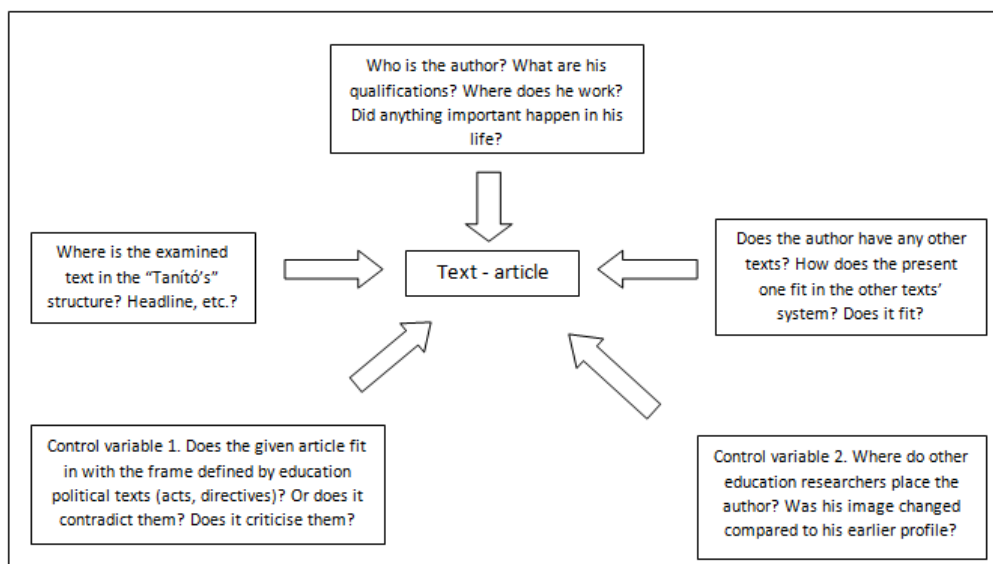


Figure 1: Text analysis method in the dissertation  
(own editing)

During the analysis of Tanító's articles the research shifted towards quantitative analysis, as we made an attempt to summarise and make measurable the different columns' articles. In this process the research revealed and made quantitatively available the number of

articles published in the given topic, what professional-pedagogical groups the authors were from and what professional-ideological views they had. The question of the authors' recruitment is especially important, because we were able to examine which education political groups were dominant in the journal with its help.

We used the Tanító's articles published between 1963-1970 as our research's primary source, which are altogether 1422 publications. Besides, we also analysed the era's educational policy documents and the articles of *Köznevelés*, *Pedagógiai Szemle* and *Művelődési Közlöny* between 1956-1970; mainly those which are about educational policy progresses and reflected on special topics in the Tanító journal.

We utilised pedagogical and biographical lexicons, such as *Pedagógiai Lexikon* (Nagy 1976, 1977, 1978, 1979, Báthory-Falus 1997a, b) as secondary sources, which helped us to process the biographies of some authors or education political-educational administration experts. Furthermore, we used the works of scholars of education, political historians and economical historians.

### **III. The ideological concept of the dissertation**

Since the dissertation examines the ideologies of education political groups and interest groups in the Tanító, the ideological concept is our work's key concept. During our analysis we used the ideology's 'soft' concept (Heywood 2007; Sáska 2011b; Pukánszky 2011; Polónyi 2011), according to which ideology is a related system of viewpoints, behind which localised interest groups exist. Thus, ideology is a system of ideas reflecting a given social group's interests and values, or their views of the world. The social interest groups – the education political groups here – then strive to gain and maintain power with their ideology's help.

One feature of the dissertation's ideological concept is that ideology and science are not exclusive entities but rather each other's complements, unions. This means that the scientific results also appear in professional-pedagogical ideologies.

This thesis uses the concept of ideology in sociology of knowledge's sense. This states that the different sociological groups' system of views and ideas are fundamentally defined by their position in the sociological structure, which economical and professional positions they hold, if any. Hence it is possible that different sociological groups understand the same sociological phenomenon differently (Berger-Luckmann 1998; Mannheim 1996; Merton 2002).

Another feature of the dissertation's ideological concept is that it regards the concept of ideology applicable not only in political analyses, but also in other fields of social life, such as in the spheres of pedagogy and education. The theoretical basis of this opinion is the earlier cited phenomenon, according to which well-defined interest groups exist behind the ideologies, who always strive their ideologies to be winners among the "battle" of other ideologies. These interest groups can be found in the arena of pedagogy, too. The professional groups fight for their professional views and ideology to become dominant, thus gaining the important, powerful positions. According to this interpretational framework the ideologies' validity and explanatory frame goes beyond politics and contains important possibilities and new ways in other agents of social life.

In our dissertation the expression 'ideology' has been used strictly in Weber's sense of value-exemption and we have tried to make the ideologies be seen in a synthesis in Mannheim's sense (Mannheim 1996). That is, from our scientific analysis' point of view the professional and political ideologies were equal; meaning that no ideology was more valid, more scientific, or less valid and less scientific than others.

#### **IV. Structure of the dissertation**

The PhD dissertation has 14 chapters. In the first bigger thematic section (chapters I-II) we introduce the pillars of the research: its theoretical frame, questions, methods and sources, as well as the ideological concept. In the next section (chapters III-IV) we wrote about the professional literature of the analysed era's education policy and education, and also presented the significant journals of the sixties. The next two chapters include the general education political-historical analysis of the Hungarian education political arena. Chapter five presents the education policy of the fifties as precedent to our research's topic, that of the sixties. Chapter six synthesises the education political decisions of the sixties. Chapter 7 starts to analyse the Tanító journal, changing the structural principle of the thesis. Following this each chapter's first section examines the segments of education policy and education in the sixties, whereas the second sections examine how these were published in the Tanító. From chapter 7 to chapter 13 we present the following thematic hubs: the question of teaching and education plans, the situation of training-self-training, the problems of the psychology of education, the questions between leaving kindergarten and starting elementary school, the main attempts to teach mathematics in the sixties, the questions of school inspection system

and the events of the Fifth Education Congress. The last chapter then summarises the findings of the research.

## **V. Results of the dissertation**

At the beginning of our research we imposed three questions, with whose help we are to systematically analyse the sixties' education political groups and the *Tanító* journal. Let us see the results:

- 1. What professional-pedagogical and ideological views appeared in the education policy of the sixties and in the Tanító journal? Furthermore, how can the changes in the sixties' education policy be described with the help of the dissertation's ideology concept?*

Based on our research we might say that two big but divided groups were fighting in the sixties' education policy's arena. The first group, based on the Hungarian Socialist Labour Party's (HSLP) education political directives in 1958, supported the school reform of 1961 Education Act; its members took an active part in it. As for their political views, they represented Soviet, mainly post-Stalin socialist ideology: they thought the lessening of social inequalities was feasible and believed in supporting children with labourer-farmer background. They crafted this socialist state ideology in their pedagogical views in the relatively low, but higher level of professional environment than that of the Rákosi era.

The other big education political group also did not contain pedagogists, but economists, who interpreted the question of education policy from a socialist economical point of view instead of looking at it culturally and educationally. As far as we can see, this education political group was mainly centred around the National Planning Office's experts, their leader was János Timár. We may look at the HSLP Political Committee's Act to stop educational reforms in 1965 as their most prominent deed.

The fight between the two big education political groups was not decided by the events in the educational arena, but by the home- and foreign political situation influencing it. Consequently, the educational field played only a dependent and submissive part in the political games between the branches and nations.

Having examined the *Tanító* journal, first published in 1963, we can say that its editors were on school reform's side all throughout the decade, they supported its principles and

professional ideas and promoted them for teachers and other related educational experts. The Tanító's editors and authors were so pro-school reformists that the journal, supervised by the Ministry of Public Education, did not even mention the stoppage of that reform.

While studying the journal's texts' ideologies and professional views, we found a new, so far unknown result of the school reform's stoppage. Up until now, we could only see its interpretation from the HSLP Political Committee's Act of 1965's viewpoint, which says that the education reform act of 1961 failed due to its lack of wider political environment and economical approach. As opposed to this, the Tanító's authors (inspectors, National Pedagogical Institution colleagues, etc.) argued that the professional-pedagogical documents developed in the process were correct and remained so until the end of the decade, only the implementation was problematic. It was inadequate, for which mainly the teachers were responsible, who did not understand the purpose of the reform. We can see how much the two education political groups' approach to reform differ. The supporters of the economical approach thought the whole reform concept and reformation of school system was faulty owing to the complete lack of labour planning viewpoints they represented; whereas the reform's creators and supporters only blamed the teachers at the lowest rank of the education system.

Further examining the school reform's supporter education political group's manifestations we could witness that their ideology and professional-pedagogical views not only incorporated the closing up of labourer-farmer families, but also that of gypsy children. Moreover, this theme was a highlighted part of the Tanító journal. The gypsy students' school successes were further enhanced by the Tanító's columns "Pre-school Education" and "Experiences of Study Plan Implementation". In the latter the education directors and experts pointed out that the teachers were not able to facilitate the gypsy students' school successes. We find this discovery relevant, because it is well known that the closing up of gypsies was a less public topic in the Kádár era.

Using Szabó Miklós's ideology typology and analysing the sixties' education political arena we can say that in 1958 the education political concept, based on the dominance of state socialist ideology, was transformed from programme ideology to status ideology in the development's years, conserving the reform concept, and cast shadow on all other rival ideas. However, due to the political changes in 1964-65 an already existing economy-based programme ideology became status ideology, making all other rival ideas on education programme ideologies, including the previously state ideology-functioning ideology-based education political concept.



On Mannheim's ideology concept basis we can state about the two education political groups' views that the opposing groups operated with not particular, but total ideology concepts in both cases. As a result, the two clashing concepts totally excluded one another, there was not a single point where they could connect, leaving no possibility for compromise. That is, the opposing parties wholly questioned the other's arguments and statements, treating them as a problem of the "fake consciousness". With this exclusive opposition the lack of connection and "swapping of members" between the two education political groups can be understood.

2. *Were there any changes due to the transformation of education policy? If so, in what, in the represented ideologies and professional pedagogical views?*

During our research we found that the earlier mentioned education political groups' professional views and ideologies were not fundamentally changed by the big education political events of the sixties: the Educational Act of 1961, the school reform and its stoppage in 1964-65, and the Fifth Education Congress. The inflexibility of the professional-pedagogical and ideological views is a feature of the education political group supporting the school reform of 1961. Basically they promoted the same ideology of supporting labourer families' children and lessening inequality at the beginning and end of the decade. Educational experts faithful to the school reform's principles supported and developed the Education Plan, emphasising education in favour of teaching, and set the revised Makarenko to serve collective education. These professional criteria and directions were valid for them in 1961, the year of the school reform, and in 1970, during the Fifth Education Congress, which professional political event can be seen as a restoration attempt of the stopped school reform's supporters. We found only a slight change in the education political group's, supporting the school reform in 1958 and between 1964-65, professional views, namely in the question of polytechnic education. The Stalin- then Khrushchev-based labour school's concept appeared along different political goals but submitted to the government's economy policy. The participants of the Fifth Education Congress did not notice anything of it, they only saw that the polytechnic education's principle is basically right; although they did not understand its role at the beginning of the 60s, because the gist of training is not to prepare children for a concrete vocation, but to provide such basic knowledge for the youth with whose help they can be useful members of the socialist society. However, we do not regard the changes in polytechnic educational views important, since they did not mean the whole change of their

direction and content, only their correction. The deeply Marxist labour school's concept, refusing Stalin's and Khrushchev's sense, became legitimate later.

As there were no significant changes in the whole educational arena and socialist equality ideological rhetoric, the same goes for the *Tanító* journal. At the starting (1963) and closing year (1970, which is our last examined year) of *Tanító* it continuously advocated the Ministry of Education's equality ideology and professional ideas to teachers. We could see they stuck to the principles promoted at the end of the fifties and beginning of sixties regarding education inspection, too. Any publications on this topic at the end of the 60s still promoted the 1957-58's socialist pedagogy and supervision.

The *Tanító*'s represented ideology remained unchanged, but the leader groups partially changed. In our studies we pointed out that until the mid-sixties the journal's main authors were the National Pedagogical Institution's (NPI) employees, professionalising and spreading the school reform's principles. Later, with Sándor Miklósvári's appearance the NPI employees were gradually replaced as authors by teacher trainers who set the journal's content and direction. These educators represented the anti-Stalinist socialist ideology more agilely; their professional views also significantly differed from those of the NPI employees, basing their professional-pedagogical views on general and educational psychology. This professional circle was emancipated by the Ministry's help opposed to the NPI, and overtook the *Tanító*.

3. *What role did the psychology of education, a special part of psychology rehabilitated at the mid- and end of the 50s, have in the 60's science of education and in the Tanító?*

One of the main findings of our research is connected to the appearance of the psychology of education, which became legitimate in the sixties.

An important milestone of its rehabilitation was when a study titled "Studying Children in a Complex and Thorough Way" was published in the *Pedagogical Review* (Sz. N. 1957). Based on this article, translated from *Sovietskaya Pedagogika*, 1956, the socialist psychology of education continued to deny pedagogy, but rehabilitated the psychology's Marxist, non-western version.

The science of psychology emancipated from pedagogy. The psychology of education was positioned between these two sciences, relating in its goals to the ideas of the science of education, using the language of psychology. Based on our research we can say that the psychology of education within the science of education had (at least) two understandings in

the 60s. The first one may be called ‘academic psychology of education’, used by the science’s elite. The second direction is connected to the Ministry’s department dealing with teachers and teacher trainers – this concept was based on teacher training.

The direction and importance of the ‘academic psychology of education’ are highlighted by the number of psychology candidates and academic doctors dealing with the science of education’s psychology and pedagogy. In the sixties the scholars of psychology and the science of education were interrelated. By the end of the decade the education candidates shifted towards the field of psychology and obtained their academic doctorates there. This process stopped at the end of the decade. In 1970 we could find only three education candidates who dealt with psychology, and no-one made an academic doctorate in the psychology of education. We see this tendency as an emancipation of psychology, or the psychology of education from the science of education, showing that the psychology candidates mainly studied the science of education.

The birth of a new, practical psychological direction differing from the ‘academic psychology of education’ was the Sándor Miklósvári-led Ministry of Education’s Independent Teacher Training Department’s merit. The seemingly professional but politics-oriented concept was formed here in 1966, which emphasised the knowledge of psychology and the psychology of education instead of pedagogy.

Reconstructing the leader’s education political acts we can see that after his promotion in the Ministry and declaring his new psychological concept he looked for allies and found them among teacher trainers. Following this alliance the teacher trainers hoped for the strengthening of their education political influence, which they did get. With the Ministry’s initiative and the help of teacher trainers the non-regularly held “*Teacher’s Academy*” was born. The new institution’s task was to draw up the new professional concept’s details based on psychological knowledge and to promote them to teachers. It is of utmost importance that this professional-political concept’s leading medium was the *Tanító* journal.

The Ministry’s leader set the new psychological concept in a political-structural dimension and focused mainly on the teachers’ training. In other words, he integrated the psychology of education into the teachers’ culture, bearing a new and stable professional ideology. This policy remained within the Ministry department’s framework and did not wish to influence the whole field of education, only concentrated on teacher training.

## VI. Further possible directions of the research

Since our research has examined the education policy in the sixties, we believe that further analyses can be done regarding the 70s and 80s. Within their framework it would be worth examining how the relationship between socialist ideology and the science of education changed before the regime change. This revelation seems to be necessary, as this question has been examined only by a few works on the history of education (Báthory 2000a, 2000b, Sáska 2001, Kozma 2001, Zsolnai 2001, Trencsényi 2001).

Another direction of researches could be a deeper, more detailed or related to longer time periods' examination of some agents in the education policy field analysed in this dissertation. For example, it would be worth examining the changes in the inspection system until its stoppage in 1985. This topic seems to be of interest for us, because one of the greatest works analysed the inspection system's changes (Halász 1984) regarding centralisation-decentralisation, and it would be worth studying how the education political changes were reflected through pedagogical professionalism and ideology.

A third direction of future researches could be the examination of pedagogical journalism. We believe it is important to examine, with the help of political scientific approach applied to the history of education policy, what education political groups appeared in other journals of the science of education – *Köznevelés*, *Úttörővezető*, *Óvodai Nevelés* –; whether there were any changes in the presence of interest groups, and if so, what were their causes.

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