



**School for Sociological  
Doctoral Studies**

## **COLLECTION OF THESES**

**Bernadett SZÉL**

**Patterns supporting partnership cohesion**

Ph.D. Thesis

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Hungarian Academy of Sciences at the Eötvös Loránd University, Budapest

Budapest, 2010

**Institute of Sociology and Social Policy**

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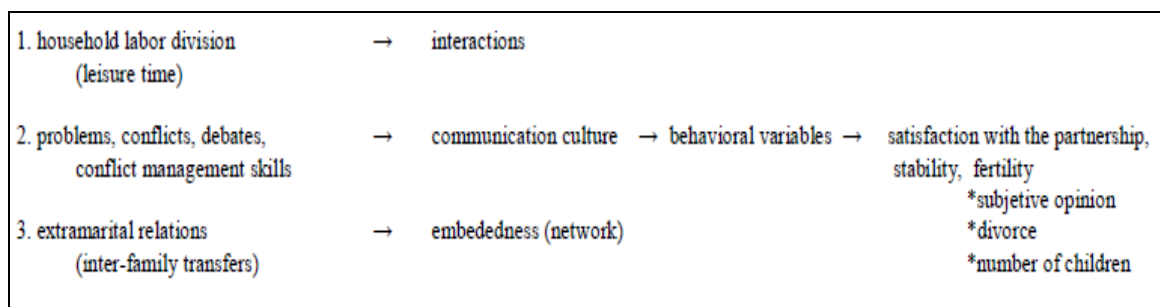
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# 1. Introduction to the conceptual framework of the research area

The coherent family – which is stabilizing on the micro level – is a social product that is able to support its members materially as well as psychically, is an absolute necessity for a properly functioning society. According to László Cseh-Szombathy in Hungary it was in the last third of the 20th century when those changes began that still affect heterosexual relations (Cseh-Szombathy, 2000). It has become visible that family life is eased on the one hand but burdened on the other by the conditions that were amended by the modernization (Somlai, 1986).

The current research focuses on how the effects of modernization influence family models and life from a designated aspect: how household labor division, communication and external relationships of the partners influence partnership cohesion. The analysis introduces cohesion using the characteristics of household labor division, communication and the patterns of extramarital network and transfers. The erosion of cohesion is measured by divorces and thinking-about getting divorced while maintenance of cohesion is measured in terms of the lack of divorce, fertility and subjective evaluations about the partnership. First the main social characteristics of the conceptual elements of the research will be introduced, and then methodological aspects will be addressed.

**Figure 1.: Conceptual framework**



Regarding the theoretical background of partnership cohesion even Durkheim (Durkheim, 2003), and Granovetter (Granovetter, 1985), Williamson (Williamson, 1981), Lawyer and Yoon (Lawyer – Yoon, 1996), Foa (Foa, 1971) and Tallman (Tallman, 1991), Cook (Cook et al., 1983), Markovsky (Markovsky et al., 1988), Skvoretz and Willer (Skvoretz et al., 1993), Becker (Becker, 1981), and László Cseh-Szombathy (Cseh-Szombathy, 1985) have all explored the different aspects and constituents of the partnership cohesion system. The concept of cohesion in the current research is built predominantly on

Durkheim's theory about solidarity (Durkheim, 2003), on the theses of Granovetter about social embeddedness and on Williamson's findings about transactional costs. Based on Durkheim the frequency of relations and communication on the one hand, and familiar solidarity and integration on the other hand are in obvious connection with each other (Durkheim, 2003). The density of the family networks was called moral or dynamic density and he claimed that in the case this density increases, the vitality of the family develops, as well. According to Durkheim solidarity evolving in communities originates from common emotions and common consciousness; and this is the way the "relations of consciousnesses" are being created. Based on Durkheim the complexity of household labor division is also an influencing factor in familiar solidarity.

Functionalist sociologists like Willmott and Young agree on that – because of industrialization – the modern family is based on certain equality and complementary functions between the partners, hence segregation of gender roles have decreased to a great extent. On the contrary, feminist opinions echo that biological determination of women regarding childbearing is an opportunity for males to exploit females, while among less radical feminists the enforcement of household labor is viewed as the manifestation of suppression. According to Marxist sociologists it is economic vulnerability that causes repression and this determines the existence of the phenomenon in the capitalist system.

In European comparisons Hungarians are measured to be one of the most traditional populations when regarding household labor division and other related gender aspects (Takács, 2009; Paksi-Sebők-Szalma, 2009). Research accomplished by Judit Takács proves that – according to the principle of the economics of courtesy – male involvement in household labor remains more an act of "helping out" than a conscious decision about sharing duties with the women (Takács, 2009). It seems that there is a certain social consensus about traditional manners which is shared by women, as well.

For a successful partnership relationship Cseh-Szombathy has also found it necessary that the partners are able to communicate with each other; which mean openness towards each other, the ability to share feelings and thoughts and consult on problems that have to be solved. (Cseh-Szombathy, 2000) It refers to the ever growing significance of communication in that the stability of families depends to an increasing extent on which communication system they use; because instead of the previously relevant normative and goal-rational cooperation the direct communicative expression of emotions, purposes and needs can be observed. (Somlai, 1986) De Graaf and Kalmijn points out that by now divorce has become a usual act, and problems evolving merely based on emotions may serve enough motivation for

breaking up a marriage. (De Graaf-Kalmijn, 2006) It is a crucial point as to what extent is the partner willing to use conflict resolution techniques in day-to-day living, how his/her endurance survives to solve the problems in a peaceful way, to whom he/she turns for advice, and how much time he/she uses to resolve the problematic situation within the given framework of the partnership. In the current research communication patterns in relation to partnership cohesion will be analyzed among marriages.

Partners should not be analyzed separated from their social bindings. Elisabeth Bott argued that partners living in dense networks may have a lower level cohesion than those who receive less assistance and support; hence they need to keep together very much so that their life can be organized. (Bott, 1971) The research needs to explore whether typical assistance transfers among family and friends can be identified, and how these actions influence the partnership cohesion.

As a whole the research focuses on which underlying characteristics typical for modern lifestyles can be explored behind the fragileness of the relationships of today and how these components affect partnership cohesion.

## **2. Methodological framework**

In the research quantitative as well as qualitative methods have been used. Below the associated methodological and methodical questions are addressed, then hypotheses are introduced.

### ***2.1 Considerations regarding the quantitative research***

Based on Bott and Willmott and Young, while analyzing household labor division we aimed to identify patterns that can be characterized by equality between partners on the one hand, and patterns that are socially determined from a gender point of view on the other hand. Moreover, in terms of communication openness between partners and an honest, intimate way of exploring partnership-related problems are analyzed. The level of tolerance towards divorce and related to this how developed communication management skills are applied are also incorporated in the research. These measures are made predominantly by latent variable methods.

An analysis focusing on early signals for divorces is feasible to do, since data originating from a panel survey is at our disposal. Since it is not the main topic of the

research, we aim at exploring whether respondents have complained of bothering partnership-related issues before the divorce.

Analyzing families in their own social networks, Bott's research pointed out that a different situation may occur in cases where the partners live in a dense social network than if they possess a loose one; in cases where the partners' social network is asymmetric, also different consequences evolve. Based on this research outcome part of the hypothesis focuses on analyzing this situation.

The theoretical background of the research referred to certain differences between marriages and cohabitation, hence the research aims at analyzing them in a separate way (separation based on legal status). The erosion of cohesion has been measured basically by divorce which is relevant only in case of marriages; analyzing quasi-divorce is not part of the research, on the other hand patterns influencing partnership cohesion are analyzed both for marriages and cohabitation wherever it is feasible. Since cohabitation seemed to be an unstable partnership form between the two waves of the survey, because of the low-level case numbers the statistical analysis could only be applied at certain phases. That is why we gave priority to researching this issue in the qualitative part.

Theoretical considerations also recommended that family life cycle influences expectations towards the partnership. Based on this, hypotheses will be tested separately on families living in the fertile interval, while at certain places families with and without children will also be distinguished (separation based on family life cycle). The research pays distinguished attention to the female's role in family cohesion. This way at many places characteristics of the female population are analyzed separately.

Being satisfied and feeling happy at an individual level is not to be neglected when researching partnership cohesion and fertility (Parr, 2010; Evans-Kelly, 2004; Zimmermann-Easterlin, 2006; Carmichael-Whittaker, 2007), hence – for the sake of exploring how the key elements of the research affect subjective well-being as an important precondition for a cohesive family – the research is framed by a complex path model. An advantage of this method, which serves also as a second argument for the method selection, is that it is possible to show causal relations among more variables in a graphical way; this way it can be presented in a clear and expressive way via which primary path independent variables affect dependent variables, and it also makes possible detection of the various relations among the variables. For completing this analysis a LISREL model was structured, because we aimed at finding out through which effects and how strongly certain partnership-related issues – household labor division, embeddedness in familiar network, partnership conflicts, and work-

life balance – influence individual-level subjective well-being, satisfaction and happiness. Besides these partnership-related subjective experiences the model explores how social origin and social-economic status influence variables that reflect personal opinions on the one hand and subjective well-being on the other hand. Variables incorporated in the model can certainly not cover all components of the causal side; effects that were analyzed in an earlier phase of the research and distinguished items of academic sociological traditions were selected for the model.

## ***2.2 Considerations regarding the qualitative research***

The effects of household labor division, communication culture and conflict management skills, and extramarital relations on partnership cohesion were analyzed by quantitative methods first. For the sake of having a closer look at the in-depth layers of these problem areas qualitative techniques had to be applied. In the main research area the lack of partnership cohesion and instability of long-term relationships were measured by the number of divorces and by thinking of getting divorced, while positive cohesion was detected via the lack of divorce and overall satisfaction with the partnership together with characteristics for fertility willingness. Thus it was reasonable to explore how circumstances and consequences of founding a family and enriching it by children affect partnership cohesion; and not only the observable existential side-effects but also emotional and mental changes that have a distinguished position based on the theory of the psychologization of relationships.

In the research, to attain these objectives deep interviews have been used, because of the nature of intimate, personal questions and the fact that in-group effects were not aimed to be analyzed. Hence structured interviews asking 17 persons were accomplished between October 2009 and January 2010. The respondents were mothers with young (under school-age) children, under 40 years, who possess a degree from tertiary education and live in the capital (Budapest) and in its green agglomeration, typically among favorable existential circumstances. The examined population can be divided into two groups: nine married, and eight cohabiting women were selected for the interviews. The aim of the grouping was to understand by qualitative techniques whether there is a difference between the two types of partnerships regarding partnership cohesion and of what nature they can be described.

The sample selection was made based on the following logic. The deep interviews basically research hypotheses having already been analyzed by quantitative methods at an earlier phase of the research, but with a special attention towards relations typical for young-



children families. The direct aim of the qualitative research was that after revealing patterns for household labor division, communication and extramarital network characteristics, research conclusions can be made as to how characteristics typical for each of the sub-areas affect the other sub-areas. Hence the examined population needed to be rather well distinguished so that a robust pattern can be identified among the cross-effects. On the other hand, since the quantitative analysis has been made from in many aspects representative surveys, the qualitative part could be segmented according to the research goal.

Since in Hungary currently it is the women who are more engaged in nourishing small children, this way they are more exposed to the consequences of this life-style. Hence it seemed to be reasonable to ask them how they evaluate changes occurring after having a child: how family life evolves, and how they personally feel among the new circumstances. An important remark has to be made at this place: the analyzed population is distinguished in the sense that because of their high-level education and stable existential circumstances they are explicitly more sensitive to the labor market changes that occur after the birth of the child, which basically means that their position on the job market is effaced. Based on the interviews, the anxious feelings related to this situation are not primarily of existential nature, but – exactly because of the easier communication of the material aspects and the willingness to continue living at the standard that was typical for the time period before having children – it gets articulated in material terms. Analyzing a different social layer would have possibly led to a different experience, but this has been a remarkable characteristic for this population.

An explicit expectation from the interviews was to understand via what kind of mechanisms family transfers affect partnership cohesion. In terms of the transfers that are provided typically by the parents it was revealed how they influence the personal well-being of the respondent on the one hand and the relations between the partners on the other hand.

### ***2.3 Hypothesis***

Based on the considerations detailed, above, the following hypotheses were analyzed.

**H1: In asymmetrical families satisfaction with partnership diminishes and thinking about divorce as well as number of divorces increases more, than in symmetrical families.**

H1.1: Neglecting child-care duties weakens family cohesion both in symmetric and asymmetric families and leads to thinking about divorce or actual divorce.

H1.2: Even in families with balanced household labor division using leisure-time independently leads to an increase in thinking about divorce; while using free-time in a complementary way does not influence it significantly.

**H2: Conservative behavior referring to a less tolerant attitude towards divorces and a well-developed partnership communication culture both strengthens cohesion, thus reduces thinking about divorce and number of divorces.**

H2.1: Partners more tolerant towards divorce think about divorce more often and at the end a higher rate gets divorced than people who do not accept divorce that much. (framing theory)

H2.2: Partners complaining about conflicts and emotional withdrawal get divorced in a bigger proportion than the ones applying more developed conflict management techniques and who pay attention to emotional harmony.

H2.3: The chance for experiencing communication problems is smaller in symmetric families.

H2.4: Families showing higher willingness to fertility, taking more children and thinking back to their decisions in a positive way experience communication problems and considerations about divorce in a smaller proportion.

H2.5: Families handling conflicts at a higher level, aiming at emotional harmony in a conscious way and who live in a more symmetric structure show higher fertility than families with more conflicts, a low emotional level and who live in an asymmetric structure.

**H3: Segregated embeddedness in dense societal networks reduces partnership cohesion and increases the proportion thinking about divorce and getting divorced.**

H3.1: Segregated embeddedness in dense relatives and friends networks will reduce partnership cohesion unless it takes over work from the family and this free-time is being created gets used to joint (neither complementary, nor independent) leisure-time activities.

H3.2: Embeddedness in loose relatives and friends networks typically increases partnership cohesion and reduces thinking about divorce.

For quantitative purposes variable blocks from the first (2002) and the second (2005) waves of the longitudinal survey database entitled ‘Turning Points of the Life-Course’ focusing on the causes and the consequences of demographic status changes, elaborated by the Demographic Research Institute of the Hungarian Central Statistical Office has been used.

The LISREL model has been constructed using data from the European Social Survey's [ESS] wave of 2005. The table, below, demonstrates the databases and methods having been used during the research with regard to the hypothesis groups. (Table 1.)

**Table 1.:**  
**The databases and methods applied with regard to the hypothesis groups**

<b>Hypothesis groups</b>	<b>Applied databases</b>	<b>Applied methods</b>
H1	Turning Points of the Life-Course, 1. 2.	MDS-models Cluster-analysis Interviews
H2	Turning Points of the Life-Course, 1. 2. European Social Survey 2005	Cluster-analysis LISREL-model Interviews
H3	Turning Points of the Life-Course, 1. 2. European Social Survey 2005	Factor-analysis Cluster-analysis LISREL-model Interviews

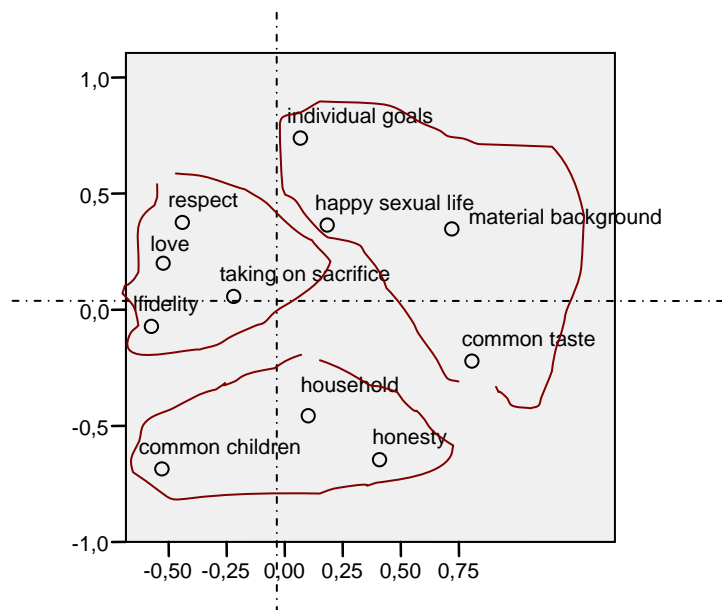
### 3. Research outcomes

The first wave of the 'Turning Points of the Life-Course' investigated 16,363 respondents where one-quarter were single, more than 50 percent married, 1 percent living apart, 9 percent were divorced and another 9 percent widowed. Among those who did not live in a marriage, 8 percent were cohabiting, and 7 percent lived in a visiting relationship. In the whole sample dependent children were present in 2,049 households at the time of the first wave. In households consisting of partners younger than 49 years this number was 1,347. Between the two waves less than 4 percent of the marriages ended up in divorce. Analyzing with T-test it has become visible that the average of the satisfaction level of those remaining with their partner is 8.80, while of those who got divorced it is 7.56; hence in terms of satisfaction there is a significant difference between the two statuses.

In preliminary research we analyzed how respondents think about what is necessary for a partnership that matches the expectations of both partners in the long term. (Szél, 2008) The multi-dimensional scaling analysis showed that one group consists of items reflecting emotional harmony between the partners: fidelity, loyalty, love, respect and taking on sacrifices for the other; the second group consists of more pragmatic items: matching

lifestyles, sufficient material background, common taste and interest, the possibility to live up to individual goals, happy sexual life and intimacy. In terms of cohesion a third important group contains items securing continuity of the partnership, like honesty, common child and well-managed household; the latter can be understood as a basis for the common future (Figure 2.).

**Figure 2.: For a good marriage, how important is...**  
**PROXSCAL-model**

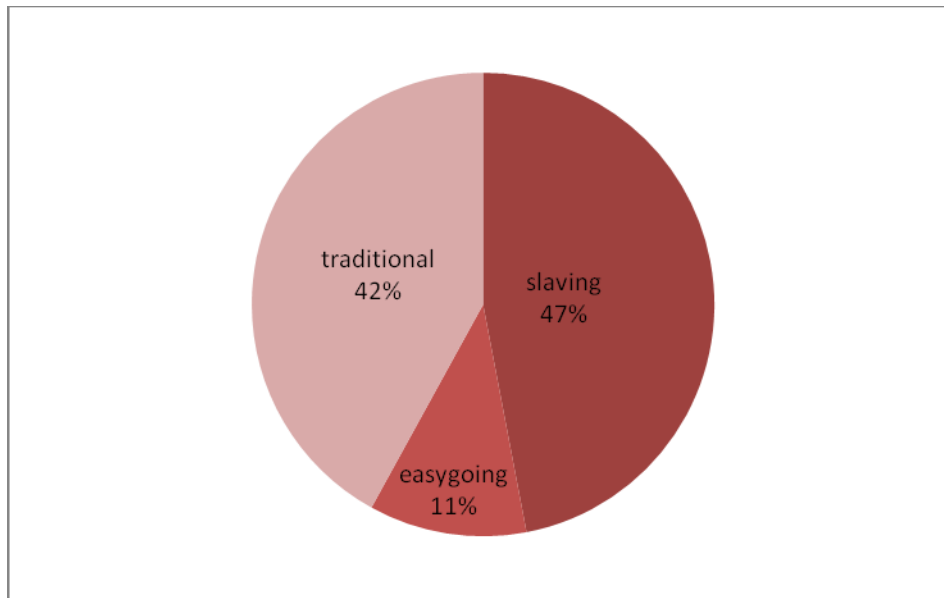


A following factor analysis underlined that the theory about psychologization of the partnerships can be traced back when analyzing the data and also strengthened the outcomes of the PROXSCALE-model. The strongest factor (35%) contains namely the items belonging to emotional harmony: fidelity, loyalty, love and taking on sacrifices for the other. The second factor (11%) incorporates items regarding partnership harmony: material background, intimacy, common taste and interest, and the possibility to live up to individual goals. The third factor (8%) represents items securing continuity of the partnership, like honesty, common child and well-managed household.

In the current research partnership cohesion was measured by household labor division on the one hand and characteristics of the leisure-time spent together on the other hand. Basic level as well as complex latent variable modeling and qualitative techniques showed that Hungarian families are typically traditional from many points of view. According to our model 75 percent of the women predominantly take full responsibility for running the

household; based on the analysis this role was accepted by them and they did not wish to reconsider it. (Figure 3.)

**Figure 3.: Household labor division**  
**K-means cluster analysis, n=6883, women**



Although based on the research one could think that in Hungary these traditional partnerships run in a rather balanced way, providing satisfaction for both partners among – from a gender point of view – a rather asymmetric household structure; more complex modeling showed signs reflecting that this way of dividing responsibilities does not ultimately support partnership cohesion. The path modeling made it clear that – although having conflicts because of household labor division is not typical for the households as a whole –, there is a significant relationship between conflicts about household duties and burden pressing down women, and as the latter increases, partnership harmony breaks, and the frequency of conflicts rises. It has also become visible, that women living in higher socio-economic circumstances are supported by a more intense family network. Interviews have confirmed these findings, echoing that in the period after the child-birth the men’s helping hand is at their disposal, as well; though this does not ruin traditional roles and usually gets activated when requested by the women. Taking a glance at the communication culture, it needs to be added here that it was found that predominantly for intact marriages there was a clear tendency not to mention the problems, which may also disguise how women honestly

feel about the traditional way of household labor division; interviews prove that this might be the case when analysis evaluates merely survey data.

Based on these we can conclude that on a socially significant level there has not developed a symmetric household labor division structure yet as it was described by Young and Willmott; it has not happened even among the elites with high education and income level, though this seems to be the layer where women can count on the help provided by the male partners the most, especially after child birth. This layer which is approaching symmetric household labor division the most possesses the highest level of communication culture and conflict management skills as well, and that – according to the research – supports partnership stability. Although we succeeded in gaining important observations, hereby sub hypotheses of hypothesis H1 could not be proven for the Hungarian circumstances as such, because the symmetric way of household labor division could not be identified at a socially significant level. Analyses which are based on survey data as well as on qualitative research refer to the dominance of the traditional approach are also valid when emphasizing the importance of the material basis, i.e. the sufficient existential background. The fact that in the interviews, where especially women living among highly favorable circumstances were researched, financial issues and related problems played a central role refers to the fact that respondents compare their current situation with their existential situation that was typical before their children were born. This way, although the economic stability of these families could be found adequate, many complain because of the worsening material circumstances. Naturally the birth of a child places extra material burdens on the parents, but one important conclusion can be made: anxiety and insecurity felt because of material problems are relevant for the families, even the ones with very stable material basis. It is also important that we have observed that – besides the financial situation –, among highly qualified women income serves as a tool for providing self-esteem. This seems to be almost independent from the amount of the salary, because the mere happiness felt about working and practicing their profession serves as the source of feeling important and valuable.

Based on the analyses made on survey data, communication culture and conflict management skills are relatively under-developed and passive among Hungarian families. Although we can identify a high proportion of partners living in partnerships that are allegedly peaceful (73 percent of the respondents), the models show that the overall level of communication is also low; and there is a significant relationship between crisis management skills and the fragileness of the partnership. Also, those partnerships that ended up in divorce for the second wave (i.e. between 2002 and 2005) could be characterized predominantly by

less developed communication culture: in these relationships the destructive types of handling conflicts were typical and the equality of the partners was not secured. In addition it has also become visible that as the level of education increases, communication culture progresses; the fact that among highly educated people the level of divorces increases does not confute this, because the relation between the level of communication and the fragileness of the relationship remains valid even separately for this layer. Religion though seems to be a supporting factor for the integrity of the partnerships, so together with the previous conclusions hypothesis H2 could be accepted. It has become evident that not only divorces but thinking about divorce significantly avoids the people who try to live up to religious values. This way the implication of the framing theory elaborated by Harmuth Esser is proven in the sense that the expectations towards the preferred ending of the relationship backlashes to the partnership. (Esser, 1999) Hence the sub hypothesis H2.1 could be proven. So while the research pointed out that in broken relationships the destructive way of handling conflicts has become visible, it is also true that partners living in stable relationships tend to disguise their opinion rather frequently, thus this way they do not solve the problem but simply avoid the conflict. The interviews also showed that in families where the partners consciously – even by the help of a professional third party – work on finding the way to each other, the level of conflict management develops and the long-term chances of the intact family increases; sub hypothesis H2.2 could be proven this way.

Analysis made on survey-data pointed out that the lack of approaching the partner in an emotionally positive way, which means the lack of understanding, patience and time for each other creates an unfavorable mental status in the partners, which leads to feeling loneliness that undermines the stability of the partnership. The research proves that people feeling apart from their partner are the most likely to consider getting divorced and situations that can be judged as an antecedent to divorce occur in the highest rate among these people, as well. This observation supports the theory of the psychologization of relationships being relevant in Hungary, too. Researching the relationship between communication culture and household labor division, because of the lack of families having symmetric structure in terms of sharing household labor responsibilities, the sub hypothesis H2.3 could not be analyzed in a robust way. When looking into fertility and communication culture it has become visible that among couples with less developed communication culture the proportion of dependent children living in the household is bigger. Also, avoiding conflicts is more frequent among partners with children than among those living without children. The family life cycle was controlled

this place so sub hypotheses H2.4 and H2.5 assuming higher level communication culture to higher level of fertility could not be proven.

In terms of analyzing inter-family transfers we concluded that in Hungary research findings of Elizabeth Bott could partially be proven. Based on our research outcomes inter-family transfers are present in the society, but according to the analysis accomplished with survey-data it is not a universal phenomenon in the sense that they are definitely strata-specific both in terms of accessibility and components. In England Bott proved her hypothesis for the middle class but in Hungary the problem should be approached from a different aspect. Here the more educated ones with better income position can count on more assistance, but among them the proportion of marriages as well as the rate of divorces is higher. In lower social strata on the other hand less help is available, fewer marriages are made, but among them – compared to the highest strata – less end with divorce. Based on the analysis we came to the conclusion that merely family transfers are not able to either protect or threaten the partnerships, but they seem to be available exactly for those layers where – considerably because of the more stable existential background and successful self-fulfillment and individualization – divorce rate is actually higher. Family transfers are of utmost importance when it comes to fertility: by making the life of the partners easier, by taking over their burdens it has a clear positive effect on taking on further children. On the other hand, when having a child, the other mechanism starts working: among partners receiving more assistance, living typically among better existential circumstances, partnerships seem to be more fragile, which is definitely disadvantageous for the children.

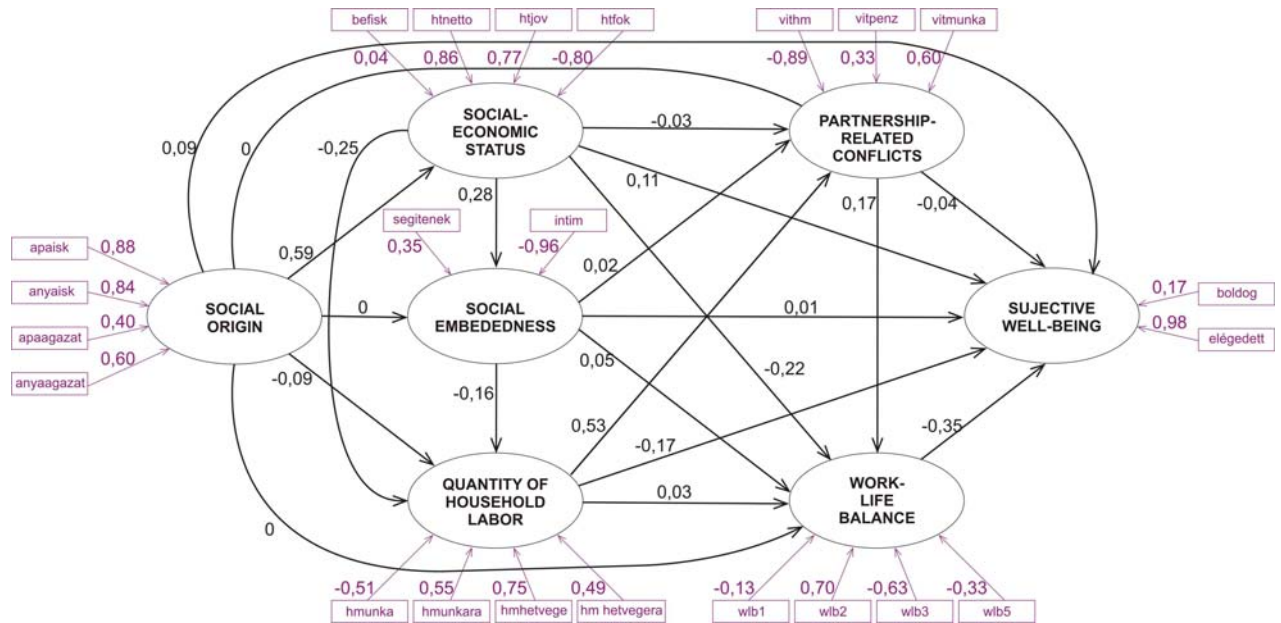
The level of satisfaction with the individual life proved to be a distinguished element in terms of partnership cohesion; according to our LISREL-model analyzing females within fertile age, subjective well-being is explained by items related to social-economic background and partnership by 26 percent. The model has underlined the results of the previous quantitative research from many aspects; in this sense work-life balance is clearly a sensitive issue which deserves distinguished attention (Figure 4.)<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> The coding of the variable names is as follows. *apaisk*= highest completed education of the father. *anyaisk*= highest completed education of the mother. *apaagazat*= the sector the father was working in when the respondent was 14-year-old. *anyaagazat*= the sector the mother was working in when the respondent was 14-year-old. *befisk*= highest completed education of the respondent. *hntnetto*= net income of the household. *htjov*= subjective opinion about the household's material background. *htfok*= number of persons living in the household. *segitenek*= help the respondent can count on from outside of the household. *intim*= person is available with whom the respondent may discuss private, intimate issues. *hmunka*= how much time the household spends on housework on an average weekday. *hmunkara*= from that how much work the respondent is responsible for on an average weekday. *hmhetvege*= how much time the household spends on housework on weekends. *hmhetvegera*= from that how much work the respondent is responsible for on the weekends. *vithm*= frequency of conflicts on household labor division issues. *vitpenz*= frequency of conflicts on material issues. *vitmunka*=



**Figure 4.: Relation system among variable blocks. LISREL-model  
(latent and empirical level)**



It has become visible that the chosen variable blocks belong to each other in the sense that there are measurable relations among them that influence each other and subjective well-being via various ways. One of the most important outcomes of the model is that we succeeded in revealing the household labor division related problems' conflict creating effect; we have also observed that with the increase of the income this burden placed on women diminishes – so does the number of related debates. The higher income eases the life of the women in the sense that – according to the model – those with better salaries are less likely to be forced to choose between work and private life. However, where this sensitive balance breaks, the inner harmony gets strongly wounded.

An important lesson is that although the higher level of disposable income seems to reduce the chance of facing household division related problems, its effect on subjective well-being is rather small. In the case we accept the importance of personal balance and satisfaction of having partnership harmony, hence stable, unbroken and fertile families may

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frequency of conflicts on job. wlb1= worried about job even when she is not working. wlb2= being too tired to enjoy home-related happenings. wlb3= feels that job hinders spending enough time with the family. wlb4= can hardly concentrate on work because of family issues. boldog= feeling happy. elégedett= feeling satisfied with overall life.

evolve, we can see that according to the model this should not be measured only by financial terms but it is necessary to examine less hard, but rather distinguishing items.

As a whole we may conclude that in Hungary partnership cohesion is strongly influenced by belonging to certain social strata; hence it is partly determined which economic and social sources can be mobilized for the sake of influencing personal and partnership well-being; on the other hand we must consider the affects of patterns that are being created on the mental level. Regarding the latter according to the research it is highly influential what kind of expectations the partners have towards the preferred ending of the partnership; for instance how much divorce is being considered as a solution and how much effort they are likely to invest in nourishing emotional harmony.

It is an important question how much acceptance females have towards the typically traditional expectations; analyzing the management of family life we have observed that if women are tolerant, asymmetric systems may also operate according to the expectations of both partners. The problem here is not merely the opinions that are not getting articulated in the communication between the partners, as it was found in the research, although these can be evaluated as a partnership weakness, as well; but crowing out the females from the job market reduces the willingness to fertility even though among the best situated strata. In Hungary after-birth employment for women is a highly sensitive question, because the society is traditionally very much oriented to family and children; despite these attitudes birth rates reduce significantly which is not independent from the family's financial situation. Promoting atypical employment as a real alternative for women and leading back the men to managing family life would have a clear positive effect on the security-level of the women and would point out a new, responsible role for the fathers – according to our research this would help both family cohesion and fertility situation.

The research naturally could not incorporate the entire field of factors influencing partnership cohesion. The characteristics of spending leisure-time, its active or passive nature; how atypical employment influences family life; patterns of adjusting obligations attached to a job and family are academically relevant areas that could be a logical continuation of the current research.

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## **5. Publications and lectures of the author that were published in the topic of the dissertation**

### *Publications in Hungarian*

1. Szél, Bernadett: Loneliness of gregarious souls. [Társas lelkek magánya.] Review about “Utasi, Ágnes: Sacrificed relations. The Hungarian singles.” (Hungarian Academy of Sciences, Institute for Political Science, Budapest 2004, p. 134). Review of Sociology [Szociológiai Szemle], 2006/4, pp. 109-113.
2. Szél, Bernadett: Measuring the Success of Long-range Relationships [A hosszú távú párkapcsolati elköteleződések sikerességének mérése], In: Review of Statistics [Statisztikai Szemle], 2008/5, pp. 440-457.
3. Murinkó, Livia – Szél, Bernadett : Review of Social Register 2008/2 (Mobility, subjective well-being, gender roles) [Recenzió a „Társadalmi regiszter 2008/2.” című kötetéről (Mobilitás, szubjektív jólét, nemi szerepek)]. Comparative Analysis of European Societies, Volume 7 [Európai Társadalmak Összehasonlító Vizsgálata , 7. kötet.] (Ed.: Füstös, László – Guba, László – Szalma, Ivett. Institute for Political Science of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences – Institute of Sociology of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, Budapest, 2008, p. 195) In: Social Research [Társadalomkutatás] Vol. 28., 2010/1., pp. 121–124.
4. Szél, Bernadett: Patterns Supporting Partnership Cohesion from a Qualitative Aspect. [A párkapcsolati összetartást segítő minták elemzése kvalitatív megközelítésben]. In: Conflict and Social Innovation [Konfliktus és társadalmi innováció], Hungarian Sociological Association. Expected time of publishing: December 2010

### *Conference lectures in Hungarian*

5. Szél, Bernadett: Patterns supporting partnership cohesion. The effect of household labor division, communication and extramarital relationship on partnership cohesion. [A párkapcsolati összetartást segítő minták elemzése. A családon belüli munkamegosztás, kommunikáció, valamint a felek társadalmi kötéseinek a párkapcsolati kohézióra gyakorolt hatása.] Annual conference of the Hungarian Sociological Association, Debrecen, 14<sup>th</sup> December 2009

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6. Szél, Bernadett: Loneliness of Gregarious Souls? (review), In: Review of Sociology Vol. 13, 2007/1., Akadémiai Kiadó, Budapest, 2007, pp. 97-101.
7. Szalma Ivett – Szél Bernadett: Analysis of the Hungarian labor market by deliberative methods. In: What Capitalism? Socioeconomic Change in Central Eastern Europe. Eds: Krause, Alexandra/ Trappmann, Vera. Collaborative Research Centre 580, Discussion Paper 36, Friedrich Schiller University, Jena, Germany, 2010, pp. 155-199.

### ***Conference lectures in English***

8. Szél, Bernadett – Szalma, Ivett: Labour market and partnership formation. The consequences of shifting between typical and atypical employment on the nature and quality of the partnership, conference entitled „Employment uncertainty and partnership formation”, Max Planck Institute, Berlin, July 2009
9. Szalma, Ivett – Szél, Bernadett: Analysis of the Hungarian labor market by deliberative methods, conference entitled “Employment, labour, welfare and socio-economic change in capitalist Central Eastern Europe” at the Friedrich Schiller University, Jena, October 2009