

THE UNIQUE INTERPRETATION OF THE SOVIET MODEL IN THE DOCUMENTS SHAPING THE KINDERGARTEN EDUCATION OF HUNGARY AND CZECHOSLOVAKIA IN THE 1950S



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This research covers the socialist reform of kindergarten education in the Central and Eastern European macroregion. Within that, it focuses on the specificities of Hungary and Czechoslovakia. The reform started in 1948 had an influence on the public education system and, within that, kindergarten education too in all countries of the Eastern bloc. This was based on adopting the concept devised in the Soviet Union which required the significant transformation of the existing pedagogical traditions. This was shown in the officially published content regulators. The research studying the history of socialist kindergarten education do not really focus on the fifties. The comparative analysis of the Czechoslovakian and Hungarian 'curricula' are considered a subject with no lack of interest in. The research examines whether unique specificities were let predominate in the documents of the two countries in scope despite the unification efforts of copying the Soviet model. We are trying to come to conclusion about latent elements behind the manifest content of the official instructions. To understand how this was implemented in Hungary, press articles of the era and reports in the national archives were also used. The objective is to differentiate our knowledge of kindergartens of the fifties on a national and macroregional level. Beside the descriptive source analysis of the interim curricula issued in 1953, the content regulators of the second half of the 1950s are compared using content structuring qualitative content analysis. The category system of the analysis was finalised using deductive reasoning along the translations of the Soviet source literature following the Soviet model and along kindergarten literature. The 'curricula' of the two countries considered the spatial dimension of the research show resemblance in several aspects. However, their volume, structure and main content differ. This might be the result of the small, nevertheless existing leeway given to the members of the reform process by kindergarten politics. This leeway created a unique adaptation despite the strong control of principles exercised in Moscow.

Keywords: Kindergarten History; Socialist Kindergarten; 'Unification', Qualitative Content Analysis;

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Témou príspevku je socialistická reforma predškolskej výchovy v makroregiónne strednej a východnej Európy so zameraním na špecifickú Maďarska a Československa. Reforma, ktorá sa začala v roku 1948, sa dotkla celého systému verejného vzdelávania vrátane predškolskej výchovy vo všetkých krajinách východného bloku. Jej základom bolo prijatie sovietskej koncepcie, čo si vyžadovalo výraznú transformáciu dovtedajších pedagogických tradícií. Túto tendenciu odzrkadľovali aj oficiálne publikované metodické príručky. Výskum dejín socialistickej výchovy v materských školách sa v menšej miere zameriava na 50. roky 20. storočia. Komparatívne analýzy československých a maďarských „učebných osnov“ majú preto supľujúci potenciál. Cieľom výskumu bolo zistiť, či sa napriek snahe kopírovať sovietsky model mohli v dokumentoch oboch skúmaných krajín uplatňovať isté špecifiká. Zároveň sme sa snažili dešifrovať latentné prvky v pozadí oficiálnych predpisov a noriem. Pri interpretácii regionálnej implementácie na území Maďarska sme vychádzali aj z článkov v dobovej tlači a z archívnych správ. Snažili sme sa prispieť k diferenciacii poznatkov o predškolskej výchove 50. rokov 20. storočia na národnej a makroregionálnej úrovni. Okrem deskriptívnej pramennej analýzy dočasných učebných plánov z roku 1953 sme podrobili kvalitatívnej obsahovej analýze a komparácii aj metodické dokumenty z druhej polovice 50. rokov 20. storočia. Jednotlivé kategórie analýzy sme definovali pomocou metódy dedukcie, s využitím sovietskej prekladovej literatúry a literatúry o dejinách predškolskej výchovy, prezentujúcej sovietsky model. „Učebné osnovy“ oboch krajín determinujúcich geografickú dimenziu výskumu vykazujú vo viacerých aspektoch zhodu, no zároveň aj rozdiely v ich rozsahu, štruktúre a obsahovom zameraní. Môže to byť spôsobené obmedzeným, ale zároveň slobodným manévrovacím priestorom, ktorý aktérom reformného procesu poskytovala politika predškolskej výchovy, čo napriek silnému ideovému usmerneniu z Moskvy viedlo k špecifickej adaptácii.

Kľúčové slová: dejiny predškolskej výchovy; socialistická materská škola; „unifikácia“; kvalitatívna obsahová analýza;

Introduction

It is crucial that a research on kindergarten history, focusing on the dawn full of struggles of socialist kindergartens, study the key features of educational matters, being shaped by the Soviet model, from the perspective of kindergartens. The influence of Sovietisation on educational matters¹, the reform changing the previous upbringing, prevailed in all countries of the Eastern bloc within the Soviet Union's sphere of interest.²

The concept implemented in another country, one that was considered an example to follow, was adopted in order to make a fundamental change in the educational system that included kindergarten education too. From the perspective of this research, this concept is considered the Soviet model. Its objective was the re-evaluation and even the replacement of the core principles of the previous system. The utopian visions were put into practice

¹ VÁG, Ottó. Reformelméletek és reformmozgalmak a pedagógiában. [Reform Theories and Reform Movements in Pedagogy]. Budapest 1985, s. 7.

² The Czechoslovakian Republic was a state inhabited by two Slavik nations. Presumably, this resulted in the expectation of following the lead of the biggest Slavik state, the Soviet Union. LUKÁČ, Eduard. K diskusii o povojnovom vývoji školstva z hľadiska tradícií reformného pedagogického hnutia. [Towards a Discussion of the Post-War Development of Education in the Light of The Traditions of the Educational Reform Movement]. In KUDLÁČOVÁ, Blanka (ed.). Pedagogické myslenie a školstvo na Slovensku od konca druhej svetovej vojny po obdobie normalizácie. [Pedagogical Thinking and Education in Slovakia from the End of the Second World War to the Period of Normalisation]. Trnava 2017, s. 117.

directly. However, according to the stage theory of reform processes, this resulted in some stages being skipped.³

The spatial dimension of the present research consists of Hungary and Czechoslovakia of the socialist bloc. However, literature on kindergarten history shows resemblances between the establishment and operation of the preschool institutions of the two countries. As of the 'fifties', it was the obligation of following the Soviet model that resulted in a similar development path in the early kindergarten matters of the two countries.⁴ The starting point is that the communist taking over of power managed from Moscow⁵ led to similar consequences in the countries within the Soviet Union's sphere of interest as far as kindergarten policies were concerned. The Soviet model encouraged the recognition of kindergarten education as an integral part of the scholar system. The socialist educational reform started in 1948 was firmly committed to kindergarten education⁶. Therefore, the reform of kindergarten affairs was implemented sooner than in other European countries.⁷

As devised within the framework of the Soviet education system, kindergartens in Hungary and Czechoslovakia were institutions which ensured upbringing, provision, and health and social care, for children from the age of 3 years until they were admitted to school, in conjunction with their families. The institution of the educational system was often referred to though from a family policy aspect as a 'benefit' that contributed to

³ see more: ANDERSON, Stephen. E. Moving change: Evolutionary perspectives on educational change. In HARGREAVES, Andy et al. Second international handbook of educational change. Dordrecht 2009, s. 70-78; and ANWEILER, Oskar et al. Bildungspolitik in Deutschland 1945-1990: Ein historisch-vergleichender Quellenband. [Educational Policy in Germany, 1945-1990: A historical-comparative source volume]. Opladen 1992, 574 s.

⁴ see e.g. PŠENÁK, Jozef. Pramene k dejinám československého školstva. [Sources for the History of Czechoslovak Education]. Bratislava 1979, 247 s.; JANČEK, Jozef. Detská opatrovňa v Prievidzi. 1888-1988. K storočnici materského školstva v Prievidzi. [Children's Nursery in Prievidza, 1888 to 1988. On the Centenary of Kindergarten Education in Prievidza]. Prievidzi 1989, s. 3-26; KASÁČOVÁ, Bronislava. Od detských opatrovní po predškolskú edukáciu. [From Childcare to Pre-school Education]. In GAŠPAROVÁ, Eva – MIŇOVÁ, Monika (ed.). Od detskej opatrovne k materskej škole. [From Childcare to Kindergarten]. Banská Bystrica 2009, s. 11-18; ŠMELOVÁ, Eva. Česká mateřská škola v historickém vývoji. [Czech Kindergarten in Historical Development]. In GAŠPAROVÁ, Eva – MIŇOVÁ, Monika (ed.). Od detskej opatrovne k materskej škole. [From Childcare to Kindergarten]. Banská Bystrica 2009, s. 19-21; VARGOVÁ, Michaela. Materská škola v zrkadle času. [Kindergarten in the Mirror of Time]. In Zborník odborných príspevkov Spoločnosť pre predškolskú výchovu Prešov a Banská Bystrica. [Proceedings of the Society for Preschool Education Prešov and Banská Bystrica]. Čadca 2019, s. 75-82; and GABZDILOVÁ, Soňa. Miesto a úlohy materských škôl na slovensku v systéme komunistickej výchovy (1948-1953). [The Place and Roles of Kindergartens in Slovakia in the System of Communist Education (1948 to 1953)]. In Studia Historica Nitriensia, 2021, roč. 25, č. 1, s. 254-269; Anon. Mateřské školy v ČSSR: vývoj od vzniku do r. 1983. [Kindergartens in the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic: development from the establishment to 1983]. Ústav školských informací při ministerstvu školství ČSR. Praha 1985. s. 22-26.

⁵ SÁSKA, Géza. Igény az igazság monopoliumára I-II. A politikai és a világnézeti marxizmus-leninizmus a sztálini kor pedagógia tudományában. [The Demand for a Monopoly of Truth I-II: Political and Ideological Marxism-Leninism in the Science of Pedagogy in the Stalinist Era]. In Pedagógia történeti Szemle, 2018, roč. 4, č. 1-2, s. 2.

⁶ MILLEI, Zsuzsa – IMRE, Robert J. The 'Cosmopolitan' Project and Hungarian Kindergarten Education: Re-reading Socialism. In Prospects, 2013, roč. 43, č. 2, s. 141.

⁷ GARROUSTE, Christelle. 100 Years of Educational Reforms in Europe: a Contextual Database. Luxembourg 2010, s. 9-10.

women's employment.⁸ This shows that kindergartens served both a social and a pedagogical purpose. However, before 1953, in Czechoslovakia, their main objective was to prepare children for school. Therefore, similarly to schools, children were put into classes, whereas in Hungary they were put into kindergarten groups. After 1953, the emphasis in kindergartens was instead shifted towards upbringing as children aged 6 were prepared for regular schoolwork in preschool classes once kindergarten upbringing had finished.⁹

Identifying socialist pedagogy as Soviet pedagogy, the János Géczi mentioned that the Soviet model was made a standard at the beginning of the 'fifties'.¹⁰ Following the Soviet model, as required by politics, resulted in discontinuity, that is, ending and reinterpreting the previous pedagogical traditions.¹¹ Before the era in question, the diversity of Hungarian kindergarten pedagogy was ensured by letting (reform) pedagogical principles, which focused on children and were psychologically and sociologically valid, e.g. the Montessori method prevail.¹² Presumably, the effects of these principles were still present as far as practical kindergarten work was concerned as pedagogues still relied on them. This allowed for a – rather subtle form of – resistance against the overly ideological pedagogy of socialism.¹³

In 1948, following the Soviet model, the homogenisation of kindergarten education started. The theoretical base of socialist pedagogy forced by the transition of power was the socialism and approach of humans devised by Stalin. One of the main objectives of pedagogy was supporting the principles and norms of the political power, and supporting the legitimisation of the social development planned by the political power. Therefore forming the socialist public education system required a change in ideology.¹⁴ Pedagogy was shaped by the existing political interests rather than professional ones. The political intention, communicated through the language of communist ideology, was of utmost importance within this process.¹⁵ Kindergarten pedagogues had to familiarise themselves with its principles and theories, then had to put them into practice. The number of translations

⁸ SZELEWA, Dorota. Three Faces of Familialism: Comparing Family Policies. In the Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland, RC19 Annual Academic Conference Social Policy in a Globalizing World: Developing a North-South Dialogue (2006)

⁹ TEMESI, Alfréd. A csehszlovák iskolaügy fejlődésének és jelenlegi helyzetének áttekintése. [The Overview of the Development and the Current Status of Czechoslovakian School Matters]. In *Pedagógiai Szemle*, 1955, roč. 5, č. 3, s. 328-337.

¹⁰ GÉCZI, János. A szovjet pedagógiai minta. A szovjet és a szovjet minta nyomán kialakított nemzeti törekvések sajtórepresentációja. [The Soviet Pedagogical Model. Press Representation of the Soviet National Aspirations and those Based on the Soviet Model]. In *Iskolakultúra*, 2006, roč. 16, č. 9, s. 24.

¹¹ GOLNHOFER, Erzsébet – SZABOLCS, Éva. A hagyományok megszakítása, átértelmezése a pedagógiai tankönyvekben az ötvenes évek első felében. [Breaking and Reinterpreting Traditions in Pedagogical Textbooks in the First Half of the 1950s]. In NÉMETH, András – PUKÁNSZKY, Béla (ed.). *Gyermekek, tanárok, iskolák – egykoron és ma. Tanulmányok a 90 éves Mészáros István tiszteletére*. [Children, Teachers, Schools – Then and Now. Studies in Honor of the 90-Year-Old István Mészáros]. Budapest 2017, s. 22-23.

¹² NÉMETH, András – PUKÁNSZKY, Béla. Life Reform, Educational Reform and Reform Pedagogy from the Turn of the Century up until 1945 in Hungary. In *Espacio, Tiempo y Educación*, 2020, roč. 7, č. 2, s. 169-170; and GOLNHOFER, Erzsébet. Hazai pedagógiai nézetek 1945–1949. [National Pedagogical Views 1945 to 1949]. Pécs 2004, s. 16, 45-98.

¹³ MILLEI – IMRE, The 'Cosmopolitan' Project, s. 138.

¹⁴ GOLNHOFER, Hazai pedagógiai nézetek, s. 28.

¹⁵ SOMOGYVÁRI, Lajos. Political Decision-Making in Socialist Education: a Hungarian Case Study (1958–1960). In *HISTORY OF EDUCATION*, 2019, roč. 48, č. 5, s. 665.

of Soviet pedagogical literature indicated that the future was going to be the Soviet model and its ideals both in Hungary and in Czechoslovakia.¹⁶

One of the conditions of working as a pedagogue was rejecting the non-socialist pedagogical methods, e.g. the reform pedagogy trends. The fight against reform pedagogy methods was the fiercest at the beginning of the 'fifties'.¹⁷ The reform pedagogy efforts were interpreted in a similar way in Czechoslovakia too.¹⁸ This resulted in an 'interim period' that officially ignored the pedagogical pluralism and that remained a requirement until the end of the 1980s. Before 1948, pedagogues only had little knowledge of the fundamentals of the socialist/communist education and the Soviet pedagogy. In Hungary, especially after 1950, adopting and implementing such literature was the focus of pedagogical work, at least as far as its literature was concerned. The following subchapter sheds light on how translated literature applied to kindergartens in Hungary. The research in libraries did not produce a result for the same period for Czechoslovakia. It is fair to assume that getting acquainted with the Soviet books and copying the communist pedagogy through them only became a requirement there a few years later, and even then, emphasis was put on school age.¹⁹ The forewords of the translated works often totally lacked criticism, and their tone was often full of admiration. This can be interpreted as the principles being completely adopted, however, there is only little information available as to how much they were really adopted.²⁰

The content regulators conforming to the spirit of the socialist reform, examined by the research, presented arguments to support the described education policy decision. First and foremost, they came up with new things verbally; at the beginning, the pedagogical practice was only influenced by them to a small extent.²¹ This also verifies that the previous kindergarten pedagogy traditions, even the ones based on reform pedagogy principles, were still able to predominate.

¹⁶ see e.g. GUBRICOVÁ, Janette. Forming Pupil's Positive Relationship to the Soviet Union in the Period of Socialism in Czechoslovakia Through the Lens of Chronicles. In *Slovenský národopis / Slovak Ethnology*, 2021, roč. 69, č. 2, s. 238; KOSTRUB, Dušan. Montanae Civitatis Neosoliensis philanthropicum institutum – schola pro educatione infantum (Ecce eventum!). Quantuscumque, quid agis?. In GAŠPAROVÁ, Eva – MIŇOVÁ, Monika (ed.). *Od detskej opatrovne k materskej škole. [From Childcare to Kindergarten]*. Banská Bystrica 2009, s. 47-53; and PŠENÁK, Pramene k dejinám československého školstva. s. 49; PÁLFI, Sándor. A magyar óvoda tanulásszemléletének sajátosságai az 1950-es években az óvodai alapidokumentumok tükrében. [The Specificities of Learning Approach in Hungarian Kindergartens in the 1950s Based on Constitutional Kindergarten Documents]. In BAKOSI KOVÁCS, Éva (ed.). *Társadalomtudományi tanulmányok III. Tanulmánykötet a Debreceni Egyetem Gyermeknevelési és Felnőttképzési Kar oktatóinak írásából. [Studies on Social Sciences III. Study book compiled from the works of teachers of the University of Debrecen Faculty of Children's and Adult Education]*. Debrecen 2011, s. 137.

¹⁷ GOLNHOFFER, Hazai pedagógiai nézetek, s. 110; and ŠMELOVÁ, Česká mateřská škola, s. 20–21.

¹⁸ LUKÁČ, K diskusii o povojnovom vývoji školstva. s. 117-128; LUKÁČ, Eduard. Pedagogické názory a pôsobenie ev. učiteľa a školského inšpektora Michala Sekeya v rámci reformy školstva a vzdelávania na Slovensku v prvej polovici 20. storočia. [Pedagogical Views and Activities of the Protestant Teacher and School Inspector Michal Sekey within the Framework of the Reform of Schooling and Education in Slovakia in the First Half of the 20th Century]. In *Historia Ecclesiastica* roč. 8, č. 1, s. 105-119.

¹⁹ see e.g. SOROKINA, Aleksandra Ivanovna. Doškoľnaja pedagogika: učebnoje posobie dlja pedagogičeskich učilišč. [School Pedagogy: Teaching Equipment for Pedagogical Classrooms]. Moskva 1951, 351 s.

²⁰ GOLNHOFFER – SZABOLCS, A hagyományok megszakítása, ártértelezése, s. 27.

²¹ NÓBIK, Attila. Neveléstörténet tankönyvek az ötvenes években. [Pedagogy History Schoolbooks in the Fifties]. In *Inskolakultúra*, 2008, roč. 18, č. 3-4, s. 45.

More and more researchers face the challenge of studying and examining the events and discussions of the 1950s with a critical eye. Hungarian history of education researchers also endeavour to discover and describe the reality of the vision of children and ‘social pedagogy’ of the era and that of the system of institutions that enforced it in different contexts.²²

The timeframe of the time dimension of the research on the ‘fifties’ can be interpreted in different ways from the aspects of common history and education history. Setting the timeframe is mainly influenced by the subject of the research. For example, in one of his studies, Tibor Darvai established that it lasted from 1948, the year of communist takeover called the turning point until the end of the 1950s.²³ Lajos Somogyvári refers to the period between 1948 and 1959 as the “long fifties”.²⁴ The present research follows this principle, therefore, for both Hungary and Czechoslovakia, the ‘fifties’ start with the passing of the 1948 laws on the deprivalisation of kindergartens.²⁵ For instance, the 1948 Czechoslovakian education law was described by Josef Váňa, director of the Prague Comenius Pedagogy Institute as a new public education reform law.²⁶ The end of the time dimension is set by a new reform period that started in 1958, also following a Soviet example. This was the year when kindergarten teacher education was first taught in colleges. We can also observe the reform of teacher education in Czechoslovakia in 1959.²⁷ It is clear that events significant for kindergarten history took place in both years. The fifties would usually mean the time period between 1950 and 1960, however, the research focuses on the decade between 1948 and 1959, hence the quotation marks used when referring to the ‘fifties’.

²² see e.g. DARVAI, Tibor. Oktatáspolitikai a korai Kádár-korszakban, a Tanító című folyóirat elemzése alapján. [Education policy in the early Kádár era, based on an analysis of the journal “Teacher”]. Budapest 2022, 198. s.; KÉRI, Katalin. Gyermekek Magyarországon az 1950-es évek első felében. [Report on Children in Hungary in the First Half of the 1950s]. In PUKÁNSZKY, Béla (ed.). Két évszázad gyermekei [Children of Two Centuries. History of Childhood in the 19th and 20th Centuries]. Budapest 2003, s. 229-247; NÉMETH, Dóra Katalin. Practical Training and Practice Kindergartens at the Kindergarten Institute in Sopron (1964-1972). In KÉRI, Katalin (ed.). Fejezetek a neveléstudomány és a nőtörténet köréből. [Chapters on Pedagogy and the History of Women]. Sopron 2023, s. 44-52; NÓBIK, Neveléstörténet tankönyvek. s. 39-49; PATYI, Gábor. Szakmai vita az óvó- és tanítóképzés akadémiai szintű egyesítéséről a pedagógiai sajtóban 1957-ben. [Professional Debate on the Academic-Level Unification of Kindergarten and School Pedagogy Education in the Pedagogical Press]. In KOVÁCSNÉ TÓTH, Tímea (ed.). A tanítóképzés múltja, jelene V, a tanárképzés múltja, jelene II. [The Past and Present of Schoolteacher Education V, The Past and Present of Teacher Education II]. Szombathely 2020), s. 58-66; SOMOGYVÁRI, Lajos. Communist Hungarian School in the Memories of Emigrated Children. In History of Education and Children’s Literature, 2023, roč. 18, č. 1, s. 95-114; SZABOLCS, Éva – GOLNHOFER, Erzsébet. A szocialista Nevelés Könyvtára: törekvés a szocialista pedagógia kialakítására, 1950–1957. [The Library of Socialist Education: an Effort to Form Socialist Pedagogy, 1950 to 1957]. In FEHÉRVÁRI, Anikó (ed.). A Borsszem Jankótól Bolognáig. Metszéspontok. [Satirical magazine From Borsszem Jankó to Bologna. Studies on Pedagogy. Metszéspontok Points of Intersection]. Budapest 2018, s. 12-32.

²³ DARVAI, Tibor. Makarenko-értelmezések Magyarországon a hosszú 1950-es években. [Makarenko-interpretations in Hungary in the long 1950s]. In Iskolakultúra, 2021, roč. 31, č. 5, s. 39.

²⁴ SOMOGYVÁRI, Lajos. A balatonfűzfői Nitrokémia az amerikai hírszerzés célkeresztjében. [Nitrokémia of Balatonfűzfő in the target cross of American intelligence]. In Iskolakultúra, 2024, roč. 34, č. 2-3, s. 118.

²⁵ In Slovakia, the aforementioned law only supported the deprivalisation that had already started in 1944. LUKÁČ, K diskusii o povojnovom vývoji školstva, s. 117.

²⁶ VÁŇA, Josef. A csehszlovák iskolatörvény. [The Czechoslovakian Education Law]. In Köznevelés, 1949, roč. 5, č. 1-2, s. 8-9.

²⁷ ZACHAROVÁ, Jarmila. Komparácia vývinu vysokého školstva na Slovensku v XX. a v XXI. storočí. [The Comparison of the Development of Higher Education in Slovakia in XX. and XXI. Century] In RĘDZIŃSKIEGO, Kazimierza – ŁAPOTA, Mirosława (eds.). Pedagogika XXII. Częstochowa 2013, s. 266.

Research on kindergarten history do not really concentrate on this period. Therefore our knowledge of the era is very limited. The works on the development of kindergartens only briefly touch upon the socialist kindergarten, and when they do, their focus is more on the 1970s and 1980s.²⁸

These works include social history²⁹ and political sociology analyses.³⁰

The content regulators defining the early childhood education are considered a major group of the primary sources of education history. In the scope of this research is the comparative analysis of the kindergarten manuals of the 'fifties'. Some Hungarian and Slovakian research do analyse the kindergarten history of the 'fifties'³¹ but no content analysis of the Hungarian and Czechoslovakian content regulators within this context has been published so far. Although there is a great quantity of sources on the topic, researchers studying the 'fifties' have to face the narrowness and unilateral nature of these as they mainly consist of official documents and publications complying with the perspective of the party state.³² It is therefore the manifest content that is predominantly looked at, yet in the meantime the latent elements are also being interpreted. The main question of the research: Were different specificities able to be implemented in the documents despite the unification efforts that characterised the 'fifties'?

One of the objectives of the research is to contribute to the differentiation of our knowledge of the kindergartens of the 'fifties' on a national and macroregional level. This could also serve as a basis to examine how the socialist pedagogical past survived.

First the pedagogy and the socialist kindergarten reform of the fifties are described, followed by the methodological framework and the sources of the research. Finally, the Hungarian and Czechoslovakian kindergarten content regulators are compared with the simultaneous presence of unification and uniqueness being highlighted.

Hungarian Examples of the Translations of Soviet Literature Influencing Kindergarten Education

The first Soviet publication that served as a guide for kindergarten education in Hungary, was published in 1949. This was supposed to ensure the kindergarten pedagogy in order to serve the building of socialism, even though it was clear that the conditions to do so were

²⁸ see e.g. MILLEI, Zsuzsa. Memory and Kindergarten Teachers' Work: Children's Needs before the Needs of the Socialist State. In *Globalisation, Societies and Education*, 2013, roč. 11, č. 2, s. 170-193; NEMES-WÉBER, Zsófia. A nők tömeges munkába állásának hatásai az óvodaügyre Magyarországon az 1950-es években. [The Effects of a Significant Number of Women Taking up Employment on Hungary's Kindergarten Matters]. In SZŐKE-MILINTE, Enikő (ed.). *Pedagógiai mozaik [Pedagogical Mosaic]*. Budapest 2019, 191-198; SZTRINKÓNÉ NAGY, Irén. Óvó-iskola, gyermekkert, óvoda: A kisgyermekkor neveléstörténete. [Protectingschool, Childrengarden, Kindergarten: The Educational History of Early Childhood]. Budapest 2009, 151. s.; VARGOVÁ, Materská škola, s. 75-82.

²⁹ KELEMEN, Elemér. Az óvoda a magyar társadalom történetében III. [The Kindergarten in the History of Hungarian Society III.]. In *Óvodai Nevelés*, 2000, roč. 62, č. 6, s. 252-256.

³⁰ ACZÉL, Zsófia. Üzemi óvodák 1945 és 1975 között. [Company Kindergartens between 1945 and 1975]. In *Iskolakultúra*, 2012, roč. 22, č. 5, s. 37-55.

³¹ see e.g. GABZDILOVÁ, Miesto a úlohy materských škôl na slovensku. s. 254-269; PÁLFI, A magyar óvoda tanulászemplétének sajátosságai, s. 137.

³² GOLNHOFER, Erzsébet. Rendszerváltások a tudomány legitimációjában – Magyarország, 1945–1949. [Regime Changes in the Legitimation of Science – Hungary, 1945 to 1949]. In SZABOLCS, Éva (ed.). *Pedagógia és politika a XX. század második felében Magyarországon*. [Pedagogy and Politics in the Second Half of the 20th Century in Hungary]. Budapest 2006, s. 9.

missing.³³ The thought written in the introduction was probably advising in a latent manner that the objective was not to copy the content of the book without thinking. It is fair to assume that the chapters of the book would later serve as sources for the future guides (e.g. educational exercises for all three age groups, types of activities: mother tongue, musical education, calculation, drawing, modelling, etc.).

The Educational Major Department of the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Public Education launched its publication in 1950, a series called the Library and Pocketbook Library of Socialist Education.³⁴

The below table presents the supervisory authorities of kindergartens in the 'fifties'. These contributed to the publication of the translations of Soviet literature and to their distribution among kindergarten teachers in Hungary.

The central administrative authority supervising kindergartens	
Ministry of Welfare (1948)	
Internal departments responsible for special duties for example: Department of Child Care	
Ministry of Religion and Public Education (from 1949) Ministry of Public Education (from 1951) Ministry of Education (from 1953) Ministry of Cultural Affairs (from 1957)	
Internal departments responsible for special duties include:	
Major Department of Education	Major Department of Kindergartens
charged with the preparation of school-books and methodological publications among others	charged with the supervision of kindergartens and the improvement of the level of education
Local state administration authorities, for example the county council	
the county-level body of the public education administration: Department of Education and Cultural Management	
The direction and supervision of the local public education, e.g. kindergarten matters were the responsibility of the Educational Subdivision.	
The person responsible for the supervision of kindergartens: kindergarten executive (charged with supervision, questions of kindergartens related to education, upskill of kindergarten teachers among others).	

Table 1. The supervisory authorities of kindergartens

Based on the referenced work, compiled by the author.

WILLERT, Andor. A közoktatásügyi igazgatás megyei szervezete és feladatai. [The County-Level Bodies and Responsibilities of the Public Education Administration]. In *Állam és közigazgatás*, 1950, roč. 2, č. 4-5, s. 299-301.

³³ REMETE, Dezső (trans.). Az óvodai nevelés gyakorlata a Szovjetunióban. [The Practice of Kindergarten Education in the Soviet Union]. Budapest 1949, s. 4.

³⁴ see more: SZABOLCS – GOLNHOFER, A Szocialista Nevelés Könyvtára, s. 13-32; and GOLNHOFER, Erzsébet – SZABOLCS, Éva. A Szocialista Nevelés Könyvtára 1950-1957. Politikai termék vagy tudományos produktum? [The Library of Socialist Education 1950 to 1957: Political Product or Scientific Product?]. In GARAI, Imre et al. (ed.). *Mestermunka: A neveléstudomány aktuális diskurzusai*. [Masterpiece: Current Discourses of Educational Science]. Budapest 2020, s. 160-173.

The executive of the Educational Major Department announced one of the main objectives of the series in the pedagogical news outlet called *Public Education*. This objective was to present the theory, practice and latest results of socialist education, and to facilitate their application.³⁵ In 1950, the third book of the series was published. This was the translation of a book for kindergartens, called *Organised Activities in Kindergartens*.³⁶

The readers of the 13th instalment of the series, called *Educational Experience of Soviet Kindergarten Teachers*, published in 1951, were given an insight into the experience of the practice of socialist kindergartens.³⁷ Using this collection of articles as a guide, the Kindergarten Department of the Ministry of Public Education (further referred to as MPE) decided to get a similar book written. The objective of this was to collate the practical experience of the best Hungarian kindergarten teachers working in different areas of education. To implement this plan, local contribution was requested. In January 1952, the head of the Kindergarten Department of the MPE instructed the kindergarten executives of the educational departments of the county councils to collect all the questions they want the future book to answer. As per sources in the archives, an example of local contribution was the kindergarten executive of the Education Department of the Fejér Country Council who asked the principals of kindergartens to collect the problems related to education they needed guidance to solve and incorporate them into the report on the operation of the kindergartens. Among others, the kindergarten teachers asked for help in shaping the relationship between families and kindergartens, e.g. making the Parents' School more popular and the relationship more intimate. The kindergarten teacher who prepared the report probably meant the confidential and close relationship with parents. This relationship was the basis of creating the unity and agreement between family and kindergarten as far as education was concerned. This was important as a changing set of values was shaping everyday life according to the communist ideology. In order to legitimise this, the party state in the 'fifties' expected the kindergarten teachers to spread pedagogical propaganda. The major organised forum for this in the first years of the era was the Parents' School.³⁸ However, the traditional values of the population of towns and country of the era before 1948 still had an effect on life, and sometimes lived on in a slightly different way. The political role of kindergarten teachers in this work has to be assessed correctly. It is neither to be underestimated nor to be overestimated.³⁹

One kindergarten teacher, according to her own report, had read the experiences of her Soviet peers and was carrying out her educational work according to what she had learned from it. She wrote that she had learned a lot, however, she wanted to read more about didactic games and the physical exercise of 3 to 4-year-old children as she only had little knowledge on these topics. Another kindergarten teacher reported that she wanted an

³⁵ KÁROLY, Sándor cited SZABOLCS – GOLNHOFER, A Szocialista Nevelés Könyvtára, s. 65.

³⁶ BLEHER, F. N. (MOLLAY, Károly trans.) Szervezett foglalkozás az óvodában. [Organised Activities in the Kindergarten]. Szocialista Nevelés Könyvtára 3. Budapest 1950, 175 s.

³⁷ Anon. Szovjet óvónők nevelési tapasztalatai. [Educational Experiences of Soviet Kindergarten Pedagogues]. Szocialista Nevelés Könyvtára 12. Budapest 1951, 299 s.

³⁸ KÓGER, Yvetta. 'Tessék lerajzolni, hogy már négyéves elmúltam.' A Ludas Matyi óvodaképe az ötvenes évekből. ['Let me draw that I'm over four years old now.' The kindergarten picture of satirical magazine Ludas Matyi from the 1950s]. In Polymatheia, 2022, roč. 19, č. 1-2, s. 227.

³⁹ VALUCH, Tibor. Volt-e 'szocialista' társadalom Magyarországon? [Was there a socialist society in Hungary]. In Beszélő, 2001, roč. 6, č. 4, s. 73.

answer to her question about learning to count in the kindergarten.⁴⁰ It is worth mentioning that the book by Bleher⁴¹ previously referred to goes into details about the importance of didactic games and gives examples on how to help children count in kindergartens. Presumably, that particular kindergarten teacher did not know this book.

The book set out to be written by the Kindergarten Department of the MPE was in fact published in 1952. It was given the title *Experience on Education in Kindergartens*.⁴² This publication is a collection of articles that summarises the experience of several kindergarten teachers. Activities were devised based on the Soviet experience but tailored to the Hungarian circumstances. As per its introduction, on one hand, the objective of the book was to help the junior kindergarten teachers who had just finished school. On the other hand, it was to start an extensive exchange of working methods. One of the topics brought up in the reports by kindergarten teachers was physical education which they could read about in the article called *Children's Physical Education in Kindergartens*. Another article referred to how to count in kindergartens. No practical experience of didactic games was recorded. Likewise, the relationship between the parents and kindergartens was not covered either. It is, however, an outstanding achievement of the book that although there were several translations of Soviet books available, it was a collection of the findings of Hungarian kindergarten teachers even though they were trying to adapt the Soviet models in their daily work.

The content of the book was probably presented to a broader audience of kindergarten teachers in January 1953 when the journal *Kindergarten Education* published its review.⁴³ The author of the review pointed out that the biggest shortage of the book was that it did not discuss the topic of activities in a group of children of different ages. This time, although the number of children required more groups within one kindergarten, most of them only had one group with children of all ages as building extensions to the existing premises was often not feasible.⁴⁴

The Library of Socialist Education was in fact the means to publish the Soviet source literature. Its further publications also had an effect on the creation of the content regulators analysed within this research.

Methodological Framework

Within the frames of kindergarten policy source dimension, and based on Zsófia Molnár-Kovács's dimension scheme, it is the directives of kindergarten matters and the 'curricula',

⁴⁰ 851-3/1952. Jelentés az óvoda működéséről a Megyei Tanács Oktatási Osztálya óvodai előadójának. Report on the operation of the kindergarten prepared for the kindergarten executive of the Education Department of the County Council. XXIII. 13a, documents of the Cultural Management Department of the Fejér County Council Executive Committee, documents of the Education and Public Education Department/Kindergartens, no. 851–852/25–26. box, 1952, MNL FVL (Hungarian National Archives).

⁴¹ F.N. Bleher: The first scientifically proven kindergarten mathematics program, called Математика в детском саду и нулевой группе, of the Soviet teacher and researcher, specialised in children's mathematics skill development, Bleher (1895–1977) had already been published in the Soviet Union in 1934. НОГИНА, ЕА. Проектная деятельность как средство обучения детей дошкольного возраста счету. [Project Activity as a Means of Teaching Preschool Children Numeracy]. Екатеринбург 2017, s. 11.

⁴² SZABÓ, Ferencné (ed.). Nevelési tapasztalatok az óvodában [Educational Experiences in the Kindergarten]. Szocialista nevelés könyvtára 59. Budapest 1952, s. 153.

⁴³ SZABÓ, Nevelési tapasztalatok az óvodában, s. 19–20.

⁴⁴ see e.g. 851-3/1952. Jelentés az óvoda működéséről (Hungarian National Archives).

i.e. the content regulators of kindergarten education that will be analysed.⁴⁵ The aforementioned dimension scheme divides the written sources into groups based on their types. In other words, it contributes to the successful completion of the research by structuring the sources.

The qualitative, deductive study conducted takes into account the criteria of the history of education. This was carried out using the guidelines of qualitative research methodology⁴⁶ which made it to be cognitive and recognising. However, it is based on the historical approach and source analysis using the descriptive, primary sources. Meanwhile, it adopts a deductive approach, as the research problem was identified using information gathered from secondary literature review. The identification of the differences and similarities between the Hungarian and Czechoslovakian content regulators is carried out using comparative analysis.

Test Sample

The first minister of culture and education of the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic, Zdeněk Nejedlý was responsible for devising the educational curricula for the whole country. He was the one to lay the foundations of the socialist kindergarten.⁴⁷ The most important document of educational and pedagogical work was *Kindergarten Work Programme* (*Pracovný program materskej školy*), issued in 1948. The next important year for content regulation was 1952. That year a very detailed manual (*Mateřská škola – Příručka pro pracovnice v mateřských školách a domovech pro děti od tří do šesti let*) was published in order to further elaborate the previous programme.⁴⁸ At this time, in Hungary, kindergarten educational work was helped by the previously mentioned books of the Library of Socialist Education. However, no unified kindergarten program was prepared.

The legislation following the Soviet example mostly adopted decrees and directives which were easy to overrule. Despite this fact, a standalone law on kindergartens was enacted in Hungary in 1953.⁴⁹ In Czechoslovakia, the school law on school system and teacher formation was passed which also regulated kindergarten matters.⁵⁰ The standalone law on kindergartens could, on one hand, mean that the education of children aged 3 to 6 was considered a priority in Hungary from the perspective of ideological indoctrination. On the other hand though, it questions the kindergartens close integration into the educational system.

⁴⁵ MOLNÁR-KOVÁCS, Zsófia. A magyar tankönyvkutatások forrásdimenziói (1867–1918) [Source Dimensions of the Hungarian Schoolbook Researches (1867 to 1918)]. Pécs 2019, 213. s.

⁴⁶ see e.g. SÁNTHA, Kálmán. Bevezetés a kvalitatív pedagógiai kutatás módszertanába. [Introduction to the Methodology of Qualitative Pedagogical Research]. Budapest 2009, 162. s.; and SZABOLCS, Éva. Kvalitatív kutatási metodológia a pedagógiában. [Qualitative Research Methodology in Pedagogy]. Budapest 2001, 103. s.

⁴⁷ JANČEK, Detská opatrovňa v Prievidzi, s. 19.

⁴⁸ VARGOVÁ, Materská škola, s. 80–81; LIPNICKÁ, Milena. Kapitoly o podmienkach rozvoja materských škôl na Slovensku. [Chapters on the conditions for the development of kindergartens in Slovakia]. Zilina 2016. s. 27–29, 41–43.

⁴⁹ 1953. évi III. törvény a kisdédóvásról. [Act III/1953 on Nursery Schools]. In Magyar Közlöny, 1953, č. 9, s. 73.

⁵⁰ 31. Zákon zo dňa 24. apríla 1953 o školskej sústave a vzdelávaní učiteľov (školský zákon). [Act of April 24, 1953 on the school system and teacher training (school law)] In Sbirka zákonov republiky Československej, 1953.

As the laws were passed, interim content regulators were also created. These were to form the unified approach of kindergartens with the contribution of legislation. The data corpus of the comparative analysis was constructed using these ‘interim’ content regulators and the ones that replaced them (N = 5). The Hungarian documents are accessible in the Martonvásár Kindergarten Museum. The Czechoslovakian kindergarten curricula were originally written in Czech and published in Prague. Their true Slovakian translations can be found in the Slovakian Pedagogical Library (Slovenská pedagogická knižnica). The methodology instruction prepared for the Hungarian kindergartens in Czechoslovakia was the translation of the Slovakian curriculum, and is kept in the library of the Forum Minority Research Institution.

As a result of following the Soviet model, the structure and content of the documents were influenced by the kindergarten teachers’ schoolbook issued in Moscow in 1951. This summarises the theoretical observations of the kindergarten education in the Soviet Union, and was edited by Sorokina. Its Hungarian translation was published as an issue of the Library of Socialist Education in 1953.⁵¹ The book edited by the Soviet author was also published in Czechoslovakia in 1953.⁵² It has to be mentioned though that its review was only ready for the Hungarian kindergarten teachers to read in January 1954 in the journal Kindergarten Education. The reports by the Fejér County kindergarten inspectors show that on a local level, kindergartens only had a few guidebooks. Therefore, presumably, kindergarten teachers saw the Soviet sources when they read about them in the journal.⁵³

Data Analysis

The text corpus of the ‘interim’ curricula was processed using descriptive source analysis with focus on education history. Besides literature, press articles of the ‘fifties’ and unpublished kindergarten supervisory reports stored in the archives were used for the analysis with the latter ones being the official records of how things were implemented on a local level.

The kindergarten content regulators replacing the interim curricula were subject to a content structuring qualitative content analysis. The main and subcategory systems were created using theory-driven (deductive) and data-driven (inductive) approaches. The phases of qualitative content analysis were oriented by the Kuckartz method. (Therefore, the text corpus was looked at, and memos were prepared. Then the categories were defined, the text was read again with the main categories allocated to it. This was followed by the creation of the subcategories by the division of the main ones, and the subcategories were allocated to the text. Then the whole text corpus was coded using the differentiated

⁵¹ The Soviet teacher, candidate of education science, Ms. Sorokina, also published works covering kindergarten education and primary school teaching. SZOROKINA, Aleksandra Ivanovna. *Az óvodai nevelés elmélete*. [Theory of Early Childhood Education]. Szocialista Nevelés Könyvtára 76. Budapest 1953, 383 s.

⁵² SOROKINA, A. I. (MIHÁL, Ján trans.). *Pedagogika predškolského veku: učebná pomôcka pre predškolské pedagogické učilištia*. [Pedagogy of Preschool Age: a Teaching Aid for Preschool Pedagogical Schools]. Bratislava 1953, 330 s.

⁵³ *Jelentés az állandó óvodák/napközi otthonok helyzetéről 1952. július 15-i állapot szerint*. [Report on the status of kindergartens/daycares as at 15 July] 1952 XXIII. 13a, no. 851–852/25–26. box, 1952, MNL FVL (Hungarian National Archives) and issue 202-1/1955. sz. *Óvodai statisztikai felterjesztéshez szöveges jelentés*. 202-1/1955. [Report for Submission to a Higher Authority for Kindergartens for Statistical Purposes] XXIII. 13a, no. 108/25–26. box, 1955, MNL FVL (Hungarian National Archives).

category system (dual intra coding)⁵⁴ for reliability. After that, data were analysed based on the categories, and the results were presented.)⁵⁵ The main categories were shaped based on the chapters of the aforementioned book by Sorokina. The subcategories were then created using the text segments of the examined documents (see Table 2). The Analytics Pro 2022 English language version of the MAXQDA data analysis software was used to assist us in coding the contents.

Analysis and Interpretation of the Results

'Interim Curricula'

The Slovakian interim curricula (*Prechodné učebné osnovy pre materské školy*), translated from the Czech original published in Prague, replaced the kindergarten work programmes of 1948 and 1952.⁵⁶ Its tone was still influenced by ideology and politics. It was built on the Soviet theoretical and practical foundations. It might have served as a theoretical framework of the aforementioned book summarising the theory of Soviet kindergarten education. The structure and content of the mandatory curriculum issued in Czechoslovakia show great resemblance to this book. Its introduction covers the importance of education and highlights that this age is an important phase as far as the children's development is concerned. All these emphasise the significance of kindergarten education. In its background, there is a concept that applies to children below school age. According to this, it is society's duty to bring up these children. This concept was introduced in the countries within the Soviet Union's sphere of interest, and the system of institutions were made available to do so.⁵⁷ The introduction of the curricula describes the objectives and tasks of kindergarten education that meet the expectations of communism. They then come to fruition in the dialectic unity of physical, mental, ethical and aesthetic upbringing. The most elaborated parts are the physical and intelligential education with the latter including the areas of aesthetic education too. As for the ethical education, the Slovakian document emphasises the significance of educating exemplary behaviour influenced by teaching. Beside the general objectives of these areas of education, the principles of socialist upbringing of kindergarteners are also discussed. The ideals of these are very different to the kindergarten education principles and reform pedagogy approaches of the era before World War II. The main role in the educational process is played by the teacher. The unified influence from pedagogues is crucial in order to fulfil the expectations of the leadership of the party state. This was the basis of the cultural manager role of kindergarten teachers, as envoys of the ideas of the party state, who were obliged to take responsibility for the ideological and political education of parents too. This work was carried out through educating children complying with the principles of kindergarten education, in order to raise communist

⁵⁴ DAFINOIOU, Ion – LUNGU, Ovidiu. *Research Methods in the Social Sciences*. Berlin 2003, 406 s.

⁵⁵ KUCKARTZ, Udo. *Qualitative Inhaltsanalyse. Methoden, Praxis, Computerunterstützung*. [Qualitative Content Analysis. Methods, Practices, Computer Assistance]. Weinheim Basel 2012, 273. s.; KUCKARTZ, Udo. *Qualitative Text Analysis: A Systematic Approach*. In KAISER, Gabriele – PRESMEG, Norma (ed.). *Compendium for Early Career Researchers in Mathematics Education*. Hamburg 2019, s. 181-197; and SÁNTHA, Kálmán. *Kvalitatív tartalomelemzés*. [Qualitative Content Analysis]. Budapest 2022, 131 s.

⁵⁶ Anon. *Prechodné učebné osnovy pre materské školy*. [Transitional Curricula for Kindergartens]. Bratislava 1953, 41. s.

⁵⁷ VÁG, Ottó. *Óvoda és óvodapedagógia*. [Kindergarten and Kindergarten Pedagogy]. Budapest 1979, 278. s.

people.⁵⁸ It is also a very important principle of the socialist pedagogy that the education is provided within and by the community.

Before discussing the way and content of work related to education and upbringing, the document emphasises that the principles laid out are mandatory and it covers the expectations held for kindergarten teachers. It highlights the priority of games in kindergarten over making children work and learn. Contrary to this, the most elaborated chapters are those that cover learning. The work of children is only mentioned briefly, associated with education about work as part of education about ethics. The kindergarten teachers of the fifties needed the most guidance on education and activities to comply with the pedagogical function of kindergartens. In terms of games, the curriculum's preferred choice was free activities. These are an excellent way for the teacher to spend time with children individually.

Different mandatory rules for the content of education and teaching are set out for two different age groups. The most detailed areas are physical education and the education of mother tongue. Details and practical pieces of advice are given for artistic education and, within that, drawing, modelling, designing and musical education. One of the main tasks of intelligential education is getting to know the world (both the environment and society) surrounding the children. This was based on forming and introducing dialectical materialism. This might have been the reason why holidays of sacral nature were ignored. However, the instructions on learning about the politics of the day and the personality cult typical of communism were also present beside the general topics (e.g. Gottwald personality cult, the country's friendship with the Soviet Union, public celebrations, e.g. the country's liberation by the Soviet army).

You can also read about one of the primary objectives of kindergartens, health care within the topic of physical education and about how to make sure that the upbringing in the family does not contradict that in the kindergarten. This latter one mostly meant to shape the behaviour and habits of children. However, the main problem with the different types of upbringing was that the introduction of socialism required a completely new system of ideas and values. These contradicted the previous, traditional values of kindergarten teachers, the ones they in fact indented to keep and pass on.⁵⁹ Some chapters cover the relationship with school and the weekly, daily or half-day agenda of kindergartens. In 1953, the year in scope, these topics were regulated in Hungary by the policies laid out in the 1951 document called Kindergarten Rules and Regulations.⁶⁰

At the time of the Slovakian interim curriculum, only one issue of the *Letters on Methodology* document series was published in Hungary. This was called *Kindergarten Activities*.⁶¹ This mainly specified the content of the mandatory activities which were the primary tools for education according to the Soviet model. It also included the activities of ethical, intelligential and aesthetic education. Several points of the introduction of this publication show resemblance to the chapter on the importance of kindergarten activities of Sorokina's aforementioned book. It is no surprise that the journal *Kindergarten*

⁵⁸ HERMANN, Aliz. Az eszmei-politikai nevelés szolgálatában. [In Charge of Ideological and Political Education]. In *Óvodai Nevelés*, 1956, roč. 9, č. 3, s. 100-102.

⁵⁹ KORZENSZKY, Richárd. Kettős nevelés? [Double Education?]. In *Mozgó Világ*, 1983, roč. 9, č. 12, s. 71-78.

⁶⁰ Anon. Rendtartás az óvodák számára. [Kindergarten Rules and Regulations]. Budapest 1951, 47. s.

⁶¹ Anon. Módszertani Levelek - Óvodai foglalkozások. [Methodological Letters - Kindergarten Activities]. Budapest 1953, 35 s.

Education had published a piece on a chapter of one of Sorokina's works, *Kindergarten Pedagogy* before the document imposed on kindergartens was issued. This book was set as a standard for the readers.⁶²

The Hungarian '*interim curricula*' highlights that the mandatory and free activities complement each other, and they are both equally important for the development of children. Similarly to its Slovakian counterpart, it shows the requirements of activity planning for the different areas of education for two different age groups and for one sole group within a kindergarten. The latter version proves the adaptation to the Hungarian circumstances which has been mentioned before. The Soviet example for one sole group might have been the last study of issue 45, called *The Kindergarten*, of the Library of Socialist Education.⁶³ This specifies how a kindergarten teacher has to prepare for this and provides a sample for preparing a draft. It includes a weekly routine and finishes with activity examples. It is not as detailed as the 1953 Slovakian curriculum, however, it is much more of a practical guide. It recommends manuals for physical education and singing lessons. The publication called *Physical Education in Kindergartens* was written by the panel supervised by the Physical Education Theory academic department of the University of Sports Science.⁶⁴ It was the professional journal of kindergarten teachers that served as a forum for working kindergarten teachers to share their opinion on the book and ask the panel questions.⁶⁵ The manual called *Kindergarten Singing Lessons: Methodology and Songs* was published as an issue of the Library of Socialist Education.⁶⁶ The music methodology schoolbook used in the kindergarten pedagogue secondary schools was also based on this publication.⁶⁷

The contents related to personality cult were also present in Hungary due to following the Soviet model. This was mentioned as a requirement within the ethical education for both age groups. The phenomenon called 'political religion' might have been behind this. Politics forced secularisation on the society in the fifties.⁶⁸ The environment in the era was secularised. However, given the traditions, Hungarian society needed something to act as a substitute for religion. This gap was filled by political religion which directly resulted in the phenomenon of personality cult. Politics was made sacral in the totalitarian one-party state. This can be interpreted as transforming religious life rather than putting an end to it.⁶⁹ The essential of previous holidays based on religious faith was given a 'scientific'

⁶² SZOROKINA, Aleksandra Ivanovna. Az óvodai foglalkozások. [The Kindergarten Activities]. In Óvoda Nevelés, 1953, roč. 6, č. 2, s. 44-47.

⁶³ USZOVA, Aleksandra Platonovna (ed.). Az óvoda. [The Kindergarten]. Budapest 1952, 180 s.

⁶⁴ CSEKE, Dénes. Testnevelés az óvodában. [Physical Education in Kindergartens]. Budapest 1952, 222 s.

⁶⁵ Anon. Válasz a 'Testnevelés az óvodában' c. könyv néhány észrevételére. [Response to Some Comments on the Book 'Physical Education in Kindergartens']. In Óvodai Nevelés, 1953, roč. 6, č. 2, s. 38-39.

⁶⁶ BARÁTH, Istvánné et al. Óvodai énektanítás: módszer és dalok. [Teaching Singing in Kindergartens: Method and Songs]. Budapest 1951, 143 s.

⁶⁷ BARÁTH, Istvánné et al. Óvodai énektanítás: módszer és dalok óvónőképzők részére. [Teaching Singing in Kindergartens: Method and Songs for Kindergarten Teacher Schools]. Budapest 1951, 143 s.

⁶⁸ NAGY, Péter Tibor. Járszalag és aréna. Egyház és állam az oktatáspolitikai erőterében a 19. és 20. századi Magyarországon. [Walking Aid and Arena. Church and State in the Field of Educational Politics in Hungary in the 19th and 20th Century]. Budapest 2000, s. 117, 123.

⁶⁹ on political religion see also e.g. BASKA, Gabriella. Rituális elemek a Rákosi-korszak pedagógiai sajtójának propaganda szövegeiben. [Ritual Elements in the Propaganda Texts of the Pedagogical Press of the Rákosi Era]. In BASKA, Gabriella – HEGEDŰS, Judit (ed.). Égi iskolák, földi műhelyek. Tanulmányok a 65 éves Németh András tiszteletére [Celestial Schools, Earthly Workshops: Studies in Honour of the 65-year-old András Németh]. Budapest 2015, s. 344-358; NÉMETH, András – BIRÓ, Zsuzsanna Hanna. A magyar

approach, e.g. Santa Claus was replaced by Father Winter whom the start of winter was remembered with⁷⁰. Christmas was changed to Pine Festivity.⁷¹ The beliefs these festivities were based on could not comply with the materialist and atheist ideology. This might explain why the document in scope did not refer to the aforementioned holidays at all.

A 1953 issue of the journal *Óvodai nevelés* (Kindergarten Education) writes about the analysed methodology letter on kindergarten work in one sole group. The objective of this article was to promote the document among kindergarten teachers in Hungary. This publication is a part of a guide created for kindergarten teacher schools. It was also referred to when discussing preparing drafts. The author praised the letter on methodology as it helped kindergarten teachers in planning and preparing for activities. However, they also pointed out that there were still many problems about working plans, schedules and draft preparations.⁷² The question of draft preparation, which had not been practiced before, or at least not the way it was expected in the 'fifties', generated a real series of debates. This was published in the 1954 issues of the journal. The summary of the debate was written by editor in chief Ilona Szabadi.⁷³

Therefore it is not unexpected that following the publication of the letter on methodology, kindergarten supervisors started to focus on the quality of planning and education in kindergartens. As per a report written in 1955, the level of kindergarten education and that of preparation for school was of high standard. That was the proof of the strengthening of the kindergartens' pedagogical function, as regulated by law, or at least it was meant to be.⁷⁴

Another source was published around the time when the contents of the methodology letter were implemented. This book edited by Usova was a Soviet publication on kindergarten education. Its Hungarian translation was also published by the Library of Socialist Education.⁷⁵ However, this was only applied in the Hungarian kindergartens later, as it is proven by a report in the working plan of a district kindergarten supervising teacher in

neveléstudomány diszciplína jellemzőinek és kognitív tartalmainak változásai a 20. század második felében. [Changes in the Characteristics and Cognitive Content of the Hungarian Educational Discipline in the Second Half of the 20th Century]. In NÉMETH, András et al. *Neveléstudomány és pedagógiai kommunikáció a szocializmus időszakában - Neveléstudomány-történeti tanulmányok*. [Educational Science and Pedagogical Communication in the Socialist Era - Historical Studies of Educational Science]. Budapest 2016, s. 7-118; SOMOGYVÁRI, Lajos et al. *Új elméleti keretek a szocialista neveléstudomány vizsgálatára. A politikai vallás*. [New Theoretical Frameworks for the Investigation of Socialist Educational Science: Political Religion]. In *Magyar Pedagógia*, 2021, roč.121, č. 1, s. 85-97; and GONTIER, Thierry. From 'Political Theology' to 'Political Religion': Eric Voegelin and Carl Schmitt. In *The Review of Politics*, 2013, roč. 75, č. 1, s. 25-43.

⁷⁰ Anon. Hogyan várjuk Télapót? [How to Prepare for Father Winter's Arrival?] In *Óvodai Nevelés*, 1953, roč. 6, č. 11, s. 282.

⁷¹ VARGHA, Ilona. Készülünk a Fenyő-ünnepélyre. [Preparation for Pine Festivity]. In *Óvodai Nevelés*, 1953, roč. 6, č. 12, s. 297-299.

⁷² MIKES, Margit. Munkaterv, ütemterv, vázlatkészítés kérdéseiről. [On the Questions Relating to Working Plans, Schedules and Draft Preparation]. In *Óvodai Nevelés*, 1953, roč. 6, č. 11, 271-273.

⁷³ SZABADI, Ilona. A vázlatírásról szóló vita összefoglalása. [Summary of the Discussion on Draft Preparation]. In *Óvodai Nevelés*, 1955, roč. 8, č. 2, s. 42.

⁷⁴ 202-1/1955. sz. Óvodai statisztikai felterjesztéshez (Hungarian National Archives).

⁷⁵ Usova was the leader of the Kindergarten Education Department of the Pedagogy Theory and History Scientific Research Institute of the Pedagogy Sciences Academy in the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic. She visited Hungary in 1955 during the month of celebrating the friendship between Hungary and the Soviet Union, and delivered a lecture to the kindergarten teachers of Budapest as a guest of the Teachers' Union; SÁNDOR, Ernő. Pedagógus vendégeink. [Teacher Guests]. In *Köznevelés*, 1955, roč. 11,

1956. She set herself the task of studying it as a part of her own upskill.⁷⁶ The translation of this book by Usova was only published in Czechoslovakia following the issuing of the curriculum of 1955, therefore, it could not be used to assist with the interim curricula.⁷⁷

The two 'interim curricula' analysed were important milestones in the process of creating the content regulators for kindergartens. They were almost leading the way to the guides published later, analysed in the next subchapter.

Kindergarten Content Regulators – 'Kindergarten Curricula'

The kindergarten content regulators were established in both countries as a result of a multiple-stage process some moments of which will be shown.

The only existing rescript⁷⁸ of the *Letters on Methodology*, the objective of which was to create the unified perspective of kindergartens together with the 1953 Nursery School Act, was analysed in one of Sándor Pálfi's studies. The subtitle *Kindergarten Activities* clearly advised the reader that the document only regulated the area of kindergarten lessons, not the whole kindergarten education. The lessons were considered the most important tool of kindergarten education that also had an influence on other topics on kindergartens.⁷⁹

It is no surprise that the Kindergarten Department of the Ministry of Education (further referred to as ME) reported on the preparational works of a guide for kindergarten teachers in *Kindergarten Education* in May 1954. As per the report, the ministry started working on the manual on kindergarten education and, within that, on the kindergarten activity plans following the adoption of the act on kindergartens. Issuing the letter on methodology was considered the first step in this direction. In the meantime, best practices were collected, and, using the aforementioned Soviet documents, an experiment plan was also prepared. The kindergarten curriculum specified by the Central Leadership was applied in certain kindergartens on a pilot basis, and the observations were recorded too. Its finalised version was meant to be a chapter of the future manual. The draft version of the manual and the kindergarten curriculum were, in fact, discussed within the ME in May 1954.⁸⁰ Gyula Kiss, deputy minister of education, admitted in a speech in 1955 that the letter on methodology was written in a hurry and therefore has imperfections. This is why, influenced by the Soviet model, the work a manual on the whole of kindergarten education started.⁸¹ The deputy minister invited the kindergarten supervisors to a staff meeting at the beginning of the school year in September 1956. The leader of the committee editing the Manual advised the attendees on this occasion that that was going to be the last year with the *Letter on Methodology* being in effect. They also confirmed that the guide

č. 6, s. 128; USZOVA, Aleksandra Platonovna (ed.). *Az óvodai oktatás kérdései*. [Questions of Early Childhood Education]. Szocialista Nevelés Könyvtára 89. Budapest 1954, 258 s.

⁷⁶ 202-1/1955. sz. Óvodai statisztikai felterjesztéshez (Hungarian National Archives).

⁷⁷ USOVOVÁ, A. P. (ČAPOVÁ, Helena trans.). *Vyučování v mateřské škole: Sborník statí*. [Teaching in kindergarten: Collection of articles]. Praha 1957, 243 s.

⁷⁸ PÁLFI, A magyar óvoda tanulásszemléletének sajátosságai, s. 140-144.

⁷⁹ Ibid. s. 142.

⁸⁰ Anon. *Az óvónők kézikönyvének előkészítő munkálatairól*. [About the Preparatory Work for the Kindergarten Pedagogues' Handbook]. In *Óvodai Nevelés*, 1954, roč. 7, č. 5, s. 155-156.

⁸¹ KISS, Gyula. *Az óvodák helyzetéről és feladatairól*. [On the Status and Tasks of Kindergartens]. In *Óvodai Nevelés*, 1955, roč. 8, č. 3, s. 84-124.

would be published in time for the next school year. A year later, *Kindergarten Education* issued several articles on the guide.⁸²

As per the guide written for kindergarten teachers, called manual, controlling the work in kindergartens was the responsibility of the district supervisors. One supervisory report highlighted that the manual was of assistance when defining the educational activities complying with the kindergartens' daily agenda. However, it also critically pointed out that, in some kindergartens, imperfections were discovered related to the preparation of drafts for tales, poems or physical education specified by the guide.⁸³

This means that the first attempt at comprehensive content regulation for the whole of kindergarten education in Hungary was made in 1957. This attempt was called the *Educational Work in Kindergartens Guide for Kindergarten Pedagogues*,⁸⁴ and it was an official instruction from the minister of cultural affairs to adhere to in all kindergartens in the country.⁸⁵ Its structure was similar to that of school curricula. It specified the 'schoolwork' to cover during kindergarten activities, and the content and structure of activities for different age groups or 'classes'.⁸⁶ Of the different curricula, instructional ones were typical for the 'fifties'. These were documents based on ideology and ideas with content regulated centrally and strictly, and with detailed objectives and schoolwork.⁸⁷

In Czechoslovakia, the interim curriculum accepted in 1953 regulated almost all areas of kindergarten education but it needed complementation. Therefore, the new kindergarten curriculum (*Učebné osnovy pre materské školy*) was completed with chapters on planning and methodology, and was published in 1955 as a legal document.⁸⁸ This was later complemented by other guides, such as *The Methodology of Musical Education in Kindergartens* (*Metodika hudební výchovy v mateřské škole*). Its original was published in Moscow in 1953.⁸⁹ This is another proof of the Soviet pedagogical literature being accepted as a standard. The curriculum does not cover the relationship between families

⁸² SZABADI, Ilona. A kézikönyv megjelenésére. [For the Publication of the Handbook]. In Óvodai Nevelés, 1957, roč. 10, č. 10, s. 228-231.

⁸³ Évvégi jelentés a sztálinvárosi járás óvodáinak helyzetéről az 1957/58-as tanévben. [Year End Report on the Status of Kindergartens of the Sztálinváros District in the 1957/1958 Academic Year]. XXIII. 13a, documents of the Cultural Management Department of the Fejér County Council Executive Committee, documents of the Education and Public Education Department/ Kindergarten Matters, no. 108/25-26. box, 1957-58, MNL-FVL (Hungarian National Archives).

⁸⁴ FÖLDES, Klára. Nevelőmunka az óvodában. Útmutatás óvónők számára. [Educational Work in Kindergartens. Instructions for kindergarten pedagogues]. Budapest 1957, 258 s.

⁸⁵ PODRÁČZKY, Judit et al. "A magyarországi és szlovákiai óvodai nevelési program összehasonlító elemzése," [Comparative Analysis of Kindergarten Education Programmes in Hungary and Slovakia], In Danubius Noster, 2022, roč. 10, č. 4, s. 108.

⁸⁶ PODRÁČZKY, Judit. Az óvodai nevelés törvényi szabályozása a 19-20. században: Az óvodai nevelés számára megfogalmazott célok és feladatok alakulása Magyarországon. [Legal Regulation of Kindergarten Education in the 19th and 20th Centuries: the Development of the Aims and Tasks of Kindergarten Education in Hungary]. In KISS, Vendel (ed.). *Az oktatási rendszer jogi szabályozása Magyarországon a 19-20. században: országos törvényektől a helyi szabályozásig* [Legal Regulation of the Educational System in Hungary in the 19th and 20th Centuries: from National Laws to Local Regulations]. Tatabánya 2003, s. 73.

⁸⁷ PERJÉS, István - VASS, Vilmos. A curriculumelmélet műfaji fejlődése. [The Genre Development of Curriculum Theory]. In Új Pedagógiai Szemle, 2008, roč. 58, č. 3, s. 5.

⁸⁸ LOVÁSKO, Ferdinand (ed.). *Učebné osnovy pre materské školy* [Curriculum for Kindergartens]. Bratislava 1955, 109 s.

⁸⁹ VETLUGINOVÁ, N. V. *Metodika hudební výchovy v mateřské škole: Metodický sborník*. [Methodology of Music Education in Kindergarten: Methodological Compendium]. Praha 1955, 220 s.

and kindergartens, however, as a complementation, the book by Papkovská, *Cooperation between Kindergartens and Parents*⁹⁰ (*O spolupráci mateřské školy s rodiči*) was translated.

The Czechoslovakian Ministry of Education asked for feedback from teachers and the school governing bodies on how the content of the document could be put into practice. The kindergartens were still considered as the first stage of upbringing socialist people. Most Czech and Slovakian experts researching the history of kindergartens agree that the 1955 curriculum needed further amendments and complementation which were included in the manual published in 1960. The source of this was admittedly the Soviet pedagogy. As it was done during the creation of its Hungarian counterpart, the forming content of the Czechoslovakian document was tested in some of the kindergartens, and the feedback of kindergarten teachers was asked for.⁹¹

The MAXMaps feature of the software MAXQDA allows for the researchers to visualise the document data coded during the study and that of the connection between one or more codes. The visualisation can help connecting the manifest content to latent elements.

This study only allows for the highlighting of some of the segments.

The 'curricula' of the two countries considered to be the spatial dimension of the research show resemblance in several aspects. However, their volume, structure and main content differ. The chart (Figure 1.) also shows that the text segments of the Hungarian content regulator resulted in a higher proportion of coding. One reason for this is that the Hungarian document is significantly longer than its Czechoslovakian counterpart.

The basis of the Soviet pedagogy (that of Makarenko) was the pedagogical optimism of total educability, hence the same was true for the kindergarten education based on it. Its grounding was legitimised by materialist psychic theses. It was emphasised that the successful development of the socialist society also depended on shaping the personality of children. Therefore, the pedagogue, who is a key person in the 'all-powerful' upbringing and education based on the results of psychology, has to know the children.⁹² This was preceded by the psychics based on the belief in children's self-development being discredited in the Stalin era. It was no longer considered a main discipline, and parts of it were integrated into pedagogy. The only type of psychology accepted was the one based on Lenin's epistemology. Its objective was the professional support of pedagogy following socialist trends and that filled by socialist content.⁹³ The psychic studies corresponding to this perspective were part of the pedagogy discipline in the kindergarten teacher schools of the

⁹⁰ PAPS KOVSKÁ, J. I. (ODVÁRKOVÁ, Miloslava trans.) *O spolupráci mateřské školy s rodiči*. [On the Cooperation of Kindergartens with Parents]. Praha 1956, 123 s.

⁹¹ KLIMKOVÁ, Klára. *Výchovné vzdělávací programy českých mateřských škol v době totality a po roce 1989*. [Czech Educational Programs of Kindergartens in the Totalitarian Era, and after that 1989]. Brno 2010, s. 22-23; MAJZLANOVÁ, Katarína – PAJDLHAUSEROVÁ, Elena. *Tvorivá dramatika v materskej škole*. [Creative Dramatics in Kindergartens]. Bratislava 2014, s. 65; and PODHÁJECKÁ, Mária – DOBIASOVÁ, Miroslava. *Hra v kurikule materskej školy*. [Play in the Kindergarten Curriculum]. In KANCÍR, Ján – ZELOVÁ, Veronika (ed.). *Príprava učiteľov v procese školských reforiem* [Teacher Training in the Process of School Reforms]. Prešov 2009, s. 139-140.

⁹² SÁSKA, Géza. *A pedagógia és a pszichológia a sztálini korban: A Makarenko-jelenség*. [Pedagogy and Psychology in the Stalinist Era: The Makarenko Phenomenon]. In *Iskolakultúra*, 2021, roč. 31, č. 5, 16.

⁹³ DARVAI, Tibor. *A nevelésléktan a korai Kádár-korszakban*. [Education policy and educational psychology in the early/classical Kadar-Era]. In *Educatio*, 2020, roč. 29, č. 4, s. 582-585; and SÁSKA, Igény az igazság monopóliumára, s. 13.

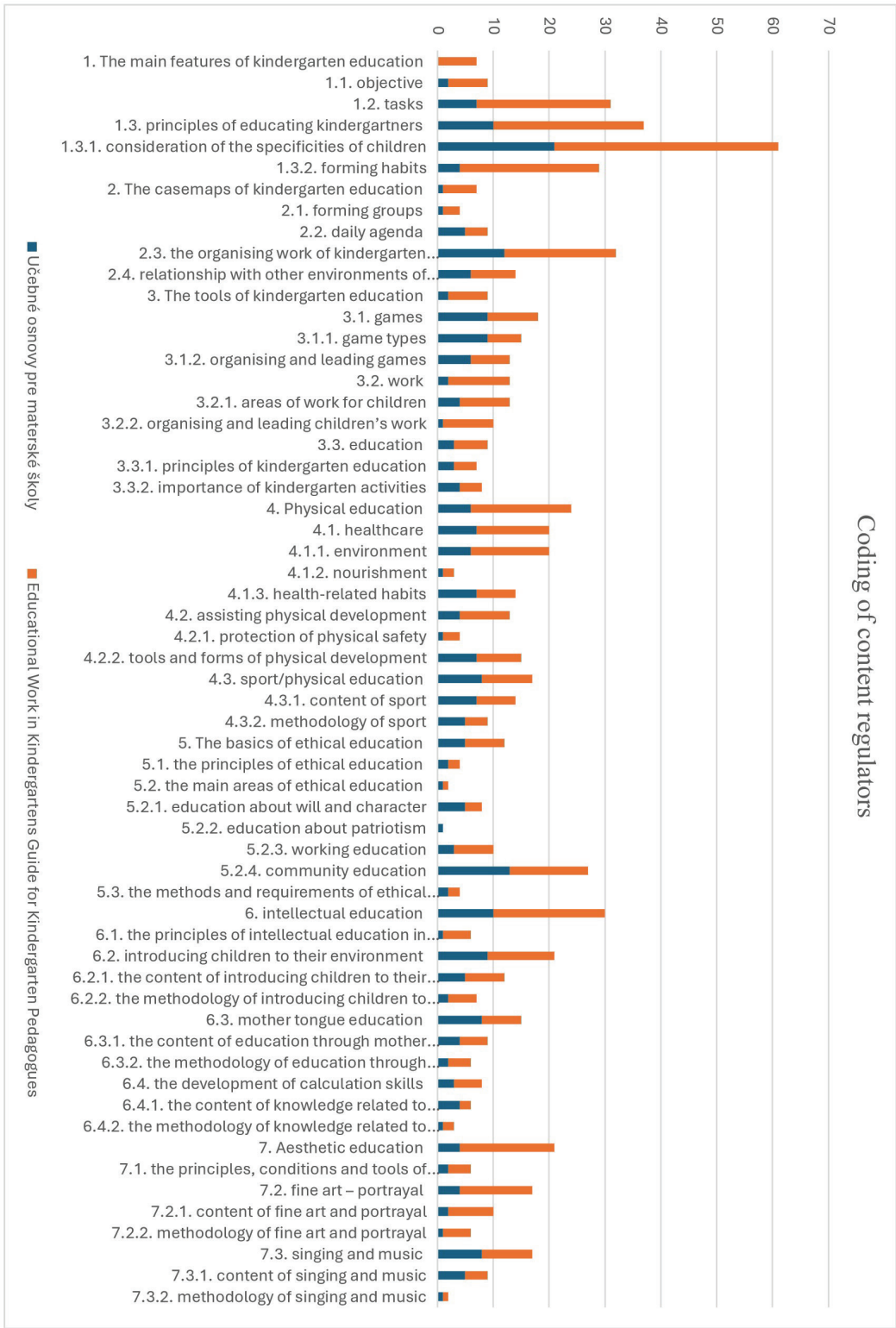


Figure 1. Coding of content regulators
Compiled by the author based on the coding data.

day.⁹⁴ However, it was at the last stage of creating the Hungarian manual that pedagogy was freed from Stalinist views, hence it was decided that it was to focus on children.⁹⁵

It is therefore no surprise that most of the coding was done focusing on the specificities of children in both documents. The organisation of activities and choice of method corresponding to the age-related specificities of kindergartners are guidelines for all areas of education. The different, unique specificities of children are mentioned several times, and they can be modified according to the expectations. This also confirms that in the second half of the 1950s, it was unity created from diversity that prevailed instead of unification.

The content scoping was prepared as methodological instructions based on and emphasising the principles of the socialist kindergarten education, and assigning tasks to the fulfilment. The coding also shows the importance of the organising work of nursery teachers in order to successfully complete the tasks of kindergarten education. This was particularly important in an era when the majority of kindergartens operated in buildings unfit for the purpose, the quantity of toys was insufficient, and the number of children was too high for the rooms and space available.

Not only is it the structure and the approach of the documents that shows that the pedagogical function, i.e. the preparation for school, of kindergartens became more significant,⁹⁶ but also the fact that among the major areas of education, it was the intellectual education that was given the heaviest emphasis. However, it was still not lessons but games that were considered the best way to achieve it. This somewhat doubts whether kindergarten education was lesson-centred.

However, the healthcare related to physical education, which was one of the main reasons why kindergartens were established at the beginning, was still prevalent. The topic of nourishment is only touched upon by the manuals in relation to physical education and healthcare. In the era in scope, kindergartens with daycare providing food were still new. Those few kindergartens that did provide food were not able to do so by focusing on the principles of 'healthy eating' as their possibilities were limited.⁹⁷

The importance and the level of details of musical education within aesthetic education was the same for both countries.

There is a significant number of codings related to forming habits in the Hungarian document. This was essential for the integration into institutional upbringing and communities. The institutional upbringing still plays a major role in socialisation and education about community as children are educated within and by the communities. This was given utmost importance in the era in question in order to achieve the acceptance of the socialist social structure.

The education about patriotism, as a part of ethical education, was an official requirement of the Czechoslovakian curriculum. This was only there in the Hungarian instruction once in a latent way in the form of learning patriotic poems. While there was a whole chapter in the Slovakian document covering the ethical education, this was not this essential in the Hungarian instruction where it was included linked to other contents. However,

⁹⁴ KARDOS, Lajos – RÉZ, Vera. *Neveléstan és lélektan az óvónőképzők számára I.* [Pedagogy and Psychology for Kindergarten Teacher Schools]. Budapest 1954, 149 s.

⁹⁵ see more: DARVAI, Oktatáspolitikai a korai Kádár-korszakban and DARVAI, A neveléslélektan a korai Kádár-korszakban, s. 584.

⁹⁶ PODRÁČKY et al., A magyarországi és szlovákiai óvodai nevelési program, s. 109.

⁹⁷ 851-3/1952. Jelentés az óvoda működéséről (Hungarian National Archives).

the education about work was an important part of the socialist ethical education. Work and pedagogy are two areas both dependent on each other. This was especially the case in the socialist era.⁹⁸ In Hungary, the expectations about work-related kindergarten activities were elaborated. This was, however, almost completely missing from the Slovakian curriculum.

The relationship with other environments, e.g. nursery, school, family, was more detailed in the Hungarian document. The reason for this was to promote the children's unified upbringing avoiding the aforementioned 'double upbringing'. The schoolbooks of kindergarten teacher schools also emphasised the unambiguous social influences that had a powerful effect on the development of children.⁹⁹

Conclusion

The researched period was far from politically homogeneous, characterized by rapidly changing political systems and educational policy cycles.¹⁰⁰ In the era in scope, pedagogy was greatly dependent on the political power. The forced educational reform also affected kindergartens, essentially taking place as part of the school reform initiated by the Soviet Union, adapting its concept. One of the (theoretical) frameworks for the growing demand for kindergartens, and the parallel expansion of the kindergarten network, was provided by efforts towards women's emancipation, influenced by communist ideology, and the regulations supporting these efforts, cloaked in the guise of ensuring constitutional rights. Therefore, copying the Soviet model became a manifest expectation in kindergarten education too. In the ambitious program of communist education, the principles of scientific foundation and the development of a materialist worldview were intended to be enforced, functioning as a form of cultural colonization.¹⁰¹ This was valid for the structure of the education system and the work of teachers of the system of institutions in both Hungary and Czechoslovakia. However, there were slight differences in following the method according to the changes in politics.¹⁰² The laws of 1953 regulating kindergarten education suggested that the institution of kindergartens was considered more the part of the school system in Czechoslovakia than in Hungary. The Czechoslovakian content regulator was published as a curriculum. This was even shown by its title. The translation created for the Hungarian kindergartens refers to the pedagogues both as kindergarten teachers and as schoolteachers. The kindergarten classrooms are referred to as school classrooms on several occasions.

The educational policy of both countries was heavily influenced by the events in the Soviet Union in the 'fifties' as that was where the governing principles of the states of the Eastern bloc were devised. The present research did not embark on carrying out a complete critical analysis also including the political background which would require to

⁹⁸ see more: e.g. SOMOGYVÁRI, Lajos. Munkára nevelés a szocialista pedagógiában: az orosz-szovjet előtörténet (1917–1958). [Education for Work in Socialist Pedagogy: the Russian-Soviet Prehistory (1917 to 1958)]. In *Iskolakultúra*, 2016, roč. 26, č. 1, s. 82-92.

⁹⁹ KARDOS – RÉZ, Neveléstan és lélektan, s. 25.

¹⁰⁰ DARVAI, Tibor. A magyar neveléstudomány 1945 és 1965 között Kelemen László visszaemlékezése alapján. [Hungarian education science between 1945 and 1965 based on the memoirs of László Kelemen]. *Iskolakultúra*, 2024, roč. 34, č. 2-3, s. 104.

¹⁰¹ KARÁDY, Viktor. The social sciences in Hungary during the Cold War and after. In *Serendipities*, 2020, roč. 5, č. 1-2, s. 19-28.

¹⁰² GOLNHOFER – SZABOLCS. A hagyományok megszakítása, átértelmezése, s. 26.

find further sources, both national and international. Of course, kindergarten education cannot be understood without taking into consideration its social, economic, sociological and political environment.¹⁰³ Researching the topic can be challenging as in Hungary, kindergartens are considered to be of 'low value'. This means that the archives do not have to work with their documents.¹⁰⁴ This is what makes interdisciplinarity, i.e. using the results of political science, social history or sociology essential.

The present research focused on one of the segments of kindergarten history, the translation of Soviet literature used as a standard for the work of kindergarten teachers and its role in the creation of kindergarten content regulators. Despite the existence of the Soviet standard, trial and error were part of the process as there was no integrated regulating document in the macroregion before the 'fifties'. However, having compared the 'curricula', it is clear that the content and methods of kindergarten education laid out in the documents of the two countries in scope do reflect the local specificities. This might be the result of kindergarten politics allowing the members of the process some leeway in interpreting the Soviet model in a unique way.

The Czechoslovakian curriculum was published earlier than the Hungarian one. This might explain why the language of socialist propaganda was more prevalent in it. It is no coincidence that the knowledge of public life, e.g. the friendship with the Soviet Union or knowing the country's leaders, was a part of the 'schoolwork' even for children in kindergarten. In the Hungarian manual published in 1957, it was only the introduction that included similar socialist commonplaces. The hidden references to the 'political religion' were not there as manifest expectations in the details of input for activities.

Presumably, the examination of the documents of the other countries of the socialist bloc, e.g. Romania, and, if you were to go a bit further, Bulgaria or the German Democratic Republic, would also show the existence of unique characteristics beside the generally dominant, Soviet-socialist educational principles. A future opportunity for the comparative analysis is to broaden the spatial dimension, hence including more data corpora into the research. Additionally, it could serve as a starting point for examining the impact of the socialist school reform process and the analyzed content regulations on kindergarten education in the 1960s and later periods.

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¹⁰³ KÉRI, Katalin. *Lánynevelés és női művelődés az újkori Magyarországon*. [Girls' Education and Female Culture in Modern Hungary]. Pécs 2018, s. 20.

¹⁰⁴ see more KOLTAI, Gábor. A fővárosi oktatási-nevelési szervek maradandó értékű iratainak feltárása és gyűjtése I. [The exploration and collection of the permanent records of the capital's educational institutions I.]. In *Levéltári szemle*, 2020, roč. 70, č. 4, s. 33-36.

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Main categories	Categories	Sub-categories
1. The main features of kindergarten education (this includes those passages and statements that determine the content and quality of the work in the kindergarten)	1.1. objective (reference to this)	
	1.2. tasks (an indication of the actions to support the achievement of the objective)	
	1.3. principles of educating kindergartners (in accordance with the current expectations of the fifties)	1.3.1. consideration of the specificities of children 1.3.2. forming habits
2. The casemaps of kindergarten education (this includes passages and statements relating to the framework of everyday educational work in kindergartens)	2.1. forming groups (according to the specific conditions)	
	2.2. daily agenda (prescribed framework)	
	2.3. the organising work of kindergarten pedagogues (in order to create the conditions)	
	2.4. relationship with other environments of education (creche, family, school)	
3. The tools of kindergarten education (this includes passages and statements referring to activity forms in kindergarten)	3.1. games (as the main activity of a kindergarten child)	3.1.1. game types 3.1.2. organising and leading games
	3.2. work (as a tool of socialisation)	3.2.1. areas of work for children 3.2.2. organising and leading children's work
	3.3. education (the educational function of the kindergarten)	3.3.1. principles of kindergarten education 3.3.2. importance of kindergarten activities

4. Physical education (this includes all passages and statements that are related to the healthy development of the child and the satisfaction of her or his physical needs)	4.1. healthcare (as a basic function of kindergarten)	4.1.1. environment 4.1.2. nourishment 4.1.3. health-related habits
	4.2. assisting physical development (reference to this)	4.2.1. protection of physical safety 4.2.2. tools and forms of physical development
	4.3. sport/physical education (the organisational framework of the movement)	4.3.1. content of sport 4.3.2. methodology of sport
5. The basics of ethical education (this includes passages and statements relating to the behavior required for integration into society and the establishment of a system of customs and rules)	5.1. the principles of ethical education (reference to this)	
	5.2. the main areas of ethical education (in accordance with the current expectations of the fifties)	5.2.1. educating civilised behaviour/education about will and character 5.2.2. education about patriotism 5.2.3. working education 5.2.4. community education
	5.3. the methods and requirements of ethical education (for the foundations of socialist ethics)	

6. intellectual education (this includes passages and statements referring to literacy content, the development of intellectual abilities and the development of the world view expected in society)	6.1. the principles of intellectual education in kindergartens (reference to this)	
	6.2. introducing children to their environment (outlining the expected literacy content)	6.2.1. the content of introducing children to their environment 6.2.2. the methodology of introducing children to their environment
	6.3. mother tongue education (reference to the importance of mother tongue education)	6.3.1. the content of education through mother tongue 6.3.2. the methodology of education through mother tongue
	6.4. the development of calculation skills (as an intellectual ability)	6.4.1. the content of knowledge related to quantity, space and forms 6.4.2. the methodology of knowledge related to quantity, space and forms
7. Aesthetic education (this includes passages and statements related to the child's aesthetic activity and the development of his or her creative skills)	7.1. the principles, conditions and tools of aesthetic education (for the kindergarten age group)	
	7.2. fine art – portrayal (as for the development of creativity)	7.2.1. content of fine art and portrayal 7.2.2. methodology of fine art and portrayal
	7.3. singing and music (as an area of aesthetic activity)	7.3.1. content of singing and music 7.3.2. methodology of singing and music

Table 2. Category system (compiled by the author).