

The demographic determinants of becoming a lone mother after separation in Hungary

Judit Monostori

Hungarian Demographic Research Institute

1. Introduction

According to the Census 2011 in Hungary 22 per cent of the families with children aged 17 or under are single parent families and the rate has only slightly increased during the last two decades. However we have more and more empirical evidence on the increasing instability of partnerships, the growing number of repartnering and on the de-standardisation of life cycles, the increasing pace of the changes in the family arrangements. Snapshot surveys do not refer to these dynamic movements on micro level, because these surveys give an insights into the people's life at a particular point in time. The prevalence of the various family arrangements of the life cycle, the routes into and out of the different status, the causes and the consequences of that remain hidden.

In the Eastern European countries the main driving forces of these processes were the changing structure of the economy, the growing inequalities, the appearance and spread of unemployment, the very high level of inactivity. Young people were particularly concerned in the expansion of tertiary education, the growing career opportunities and on the other hand the broadening insecurity on the labour market which requires much more flexibility than before. In Hungary young parents were also widely affected in the transformation of social services, especially in the changes of childcare institutions. The spaces in the state-run childcare institution have decreased dramatically, in line with this private institutions have appeared and became to spread. Thanks to the decreasing state engagement and other processes relating to the market, the cost of child-rearing have increased. Due to the inflexible labour market and shortage of part time work the reconciliation of work and family life is becoming especially a problematic issue. These pro-

cesses obviously have an effect on family life, the partnership forms, the stability of partnership and in consequence on the family arrangements.

The demographic changes are also in straight connection with the changing family arrangements. The fertility rate is amongst the lowest in Europe, the marriage rate is decreasing, the proportion of cohabitation among the partnership and the extramarital births are constantly increasing. According to the previous studies these processes also connect with the stability of partnership and emergence of lone parenthood.

In line with this processes the values and attitudes, the acceptance of different family arrangements have also changed, though the Hungarian society is traditional in several ways. The child rearing and family life are highly valued by Hungarian people. According to the cross-country comparison in the European region the gap between the real demographic behaviour and attitudes is the broadest. (Pongrácz M., 2012)

Our paper deals with the changes in the family arrangements among women who raise their child(ren). The questions of the study are regarded from the point of view of mothers. We focus on the trajectories into the lone parenthood and we try to identify the demographic factors which contribute to becoming a single parent family. We basically concentrate the termination of partnership since that is the main route into the lone parenthood. (Monostori J., 2013) On the other hand we know that a small part of the lone mothers begins to raise their child without partner from the child's birth. (Földházi E. – Murinkó L., 2009; Harcsa I. – Monostori J., 2014) As we mentioned above we focus on the demographic determinants of lone parenthood from a life course perspective and we do not deal with the proximate, the psychological factors and economic determinants that can lead to the dissolution of partnership as well.

We can assume that besides the demographic factors several other sociological consideration take effect on becoming lone parent. Parental house, educational attainment, labour force activity, the characteristics of partner are seem to be important, but we have no reliable longitudinal information about these factors, that is why we do not concern with these determinants in detail.

Using the whole partnership and childbirth trajectories we estimate the likelihood of becoming a lone parent, the duration of episodes of living as a lone parent, the time of the partnership disruption during a particular period of the lifetime. We investigate whether parental cohabitation is more likely

than parental marriage to dissolve before the end of childrearing period. We examine the frailty of the parents' partnership among the different birth cohorts and families with different demographic background.

In the first place we provide an overview of the relevant facts about single parent families from cross sectional and longitudinal perspectives, and thereafter we review the theoretical issues and the results of the related line of research. After this we describe the risk of becoming a lone parent during a particular time period. Achieving a better understanding of the causal mechanism, we investigate the demographic determinants of becoming a lone parent.

2. Facts about lone parent families from cross sectional and longitudinal perspective

In the cross-national studies Hungary is at the middle of the European scale taking notice of proportion of lone-parent families among the families with children. Looking at the Eastern European countries a very high degree of heterogeneity was measured. In Slovakia, Poland and Slovenia the rates of lone parent families were among the lowest in Europe, while in the Baltic countries the proportion of lone parents were very high. Hungary and Czech Republic were at the middle of the scale with moderate value of indicator. (Iacovou, M. –Skew A., 2010)

According to the Census 2011 the proportion of lone parent families (LPF) is 21 per cent among the families with children aged 15 and below, and 22 per cent among the families with children aged 17 and below.¹ In Hungary contrary to what is often believed the rate of LPF-s has not increased significantly after the transition, in the last two-three decades. On the other hand in the long run an increasing ratio can be observed. (*Figure 1*)

The overwhelming majority of LPFs – 91 per cent in 2011 – are headed by a female parent. In the majority – 2/3 – of LPFs' child(ren) live only with their

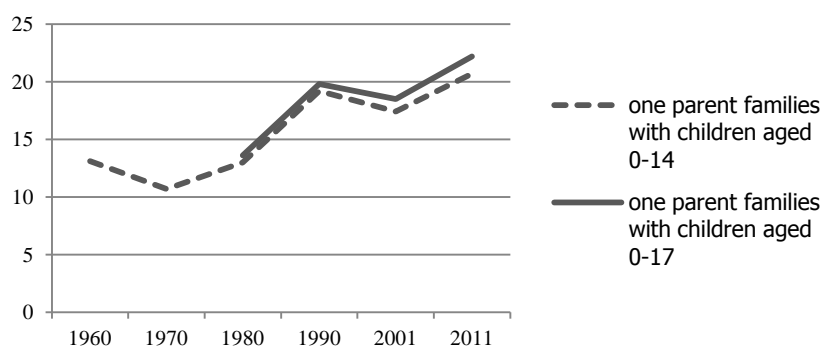
¹ In this section we follow the methods and definitions of Censuses. According to these those families were regarded one parent families where the children live with only one parent, irrespectively whether the parent is biological parent or not. The families where other relatives (for instance a grandmother) live with the child(ren) and his/her mother or father are also regarded one parent families.

parent, without relatives nor non-relatives. (Census 2011, the author's calculation)

LPF-s are characterized by numerous social disadvantages, which is due to the family structure and the lower social status of affected parents. They have weaker positions on the labour market and the proportion of mothers' with lower educational attainment is higher.

In 2011 the proportion of families without employed is 10 per cent among the two parents families and 26 in the group of one parent families. The value of indicator is particularly high (39 per cent) among the lone parent families with at least two children, where all of the children are under aged 19. (Census 2011, the author's calculation)

Figure 1
Proportion of lone parent families in families with children aged 0-14 and 0-17, Hungary



Data sources: Censuses, The author's calculation

In the two parents families 21 per cent of mothers have only educational attainment ISCED 1, while 33 per cent among the mothers who raise their child(ren) without coresident partner. Conversely the rate of persons who have educational attainment ISCED 5-8 is lower among the lone mothers, than mothers with resident partner. In the two parents families the ratio of

mothers with degree is 22 per cent, and 16 per cent among their one parent counterparts. (Census 2011, the author's calculation)²

Therefore the single parent families face a higher risk of poverty than families with two parents. In 2013 the poverty rate for the whole population was 14.3 per cent, 17.9 for two parents families with dependent child(ren) and 34.3 for the single parent headed families. (EUROSTAT)

The dynamics of lone parent family status can be measured by panel surveys, though we can assume that a child living in a family where only their mother or father is a biological parent has experienced the dissolution of their parents' union in their childhood. If we add the proportion of these children to the children living in a lone parent family in a given time we can estimate how many per cent of the children have already lived LPF in their lives.

Using this method, we have estimated that in 2011 27 per cent of the children aged between 0 and 18 lived in lone parent family in their life time. The older the child the more risk of LPF period is in their lifetime. According to our estimation 37 per cent of the children aged between 15 and 18 have had lone parent family episod in their childhood. (Table 1)

Table 1
Children aged 18 and bellow in different family structures by age groups, 2011

Age groups	Two parents families				Lone parent families	Together	In lone parent family in their life time (estimated)
	Both of them are biological parents	Only mother is biological parent	Only father is biological parent	None of them are biological parent			
0-2	82,3	1,2	0,7	3,7	12,0	100,0	14,0
3-5	78,1	2,8	0,8	3,7	14,6	100,0	18,2
6-9	71,2	5,2	1,1	3,4	19,0	100,0	25,3
10-14	64,2	7,8	1,5	2,7	23,7	100,0	33,0
15-18	60,2	8,5	1,9	2,4	27,0	100,0	37,3
0-18	69,7	5,6	1,3	3,1	20,3	100,0	27,2

Data source: Harcsa, I. – Monostori, J.(2014).

² ISCED is the International Standard Classification of Education. ISCED level 1 is the primary education, ISCED 5-8 is the different levels of tertiary education.

Remark: Only for households with one family.

We also estimated the proportion of children who were experienced in lone parent families according to their mother's educational attainment. We have found that that the lower educational level of mothers have the higher proportion of children who ever lived in one parent family in their childhood. The proportion of children who have ever lived in one parent family was 30 per cent among the children whose mother's (or father, if they live only with their father) educational attainment is at most elementary school, and 31 per cent among their counterparts whose mother has a degree. (Census 2011, the author's calculation)

In our earlier research we investigated the transitions of family arrangements during a shorter period of life cycle. Using panel data we investigated the women who were aged between 21 and 50 in 2004. We found out that 70 per cent of the single mother headed family were in the same family structure four years later and 30 per cent lived in an other family structure. The majority of them repartnered, and the minority lived alone, after their children had leaved the parental house. From the other side almost two out of tree mothers in single parent families in 2008, lived also in that family arrangement in 2004. 31 per cent lived with their partners and child(ren) four years earlier. This shows that the most frequent way to become a lone parent is the separation from the former partner. (*Monostori J., 2013*) And this research also refers to the very high intensity of changing of family construction among the mothers who were affected in the lone parenthood during their life.

3. Theoretical background and research questions

Our study focuses on the lone parenthood after separation from dynamic perspective. We examine the characteristics of lone parenthood on micro level . We take account of the theoretical considerations which refer to the changes of family transitions and the demographic determinants of becoming a lone-parent.

3.1. The pluralisation of family forms and dynamics of family arrangements

Understanding the pattern of family transitions we use the theory of pluralisation as a theoretical background. Even though the pluralisation of family forms is a widely used terminology for describing the main changes connected family forms in the last decades, the explanation and the content of the pluralisation show large diversity. According to the main approaches the pluralisation of family forms mean that the nuclear families based on marriage are decreasing, but other family forms, like cohabited families, one-parent families, step families and multinuclear families are widely spreading. These changes can be related with the process of individualisation and de-institutionalisation of the family. (Beck, U.-Beck-Gernsheim, E., 2002; Vaskovics, L. 2014) Family diversity and its driving forces can be described on macro and micro level. On micro level the pluralisation of family forms appear in the growing ratio of families who have passed through the one parent family status under their life.

Hypotheses: **H1.** Based on this theory we can assume that the younger birth cohort of mothers has a higher likelihood to become a lone parent than older counterparts because the younger generations' partnerships are more fragile. **H2.** We also expect, that the first time of lone parenthood is on an earlier phase of family life among the younger generations, because in Hungary the ratio of separation after a very short period is higher among the youngsters. It do not means that the partnership's dissolution happens in earlier ages, but in earlier phase of family life e.g. within a sorter period after the construction of partnership or the first childbirth. **H3.** If we accept the thesis of increasing pace of changes in family life cycles, we can consider that the duration of a given family structure is shorter on the invidual life trajectory among the younger generations.

3.2. The demographic determinants of becoming a lone parent

As we mentioned above the termination of partnership – within this the separation – is the main route into the lone parenthood in Hungary. (Monostori J., 2013) As the previous research has pointed out, the likelihood

of separation depends on the type of partnership. (Földházi E., 2015) In general the cohabitation is more fragile than marriage, on the other hand the incidence and characteristics of the cohabitation are changing. It may be asked whether the probability of separation remains high if the cohabitation is a widespread phenomena in a country. It is also questionable how the children influence the stability of partnership. Are there any differences between the marriage and cohabitation from this point of view?

Marriage vs. cohabitation

Convergence thesis

In spite of the growing proportion of cohabited partnership, the meaning of cohabitation is controversial. It is a fact that the role, the judgement and the acceptance of cohabitation is changing. Cohabitation is not a marginalized behaviour any more, it is gradually becoming an accepted family form. Cohabitation is not a short-term and childless state in life but it is a more stable arrangement in which having and raising children is prevalent. It follows that the distinctions between cohabitation and marriage is diminishing in time. (K. Kiernan, 2002)

The deinstitutionalization of living together hypothesis (Cherlin, A.J., 2004) also concludes the convergence between the unmarried cohabitation and marriage in many ways. The hypothesis argues the weakening of the social norms that define people's behaviour. Recently more forms of living together and more alternatives to marriage are socially acceptable. Moreover people frame the marriage into their life in different way. Some people marry without previous cohabitation, others marry after a cohabitation period, some of them have a children before marrying, others marry after their first child's birth. After a divorce some people remarry whilst other do not marry anymore.

Several demographers and family researchers state that having children within cohabitation is a sign that cohabitation become to be similar to marriage, with similar risk of dissolution. (Seltzer, J.A. 2000; Raley, R.K., 2001.; Kiernan, K, 2004; Musick, K., 2007; Perelli-Harris, B. et al, 2012; Harcsa, I.-Monostori J, 2014)

A few study state that children in the family are the signs for the long-term commitment, and after the birth the type of union no longer matter. Cohab-

ited and married couples lived similar in several aspects. They live and make decisions together, share their incomes, raise their child(ren), keep in touch with relatives from both sides. (Musick, K., 2007) Whereupon the difference between the married and cohabited couples with children are negligible.

Divergence thesis

An opposing view suggests persistent differences and potentially divergence in the experiences of marriage and cohabitation. This approach states that marriages have a growing symbolic significance since less and less people get married. This involves that marriage is less dominant and more distinctive than it was. (Cherlin, A.J., 2004; 2009) Actually an opposite self-selection process began to work. Those people choose the marriage, especially the direct marriage who have more traditional attitudes towards the family life and childrearing. That is why we assume that cohabited partners have higher odds of disruption than married counterparts.

Others argue that cohabiting and married couples differ on many domains, therefore the difference is being hereafter. (Andersson, G. – Philipov, D., 2002; Heuveline, P. – Timberlake, J.M. – Furstenberg, F.F., 2003; Wu, L. – Musick, K., 2008; Goodman, A. – Greaves, E., 2010; Perelli-Haris, B., 2013) Cohabitors have different social background, less traditional family-oriented attitudes, that is why cohabiting couples have less stable relationship, with lower commitment to each other. Therefore cohabitors have higher risks of separation than married couples. (Kiernan, K. 2004; Liefbroer, A.C. – Dourleijn, E., 2006)

Hypotheses: H4. In Hungary in the last few decades the proportion of cohabitation has been rising and children are increasingly born into cohabiting parent families. Even though more and more children live in cohabited family, but most of the children's parents are still in marriage. In 2011 among the families with children aged 15 or under 61 per cent were married parents families, 19 per cent cohabited and 21 per cent lone parent families. Furthermore many young people choose the cohabitation as a first union, but only a few choose it as a life long form of partnership. A substantial proportion of cohabitations lead to marriage. In many cases the parents get married after the birth of their child. (Pongrácz, M. 2012) Taking into consideration all of these facts we assume that the parents living in cohabitation have a higher risk of dissolution than counterparts in marriage.

The effect of the trajectories of the current partnership

A substantial body of research deals with different risk of separation among the direct marriage, the marriage with prior cohabitation and cohabitation without marriage, and also deals with the difference of likelihood of dissolution in families where child(ren) are born in cohabitation and where the parents live in marriage. (Musick, K. – Michelmore, K., 2014)

A large body of literature demonstrates that couples who cohabited before marrying are more likely to divorce in spite of the fact that they have more experience about each other and life together. (Amato, P.R. – James, S. 2010; Lyngstad, T.H. – Jalovaara, M., 2010) According to this explanation, couples who cohabited are less traditional and may have different ideals and expectations of living together.

On the other hand some empirical results declare that the connection between prior cohabitation and later separation diminish as cohabitation becomes more prevalent and lasts longer before marriage. (Hewitt, B. – Vaus, de D., 2009)

Furthermore children in a family can change this linkage. Some empirical evidence prove that children born before marriage significantly increase chances of disruption. (Waite, L.J.-Lillard, L.A.1991) Conversely Manning et al. (2004) found that children born to cohabiting parents are more likely to experience a parental separation than children born to married parents, and marriage following a cohabiting birth is associated with a greater union stability. Musick and Michelmore argue that there is no significant difference in the risk of separation for couples who have a birth in marriage without ever cohabiting, who cohabit and then have a birth in marriage, and who have a birth in cohabitation and then marry. (Musick, K. – Michelmore, K., 2014)

H5. Taking into consideration the characteristics of cohabitations in Hungary we can assume that the partnership status at the time of the first child's birth has a determining role of partnership stability, even if the partners get marriage later.

The number and the age of the children in the family

Dissolution risk is not constant through the course of partnership. Studies have generally found that the likelihood of separation increases through the

first years. After this, the risk begins to decline gradually as couples accumulate investments in their marriage or cohabitation. (Földházi, E., 2009; Lyngstad, T.H. – Jalovaara, M, 2010)

Children are regarded as a shared investment that is generally decrease the risk of separation, but empirical facts prove that in Hungary in the 2000's about 60 per cent of the marriage broke up with children.

A related line of research confirms that among the families with children the number and the age of children have effect on their parents' partnership stability. (Waite,L.J. – Lillard, L.A., 1991; 1993; Steele, F. – Kallis, C. – Joshi, H., 2005; Kalmijn, M. – Poortman, A.R., 2006; Svarer, M. – Verner, M., 2006; Coppola, L. – Di Cesare, M., 2008;) According to some empirical evidence the age of the oldest and youngest child have significant effect on separation of parents. The results indicates that firstborn child increases the partnership stability through their preschool years. Other children increase the stability only when they are very young. On contrast with this argument other research did not find that association.

Studies have generally found that the more children in the family the lower risk of separation.

Hypotheses: H6. The timing of separation depends on the age of the oldest child. The risk is higher when the children are between aged of 3 and 14. **H7.** The more children the lower risk of separation.

4. Data and Methods

In our research we use the four waves of the Hungarian Generation and Gender Panel Survey (conducted by the Hungarian Demographic Research Institute) as a database, to create a partnership, childbirth and family arrangement trajectories, and to build our event history models with the covariates. The total duration of the Hungarian GGS was 11 years running from 2001 to 2012 (within this period four waves were accomplished, in 2001, 2004, 2008 and 2012) and we also have retrospective data in line with our research questions. All of the information that happened before 2001 and life events are between the two waves of survey come from retrospective data. In the four waves 8103 people were interviewed.

The study uses the data of women who were aged 18-49 at the beginning of the data collection (in 2001), so we analyse the life course of the women who were born between 1952 and 1983. Regarding the whole partnership and childbirth trajectories, our analytic sample is restricted to female respondents who had a first birth in a marital or cohabiting union. Our restricted sample size is 2179. We begin the risk of union disruption at the time of the women's first marital or cohabiting birth and follow respondents' life to the age of 18 of the oldest child. Very detailed data can enable the analysis on monthly level, as follow the partnership and childbirth trajectories are available for 216 month.

We focus on the main route into the lone parenthood, namely the risk of union disruption. Therefore the mothers who gave birth to a child and did not live with the child's father or any other partner at the time of childbirth were excluded from our interest. In our restricted sample 9 per cent of the women had no cohabiting partners at the time of child's birth. It seems an under represented value whilst we have no accurate information on proportion on the mothers without partner within the extramarital births. According to the Vital Statistics in 2013 11 per cent of the women does not declare for their child's father to the registry office. (Kapitány B. – Spéder Zs., 2015) We can assume that these women does not live with partner at the time of child's birth. However the 11 per cent is also an underestimated value, because it does not take into consideration the women who declared for their child's father but they did not live with the partner at time of childbirth. Other research estimate the proportion of women without partners at most half year after the child's birth. This study calculates the proportion of concerned mothers for 15 per cent. (Harcsa I. – Monostori J., 2014)

We do not use the information reported by fathers in consideration of the fact that large segments of children live with their mother if they live in one parent family. Accordingly mother's reports give an adequate coverage of the routes into the lone-parenthood. On the other hand the sample size of the lone fathers is very small, so we can not give a real picture using this data source.

Table 2
The whole and the restricted sample

Samples (Generation and Gender Survey)	Cases
The whole sample	8103

Women aged between 18 and 49	2808
have child(ren)	2383
first child was born into marriage or co-habitation	2179

Most lone-parent families come into being as a consequence of marital breakdown (separation or divorce), but some result from death of one of the parents. In our study we do not distinguish these two routes, but the death of partner is very infrequent in that ages. Women who is repartnering immediately after the separation are not regarded lone parent, because they did not live without partner, merely found a new partnership.

In our study the category of lone parent family refers to the families consisting of at least on child with only one parent, where the other parent permanently absent or being dead. This is a structural approach not a functional. We do not have information on the relationship between the child(ren) and the non-residential parent and between the parents. In several cases the parents provide the parental functions perfectly from different households. They ensure the financial and emotional background, they organize family programs, the children have close connection with their grantparents from both sides. On the other hand there can be functionally lone parent families among the two parents families. In some cases the parents divorce but they can not separate, due to the financial background or other reasons one of the parents do not move. In our paper these types of families are regarded as two parent families, because the parents live together, but functionally it can be one parenthood as well.

Creating the life tables and our causal models we used the information about the whole trajectories of partnership and childbirth, taking into retrospective data. Using the event history analysis we restructured our database from person oriented database to event oriented database. This database includes 405 859 cases. During the period of interest, that lasts from the first child birth to the time before they turn 19, 560 events happened. That means that 560 lone parent families have arisen. Applied multivariate model is a Cox regression model.

We investigated only the first partnership disruption after the birsth of first child.

5. Descriptive analysis: family arrangement trajectories of women with child(ren)

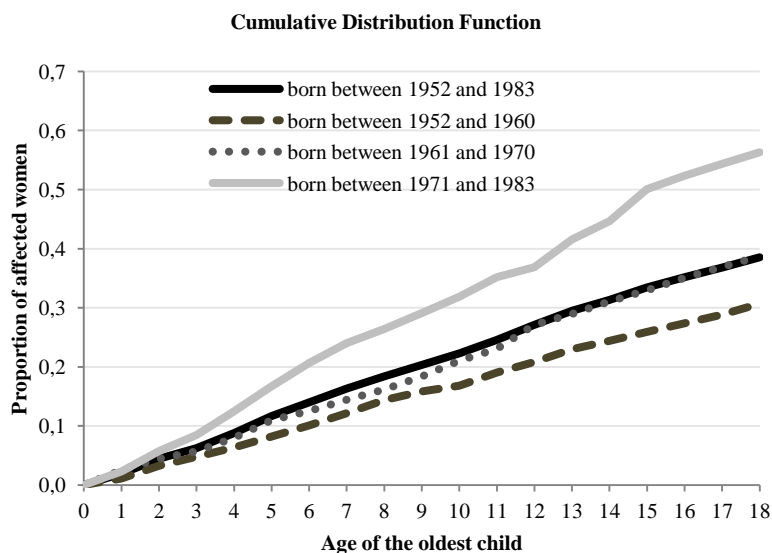
Using the whole partnership and childbirth trajectories we present descriptive measures on mother's experience of partnership disruption until their oldest child reaches the age of 18. We censor an observation if the oldest child is under 18 at the time of the mother's interview. We present the cumulative percent of mothers who have ever experienced the lone parenthood.

Our life tables show that 39 per cent of the mothers who were born between 1953 and 1983 reported that they have had an experience of partnership dissolution before their oldest child reaches the age of 18. That is 39 per cent of the mothers had a lone parent episode during the examined life cycle. *(Figure 2)*

Our research reveals remarkable differences in experience of lone parenthood in different birth cohorts. The younger generation the higher likelihood to become a lone parent by the age of 18 of the first child. In the youngest birth cohort the proportion of affected women exceeds the 50 per cent whilst in the case of the oldest cohort the rate is no more than 31 per cent. *(Figure 2)*

Figure 2

The proportion of women who were in lone parent status up to age of 18 of their oldest child



Source: Hungarian GGS. The author's calculation **Method:** Kaplan-Meier Survival Analysis

Two peaks of the risk of disruption were found: the first was between the age of 4 and 6 of first child, and the second was when the child was between aged of 11 and 13. After these ages the risk slowly decreased.

The mothers belonging to the youngest birth cohort become a lone parent on earlier phase of their family life cycle, at younger age of their first child. The *Table 3* shows the percent of those women who have ever experienced a partnership dissolution by the ages 3, 7, 15 and 18 of their first child. According to our estimation 8 per cent of the mothers who were born between 1971 and 1983 were affected the family disruption by the child's age 3. Almost one out of four experienced the lone parent status their child's age 7, 47 per cent by the age of 15, and more than half of part of them by the first child turned 19.

Table 3
Cumulative percent ever out of union, by age of child for mothers

Birth cohort of mother	Age of the first child			
	3	7	15	18

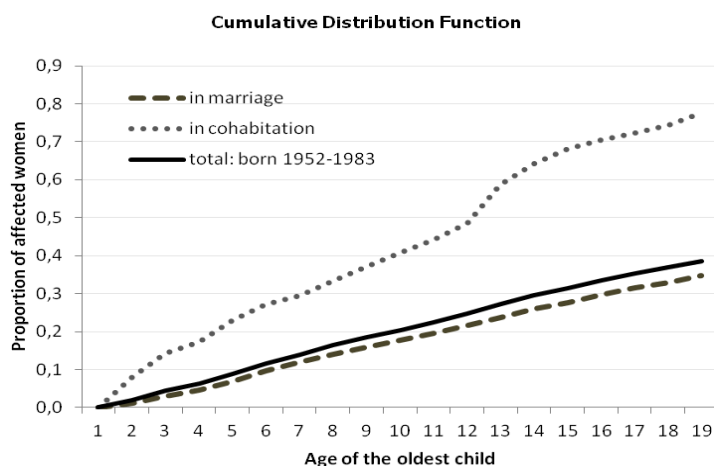
1952-1960	4,8	12.2	26.1	30.9
1961-1970	5.7	14.4	30.9	38.4
1971-1983	8.3	23.4	46.6	51.1
<i>1952-1983</i>	<i>6.2</i>	<i>16.3</i>	<i>31.4</i>	<i>38.6</i>

Source: Hungarian GGS. The author's calculation **Method:** Kaplan-Meier Survival Analysis

The *Figure 3* shows significant differences in becoming a lone parent in groups with different type of partnership. As a substantial body of earlier research confirms the cohabitation is associated with a higher risk of dissolution than marriage.

During our period of interest 35 per cent of married mothers have experienced a lone parenthood, while the value of indicators was 78 per cent for cohabited mothers.

Figure 3
The proportion of women who were in lone parent status up to age of 18
of their oldest child by the type of partnership



Source: Hungarian GGS. The author's calculation **Method:** Kaplan-Meier Survival Analysis

Table 4 describe the number of month spent in lone parenthood up to the child's age of 18. As we could seen the youngest birth cohort have a higher likelihood to become a lone parent, than older counterparts. Furthermore they become a lone parent at earlier stage of their motherhood. At the same time they do not spent as much time as a lone parent up to the child's age of 18, than the older age cohorts. The average number of month spent in lone parent family is 65 for birth cohort 1971-1983, 78 for birt cohort 1961-1970 and 73 for the oldest group. That is to say they can come out from this family status after a shorter period, than their older counterparts.

Table 4
Number of month in lone parenthood up to the age of 18 of first child

Months in lone parenthood among the affected mothers	Birth cohort of mother			
	1952-1960	1961-1970	1971-1983	1952-1983
Average number of months	73	78	65	74
The number of months (%)				
1-12	9.2	15.3	9.1	12.1
13-36	19.9	20.3	13.8	19.3
37-60	17.7	11.3	23.8	15.4
61-120	32.4	28.4	36.2	31.0
more than 120 months	20.8	24.7	17.1	22.2
	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Hungarian GGS. **Remarks:** Only for lone parent families who were observed for 18 years.

6. The demographic determinants of becoming a lone parent

Investigating the demographic determinants of becoming a lone parent we focuses on effects of the birth cohorts, type of partnership, the number and the age of children. The type of partnership and the children's characteristics are regarded as time-varying factors, which can change in the course of time.

The effect of cohorts is largely as expected from prior research. The youngest birth cohort faces a higher risk of becoming a lone parent, than older cohorts. (*Model 1*) This effect remains significant if we take into consideration other covariates. (*Table 5 – 6*)

Regarding to the type of partnership we analysed the risk of disruption among the mothers lived in marriage at the time of the first child's birth and mothers who lived in cohabitation. (*Model 2*) This model shows that the likelihood to become a lone parent is significantly higher among the females who lived in cohabitation at the time of first child's birth than their counterparts lived in marriage. Since the type of partnership can change in the course of partnership we created two time-varying variables. First one distinguishes the marriage and cohabitation, and measure the partnership's type directly before the separation. The second variable breaks up the mar-

riages into two categories. The first refers to the marriage which was already marriage at the time of the first child birth, and second includes the mothers who married after their first child birth.

Our model 4 shows that mothers lived in cohabiting union at the time of their first child's birth and later have significantly higher odds of experiencing the dissolution of partnership than mothers in marriage. On the other hand the mothers who lived in cohabitation at the time of their first child's birth and married later do face higher odds of instability than mothers in marriage. However their risk of disruption is lower than mothers who lived in cohabitation during the whole period of interest.

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Table 5
Relative risk of becoming a lone parent I. Females, birth cohorts 1952-1983

Covariates	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3		Model 4	
	Exp (B)	Sig.	Exp (B)	Sig.	Exp (B)	Sig.	Exp (B)	Sig.
Cohorts								
1971-1983	2.415	0.000	2.051	0.000	2.496	0.000	2.145	0.000
1961-1970	1.209	0.067	1.144	0.198	1.289	0.015	1.180	0.112
1952-1960	ref.		ref.		ref.		ref.	
Type of partnership I.								
In marriage at the time of first child's birth			ref.					
In cohabitation at the time of first child's birth			2.392	0.000				
Type of partnership II. (time-varying variable)								
Marriage					ref.			
Cohabitation					2.269	0.000		
Type of partnership III. (time-varying variable)								
Marriage at the first child birth and later							ref.	
Cohabitation at the first child birth and marriage later							1.522	0.056
Cohabitation from beginning to end							2.593	0.000
-2 Log Likelihood	13437.893		13389.940		13278.621		13382.667	
Sig.	0.000		0.000		0.000		0.000	
Cases available in analysis:	405 859							
Events:	560							

The number of children clearly have a powerful effect on the risk of partnership separation. Our results show that parents with children have lower odds of dissolution than parents who has only one child. On the other hand the causal association is reverse. The higher instability is in a partnership the lower fertility has for the couple.

The association between the number of children and the risk of disruption of partnership remains significant if we control the effect with the variable of birth cohort. (Model 5)

As several earlier research has shown since in general, the cohabitators have less traditional family-oriented attitudes and they do not focus on the children, they are more likely to have only one child.

However the effect of the number of siblings is significant even if we control the effect with the type of partnership. (Model 6)

The effect of demographic factors remain significant if control them with the educational attainment. (Model 7)

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Table 6
The demographic determinants of becoming a lone parent II.

Covariates	Model 5		Model 6		Model 7	
	Exp (B)	Sig.	Exp (B)	Sig.	Exp (B)	Sig.
Cohorts						
1971-1983	2.190	0.000	1.818	0.000	1.335	0.008
1961-1970	1.187	0.098	1.105	0.338	1.018	0.864
1952-1960	ref.		ref.		ref.	
Number of siblings (time-varying variable)						
No sibling	3.136	0.000			12.314	0.000
One sibling	1.058	0.639			2.198	0.000
Two or more sibling	ref.				ref.	
Age of the youngest child (time-varying variable)						
0-3			ref.		ref.	
4-7			0.503	0.000	0.368	0.000
8-14			0.188	0.000	0.094	0.000
15-18			0.081	0.000	0.019	0.000
Type of partnership III. (time-varying variable)						
Marriage at the first child birth and later					ref.	
Cohabitation at the first child birth and marriage later					1.442	0.100
Cohabitation from beginning to end					1.953	0.000
Educational attainment of mother						
ISCED 1					1.248	0.102
ISCED 2					1.045	0.734
ISCED 3-4					0.932	0.551
ISCED 5-8					ref.	
-2 Log Likelihood	13290.928		13149.912		12761.831	
Sig.	0.0000		0.000		0.000	
Cases available in analysis:	405 859					
Events:	560					

7. Conclusion

Our research focused on the investigation of lone parenthood from longitudinal perspective. We have dealt with the changes in the family arrangements among women who raise their child(ren), paying attention to trajectories into the lone parenthood and the demographic determinants of this process.

Our research has highlighted that the ratio of mothers who were affected in lone parenthood is substantially higher than those who are in lone parenthood in a particular year. According to our estimation 39 per cent of the mothers who were born between 1952 and 1983 were concerned in their partnership dissolution before their oldest child reached the age of 18. Within this group the younger cohorts had a higher risk to become a lone parent. *(H1)* Among the birth cohort aged between 1971 and 1983 one out of two mothers lived as a single mother during the period of interest. Moreover the mothers belonging to the youngest birth cohort became lone parents at younger age of their first child: 8 per cent of the mothers lived in lone parent family at least once by the oldest child's age 3 and almost one out of four experienced the lone parent status by the child's age 7. *(H2)*

This result is not trivial as the women belonging to the younger cohorts give birth to the children in later ages, with more previous partnerships behind them so it would be expected that the disruption happen on the later phase in their life than in older cohorts.

The mothers who had at least once a lone parent family episod in their life spent 74 months, i.e. more than 6 years, in lone parenthood an the average. Even though the youngest birth cohort had a higher likelihood to become a lone parent and they became a lone parent at earlier stage of their motherhood, they spent shorter period (65 months an the average) in that status than older counterparts. The results refers to the fact that younger cohorts can come out of the lone parenthood after a shorter period than their older counterparts. *(H3)* This results also indicate that we can assume the expansion of the repartnering among the single parent women. It can also tell of an increasing pace of changing in family arrangements. Furthermore it can be the explanation why the cross sectional surveys do not show remarkable changes.

Our paper pointed out that there is an appreciable risk of partnership disruption between the mothers who lived in cohabitation and those who are in marriage. This distinction appears in all casual models where we controlled the variables of partnership type with other demographic explanatory variables.

Accordingly in spite of the fact that the cohabitation turned into a prevalent family arrangement where more and more children are born and growing up, a significant difference remain between the two coexistence forms. The couples in cohabitation face a higher risk of separation than married counterparts. *(H4)*

Some prior studies demonstrated that couples who marry after first birth are very similar to those who marry before first birth. They just postponed the marriage later in their life course. We investigated this question with time varying variables, which divided the mothers into three groups: the first group includes the mothers who were married at time of first birth, the second the mothers who lived in cohabitation from the first birth to the end of the period of interest; the mothers lived in cohabitation at the first birth and got married later belong to the third group. Using this typology we stated that the risk of separation is significantly lower for mothers who got married before the first birth, than the other two groups. It seems that the mothers and fathers who got married after their first child's birth significantly differ in stability of the partnership from those who were married at the first birth. *(H5)*

We also examined how the number of children in the family is associated with the partnership stability. *(H7)* We state that couples with only one child have a significantly higher risk of separation than couples with two or more children. This result can be interpreted equivocal. It can be a self-selection effect, namely those undertake only one child with higher likelihood who are less able to organize the everyday family life. On the other hand it can be feasible that these women planned more children but the quality of the partnership inhibited them from realizing their fertility intentions.

Concerning the association between the disruption of partnership and the age of the oldest child, two peaks of the risk of disruption were found: the first was between the age of 4 and 6 of first child, and the second was when the child was between aged of 11 and 13. After these ages the risk slowly decreased. *(H6)*

In our study we examined only the first partnership disruption after the first child birth, but becoming a lone parent can happen more than once during the life. A substantial body of research confirms that the association between the repartnering and separation is very strong. (*Monostori J., 2013*) On the other hand the decreasing effect of selection can be applied to this phenomenon as well. As repartnering become more common the repartnered come less selective than before.

Understanding the dynamics of lone parenthood the research must be expanded to the phenomenon of the risk of lone parenthood as a repeated event during the life and the routes out of lone parenthood. Our research will continue towards these questions.

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