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**Recognition, Rights and Redistribution. Introduction to the
Honorary Issue of Intersections. EEJSP to Celebrate Júlia
Szalai**

Intersections. EEJSP
4(1): 4-8.
DOI: 10.17356/eejsp.v4i1.421
<http://intersections.tk.mta.hu>

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This special issue of *Intersections. EEJSP* is dedicated to some of the central concerns of contemporary sociology: recognition, rights, and redistribution. These are three interrelated and often contrasted subjects that have occupied a special place in the works of Júlia Szalai, one of Hungary's leading sociologists. Szalai, besides being an early pioneer of sociological research in her own country, is also well known outside Hungary for her international and comparative investigations of inequality and poverty, her research on ethnic minorities, and especially the Roma, as well as her work on the welfare state. Her research has involved close co-operation with colleagues from all over Europe from Scotland to Sweden, from Slovakia to Romania and Serbia. This is why, besides a special issue being dedicated to her in *Socio.hu: Social Science Review* in Hungarian, a 'twin-issue' of *Intersections. EEJSP* is also being published to allow her friends and colleagues from around Europe to celebrate Júlia Szalai on her birthday. *Intersections. EEJSP* and *Socio.hu* are both on-line social science journals based within the Hungarian Academy of Sciences where Szalai started her research career in the 1970s, and where she has served as Professor Emerita in recent years while also teaching and undertaking research at the Central European University. These two journal special issues thus also symbolize the gratitude of the Center for Social Sciences, and within this, the Institute for Sociology, to Szalai for the teaching and inspiration her colleagues and friends have received from her for nearly half a century.

These two publications at the same time reflect the versatility as well as the international and national embedding of Júlia Szalai's work.

Engaging with the research of the great masters - Zsuzsa Ferge, Ágnes Losonczi, István Kemény - who walked ahead of her in the profession, Júlia Szalai fleshed out the issues, research fields and methodological tools she would later work with during the early years of her career. She proved at an early stage how keen she was on conducting detailed investigations that mixed thorough analysis of statistical and research data with the use of qualitative sources, especially in-depth interviews. Thus, she was inquiring into the inequalities inherent in the distribution of labor within the family based on time-use surveys as early as the 1970s. Using statistical data and in-depth interviews she studied the reasons for the expansion of the capacity of kindergarten, which she found was driven rather by demands of the socialist economy than the actual needs of families, women and children. Her investigations into the "diseases" of the Hungarian healthcare system (mid-1980s) foreshadowed her later

work in social policy accomplished around the time of the regime change, in which she so insightfully criticized the flaws of the social security system.

Júlia Szalai was a seasoned professional by the time of the regime change. The transformation that fundamentally shook up Hungarian society and rearranged social structures turned her attention towards excluded social groups – the losers of the transition – who had suffered from the elimination of the state, the introduction of the market economy, and the reconfiguration of large redistribution systems. In this period, the bulk of her research discussed issues of social exclusion, vulnerability and solidarity: she explored this field from several perspectives, typically using a wide array of theoretical and empirical social historical and comparative methods and a variety of approaches. Júlia Szalai thus became known in Hungarian sociology and social policy especially as an expert on state socialism, and then, with regard to the post-socialist era, as a professional specializing in the state redistribution system and the system of social provisions. Her research on the welfare state during the early 1990s was often carried out in close co-operation with her colleague and friend Bob Deacon, who sadly passed away in 2017 (*Social Policy in the New Eastern Europe: What Future for Socialist Welfare?* Aldershot: Avebury, 1990). She later turned to issues of privatization and informal relations within and outside of the welfare system and social security, as her work with Terry Cox, a long collaborator of Szalai's illustrates (e.g. *Transition, Privatisation and Social Participation in Central Europe*. Genf: United Nations Research Institute for Social Development, 1992). Her discussions of the changing relations of interests and anomalies in social security (see, for example: Social Transformation and the Reform of Social Security in Hungary, in *Czech Sociological Review*, 1993) included an in-depth analysis of the changes in welfare redistribution since the regime change. In her work, Júlia Szalai describes how the principle of equal rights and related institutional practices were eroded and broad sections of society marginalized as a result of struggles for state redistribution, contributing, ultimately, to the division of society. Szalai's often-cited research concludes that those excluded from large redistribution systems have become trapped among the increasingly obscure relations of local-level social policy (see, e.g.: *Poverty and Degradation of Social Rights: The Case of Hungary*. Harvard Working Papers. Cambridge: Harvard University, 2001).

Closely related to her studies in social policy, another important theme in Szalai's scholarly work focuses on marginalization and exclusion on social and ethnic grounds. She studied these issues typically as the lead researcher of comprehensive national and international comparative research projects. Thus, she has conducted important research into gender-, social-, class- and ethnic-based discrimination and its background mechanisms reflected in the actions of mediating persons and in institutional practices; the rights and disenfranchisement of excluded social groups; and issues of political engagement. Investigating the often-intersecting inequalities and exclusionary processes that affect the Roma and women led her to engage with the issue of recognition and also to a fruitful and long-lasting collaboration with one of the greatest sociologists of gender research, Barbara Hobson (*Conflicting Struggles for Recognition: Clashing Interests of Gender and Ethnicity in Contemporary Hungary*. 2003.)

Her papers and edited volumes produced in yet another fruitful collaboration with Ágota Horváth and Mária Neményi that have occupied an important position in Hungarian sociology, academic thought and discussions of public policy, representing important sources for several generations. Publications in question include *Cigánynak születni* (English: Born to be Gypsy) (2000), *Kisebbségek kisebbsége* (English: The Minority of Minorities) (2005), her most recent volume *Egymás szemébe nézve. Az elnúlt fél évszázad politikai törekvései* (English: Looking Each Other in the Eyes. Political Efforts Over the Past Half a Century) (2017), and *Faces and Causes of Roma Marginalization in Local Contexts* (2014) which analyzes the situation of Roma in an international context.

Szalai's work in the field of social exclusion includes a research project that she has coordinated together with Violetta Zentai and Mária Neményi and that may have been the most outstanding one of recent years. It involved nine partner countries and explored how ethnic differences contributed to the diverging prospects for minority ethnic youth and their peers in urban settings. (EDUMIGROM). The results of the project were published in the book *Migrants, Roma and Post-Colonial Youth in Education across Europe* by Palgrave in 2014. She acted as lead researcher in another European research consortium that examined the causes and patterns of early school leaving (ReSLEU). Szalai has authored several important publications discussing the mechanisms and consequences of teachers' low expectations towards children who belong to the Roma community or other stigmatized groups, as well as those which analyze how racial prejudices are reflected in teachers' grading practices.

However, Szalai's research interests are much broader. She has not only been concerned with the victims of processes of social exclusion that extend through several centuries and survive different regimes; processes which entrench social relations and inhibit mobilization. In collaboration with Mihály Laki she has also investigated those individuals who occupy the highest positions of the social hierarchy, repeatedly conducting research among entrepreneurs in Hungary (see: The Puzzle of Success: Hungarian Entrepreneurs at the Turn of the Millennium. In: *Europe-Asia Studies*, 58(3): 317-345, 2006).

Besides its thematic richness, Júlia Szalai's work stands out for its methodological diversity, as well: although originally an economist with a background in mathematical statistics, she has never allowed any single method to limit the research opportunities inherent to her inquiries. She has moved with ease among the requirements of the most "hardcore" statistical techniques just as she has in the realm of qualitative methods. Not only is she widely educated in methodological terms but, as with any really good sociologist, she primarily sees the problems that need to be explored and understood and the phenomena to be explained and adjusts her diversified toolbox to meet these needs, rather than vice versa.

Finally, perhaps the most significant message conveyed by the two special issues is Julia's tremendous importance for us not just in professional but also in human terms: our research and personal friendships have often evolved together, overlapping and mutually reinforcing one another for several decades.

The twin issues of the two journals honoring Júlia Szalai reflect the thematic, methodological and disciplinary pluralism of her work. The special issue of Intersections. EJSP is introduced by an essay by Barbara Hobson (University of

Stockholm), in which the author, looking back on the history of collaboration with our laureate describes how, in analyzing the situation of Roma in Central and Eastern Europe, Júlia Szalai engaged with the debate of redistribution versus recognition paradigms outlined by Nancy Fraser, expanding this important theoretical framework in sociology and adopting it to social contexts outside the Western world.

Terry Cox investigates Szalai's concept of the 'bifurcated welfare state' and reflects on it from the context of the debate around Esping-Andersen's ideal types of welfare state regimes, and especially the issue of stratification. He concludes that the bifurcated welfare state offers a means of understanding the key features of hybrid welfare states in East Central Europe.

Mariann Dósa explores the relationship between welfare and citizenship. First, she reviews the most important theoretical approaches and argues that shifting our focus to an alternative perspective – viewing welfare as an agent of citizenship socialization – provides a more comprehensive picture. She convincingly claims that the undemocratic, disempowering institutional characteristics and practices of the post-transition welfare regime in Hungary diminish recipients' perceptions of democratic subjectivity.

Judit Durst and Zsanna Nyírő analyze the 'hidden costs' of upward mobility, especially for Roma women. They explore the personal experiences of the impact of moving class through educational mobility via an extensive set of interviews conducted with young Hungarian Roma women who have obtained higher education diplomas. They furthermore pay special attention to influential ethnic support groups and organisations and address the question what effect they have on the costs of upward mobility in terms of the mobility of the interviewees.

Zsuzsa Árendás, Vera Messing and Viola Zentai discuss the issue of Roma inclusion in the labour market, focusing on a specific group of highly qualified young Roma within the context of the business sphere. The authors present the first results of new research into the obstacles and opportunities of Roma youth who apply to work at transnational companies. Their interviews with HR officers and young Roma job-seekers give a unique insight into the issue of the disadvantages of highly qualified Roma youth, as well as the dilemmas that multinational companies face in relation to the recruitment, selection and employment of young, educated Roma.

Finally, Gábor Erőss salutes Júlia Szalai with a review of a recently published book that she - together with Claire Schiff - edited and which summarizes the results of a vast, Europe-wide comparative research effort on the mechanisms of racial differentiation in education, and its consequences.

The twin special issue of this one - Socio.hu - is celebrating Júlia Szalai with 10 articles published in Hungarian which mirror the thematic, disciplinary and methodological diversity of the work of the laureate. The Socio.hu special issue starts with an essay from Ágnes Losonczi, a defining Hungarian sociologist who has been a mentor and long-standing colleague and friend to Júlia Szalai since the 1970s. Research articles in the special issue discuss recognition politics in theoretical terms as well as in the case of the Roma in Hungary (Csaba Dupcsik and Roza Vajda); issues related to social policy, such as the reform of pension systems in 11 EU countries (Simonovits & Domonkos) and the welfare state (Éva Voszka); the case of the emergence and strengthening of entrepreneurs after the system change (Mihály Laki);

innovative educational experiments for Roma (Ágnes Kende); the role of personal networks in the migration of rural Roma (Tünde Virág); solidarity in Hungarian society amid the refugee crisis (Margit Feischmidt); and, finally, practices of the communist state's secret service regarding the compromising and defamation of people considered 'enemies' (Judit Takács).

Special thanks must be given to the reviewers who have – sometimes working to very short deadlines – undertaken the reviews, to Róza Vajda for her help with translation, and to István Hegedűs for the immense technical support.