

ESF Exploratory Workshop on

Particularities of Childbearing Determinants in East-European Countries after the Political Turnover

Cluj-Napoca, Romania, 25-27 September 2008

Convened by:
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SCIENTIFIC REPORT

Executive Summary

The European Science Foundation exploratory workshop on “Particularities of Childbearing Determinants in East-European Countries after the Political Turnover” took place on 25-27 September 2008 at the Babes-Bolyai University, Cluj-Napoca, Romania.

The main invited countries were: Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Russia and Slovak Republic, since they have adequate data and are former socialist-countries. These countries dispose of recent survey data, mostly (but not exclusively) collected in the frame of Generation and Gender Programme, a trans-national, comparative, highly innovative and interdisciplinary project, initiated by Population Activities Unit of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE PAU).

Nineteen participants from ten European countries were present (Austria, Czech Republic, France, Germany, Hungary, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovak Republic, and Sweden). Not all of participants came exactly from these countries, but surely they have studied population developments of one or even more of them. Four researchers from Max Planck Institute of Demographic Research, Rostock, Germany (institution known for its role in promoting and supporting GGP) were in this situation since they work on Bulgaria, Hungary, Romania, and Russia; the participant from Stockholm University is well known for her studies on Hungary, and one of the Czech researcher came from Austria where he recently located at Vienna Institute for Demographic Research. All the other participants came directly from their origin countries (a former-socialist one), where their contribution to the development of demographic science is nationally recognized and internationally well known. Only Estonia was not participating, due to causes over their will, but they expressed their willingness for any further development of the project.

The workshop was organized in eight working sessions addressing theoretical and methodological issues, and presenting empirical findings regarding various childbearing determinants.

The workshop opened on mid Thursday September 25th with a welcome speech addressed by Dr. Dan Chiribuca, dean of Faculty of Sociology and Social Work, followed by a short introduction on ESF aims and current programmes presented by the ESF representative, and a short keynote speech on the scientific background of the workshop topic, presented by Cornelia Muresan. After lunch, the day continued with two working sessions: first, on fertility theories and adequate research methodologies, and second, on one of the

classic and proximate determinants of childbearing, i.e. union formation, and on marital and non-marital births.

Friday September 26th was a full day of presentations, where four large areas of determinants were discussed: the effect of educational attainment and enrolment, the effect of gender equality-inequality, the cultural induced fertility differences, and the effect of labour force participation and social policies.

The last workshop day was held in another location than Cluj, in the neighbour mountains, at Valea Ierii. In a wonderful fresh atmosphere, the workshop continued with its two last sessions: one on the ideational factors that could influence fertility changes, and the other on future plans.

The workshop provided opportunities to share knowledge about current research on fertility development in post-socialist countries, and about possible determinants able to explain these developments. Every presentation disposed a generous time span of forty-minutes, which included time for in-depth discussion. Very interesting ideas related to similarities and differences between countries, which need further comparative research developments, emerged during these discussions. The last session was aimed to think together about further way of collaboration needed for the field developing, and to asses the most suitable programmes for that.

Scientific content

One of the most emphasized population issues in nowadays European societies is the persistent low-fertility that, if maintained sufficiently long, is also the most important factor of ageing process and of population decline. Almost without exception, countries' fertility is below replacement level in Europe. Among them, the former socialist-countries and those from southern Europe have very low fertility, or "lowest-low" fertility, i.e. below the European average.

An important flow of scientific literature deals with theories, models, causes, and consequences of fertility decline, and national or international comparative studies try to find out the mechanisms behind these fertility developments. Not surprisingly, deeper analyses concern especially western countries, since they disposed more proper data for causal analyses. Classical studies, using macro-level data, were done as well for Eastern-European countries, but those revealing mechanism behind manifestations, and using individual-level data, are more scarce. The new developments in fertility and family behaviors in former

socialist-countries are very similar in manifestations with those in the western countries; however we suspect that the mechanisms behind them are quite different.

The *ESF Workshop on Particularities of Childbearing Determinants in East-European Countries after the Political Turnover* was the first step in forming a research group that would investigate the particularities of childbearing evolutions in Central and East-European countries, with focus on the period following political turnover. It appeared from the need to find out the mechanisms behind the fertility developments, which are different from those in the western countries.

The thematic sessions brought into discussion different fertility determinants and their action in different social contexts. The scientific workshop opened with the section *Fertility theories and the life course perspective*, which included a critical approach of the present theories of reproductive behaviour, especially of the ideational change as the main determinant of below replacement fertility, followed by a presentation on trends in union-formation patterns in Romania since 1960. Presentations from the section *Entry into adulthood* focused mainly on union formation as a classical main determinant of childbearing behaviour. The section included an analysis of the increase of cohabitation, the delay of first birth and the interrelation between these events in Bulgaria, a discussion on the possibilities of computing alternative measures of fertility besides the conventional tempo distorted total fertility rate, exemplified on the Czech Republic, and a presentation on the specific of non-marital births in Romania. The session *Education* addressed female education (educational attainment and educational enrolment) as a key determinant of the transition to the second birth, in the context of three former socialist countries: Czech Republic, Russia and Romania. The following session, *Gender perspective*, included an analysis of the influence of perceived gender equality on fertility intentions in several former socialist countries and a presentation that addressed whether the recent changes in family connected behaviors in Hungary are associated with changing gender role attitudes during and after socialism. The *Culture* session included a qualitative approach of the mechanisms of the postponement of childbearing from the life course perspective in Slovakia, and a discussion on urban-rural differences of fertility intentions in Romania. The following session addressed the family related changes in connection with *labour force participation and social policies* in Poland, with a deeper analysis of the inter-relation between fertility and women's employment in the same country. The session ended with a presentation that reviewed the main characteristics of social/family policies in socialist and post-socialist regime in Romania, bringing into discussion their influence on family formation and fertility. The presentations in the following session,

Ideational changes, discussed the diffusion of cohabitation and the influence of ideational factors on fertility behavior in Hungary and the determinants of childbearing trends in Lithuania, with a focus on the ideational factors, which have been increasingly gaining strength.

The last session was dedicated to the future plans, in order to develop and strengthen this research group on particularities of childbearing determinants in the former socialist countries. The ESF representative offered a detailed presentation of the possible steps to follow in order to reach this aim, and all participants agreed that their future endeavour should focus on the Generations and Gender Programme and its future waves, since one of its main objectives is to find out the fertility determinants.

Assessment of the results, contribution to the future direction of the field

Workshop preparations: The workshop was very well prepared. Presentation topics were selected well ahead of time. The main criterion for the selection of the topics was coverage of frontier research areas, thematically and methodologically, in order to establish a basis for determining novel research lines. The topics and the aim of the workshop were discussed by email between the organizers and workshop participants in a friendly atmosphere, which was maintained throughout the meeting. Good relations were established on arrival, and transportation between the overnight locations and the various workshop activities went smoothly.

Workshop format: The workshop brought together a well selected number of established and young scientists who work on individual-level demographic behavior in Central and Eastern Europe, using new surveys or recently collected qualitative data. Forty-minute presentations were made in two-hour slots, with sufficient time for in-depth discussion. Evenings, dinner was taken in a relaxed atmosphere, which allowed for further exchange. These arrangements gave ample opportunity for discussion and digestion of the material presented, for discerning lacunae in current research, discussing novel ideas, and renewing or establishing research collaboration.

Future collaboration: Some participants had already collaborated fruitfully for some time before the meeting, and they stressed their willingness to continue the established collaboration in the future. There emerged a discussion about the topics of the further collaboration and possible extension of the network. Despite the fact that there is already

considerable research activity focusing on childbearing behavior, participants agreed that this needs to be encouraged, particularly in the countries in CEE, where exploration of childbearing determinants with individual-level data has been surprisingly scarce so far. Since longitudinal individual-level data covering the pre- and post-transition years in CEE countries are only starting to become available, this research is likely to offer new insight into the economic, cultural, and institutional factors which shape fertility development in CEE countries. In order to advance investigation in these countries, the recommendations of ESF for financing of Generations and Gender Program by national funds would be very useful for CEE. Furthermore, Gender and Generations Survey (GGS) might be an European research infrastructure – that presupposes that the national agencies put GGS on their ESFRI (European Strategy Forum on Research Infrastructures) roadmap. The need of collaborations with participants from the “old” Europe, the importance of the experience in southern European and the Scandinavian countries were also stressed.

Participants further discussed collaboration in new and innovative research areas. Some presentations led our attention to the linkages of childbearing with other life course transitions, such as *partnership dynamics and other transitions of adulthood processes*. In explaining reduction in marriage formation and increase in non-marital cohabitation in CEE countries we have to use a flexible approach. Cohabitation does not have to be automatically linked to post-modernism because it was also specific to pre-modernism. Diffusion of cohabitation started at the bottom end of the social hierarchy, what seems to be contradictory with the second demographic transition. But cohabitation can have different meanings, since in the first phase diffusion started at the bottom of the social hierarchy and in the second phase diffusion started from the top of status hierarchy. Deeper investigations, testing multiple factors and harmonization of exiting approaches, are needed.

Emerging family forms and new meanings of childbearing in CEE countries was found another important topic to be further investigated. For example, the effect of educational attainment and enrolment on childbearing was found highly variable among various countries. If for a couple of western countries high level of education has a positive effect on the risk to have a second child, in Romania there is an opposite relation, in Czech Republic there is no relation, and in Russia the effect is u-shaped. We also have learned about the effect of enrolment on childbearing, but it was found not as important as it might be believed. We agreed that we strongly need data from the second GGS wave in order to be able to construct better education variable for our models (and to include the employment history as well). Recommendations of ESF to include Generations and Gender Program among national

research priorities would be crucial for Romania and other CEE countries that have data only from the first wave, since these information are planned to be gathered only in the second GGS wave. Beside education and employment, other factors aimed to be addressed in our future research topics related to new meanings of childbearing are the changing gender role attitudes during and after socialism, and the increasing strength of ideational factors in childbearing decisions (i.e. balance between age norms and sequencing norms).

The *importance of the institutional configurations and social policy* were also stressed during the workshop and some participants considered it a topic that deserves further research. They plan to investigate the need of more inclusive employment policies for caring mothers, the positive effect of temporary public employment on childbearing, and the side effects of policy measures targeted mainly toward working women.

All participants thought that contacts established during the workshop would facilitate collaboration on the mentioned topic and enable a possible extension of the network.

Given the success of the workshop, participants discussed the possibility of a future application to another ESF funded program. Three types of needs for international collaboration were identified: the need for comparative research concerning particular subjects, the need to continue networking activities, and the need for the education of young researchers in life-course analysis. The most suitable format for all these activities would be an ESF EUROCORES European Collaborative Research Project, but success depends on whether national funding agencies support such a project. The Demographic Research Institute from Budapest is seriously considering an application. They like to prefer a collaboration on the basis doing comparative analyze on the GGP survey (GGS) and contextual data, and grouping the participating researcher and institutions around different research questions (see above). If not, other alternatives, such as a Research Networking Program or COST projects, would be taken into consideration.

What was already agreed upon during the meeting is to take up the offer of the Romanian Journal of Population Studies to publish a special issue with the papers presented at the workshop. All participants were invited to submit their contribution to the editorial board of the journal, and conditional on acceptance by journal reviewers, selected papers will constitute the first number of year 2009 of the Romanian Journal of Population Studies. This will be the first comprehensive publication on the topic covering CEE countries in a comparative perspective.

Final programme

Wednesday 24 September 2008

evening *Arrival*

Thursday 25 September 2008

morning *Arrival*

12.00-12.15 **Registration**

12.15-12.30 **Welcome address**

Dan Chiribuca (Babes-Bolyai University, Cluj-Napoca, RO – dean of Sociology and Social Work Faculty)

12.30-12.45 **Presentation of the European Science Foundation (ESF)**

Balázs Kiss (ESF Standing Committee for Social Sciences)

12.45-13.00 **Introduction**

Cornelia Muresan (Babes-Bolyai University, Cluj-Napoca, RO)

13.00-14.20 *Lunch at Piramida Restaurant*

14.20-15.40 Afternoon I Session: Fertility theories and the life course perspective

Chair: **Cornelia Muresan** (Babes-Bolyai University, Cluj-Napoca, RO)

14.20-15.00 **A critical analysis of fertility theories, with application to Romania**

Traian Rotariu (Babes-Bolyai University, RO)

15.00-15.40 **Trends in union-formation patterns in Romania since 1960**

Jan Hoem (MPI for Demographic Research, Rostock, DE)

15.40-16.00 *Coffee break*

16.00-18.00 Afternoon II Session: Entry into adulthood

Chair: **Zsolt Spéder** (Demographic Research Institute, Budapest, HU)

16.00-16.40 **Transition of nuptiality and fertility onset in the Czech Republic since the 1990s**

Krystof Zeman (Austrian Academy of Sciences, Vienna, AT)

16.40-17.20 **The rise of cohabitation and childbearing outside of marriage in Bulgaria**

Elena Koytcheva (MPI for Demographic Research, Rostock, DE)

17.20-18.00 **The growing of nonmarital fertility in Romania after 1989**

Cristina Oanes (Babes-Bolyai University, Cluj-Napoca, RO)

18.00-19.00 **Summary Discussion**

19.30 *Welcome Dinner at Panoramic Restaurant*

Friday 26 September 2008

09.20-11.20 Morning I Session: Education

Chair: **Jan Hoem** (MPI for Demographic Research, Rostock, DE)

09.20-10.00 **A second child in the family – the consequences of changing family and fertility patterns in the Czech Republic**

Anna Stastna (Research Institute of Labour and Social Affairs, Praha, CZ)

10.00-10.40 **The effect of education on second births in Russia**

Dorothea Rieck (MPI for Demographic Research, Rostock, DE)

- 10.40-11.20 **Educational enrolment and educational attainment as determinants of childbearing in the Romanian case**
Cornelia Muresan (Babes-Bolyai University, Cluj-Napoca, RO)
- 11.20-11.40 *Coffee break*
- 11.40-13.00 Morning II Session: Gender perspective**
*Chair: **Vlada Stankuniene*** (Institute for Social Research, Vilnius, LT)
- 11.40-12.20 **Gender equality and fertility – which equality matters?**
Gerda Neyer (MPI for Demographic Research, Rostock, DE)
- 12.20-13.00 **Becoming a mother in Hungary – exploring changing patterns in fertility before and after socialism**
Livia Olah (Stockholm University, SE)
- 13.00-14.20 *Lunch*
- 14.20-15.40 Afternoon I Session: Culture**
*Chair: **Livia Olah*** (Stockholm University, SE)
- 14.20-15.00 **Mechanisms of the postponement of childbearing from the life course perspective, in Slovakia**
Michaela Potančoková (Demographic Research Centre, Bratislava, SK)
- 15.00-15.40 **Urban-rural differences in reproductive behavior of Romanian women**
Mihaela Haragus (Babes-Bolyai University, Cluj-Napoca, RO)
- 15.40-16.00 *Coffee break*
- 16.00-18.00 Afternoon II Session: Labour force participation and social policies**
*Chair: **Gerda Neyer*** (MPI for Demographic Research, Rostock, DE)
- 16.00-16.40 **Family related changes in Poland**
Irena Kotovska (Institute of Statistics and Demography, Warsaw, PL)
- 16.40-17.20 **Fertility and women's employment in Poland : how are they inter-related?**
Anna Matysiak (Warsaw School of Economics, PL)
- 17.20-18.00 **The impact of social policies on family and fertility in Romania 1990-2008**
Paul-Teodor Haragus (Babes-Bolyai University, Cluj-Napoca, RO)
- 18.00-19.00 **Summary Discussion**
- 19.30 *Dinner at Roata Restaurant*

Saturday 27 September 2008

- 9.40 *Departure to Valea Ierii / Lara Pension*
- 11.20-11.40 *Arrival Coffee*
- 11.40-13.00 Morning Session: Ideational changes**
*Chair: **Irena Kotovska*** (Institute of Statistics and Demography, Warsaw, PL)
- 11.40-12.20 **Ideational factors influencing parenthood at later phase of demographic transition**
Zolt Spéder (Demographic Research Institute, Budapest, HU)
- 12.20-13.00 **Childbearing in Lithuania: trends, determinants and attitudes**
Vlada Stankuniene (Institute for Social Research, Vilnius, LT)
- 13.00-14.30 *Lunch*
- 14.30-16.00 Afternoon Session: Future Plans**
*Chair: **Jan Hoem*** (MPI for Demographic Research, Rostock, DE)
- 14.30-15.15 **Discussions around next steps to follow**

15.15-16.00

Conclusions

16.00

End of workshop and departure to Cluj-Napoca

Sunday 28 September 2008

Morning

Departure

Statistical information on participants

Number of participants: 20 from which:

17 participants presented papers

1 representative from UNFPA Romania

1 representative from ESF

1 local organizer's help from Babes-Bolyai University

Age structure:

The youngest was 29; the oldest was 69.

Mean age was 43.6 years. Median age was 36 years: 9 participants were below or at age 36 and 8 participants were above that age.

Gender repartition:

5 males

12 females

Countries of work:

Austria (1), Czech Republic (1), Hungary (1), Lithuania (1), Germany (4), Poland (2), Romania (5), Slovak Republic (1), Sweden (1)

Academic position:

PhD (12) PhD Candidates (5)

List of participants

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