

The development of demography as science in South Eastern Europe since the 1950s Comparative analysis of demographic discourses and population development in Romania, Hungary, Bulgaria and Yugoslavia

Extended abstract

As part of a longer term effort this history paper intends to understand how “developmental” competition with the “West” shaped demographic discourses in South-Eastern Europe in the context of demographic processes and institutionalized control of “population resources”. The longer term project will compare population and migration discourses and relate them to longer term historical development of migration, mortality, fertility and family formation in four countries in South and South Eastern Europe (Hungary, Romania, Yugoslavia/Serbia and Bulgaria). The four countries have been chosen as they had a distinct and highly important contribution to global and European population debates and policies since the 1950s. At the same time they represent close but varying versions socialisms, post-transition capitalisms with somewhat different demographic trajectories. Based on an understanding of the pre 2nd World War discursive and demographic scenario this project focuses on the second half of the 20th century till the early-21st century. Beside various academic publications, the analysis will be based on texts, interventions by "experts" and "academics" related to global population debates at UN Conferences, IUSSP population conferences. Some of those events actually took place in the region under study. For the last historical period to be analyzed (the early 21st century) beside elite perceptions, popular cognitive structures concerning “development” and population change will be also addressed. In order to relate discourses to processes, the project will analyze a set of demographic processes also in a global comparative framework. The project will integrate the linked discursive and demographic processes into the analysis of how scholars and population experts envisaged "development" in terms of demographic change and proposed ways to secure a better position in global competition.

As a result of longer-term historical changes and path dependencies in global inequalities by the 21st century, the South East European region is facing major demographic challenges and problems of demographic restructuring during a period when it first consolidated its relative positions after an extended period of decline since the 1970s, both in terms of economic weight and autonomy in the global economy.¹ The region has experienced low and/or declining fertility and relatively high mortality in a period when it became a region sending millions of migrant workers to Western Europe and many other areas of the world, without receiving larger inflows of people from other regions.² After a period of increased “biopolitical struggles” between and during the two World wars, countries in the region have followed discourses of competing “modernities” and a need to adapt demographic behaviour to the needs of a new type of “block” competition over “development”.³ For instance, this region espoused powerful ideas about constant progress, reducing infant mortality to “Western levels” and showing the superiority of “socialist morality,” and the aim of increasing fertility to much higher

¹ Böröcz, József (2009). *The European Union and Global Social Change: A Critical Geopolitical Economic Analysis*. London: Routledge.; Böröcz József (2015) *Regimes of Remittance Dependency: Global Structures and Trajectories of the Erstwhile Soviet ‘Bloc*. *Demografia English Edition*, forthcoming.

² Fassmann, Heinz – Musil, Elisabeth – Bauer Ramon – Melegh, Attila – Gruber, Kathrin (2014). *Longer-Term Demographic Dynamics in South-East Europe: Convergent, Divergent and Delayed Development Paths*. *Central and Eastern European Migration Review*, 3(2), 150-172. Attila Melegh (2015): *Biopolitics, regions and demography* In: Diana Mishkova, Centre for Advanced Study Sofia, Balazs Trencsényi, Central European University (eds): *European Regions and Boundaries A Conceptual History*. Berghan Books (accepted); Attila Melegh (2012) *Net migration and historical development in Southeastern Europe since 1950*. *Hungarian Historical Review* 1, no. 3-4: 144-182

³ e.g. Melegh, Attila (2006). *On the East/West Slope. Globalization, Nationalism, Racism and Discourses on Central and Eastern Europe*. New York-Budapest, CEU Press; Kiss Tamás (2010) *Adminisztratív tekintet. Az erdélyi magyar demográfiai diskurzus összehasonlító elemzéséhez. Az erdélyi magyar népesség statisztikai konstrukciójáról* (Administrative gaze. On the comparative analysis of Hungarian demographic discourses and population reconstruction in Transylvania, Romania. Cluj,

levels.⁴ This competition with the West involved, from time to time, dictatorial developments, producing discourses against abortion, decrying the putatively “too high fertility of Gypsies” or of “the Albanian minority”, lashing out against “illegal emigrants”, “dissidents”, “hostile emigrants”. Today we see a variant of such rhetoric aiming against “illegal border crossers.”⁵ Thus this region has shown an ambiguous relationship to other parts of the world as a process of mimetic competition—foregrounding the putative need to copy in order to catch-up—could lead to a search for adaptation versus distinction and/or a search for alternative ways or even harsh demographic control to counterbalance “disadvantages” perceived in terms of certain demographic indicators.

Scholarship on larger scale population processes, put forth by demographers, has debated the validity of demographic models concerning a second demographic transition and/or migration transitions. One very important conclusion of such debates is that, behind similarities of trends, we find somewhat specific historical processes that reveal multiple social, economic and cultural factors at work. It has also become clear that, beyond all the discontinuities, there are stable migratory and demographic structures that have allowed the emergence of rather stable empirical patterns and trajectories.⁶ Comparative histories of population policies have revealed how demography as a method of social engineering has contributed massively but in varying ways to the selective control of populations in- and outside Europe and how it has been embedded in global and national ideological and geopolitical debates.⁷ In order to avoid mechanical national and ideological comparisons, pioneering attempts have been made to write transnational histories of demographic thinking.⁸ Most important, there is an increasing interest in the global history of population conferences and international societies, revealing some of the global interactions they had facilitated.⁹ There are also

⁴ e.g. Lynne Haney (2002) *Inventing the Needy: Gender and the Politics of Welfare in Hungary*. University of California Press.

⁵ e.g. Kligman, Gail (1998): *The Politics of Duplicity. Controlling Reproduction in Ceausescu’s Romania*. Berkeley, Los Angeles. UCP. Ulf Brunnbauer (Hg.) (2009): *Transnational Societies, Transterritorial Politics. Migrations in the (Post-)Yugoslav Region, 19th-21st Century*. München: R. Oldenbourg Verlag. Brunnbauer, Ulf (2004) *Fertility, Families and Ethnic Conflict. Macedonians and Albanians in the Republic of Macedonia, 1944-2002*. In: *Nationalities Papers*, 32:3 (2004), 565–598; Hannes Grandits and Ulf Brunnbauer (2013), *The Ambiguous Nation: Socialist and Post-Socialist Nation-Building in Southeastern Europe in Perspective*. Oldenbourg Verlag, München

⁶ e.g. Mansoor, Ali Bryce Quillin (eds) (2007), *Migration and Remittances: Eastern Europe and the Former Soviet Union*, World Bank. Europe and Central Asia Region; Mureşan, C. et al. (2008). *Romania: Childbearing metamorphosis within a changing context*. *Demographic Research* Vol. 19, 855-906, Bonifazi, Corrado (2008). “The evolution of regional patterns of migration in Europe.” In Corrado Bonifazi, Marek Okólski, Jeannette Schoorl and Patrick Simon (eds.) *International Migration in Europe. New Trends and New Methods of Analysis*. Amsterdam: University Press. 107–128; Meslé F. (2004a). *Mortality in Central and Eastern Europe: Long-Term Trends and Recent Upturns*. *Demographic Research, Special Collection 2*: 45–70; Sobotka T. (2002). *Ten Years of Rapid Fertility Changes in the European Post-Communist Countries. Evidence and Interpretation*. Working Paper Series 02-1. Groningen: Population Research Centre; Horváth, I., & Anghel, G. R. (2009). *Migration and Its Consequences for Romania*. *Südosteuropa*, 57, 386-403; Spéder, Zsolt - Kapitány, Balázs: *Failure to Realize Fertility Intentions: A Key Aspect of the Post-communist Fertility Transition*. *Population Research and Policy Review*; January 2014,

⁷ e.g. Weiner, Myron and Michael Teitelbaum: *Political Demography and Demographic Engineering*, Bergahn Books, New York and Oxford; Teitelbaum, Michael S.–. Teitelbaum, Jay M. Winter, Jay M. editors.; New York ..*Population and Resources in Western Intellectual Traditions*. New York–Cambridge: 14 Supp Cambridge University Press, 102–121; .; Teitelbaum, Michael S. and Winter, Jay (1998): *A question of numbers. High migration, low fertility and the politics of national identity*: New York: Hill & Wang; Quine, Maria Sophie (1996): *Population Politics in Twentieth Century Europe*. Routledge, New York; Bashford, Alision (2007): *Nation, Empire, Globe: The Spaces of Population Debate in the Interwar Years* *Comparative Studies in Society and History* (2007), 49: 170-201; Alison Bashford (2014). *Global Population: History, Geopolitics, and Life on Earth*. New York.

⁸ e.g. Hartmann, Heinrich and Corinna R. Unger (2014). *World of populations. Transnational perspectives on demography in the 20th century*. New York, Berghan

⁹ e.g. Cliquet, R. K. Thienpont (1995), *Population and Development: A Message from the Cairo Conference*. Dordrecht, Boston, London: Kluwer Academic Publishers; Zimmermann Susan (forthcoming) ‘The International Labour Organization, transnational women’s networks, and the question of unpaid work in the interwar world’,

pioneering attempts to understand popular beliefs and attitudes concerning population policies, ideas of demographic change and/or migration among non-elite groups for various regions including SEE.¹⁰

Specific histories of population and eugenic policies and discourses concerning South and South East European societies have revealed the massive interaction between scholars and policy makers following international developments before World War II, during state socialism and after the regime changes. It has also been clarified that state socialism saw somewhat varied population policies, clear beyond the clear similarities.¹¹ From a gender perspective, critical historical sociology and critical global history have been developed concerning social and reproductive policies. Utilizing a variety of methods, such work has revealed the micro- and macro-ideological mechanisms of control, repression over families, women and their bodies and a variety of forms of resilience. Such studies have embedded the analysis of demographic discourses into gender-power relations. These analyses show changes under state socialism, and especially after state socialism, but they also demonstrate the very resilient structures of gender suppression.¹²

Many of the insights and actual empirical findings of the above histories are relevant and well demonstrated, but the global and transnational linkages and their consequences have not been properly and systematically investigated in a longer run. We need a new type of global historical sociology to fulfil that task. In order to achieve this goal, we might pose several interrelated questions: What mechanisms, transfers and constructions of knowledge can we observe in these global-local interplays in the context of actual demographic processes? How has demography as a science got integrated globally and how have these forms of integration changed during a time since the 1960s—when demography emerged as a globally institutionalized science? How have SEE experts maneuvered in various debates concerning family planning, abortion, migration and related “development” issues and how have they consolidated their position in “global” and “local” demographic academia? How has demography in SEE countries moved from opening up to addressing the problems of the Third World in the 1950s and 1960s to more restrictively Euro/West-centric perspectives? How have non-elite groups perceived the linkages between “development” and demographic and family change, and how can we contrast this with elite and academic discourses? What dynamics has mimetic competition with and/or violence against, the “West” involve in the context of unequal “development”? Why have countries under partly varied, partly similar demographic and economic structural conditions followed different paths and/or different rhythms of changes in demographic discourses and policies?

The paper will analyze the key topics and key areas covered by demographic journals (like the *Hungarian Demográfia*). It will also analyze some interventions of experts at the events organized by

in: Clare Midgley, Judith Carlier, and Alison Twells (eds) *Women in Transnational History: Gendering the Local and the Global* (Routledge, forthcoming 2016)

¹⁰ e.g. Thornton, Arland (2005). "Reading History Sideways: The Fallacy and Enduring Impact of the Developmental Paradigm on Family Life." University of Chicago Press; Thornton, A. "International Family Change and Continuity: the Past and Future from the Developmental Idealism Perspective." In E. Scott and M. Garrison (eds.). *Marriage at the Crossroads: Legal, Social, and Policy Perspectives*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012; Höhn, Charlotte, Dragana Avramov, Irena Kotowska (2008) *People, Population Change and Policies, Lessons from the Population Policy Acceptance Study – Volume 1*. Avramov, Dragana (2013) (Ed.), *Acceptance of immigrants in Europe?* Verlag Pro Business, 2008

¹¹ e.g. M. Bucur, "Remapping the Historiography of Modernization and State-Building in Southeastern Europe through Health, Hygiene ... (Budapest, 2010), 429–445. Health, hygiene, and eugenics in southeastern Europe to 1945 / edited by Christian Promitzer, Sevasti Trubeta, Marius Turda Budapest : Central European University Press, 2010; Turda, Marius and Paul Weindling (2007), *Blood and homeland" : eugenics and racial nationalism in Central and Southeast Europe, 1900-1940*. Budapest ; New York : Central European University Press, Turda, Marius.(2010). *Modernism and eugenics*. New York : Palgrave Macmillan; Baloutzova, Svetla (2011): *Demography and Nation. Social Legislation and Population Policy in Bulgaria, 1918-1944*. Budapest-New York, Central European University Press;

¹² e.g. Hoerder, Dirk, Elise van Nederveen Meerkerk and Silke Neunsinger, (2015) *Towards a Global History of Domestic and Caregiving Workers*, Brill; Szikra, Dorottya. *Eastern European faces of familialism: Hungarian and Polish family policies from a historical perspective*. In Diana Auth, Eva Buchholz, Stefanie Janczyk (eds.): *Selektive Emanzipation: Analyse zur Gleichstellungs- und Familienpolitik*. [Politik und Geschlecht, Band 21] Verlag Barbara Budrich, Opladen & Farmington Hills, MI, 2010. pp. 239-254. Susan Gal and Gail Kligman (200), *The Politics of Gender After Socialism: An Historical Comparative Essay*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

the UN and IUSSP (e.g. Bucharest and Cairo conference of the UN). It will utilize background interviews of experts in the relevant countries (e.g. Demény, Klinger,) and ones which had a key role at these events and had a view on experts from these countries (e.g. Cliquet). The paper will also analyze the biographies and long term integration of the scholars into demography as a science and their interaction with scholars of other regions. This understanding of the history of ideas will be related and interpreted on the basis longer term comparative databank of specific key demographic processes and structures since 1950 including longer term processes of fertility, mortality, partnership and migration and its structure.¹³ For the most recent period for Bulgaria, Romania and Hungary I will utilize the results of smaller scale surveys on developmental hierarchies which also include how respondents could see the link between demographic change and development.¹⁴ The paper thus will outline relational analysis of the elite discourses, demographic processes and popular cognitive structures in global, comparative and historical framework in order to understand the transnational histories of demographic thinking and processes in the analyzed region.

The paper will demonstrate within the overall development of demography as a global science that national and regional histories did and do have an autonomous role regardless of often similar or converging demographic processes and thus various countries prioritized certain topics and followed certain scientific discursive traditions, while other (otherwise significant) processes were somewhat ignored. There was an overall consensus over pronatalism, but these countries opted for varying versions of pronatalism and there were various approaches of understanding fertility decline. Also fertility decline has been a priority in Hungary (since the 1920s) and much global collaboration has been going on in this respect, while other scholarly communities like in Bulgaria and Romania joined these discussions later and with different agendas. Also very importantly there were differences concerning issues of migration and mortality. It will be also demonstrated that in the 1950s and 1960s the global perspectives were more open toward the “Third World” and later the European focus became far clearer and dominant. Very importantly during state socialism in international terrains the experts of the region presented themselves as experts who could handle some of the problems of demographic analysis not only in their own region, but also in the Third World. This was one of the ways toward international careers and collaborations.

¹³ See Fassmann et al 2014; Melegh 2012

¹⁴ Melegh, Attila, Arland Thornton, Dimiter Philipov and Linda Young-DeMarco (2012) Perceptions of societal developmental hierarchies in Europe and beyond: A Bulgarian Perspective, *European Sociological Review*, Csánó Szabina 2013. Rank-Ordering Modernity. Perceptions of Global Hierarchies and Development in Hungary. M.A. Thesis Central European University – Sociology and Anthropology Department. Tamás Kiss (2016) Positioning on the slope? Perceptions of developmental hierarchies, national self-perceptions, ethnic and regional stereotypization in Romania. – Romanian Institute for Research on National Minorities, Forthcoming