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## **Population science in Central and Eastern Europe: Implications for Research and Practice**

### **Introduction**

Any brief characterization of such a complex discipline as demography must be arbitrary and selective in many respects. First, it should be borne in mind that demography can be used in either a broad or a narrow sense. As David Coleman (2000: 27) puts it, demography is “the statistical study of the processes of reproduction, migration and death in their human species, their interrelations with the distribution and dynamics of population, and their biological, environmental and socio-economic causes and consequences”. This definition would include ethology, population genetics, biosocial anthropology, sociology, and economics. In the narrow sense, following Nathan Keyfitz (1996), demography refers primarily to the analysis of population variables. Both positions have been explored in lively theoretical debates about whether demography is a discipline or a field of study (see e.g. Pavlík, 2000). But whatever it is, it has become obvious over the last decades that more and more demographers have gone beyond the standard demographic accounting because they also wanted to know why a fertility level is dropping or why a mortality level is worsening for specific groups. And to the degree that they have been using more and more ideas borrowed from other disciplines, we could probably now speak of *population science*, i.e., the scientific discipline that covers current knowledge of the size and structure of populations, changes therein, and their causes and consequences.

This article contains an overview of the situation in the field of population studies in the CEE region identifying the most important lines of research and providing insight into promising developments and lacunae, partly with a view of the possible effects of population research on social policy and on political issues. As a result of the extremely short duration of our investigation as well as the lack of systematic surveys of research results in the countries under consideration, the presented overview is correspondingly brief (and general). It is based on information that was quickly available and that consequently varies in volume from section to section. This means that the availability of information relating to various aspects of population science development also can vary greatly. The following descriptions call for more extensive study of the field.

We begin by placing population science in its historical context and then describe the socio-political and cultural contexts of the field’s development, followed by a section discussing some theoretical and applied approaches.

### **1. Analysis of the pre-1989 situation**

#### **Historical outline**

Demography had to move through several stages of development until the new science, with its more rigorous methodology and systematic theory-building, took over. Although a wide variety of scholars, including anthropologists, biologists, psychologists, historians, sociologists, and economists, were involved in population research, the early years of demography were most clearly interwoven with the development of statistics. Actuaries developed much of the theory, and statisticians and biostatisticians added the techniques of numerical and casual analyses (Keyfitz, 1996).

As a result, demographic analysis has often some claim to be considered the beginning of population science itself, in that the relative growth and decline of populations has been a fundamental concern of political and economic theorists since Machiavelli and Boisguilbert. A

more sophisticated algebra of human numbers began as early as the 17th century, when John Graunt used statistical methods to estimate the male-female ratio at birth and to conclude that people have unequal risks of death. The first technical problem that demographers solved was how to go from statistics of deaths and of exposed populations to the probabilities of dying (the first actuary tables were developed in the Netherlands and in Britain during the course of the 18th century). Later, Malthus and his 19th-century contemporaries observed that human numbers are checked not only by mortality, but also by institutions and customs, like delayed marriage, that keep fertility well below the biological maximum for the species (but the development of a general method of analyzing how these and other factors influence populations' structures dates only to the 1950s, when the French demographer, Louis Henry, initiated a new approach). The pioneer in demographic methods and models was Alfred J. Lotka, who in a series of papers extending from 1907 to 1948 showed how to answer the questions that are still being asked. A central one was "How fast is a given population really growing, as determined by its age-specific birth and death rates, in abstraction from its age distribution?"

The search for general principles of population dynamics has also been going on for a long time. Up to now, no one has discovered a definitive, all-encompassing, spatially and temporally invariant set of principles of population change, but many have contributed interesting ideas. Malthus' *An Essay on the Principle of Population* (1798) identified the checks to population and for most of the 19th century they remained the basics of political economy, though his population principles seemed to impose narrow limits to the possibilities of economic growth and social improvement. Another important contribution to population theories was made during the 19th and early 20th centuries. An essential part of Dumont's *Principle of Social Capillarity* (1890) was that people with ambition to rise restrict their fertility to enable them to take advantage of opportunities to move up the social ladder.

During the progressive era (approximately between 1880 and 1920) with its stronger concern for social issues, demography appeared to have been more influenced by a broad cultural matrix, and there was growing interest in the problems created by industrialization and urbanization, but also in the personal domain of life. Scholars began focusing on face-to-face family relationships, the implications of family life for individual well being, and, particularly during the 1920s (and later in the 1930s), on ways to predict success in marriage and family life. There were, of course, other threads in population research that were not entirely family- or individual-oriented.

Pre-war demographers, too, were usually affiliated with statistics. The major element unifying demography and statistics at that time was a population census that still remains the most comprehensive and valuable source of statistical data on population. The censuses were not only a fertile soil for the further growth of demography, but also the first real field of its application and of its connection to the public domain. National statistical offices or bureaus provided a home to many demographers of that time, especially in Central and Eastern Europe, and became a hub for demographic research. Academia recruited many university teachers and professors from the "state" demographers. Later, mostly after the World War II, some of them joined the universities and built the chairs or institutes of demography. But pre-war demography in the region remains a discipline of rather "private" demographers, i.e., a discipline without its own institutional settings.

Generally, in the 20th century, descriptive analyses of fertility, mortality, and migration differentials began to receive considerable attention. The so-called *demographic transition theory* was formulated (see e.g. Thompson, 1929; Notestein, 1945; Blacker, 1947) and repeatedly reformulated (Coale, 1973; Caldwell, 1976; Léridon, 1981; van de Kaa, 1987), and the use of typologies in developing conceptual schemes was proposed. The other prominent theoretical framework that developed in the post-war period was Landry's (1934) concept of *demographic revolution* (see e.g. Pavlík, 1979, 1981; Vishnevsky, 1982).

On the other hand, with some notable exceptions, theoretical enterprises seemingly went into decline from the 1950s to the mid-1980s. In most national demographies, quantitative methodology remained the "gold standard" of population research. Especially beginning in the

1960s, scholars increasingly used computer-facilitated multivariate statistical techniques. These techniques allowed for a closer fit between complex theories and statistical procedures, since several variables could be examined simultaneously and interactively and several measures could be used as indicators of an underlying theoretical construct (Bogue, 1969; Coale, 1972; Land and Rogers, 1982). In many ways, however, advances in the sophistication of statistical methods had outpaced advances in population theory and measurement. There often were elegant analyses of relatively crude measures not supported by a corresponding theory; research questions were selected more on the basis of the availability of a statistical technique than on the substantive value of what was under study.

That is why many reviewers of the field pointed out that the late 1980s were not only the end of an era of ideologically unified science in the former communist countries (see the following section), but also the beginning of a new stage in the development of population science itself. First of all, there appeared to be a revival of interest in developing theory alongside more methodological diversity. At the same time, demographers increasingly recognized the contextual limits of population theory and research knowledge. Academically, population science grew more open to developments and fashions in other disciplines involving greater numbers of sociologists, anthropologists, social biologists, and economists, but also of physicians, lawyers, policy analysts, and social workers.

### **The spectrum of Marxism-Leninism**

The field's development in the post-war period in the CEE region was undoubtedly influenced by the state socialism system, particularly the rule of command economies, doctrinal orthodoxy, and the leadership claims of communist parties. The question of the extent to which scholars used Marxist social theory as a point of departure for their research cannot however be answered in general terms. At first glance, the Marxist-Leninist conception of history, particularly the Marxist theory of conflict, seemed reflected in the development of population theory, and was often called the socialist theory of population. It considered the modern history of population mainly a reflection of the contradictions of capitalism and proclaimed that only the socialist system could allow working people to realize their choices and preferences, for example, in family matters and marriage. In turn, the economic (material) determinism of this approach led to preoccupation with macro-analysis in demographic research and, as a result, the dominant use of quantitative techniques. Although not faring well in dealing with the many aspects of demographic behavior or, for example, in explaining the hidden unemployment also existing under socialism, Marxist-Leninist ideas were also extensively used when population-related policies and programs were being designed and put into effect.

In the course of time, the limitations of conceptualizing population issues in Marxist (socialist) terms became apparent to most demographers. Marxism, for example, offered fewer (if any) impulses for scholarly enterprises dealing with the measurement of demographic processes and their prospective effects. The failed attempts to explain demographic phenomena in social theory terms, however, had an important by-product in that the specificity of population development became much clearer than that of other social processes. In the late 1970s, this already led to a search for a synthesis between the Marxist-Leninist approach and theories emphasizing familial and individual behaviors. By the mid-1980s, a number of studies had provided evidence that class (social) differences were not the only source of the origins and continued existence of variations in demographic behavior among population (sub)groups, and that the Marxist model conceiving the separation between the individual and society had limited the kind of research questions that could be asked. It was recognized that demographic phenomena had too often been seen as outputs of social practices instead of as an essential part of them. In other words, researchers were more and more confronted with the question of the application of Marxism in population theory and analysis.

The influence of the ruling ideology on the development of demography varied among the former socialist countries and was probably greatest in the countries where the main focus was placed on designing universal population theory (e.g. the USSR, Bulgaria, and Romania).

Opposition to Marxist ideology was either “legal”/“soft” (in the form of further development and specification of Marx’s and Lenin’s ideas) or, less often, illegal (public criticism and resistance). In the former socialist countries, Marx’s work not only paradoxically inspired many demographers to varying degrees; even those who rejected Marxism-Leninism frequently found themselves “obliged” to define their own thought in relation to it.

### **The impact of Western theories**

By almost universal consent, the principal theoretical orientation of pre-World War II demography was *structural-functionalism* (or simply functionalism), and some functionalist assumptions remained central to demographic studies, particularly to family studies, during the period of state socialism, as well. In this framework, a pivotal notion was that, to perform its functions in an optimal fashion, the family must have a particular kind of structure or arrangement of the roles composing a social system. According to functionalists, role-specialization increased a system’s (in this case, the family’s) functionality. Consequently, family policies often stemmed from the so-called “social work” values, in terms of help or self-help to overcome “inadequacies” in fulfilling family functions.

The emergence of *modern systems theories* also had some impact on the development of population theory, especially since the mid-1960s. Demographers began to consider applications of systems theories to the process of population reproduction (growth) or, to a lesser extent, to family dynamics. Concomitant with an interest in systems theory was the family field’s recognition that policies affect families and that family professionals have a role in policy-making. As early as the mid-1970s, there was already significant pressure on governments to focus their policy more directly on the well being of “socialist families”. Demographers in particular emphasized that recognition of the family system must involve some clear consideration of how various alternative policies could either foster family development or discourage the institution.

Theorists working in the area undoubtedly “borrowed” from other Western theories, too. More specifically, *family development theory* provided them with the idea of “family life-cycle stages” and of “family transitions”, whereas *human ecology theory* brought their attention to the concept of the “sustainability of environments”. Among the newer versions of demographic transition theory, the *European Fertility Project* seems to have been the most influential. This project, undertaken by scholars associated with Princeton University, came up with a number of important findings, e.g. that economic development was not a necessary condition for fertility to start declining in Europe. Last but not least, scholarship undertaken in Western countries demonstrated to demographers from the former socialist camp the advantages of prospective longitudinal methods and of the uses of *simulation* and *experimentation*.

## **2. Redefinition of the discipline since 1990**

The beginning of the 1990s marked a turning point in the development of social science in the CEE region. First of all, Marxist-Leninist doctrine came under attack for its political prejudices, hegemonic nature, and lack of empirical verification. This criticism, along with the fostering penetration of theories and methods used in the Western countries, underlined important shifts in the understanding and application of demographic research. In this section, we attempt to sketch some major changes that occurred in the field in the 1990s, while recognizing that this description is inevitably incomplete and oversimplified.

### **Change of paradigms**

The most important change has been the replacement of one, dominant, Marxist (materialistic) paradigm by a plurality of relatively autonomous conceptual frameworks and analyses.<sup>1</sup> A second important change is the trend toward more theoretical and methodological diversity. Although the concept of demographic transition is still the backbone of theoretical discourse in demography, the classic works have been frequently revisited, reread, and reinterpreted in the light of new knowledge as well as of changing experience, interests, and cultural meanings. On the whole, there has been an increased blending of theories and methods typically associated with different disciplines and a growing consensus among population researchers that the opposition between quantitative and qualitative methods is artificial and limiting. But one of the consequences of the acceptance of diverse kinds of theories and methodologies is a lack of consensus about how to evaluate the quality of these theories and of population research in general.

The other major development, in our view, has been the movement toward more concern with the contextual and cultural dimensions of demographic phenomena. Criticism of the existing conceptual and methodological frameworks have displayed skepticism about the earlier goal of codified, abstract population (meta)theory. It has been more often emphasized that the knower and the object of knowledge cannot be separated and that knowledge of the world also requires the study of language and meanings constructed by the observer. In other words, a post-positivist view became more articulated that demography cannot find an overarching theoretical construction because of the inherent complexity of population development and the cultural/contextual specificities involved in interpreting that development. This in turn has led to an increased focus on the transmission of ethics, values, and religion through demographic studies, particularly those dealing with fertility and migration issues.

In the 1990s, demographers in Central and Eastern Europe also attempted to reconsider the dichotomy between population science and social interventions, particularly the public policy implications of their work. The absence of an objective, value-free approach to population issues under the communist regimes raised a number of important questions about the relationship between science (theory) and practice. Knowledge for itself versus knowledge for social change – or to what degree should population science be viewed as basic (fundamental) science, to what degree as applied science? Starting in the second half of the 1990s, this question has attracted more and more attention among demographers in the CEE countries, as a result of the ongoing changes in population dynamics and behaviors and their consequences for large-scale social development.

Before describing the core theoretical and methodological orientations in more detail, two comments are necessary. The first concerns the change of professional elites in time. The second relates to the current conditions, that is, to the extent and form of institutionalization.

### **Change of elites and the new institutional structures**

In the early 1990s, most researchers in the CEE countries had to legitimize their previous (social) position as well as their academic work in the field, but demography was generally less influenced by replacement of its elites than some other scientific disciplines were. We have even discovered that few personal changes among demographic researchers since 1989 can be attributed solely to political screening. Influenced by restructuring processes within academia (including funding shortages), on the one hand, and by emerging opportunities in society, particularly in business and management, on the other, a number of recognized professionals have “voluntarily” left the field. But it is unclear whether the quantity of personal replacements was due to the ideological neutrality of scholars involved in population studies compared with those working in other areas like history, sociology, or economics or if was because of the lower competitiveness of their professional backgrounds and skills.

In our view, the most important change in personnel policy was that, beginning in the 1990s, good education and expert knowledge of the issues of the field of population studies became more significant qualification criteria for professional appointment than they were before. Generally,

academic institutions had not previously regarded professional skills as a crucial requirement. Instead, ideological faithfulness, often party membership, and length of service were seen as the most important factors determining one's professional career in the field. At present, the academization process is a fairly self-evident phenomenon, and young university graduates have more chances "to come to power", at least in principle. The increasing involvement of younger scholars has led to a broadening and deepening of the research agenda and, to some degree, to a shift from the heteronomous values that determined research practice before 1990 to more autonomous academic values, i.e., values that are inherent to the cognitive process itself (including the striving for "better" knowledge, independent of the interests of third parties). Demographically, the field now has a greater number of women in visible positions and, to a lesser extent, individuals from ethnic minority groups.

To date, there has been little systematic insight into the effects of *institutionalization processes* on the scope and quality of scholarly practice in the field of demography in the CEE region since 1989. First, though some new structures have been established, especially in countries with worrying population developments, on the whole, developments have been the opposite. Starting in the early 1990s, the number of scholars and the level of research funding were reduced in many existing units. Population studies also seem to have lost their previous prestige among university graduates in competition with such areas as marketing, management, and business administration, which offer a wider choice of careers and better salaries.

Second, our brief investigation provides evidence that impulses for institutional (professional) renewal often took place outside existing academic structures. In particular, the demand from policy makers and public administrators for demographic expertise became more urgent, due the increasing pressure on governments to develop social programs for pensioners, to manage migration problems, to reform health care systems, etc. As a consequence, in a majority of cases, the new structures have not been created as exclusively scientific units. The new academic institutions are more oriented toward processes of social change than are traditional ones, and therefore focus more on developing specific instruments that can contribute to these processes.

### **3. Core theoretical and methodological orientations**

As noted earlier, no clear dominant framework can be discerned at present in the theoretical and methodological pluriformity of population studies. In the search for useful theoretical concepts, the notions of "classic" and "modern" theorists are examined and, if possible, reinterpreted on the basis of newer population research as well as of recent developments in other scientific disciplines. Sometimes, after trying and testing, a specific approach becomes a preferred method on a local level. But in practice, the boundaries between the different theoretical constructions are inevitably blurred.

#### **Revival and adaptation of major pre-war traditions**

Current demographic research often starts with the revival of concepts that have their roots in pre-war years. In this respect, *structural-functionalism* should be mentioned first, not only because it occupied a central place in population studies in the pre-war period, but also because many recent studies have continued applying functionalist assumptions, in spite of arguments against doing so. The central theoretical issue that already preoccupied Parsons, that is, the condition of equilibrium (e.g. sustainable population reproduction), is still being addressed, though few demographers today explicitly use functionalist terminology, much less call themselves functionalists. Literature on the family and lifestyles, in particular, represents the realm of population research in which nonconformity ("deviance behavior"), the other important functionalist notion, is most articulated. Undoubtedly, there are important differences between classic pre-war theory and neo-

functionalism, which has shifted its focus much closer to general theory in both psychology and sociology (see e.g. Alexander, 1985).

Another important theoretical orientation of the 1920s and 1930s, *symbolic interactionism*, has also, though to lesser extent, shaped the area throughout the 1990s. Conceptualizing families as social groups and as sets of interacting selves and identities leads family demographers to examine questions like: How do time, age, gender, class, or race/ethnicity relate to family groups? What strategies and tactics do family members use to construct familial realities and negotiate familial roles? That is, how are family identities constructed, learned, and eventually played out; why are some family roles deemed more important than others; and how do individuals add their uniqueness to family roles? In recent years, scholars have been paying more attention to the formulation of concepts and theories that specify the nature of connection between the individual and society. At the same time, symbolic interactionism has been extensively employed in historical and comparative research.

As demographers moved increasingly from cross-sectional to longitudinal analysis (or a combination of the two), the *concept of family cycle* surfaced again the early 1990s. This framework, which can be traced already at the beginning of the 20th century (see e.g. Rowntree, 1906), has provided a scheme by which families can be sorted and has also been used as an independent variable predicting some other elements of population development. The family life cycle has generally been considered as having a varying number of predetermined stages – based on marriage, childbearing, child-rearing, and dissolution through the death of a spouse – that characterize the development of family units. It has also been emphasized that a cluster of social, economic, geographical, health, and other factors influences the timing of the family, which in turn influences the cluster. When combined with the concept of the birth or marriage cohort, the family life cycle has also served as a convenient mechanism for studying change in family structure and process. More recent research in this area has expanded to include information on the interrelationships between the family life cycle and a variety of related life cycle processes, such as schooling and employment.

If we are not limited to the concepts emerging before World War II, then the impact of *exchange and resource theories* should be especially mentioned. Probably because these theories (which first appeared in the West in the 1950s) viewed individuals' relationships as extended "markets", they had little influence on the field in CEE countries until the recent decade. However, starting in the early 1990s, the exchange framework has methodically worked its way into the mainstream of population studies, particularly in family demography.

Finally, although not all demographic analyses carried out in pre-war years can be compared to those of today, the basic *statistical procedures* continue to be an important tool for contemporary demographic scholarship. The ongoing evolution of research tools is mainly a result of developing databases and high-speed computer usage. Also, almost until the mid-1980s, specific theoretical frameworks were usually associated with specific measurement techniques. For example, demographers based in symbolic interactionism applied global self-report measures, while researchers influenced by the family cycle perspective preferred observational measures. In recent years, after much has been written about the complementary uses of various measurement procedures in the study of population phenomena (i.e., the emergence of "critical multiplism"), demographers seem to be more concerned with how to incorporate in their research both quantitative and qualitative instruments of analysis.

### **New approaches**

Though new trends in development of population studies are too numerous to be detailed here, perhaps we may identify their core element as an effort to synthesize the macro- and micro-levels, beginning with the premise that individuals' choices and behaviors are either constrained or enhanced by the structural conditions and the cultural milieu in which they live. This shift away from exclusively structural analysis in favor of more complex conceptual models can be seen in



demographers' growing preference for the construct "life course" and the corresponding decline of interest in the construct "family life cycle".

As compared with the family cycle approach, in life-course studies the unit of analysis has shifted from the family as a unit to individuals in the family and the timing of crucial events or transitions in their lives (While some early studies took the perspective of adult society, more recent work is beginning to view life stages from the perspective of all individuals involved in them). The conceptual focus became the choices persons make, along with their consequences, within an ever-shifting structural and cultural context. More recently, as demographers focus on individuals' ongoing reconstruction of their life course over time, increased attention is also being paid to the construct 'control'. Cohort analysis is seen as particularly helpful in life-course research but, as a general rule, the earlier the historical period of the study, the more difficult life-course analysis is.

In the course of the 1990s, the use of new statistical methodologies for demographic research has also been expanded among scholars in the CEE region. At the same time, there are major currents of demographic scholarship that have not yet influenced mainstream population science in the CEE region, for example, gay and lesbian demographic research and radical social theories of the family. As well, the broad cultural movement termed postmodernism began to influence 'Western' demographers already in the late 1980s, but has not been much considered by their 'Eastern' counterparts.

Of the related issues, one that especially intrigues us is the *theoretical heterogeneity or pluralism* in the field. Some scholars take the diversity for granted and view it as natural and constructive. Others are critical of the degenerative nature of bitter disputes between advocates of different theories and conceptual frameworks. Still others are addressing alternative responses to pluralism. At the moment, however, we are not too optimistic that the discussion of that relationship will be acted on in the field very thoroughly or even very rapidly. The main reason is that the existing social system of demography is oriented toward rewarding scholars for substantive, theoretical, and methodological contributions to rather direct and immediate understanding of population development. Hence, there likely will be limited opportunities in the future for many demographers to devote much of their careers to what one can identify as population metascience.

There is no strong antagonism between the quantitative and qualitative methods in population studies. Varying scientific instruments are applied depending on the subject and the propositions of the research. A more serious challenge facing demographers seems to be the *relationship between theory and methods*. Many scholars involved in population studies have been critical of the lack of congruence between the theory, measurement, and analysis used to conduct demographic research (see e.g. Pavlík, 2000). This concern raises questions about the relationship between theory and method more generally. Do particular theoretical positions necessitate the adoption of particular research methods? To date, very little discussion of this kind has however been attempted.

Further systematic consideration is also needed to answer the question about *interdisciplinary work* in demographic scholarship. In recent years, demographers have repeatedly discovered that the interdisciplinary cooperation they aspired to is more or less a pipe dream that is difficult to realize. First, the development of new interdisciplinary (conceptual) frameworks and a new interdisciplinary language seems to be more difficult than had been expected. The institutionalization of interdisciplinary cooperation is even harder. In reality, many research projects that aim at interdisciplinary cooperation are, more often than not, multidisciplinary projects.

#### **4. Thematic orientations and funding**

Contemporary demography is a widely ramifying discipline, subdivided into numerous areas of specialized study. The demarcation of these areas follows the institutionalized, functional divisions in society quite closely, answering the effective or assumed demand of the established areas of management.

Though political, economic, and social transition has not been the first-hand or direct object of population studies, its impact on parameters of population reproduction and demographic structures is one of the major topics of present Eastern European demography. Compared with the first half of the 1990s, when population research focused mainly on describing new developments, recent years are characterized by increasing attempts to classify and explain what has happened and where population development is going.

The demographic changes faced by post-communist countries in the last decade have been linked to all the principal components of population reproduction and, therefore, the hierarchy of themes frequently reflects national specificities. Nevertheless, a final selection of topics is determined mainly by the available financial resources. Thus, the thematic orientation of population research and the approaches applied are often guided by the preferences of the main fund providers.

Given the variety of population development over the last decade, any overview of current population research topics is necessarily incomplete. The decline of fertility and its perspectives, changes in mortality and its factors, new forms of family behavior, international migration, its consequences and the integration of migrants, population policy and its acceptance, and population prospects, together with demographic aging, are only the topics of the day. Even if the thematic focus of Eastern European demography has tended to converge with what we can observe in Western Europe, there are still important differences in handling the issues. Most population studies dealing with population development in the CEE region remain quite descriptive, without any deeper attempts to understand and explain factors and processes underlying observed changes.

Perhaps this can be explained in part by the fact that, after 1989, almost all countries in the CEE region have witnessed appreciable reductions in their academic research funding for population studies. In some countries, university finding has come to an almost complete stop due to government policy, and the volume of funds generally available for population research has only recently begun growing, in concordance with emerging problems or threats connected to observed or expected population development. The structure of resources is changing, and the proportion between private and public involvement differs significantly from country to country. In general, the private funds, represented mostly by private or corporate foundations, prevailed in the early 1990s, but about five years ago they started moving their activities from the more to the less affluent countries of the region. Their vacancies were partially filled by public sources – retrieved and new domestic as well as foreign and international funds. At present, population research has explored commercial sources more often. In recent years, the latter's share of overall funding has rapidly grown in the region, especially because the role of marketing and market research is increasing.

On the other hand, the way population studies projects are currently being financed marks the final product and particularly the scope and nature of the academic output. Demographers in the CEE region are increasingly dependent on financing from third parties and more and more demographic enterprises are commissioned by non-academic institutions; this has modified the venue and character of population research. The research usually must be policy/practice-oriented, and the duration of study is mostly short. Many study projects that are not directly relevant to immediate practical outputs are neglected. Since not all the specific research interests can be tied unambiguously to administrative demands, politics has led to rather scant theoretic results in the recent years.

## Conclusion

The field of population studies in the CEE countries has all the characteristics of a scholarly terrain still in its development: numerous foreign influences and the odd impulse for original theory formulation. The most important advances in demographic methodology have occurred mainly due to the cumulative nature of demographic (quantitative) knowledge and to the region's demographers' access to substantial increases in computational power. There has been a shift away from theories emphasizing structure and stability toward theories emphasizing process and change and a concurrent emphasis on causal relationships. Also related to this development has been the change in the significance ascribed to psychology in the evolution of demographic phenomena. The psyche is no longer seen exclusively as a reflection of society, but now has an independent significance and status. A shift has also occurred in thinking on the function and form of ideology. Ideology has recently been seen as more than a false representation of the reality underlying individuals' behavior. This in turn gives rise to research on the relations between normativity, normalization, and subjectivity, i.e., broader application of discourse analysis in population studies.

Reviewing interdisciplinary cooperation, demographic scholarship more often than not continues to merely "tolerate" the knowledge obtained in other fields, and it is still rather uncustomary to take deliberations on new research in existing disciplines as a principle point of departure for studying population phenomena and their changes. We find this "tolerant" attitude in many demographic writings; the advances of neighboring disciplines are noted, but have no effect on the propositions or conceptual frameworks. For population science, the question of the boundaries of the discipline thus remains relevant. This is not because no boundaries have been outlined, but because these boundaries should perhaps be drawn in different places and be more flexible. It is not uncommon in population studies for various research groups to function in the same discipline without taking actual note of each other's work. If we take this into consideration, the existence of an "autonomous" demographic research group alongside other groups cannot be a measure of the success of demographic scholarship.

Finally, in the 1990s, public issues became an important area of demographic scholarship: academic questions were often derived from social questions relevant to population development at that point in time. But the increasing emphasis on practical value and policy relevance is also open to question. Once scientific knowledge is viewed as a politically informed social construction, how does the role of the social scientist differ from that of politician or political activist? If demography as a social science should be "emancipatory", as most practitioners and some scholars believe, then what counterbalancing ethical principles should guide the researcher in interpreting data and generating theory? To use MacIntyre's (1984) term, are there not certain "virtues" in the practice of social science, such as truthfulness, honesty, and openness to new information, that are so central to scholarly integrity as to be uncompromisable, even if the emancipatory effect of the work is thereby diminished? If professional demographers are to contribute to the public dialogue about important social issues – and not just reflect a segment or prevailing opinion, whether radical, liberal, or conservative – then they must be willing to challenge all manner of received wisdom in order to pursue understandings that are probably not present in current public discourse.

As for the future prospects of population science in the CEE countries, our main source of optimism is that more kinds of people are now joining the scholarly dialogue in the field and that more demographers are looking self-awarely at how the world influences their work and how their work influences the world. If demography can become more inclusive as a field and if demographers are open to these new perspectives, then population studies will have resolved existing dichotomies between macro- and micro-research, quantitative and qualitative methods, practitioners and scholars (academicians), advocates of population science as a multidisciplinary field versus population science as a primary discipline, etc. We therefore hope that, for

demographers, our report can provide an impulse to further develop of the field, and that, for other readers, it can stimulate further cognizance of the results in their own or other disciplines.

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<sup>1</sup> It is also noteworthy that the spectacular collapse of communism after 1989 has not led to overall contempt for Marx's and Lenin's ideas about population issues. Revised by post-Marxist followers from Central and Eastern Europe as well as from social welfare states, some Marxist-Leninist explanations are still used in analyzing demographic trends and phenomena. Unlike their orthodox predecessors, contemporary Marxist-inspired demographers view the demise of capitalisms and, particularly, class inequality as a necessary but not as a sufficient condition to provide all people with equal possibilities for realization of their choices within and outside the family. In practice, they also often apply other macro-structural approaches, for instance considering family structures and social systems as intervening constructs.

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