

Changes of Family Related Behaviour in Romania. A Life-Course Perspective.

- Habilitation Thesis -

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Abstract

In the 15 years elapsed since I obtained the PhD in sociology with a thesis on demographic developments in Romania, I have continued the study of the national population, at first anchored in the macro-analytic perspective of classical demographic methodology, but later embracing the life course perspective, i.e. a micro-analytical and longitudinal approach.

Dealing with family-related demographic processes in a life-course perspective and analysed by event-history analytical tools has been my main research concern, and I am the first scientist in Romania who has conducted such studies. In the following I describe five of my papers which are part of the main flux of my international publications.

In the paper on the *Impact of Induced Abortion on Fertility in Romania* (Mureşan, 2008a) I am looking to show to what extent induced abortion, used illegally in the period 1967-1989 and legally after 1990, had any effect on first, second, and third births. Using my own analytical strategy I have managed to prove that the liberalisation of abortion after two decades of total ban had an immediate effect on second and third order births, but contributed less to the decline in first order births. Moreover I show when the role of abortion in limiting births started to decline, what categories of women first stopped using it, and how women changed strategy across time in using induced abortion as a means of birth control.

In the article on *The negative educational gradients in Romanian fertility* (Mureşan and Hoem 2010) we show that in Romania, contrary to what is observed in some Western countries, second and third birth intensities fall along with increases in the educational attainment of women. We also show how the negative educational gradient of fertility becomes even more pronounced when we control for unobserved heterogeneity. New and original in this paper is also that we consider, for the first time in Romania, not the level of education as it is reported at the time of interview, which has little connection with the level attained at the time of birth, but the current level of education in any month, including the situation when the mother is still enrolled in education.

The next two ISI papers are co-authored with Jan Hoem, and they both use the newest methodology in event-history analysis. Both propose new fertility-level indicators, namely 1) an indirectly standardized total fertility rate, calculated using the hazard rates estimated by even-history analyses, as described in *An Extension of the Conventional TFR* (Hoem and Mureşan 2011a) and 2) the total union-type fertility rate, by various union situations (like consensual unions, direct marriages, marriages with pre-marital cohabitation, etc.) published in *The Total Marital Fertility Rate and its Extensions* (Hoem

and Mureşan 2011b). They have been applied to Romanian GGS data, which makes Romania the first country in Europe where such levels of reproductive life-time fertility have been estimated, highlighting the role of structural changes in educational attainment, of human capital accumulation, and the diversification of partnership formation in Romanian reproductive behaviour. In future projects we plan to include replications with other countries' GGS data and further development of the methodology with population register data, which we can do in the case of Finland.

A paper which has attracted much attention in international publications, *Traces of the Second Demographic Transition in Four Selected Countries in Central and Eastern Europe: Union Formation as a Demographic Manifestation* (Hoem et al, 2009a), is co-authored with colleagues from the Max Plank Institute for Demographic Research. Using data from the first round of the national Gender and Generations Surveys of Romania, Bulgaria, Hungary, and Russia, we study rates of entry into marital and non-marital unions. We have used elements from the narrative of the Second Demographic Transition (SDT) as a vehicle to give our analysis of the data from the four countries some coherence, and find what can be traces of the SDT in these countries. The details vary by country; in particular, latter-day developments in union formation patterns did not start at the same time in all the countries. In our assessment it began everywhere, somewhat surprisingly, before communism fell, however, that is, before the societal transition to a market economy got underway in 1990.

In the immediately coming years I am involved in my project aimed at “*Understanding Family Change from the Life Course Perspective. Romania in European Context*”, UEFISCDI grant PN-II-ID-PCE-2011-3-0145. Together with my research team, I focus on Romania, but we will situate the country in a wider European context. From February 2013, for four years, I will extend collaboration to foreign partners in the Seventh Framework Programme, the large scale collaborative project “*FamiliesAndSocieties - Changing families and sustainable societies: Policy contexts and diversity over the life course and across generations*”, European Commission grant 320116 / FP7-SSH-2012-1. Its aim is to investigate the diversity of family forms, relationships and life courses in Europe, to assess the compatibility of existing policies with these changes, and to contribute to evidence-based policy-making. Coordinated by the Stockholm University, the consortium brings together 25 leading universities, research institutes from 15 European countries, three transnational civil society actors and a large number of national and international stakeholders.

Note: All my contributions so far based on the Romanian data of the 2005 GGS are now accessible to the Romanian speaking public in my latest book, entitled *Changes of the family related behaviour in Romania. A life-course perspective* (Mureşan 2012).¹

¹ This book also contains other papers of mine, which are not quoted here but are published in foreign journals (see the list of publications). It also contains enhanced versions of my working-papers published at the Max Plank Institute for Demographic Research during my stay there. In addition, the first three chapters deal with more general, paradigmatic aspects of the life-course theory, they sketch a suitable research design, and they present generalities about event-history analysis, in order to provide the reader with principles, concepts, notions, and methods belonging to the life-course paradigm. This will be useful in browsing the volume.