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Overview Chapter 5: Determinants of family formation and childbearing during the societal transition in Central and Eastern Europe

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Overview Chapter 5: Determinants of family formation and childbearing during the societal transition in Central and Eastern Europe

Tomas Frejka¹

Abstract

Societal conditions for early and high rates of childbearing were replaced by conditions generating late and low levels of fertility common in Western countries. Central among factors shaping the latter behaviour (job insecurity, unstable partnership relationships, expensive housing, and profound changes in norms, values and attitudes) were the following: increasing proportions of young people were acquiring advanced education, a majority of women were gainfully employed, yet women were performing most household maintenance and childrearing duties. Two theories prevailed to explain what caused changes in family formation and fertility trends. One argues that the economic and social crises were the principal causes. The other considered the diffusion of western norms, values and attitudes as the prime factors of change. Neither reveals the root cause: the replacement of state socialist regimes with economic and political institutions of contemporary capitalism. The extraordinarily low period TFRs around 2000 were the result of low fertility of older women born around 1960 overlapping with low fertility of young women born during the 1970s.

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1. Introduction

The abrupt termination of the autocratic and centrally planned systems in Central and Eastern Europe, and the ensuing political, social and economic transition, were historically unprecedented. The fast changing societal environment generated rapid changes in family formation, partnership relationships and childbearing. New, different sets of constraints and incentives for childbearing behaviour emerged in the 1990s. How unique and extraordinary these new conditions were can be better understood by exploring and outlining the broad historical context and developments of the past two centuries.

Once European populations had passed through the industrial and technological revolutions and the demographic transition of the 19th and early 20th centuries, the two halves of Europe divided by the Iron Curtain took very different paths. During the latter decades of the 20th century, the consequences of social and economic developments in the West² led to an increase in the importance of factors conducive to low fertility rates in many Western European countries. In contrast, during the same period societal conditions in the state socialist authoritarian and centrally planned regimes had developed an environment that was comparatively favourable for early and relatively high rates of childbearing. When the state socialist regimes collapsed in Central and Eastern Europe, the entire societal and institutional system was transformed. Incentives and constraints related to childbearing ended equally abruptly, and were replaced within a period of a few years by a new social, economic and welfare system that is based on the same principles as institutional systems in Western societies. During the 1990s and the early 21st century, young people of prime childbearing age adjusted to these new conditions, which were mirrored by changes in family formation, partnership relationships and patterns of childbearing.

The principal focus of this chapter is to gain a better understanding of the family formation and childbearing determinants during the transition from socialism to capitalism³. Section 2 contains a concise sketch of the secular historical context of

² In this chapter the dichotomy of Western Europe (the West) and Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) is employed. The latter includes all formerly state socialist countries, whereas the former includes the remainder of Europe, namely all countries of Northern, Western and Southern Europe where market economies operated throughout the 20th century.

³ Intentionally the actual trends and patterns of family formation and childbearing are not described and analyzed in this chapter. A detailed exposition of this topic can be found in the country chapters and an overview was presented, for instance, in chapters 7 and 8 in Sobotka (2004). It would be redundant to essentially repeat such an analysis in this chapter.

European fertility trends up to the second half of the 20th century. Section 3 explores the basic circumstances of the Western European fertility decline from the 1960s through the 1990s. This analysis of Western European developments is justified and relevant because analogous conditions emerged in Central and Eastern Europe after the collapse of state socialism. In section 4, the basic demographic mechanism of fertility trends during the state socialist era is analysed so that these trends can be compared to those of Western countries, as well as to those of Central and Eastern Europe of the 1990s and 2000s. Section 5 characterises the contemporary historical context in Central and Eastern Europe. Section 6 analyses the demographic structural background of the extraordinarily low period fertility rates of the mid- to late 1990s. In section 7, the main reasons for the fertility trends in the contemporary transitional period are discussed. Section 8 deals with the various specific factors modifying childbearing during the transition from socialism to capitalism that were identified in the country chapters. In the final section, the main conclusions are summarized.

2. The secular historical context

By the middle of the 20th century, European societies had experienced major economic and social transformations. General modernization, industrialization and urbanization, which generated the growth of various social strata, especially of the working and the middle classes, were spreading throughout Europe. The timing of these processes was very different from one country to another. There were still a number of populations living in rather underdeveloped economic and social conditions in countries such as Portugal, Macedonia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and, most notably, Albania; as well as in regions of deficient development within these and other countries, such as Poland, Slovakia and Romania.

Almost all European populations had passed through the demographic transition by mid-20th century. Individuals and families had adjusted to the historical, structural, economic and social changes. Childrearing had become costly, children were no longer contributing to the family economy, and children's contribution to old age security was small and decreasing. Economic and psychological costs by far outweighed benefits. According to Caldwell (1976), the net flow of wealth transfer from children to parents in "primitive and traditional societies" had been converted to flows of wealth from parents to children. Ariès (1980) concluded that the family "had turned inward upon itself and organized itself in terms of children and their future. The parents' chief

psychological and material investment consisted of children to get ahead. ... The fewer the children, the more time and care could be devoted to each and the better the results.”

In the wake of the Second World War, “from Stettin in the Baltic to Trieste in the Adriatic an *iron curtain* has descended across the Continent” (Churchill 1946). Countries of Central and Eastern Europe became part of the “Soviet sphere” under the control of Moscow. From thereon for more than 40 years, authoritarian, centrally planned regimes of the type that had been installed in the Soviet Union by the Bolshevik revolution of 1917 were in power in these countries. For these 40-odd years, political, economic and social developments in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe differed in fundamental ways from those of Western countries. Fertility levels and trends were also distinctly different between the two parts of Europe, shaped by varying sets of constraints and childbearing incentives, and by the accompanying changes in values, norms and attitudes.

3. Western Europe

It is crucial to understand the principal determinants of the fertility trends in the West of the second half of the 20th century because analogous conditions were created in the Central and Eastern European countries after the collapse of the state socialist regimes around 1990.

The realization of previously postponed births and marriages were the initial impetus for the post-war rise in fertility in Western Europe. The modern welfare state was established at that time, and became an important factor in sustaining the baby boom through the 1950s and into the early 1960s. Many of the costs of education, health and welfare of children were covered by the state, thus lowering costs of childbearing. This was also a period of extraordinary economic growth. Real wages and salaries were increasing, employment was virtually guaranteed, unemployment was low, and housing destroyed by the war was being reconstructed and expanded. These conditions led people to view parenthood as attractive and affordable (Hobcraft & Kiernan 1995, Hobcraft 1996).

Precipitous declines in period fertility of the 1960s and 1970s, and the persisting sub-replacement fertility of the 1980s and 1990s, were brought about by a number of interacting factors. The underlying demographic mechanism consisted of a gradually declining fertility quantum combined with a postponement of marriages and of childbearing. Among the basic circumstances driving this demographic mechanism were the following:

- A. An unprecedented, increasing need for large proportions of the population to acquire more than a basic education,
- B. High and increasing labour force participation rates of women, and
- C. Increasing roles and responsibilities of women.

There were a host of other circumstances which contributed to the fertility decline and the postponement of parenthood. Generally, it became more difficult for young people to establish a household in the latter decades of the 20th century. It was not easy to find employment or to establish oneself in a career during this period, and housing costs were rising (Hobcraft 1996; Kohler et al. 2002; Billari et al 2002).

The advent of reliable, modern means of contraception; access to safe and legal induced abortion; changing patterns of partnership relations; substantial changes in values, norms and attitudes concerning family formation and childbearing; as well as relatively weak family policies in Western countries were significant in generating the fertility levels and trends of the late 20th century. These latter factors are discussed in overview chapters 3, 4, 6 and 8, respectively, and in the country chapters.

A. The increasing need for a better educated population

The technological advancements of the second part of the 20th century and the restructuring of economies, dominated by the vast expansion of the information and service sectors, required that significant and gradually increasing proportions of the population be well educated. This demand was satisfied by a considerable expansion of educational systems, which absorbed large proportions of young people. The societal demand for a skilled and educated work force was matched by the desire and need of the young to acquire an advanced education, which became a prerequisite for obtaining desirable, well paying positions of gainful employment.

In Europe in 1970, the gross enrolment ratio⁴ (GER) was 68 percent at the secondary level and 14 percent at the tertiary level (Table 1). At each level, male GERs were higher than female GERs. At the tertiary level, the GER for males was over 60 percent higher than the female ratio. By 1990, the GERs for men and women combined had increased to 92 and 36 percent, respectively. At both the secondary and the tertiary

⁴ Regrettably the data are for the whole of Europe, not separately for the West. It does not matter that much for our purpose. Especially the trends between 1970 and 1990 were mostly driven by developments in Western Europe.

levels, female GERs increased faster than male GERs. Thus by 1990, the enrolment ratios for women were higher than those for males. These trends persisted during the 1990s. By 1997, virtually all people of secondary school age were enrolled, but the GERs for women were somewhat higher than those for men. At the tertiary level, the more rapid increase in the enrolment ratio for women was maintained. Consequently, 46 percent of 20-24-year-old women were enrolled, compared to 40 percent of men in this age group.

Table 1: Gross enrolment ratios* at the secondary and tertiary levels of education, Europe 1970–1997

Year	Secondary			Tertiary		
	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female
1970	67.5	69.9	65.1	14.4	17.7	11.0
1990	92.4	91.1	93.7	35.9	35.0	36.9
1997	99.2	97.2	101.3	42.8	39.5	46.3

Source: Unesco Statistical Yearbook 1999, 2005.

*Note: Gross enrolment ratios are crude measures. The denominators are populations of strictly defined age groups whereas the numerators include all individuals enrolled at the respective educational level some of whom can be from outside the age group of the denominator. Thus values higher than 100 can appear and are legitimate

In general, these high levels of enrolment in tertiary education have continued to increase in the early years of the 21st century in most countries of Western Europe (Table 2). These rates have levelled off in some countries, as demonstrated by the trends in Austria. In most countries, enrolments of women have continued to increase faster than those of men, thereby enlarging the gender gap in favour of women in advanced education.

Table 2: Gross enrolment ratios at the tertiary level of education by sex, selected Western European countries, 1991–2005

Country	Sex	1991	1999	2002	2005
Austria	M	36	52	44	44
	F	32	55	51	53
France	M	37	47	47	49
	F	43	58	60	63
Italy	M	33	41	47	56
	F	31	53	63	75
Netherlands	M	43	49	54	57
	F	36	50	58	61
Spain	M	36	52	57	60
	F	39	62	68	73
Sweden	M	29	53	60	64
	F	35	75	92	100
United Kingdom	M	30	55	56	50
	F	29	64	70	69

Source: UNESCO 2007.

B. The increase in female labour force participation rates

During the second half of the 20th century, increasing proportions of women in Europe joined the labour force. In the years immediately following the Second World War, the majority of the gainfully employed were men. During the years of the post-war economic expansion, there was a shortage of labour, and women were increasingly drawn into the labour force at all levels and in many professions (ILO 1990). The demand for female labour continued to grow in Western countries throughout the second half of the 20th century, and was still going strong early in the 21st (Table 3). The employment rate of women in the 15 Western countries of the European Union increased by 16 percent between 1995 and 2005, while the employment rate of men grew by only 3 percent.

Table 3: Employment rates in states of the European Union, 1995–2005

EU-15	EU employment rate		
	1995	2000	2005
Total	60.1	63.4	65.3
Male	70.5	72.8	72.9
Female	49.7	54.1	57.7

Source: Eurostat Yearbook, 2006-2007.

Women joined the labour force willingly, and for good reasons. For those who were married, an important motive was a second income, making it possible to achieve a higher standard of living for their families. For single women, employment secured the freedom to choose their own course in life. For all women, the psychological benefits of self-realization also played an important role. Thus the demand for additional labour was matched by large proportions of women desiring employment.

C. Increasing roles and responsibilities of women

The male breadwinner family model was gradually replaced by the dual-earner model. Even though women studied longer, became gainfully employed and contributed significantly to family income, the division of labour within the family did not keep pace with these changes. The responsibilities of childrearing and maintaining households continued to be disproportionately carried by women (Table 4).

According to time use surveys conducted by national statistical offices (Aliaga 2006) throughout Europe, employed women spend more time on domestic work than men, from about 50 percent more in Nordic countries, to three times more in Southern Europe. The amount of time employed women spend on domestic work does not differ much between countries. It is the contribution made by men to childrearing and household maintenance that is important. On average, men in Sweden and Norway devote about twice as much time to these activities as men in Italy and Spain (Table 4).

Table 4: Time use structure of employed women and men (in hours and minutes per day), selected European countries, 1998–2004

	Spain	France	Italy	Sweden	United Kingdom	Norway
<i>WOMEN</i>						
Gainful work, study	4:57	4:32	4:39	4:05	4:06	3:46
Domestic work	3:29	3:40	3:51	3:32	3:28	3:26
Travel	1:22	1:05	1:28	1:28	1:33	1:17
Sleep	8:11	8:38	8:00	8:05	8:25	8:07
Meals, personal care	2:28	2:57	2:44	2:23	2:07	2:02
Free time, incl. unspecified	3:33	3:08	3:18	4:27	4:21	5:22
<i>Total</i>	24	24	24	24	24	24
<i>MEN</i>						
Gainful work, study	6:11	5:44	6:13	5:17	5:42	4:56
Domestic work	1:20	1:53	1:10	2:23	1:54	2:12
Travel	1:23	1:10	1:40	1:32	1:36	1:23
Sleep	8:15	8:24	7:58	7:52	8:11	7:53
Meals, personal care	2:31	2:58	2:52	2:05	1:55	1:58
Free time, incl. unspecified	4:20	3:51	4:07	4:51	4:42	5:38
<i>Total</i>	24	24	24	24	24	24

Source: Aliaga 2006.

Note: The average time is calculated for the group of all employed persons, and for the whole year including working days and weekends, as well as holiday periods. This explains why time spent on gainful work is significantly less than a normal working day.

These data suggest a correlation between the status of women and men in society and in the family, on the one hand, and fertility, on the other, around the turn of the century in Western Europe. In the Scandinavian countries, where women are involved in many spheres of public life and many of them are gainfully employed, and where men share quite a considerable amount of household responsibilities, fertility is relatively high, close to replacement levels (Oláh and Bernhardt 2008). In contrast, in the Mediterranean countries where women's involvement in public life is rising but still rare, where lesser proportions of women are gainfully employed, and where patriarchal relationships are still quite prevalent in the family, fertility is very low, considerably below replacement rates (De Rose et al. 2008, Delgado et al. 2008).

Summing up this section on Western Europe, we can observe that, towards the end of the 20th century, there were many circumstances making it relatively difficult for

young people to establish families and to have children. The situation was very heterogeneous, with national period fertility rates in 1990 ranging from 1.3 in Italy and 1.4 in Spain, to 2.1 in Sweden, Denmark and Ireland. This reflects the numerous differences in the micro and macro conditions that were instrumental in shaping people's childbearing behaviour.

Compared to generations of young people in the 1960s and 1970s, young people in the West in the 1990s spent several more years on average acquiring education. Once they finished school, it was more difficult for them to find employment, and the employment they found was, moreover, less secure than it used to be. It was also more expensive to secure a place to live independently. Much higher proportions of women were studying at the secondary and especially at the tertiary levels, and larger shares of women were gainfully employed. At the same time, however, women retained prime responsibilities for maintaining households and bringing up children. The duration of partnership arrangements --marriages and consensual unions-- became less predictable and increasingly uncertain. Also, modern contraceptive means and liberal abortion legislation made it easier to prevent unwanted and unplanned births (Hobcraft and Kiernan 1995; Lesthaeghe and Moors. 2000).

4. Central and Eastern Europe

In the immediate post-war period, there was a tendency for fertility to increase in the majority of the Central and Eastern European countries. Within a few years, by the late 1940s and early 1950s, fertility started to decline, and this descent was sustained into the 1960s. While fertility was increasing and the baby boom was taking place in Western Europe, fertility in Central and Eastern European countries was on the decline, reaching below replacement levels in a number of countries in the 1960s. Arguably the development strategies adopted by the state socialist governments were the main cause. The central emphasis was on major investments in heavy industries, while consumer industries, housing and services were neglected. Rapid growth of industrial capacity was achieved without sufficient advances in technologies, and with relatively low productivity, creating an environment of high demand for labour. Male labour force participation rates were already high, and so the gap was filled by unprecedented increases in female employment. Moreover, women's employment was promoted on ideological grounds as a basis for gender equality. As a result, in Czechoslovakia, for example, the proportion of women in their prime childbearing years (ages 20-30) in the labour force increased from 30 percent in 1950 to 60 percent by 1961 (Frejka 1980).

The implementation of liberal induced abortion legislation in the mid-1950s in almost all Central and Eastern European countries contributed to the ongoing fertility decline (Frejka 1983). It was frequently modified and often moderately restricted, but, with the notable exception of Romania, access to induced abortion remained in place throughout the state socialist period.

Fertility rates increased in several countries in the late 1960s and early 1970s, and stabilized at close to the replacement level in almost all the Central and Eastern European countries during the 1970s and 1980s. The basic demographic mechanism underlying this fertility level and its stability was universal and early marriage, a low age of childbearing with low rates of childlessness, and high rates of first and second births. Societal circumstances underpinning this demographic regime were generated and sustained by the following factors (Frejka 1980; Sobotka 2004, chapter 8):

- A. Predominantly pro-natalist social and population policies,
- B. The centrally planned economic system and the socialist welfare state, and
- C. A tight authoritarian political system

A. Predominantly pro-natalist social and population policies

Governments throughout Central and Eastern Europe became gravely concerned about the declining and low fertility rates of the 1960s (Macura 1981). This was unexpected and contrary to theoretical and ideological expectations (Besemeres 1980). Under socialism, population was supposed to grow as an expression of the system's strength and superiority relative to capitalism. Yet population growth was faster and fertility levels were higher in the Western capitalist countries. Another reason for concern was the prospect that future generations of young women and men would be too small in numbers to replenish the armed forces and the labour force. Throughout Central and Eastern Europe, social and population policies of a predominantly pro-natalist nature were devised and implemented during the late 1960s and early 1970s (Stefanov and Naoumov 1974, Ziolkowski 1974, Frejka 1980, Macura 1981, Büttner and Lutz 1990, Kamaras 1996). By and large, these policies generated some of the desired results, and thus brought about moderate fertility increases. These policies were continuously updated and modified during the 1970s and 1980s, and played a role in sustaining fertility at around replacement levels.

The pro-natalist policy measures varied widely, and differed from one country to another. They ranged from various types of financial aid to individuals and families, to

the establishment of a network of institutions serving families, to preferential access to housing for young families with children.

The financial aid to families consisted of grants provided at the birth of a child, child allowances up to a certain age, payments during relatively extended maternity leaves, income tax credits, and loans to young couples with favourable terms, such as a provision that a specified amount would be written off upon the birth of a child. The principal component of the institutional networks aiding families were crèches, nurseries and kindergartens. In addition, older children could stay in school after regular classes, and school meals and children's clothing were subsidized. These outlays amounted to a significant redistribution of income, i.e., they resulted in a considerable lowering of the costs of childbearing and child raising⁵ (David and McIntyre 1981, Frejka 1980).

The administration of housing policies was a crucial element of social and population policies. Much of the housing stock was state owned and in short supply. To a large extent, access to housing was not governed by the market but by administrative decisions of the government bureaucracy. Young people advanced on waiting lists for housing if they got married and had a child or two. The prospect of gaining access to housing was among the incentives to marry and have a child while young. Starting a family was also a feasible route for young people to leave the parental home and become independent (Frejka 1980, Sobotka 2004).

Sex education was introduced in the 1960s and 1970s, mostly in support of the pro-natalist policies in the form of education for marriage and parenthood. Biological aspects of sex were included in natural science lessons on human anatomy, physiology and hygiene for 8- to 15-year-olds. The classes were usually taught by school physicians, which meant that the health aspects were emphasized, while contraceptive education and many of the broader aspects of partner relationships were neglected (Stloukal 1999).

Extensive reliance on induced abortion, widespread use of inefficient traditional means of contraception, and a lack of modern contraceptive methods were the basic characteristics of practices directly affecting birth regulating behaviour (see also Overview Chapter 3). The state socialist policies in this area originated in the substantial liberalization of abortion legislation in the Soviet Union in 1955. Presumably, the rationale was derived as much from concerns about public health as from ideological considerations (Frejka 1983). Some scholars interpreted this decision

⁵ In Czechoslovakia in the early 1970s these disbursements amounted to about ten percent of total government expenditures (Frejka 1980).

as an expression of sensitivity to current social problems in the initial years of the post-Stalinist era (Besemer 1980). The reliance on induced abortion, combined mainly with *coitus interruptus*, developed as the fertility regulation norm in CEE countries during the late 1950s and early 1960s. This was before the introduction of hormonal contraception and before the widespread use of IUDs and sterilization during the 1960s and subsequent years in the West (Westoff and Ryder 1977).

As a rule, governments in Central and Eastern Europe opposed the diffusion of hormonal contraception for a number of reasons, some of them publicly enunciated and purposefully promulgated, especially among physicians, but also among the general public. It was claimed that the risks to women's health associated with oral hormonal contraceptives and IUDs by far outweighed the benefits. Thus, doctors did not promote modern contraception, and the public was suspicious of these methods and did not seek them out. Also, because governments imposed restrictions on their importation and domestic production, modern contraceptives were practically unobtainable and in short supply. In some countries, access to contraceptives was deliberately circumscribed based on pro-natalist intentions of raising fertility (Stloukal 1995). The fact that modern contraceptives were developed and widely used in the capitalist West made them, by definition, unsuitable for use in socialist countries. Nonetheless, the situation was very different from one country to another. For example, authorities in Hungary, the German Democratic Republic and Yugoslavia made the contraceptive pill generally available and encouraged the use of modern contraceptives (see also contributions in David 1999). In 1977, the pill was used by 55 percent of all users in Hungary, compared to 10 percent and 3 percent in Poland and Bulgaria, respectively (Frejka 1983).

B. The centrally planned economic system and the socialist welfare state

The socialist welfare state and the lack of market forces operating in the economy provided further favourable circumstances for childbearing, but also contained several elements that tended to discourage people from having children.

Young people lived in a relatively risk-free environment, created by virtually free education, free health care and guaranteed employment. Full employment and the obligation of all working age population to study or be employed were considered incontrovertible. The inefficient functioning of state-owned enterprises created a large demand for labour, which made full employment possible. Moreover, workers often lacked motivation to work to their full potential, thus reinforcing the inefficiency of the

economy (Table 5). Consequently, job security, which was a related, proclaimed goal of the socialist system, was guaranteed.

Table 5: Population, gross domestic product, and GDP per head in Europe and the former Soviet Union 1950 and 2001

Region	Population (millions)			GDP (billion dollars)			GDP per head (dollars)		
	1950	2001	2001/ 1950	1950	2001	2001/ 1950	1950	2001	2001/ 1950
Western Europe	304.9	392.1	1.3	1,396	7,550	5.4	4,579	19,256	4.2
Central & Eastern Europe	87.6	120.9	1.4	185	729	3.9	2,111	6,027	2.9
Former Soviet Union	179.6	120.9	1.6	510	1,343	2.6	2,841	4,626	1.6

Source: Demeny and McNicoll 2006.

A crude measure of the inefficiency of centrally planned economies in contrast to Western economies is expressed by the comparative growth of the respective gross domestic products and GDP/capita during the second half of the 20th century.⁶ GDP in Central and Eastern European (CEE) countries increased by a factor of 3.9 times between 1950 and 2001, compared to an increase by a factor of 5.4 times in Western Europe (WE). In addition, per capita income grew at a slower rate in the CEE countries compared to WE, so that the gap between them increased. In 1950, per capita income in the West was more than twice that of the CEE countries; in 2001, the difference was more than threefold. The respective differences between the former Soviet Union and WE were even greater. Moreover, the desire for consumer goods was growing in Central and Eastern Europe, but remained far from satisfied. The inefficient, technologically lagging economies did not produce sufficient quantities of consumer goods, and, in addition, many people operated with a limited purchasing capacity (Table 5). There were long waiting lists for household appliances and furniture, and

⁶ The period 1950-2001 includes the transition years of the 1990s. A comparison of these indicators for the years 1950-1990 would be slightly more favourable for the former state-socialist countries, due to the economic crisis experienced during that period in most of these countries, but the basic conclusion would be similar.

people often had to wait for years to purchase motor vehicles of inferior quality (Kotowska et al. 2008).

The high demand for labour continued to require that ever growing proportions of women join the labour force. The desire to secure an acceptable standard of living by earning a second income motivated women to seek gainful employment. Practically all women of working age were employed. Their labour force participation rates reached levels almost as high as those of men, particularly if women on maternity leave are taken into account.

Officially, the high female employment rates were heralded as proof of women having achieved equal rights with men. In reality, women became overburdened. The traditional division of responsibilities in the household remained almost unchanged. Women had to maintain households and raise children under rather unfavourable conditions, which frequently included shortages of consumer goods, inadequate services, a lack of labour-saving household appliances, difficulties with child-care facilities and, in some cases, inferior housing. Several surveys of the 1960s documented that women's household duties took up almost as much time as their jobs, leaving only seven or eight hours a day for other activities, including eating and sleeping (Frejka 1980).

A lack of competition and the inefficient economy did not require a highly technically qualified work force, and egalitarian principles were overriding market forces in the demand for labour, and in determining wage levels. Occupations that required advanced education were often rewarded equally, or even less than, manual labour. Physicians earned as much or less than bus drivers and miners. Altogether, there was not much motivation to acquire an advanced education. Compared to the West, smaller proportions of young people were enrolled in institutions of higher learning, and both the quality and the relative size of these institutions lagged behind the West. On average, the part of the life cycle spent in school was shorter in CEE countries than in WE countries.

C. A tight authoritarian political system

Many aspects of citizen's private life were closely watched by the authorities. It was unacceptable to deviate from the official political ideology and positions. A strong security apparatus was maintained to keep people in line. Outside of the family and a circle of close friends, people did not know who could be trusted. The family environment became a safe haven.

There was a major effort to keep the citizenry in isolation from the outside world in order to prevent the infiltration of ideas from abroad. Travel to the West was severely restricted. Authorities were also reluctant to let people travel to some of the other Central and Eastern European countries for fear that liberal ideas or movements could spread. In some countries, people did not have the right to own passports, and for each trip, especially to the West, an exit visa was required. In any case, most people could not afford to travel abroad given their relatively low incomes (cf. Table 5). Moreover, currencies of the state socialist countries were not officially convertible to Western currencies. For the most part, it was very expensive for normal citizens to acquire Western currency, and currency exchanges were mainly done illegally on the black market.

Isolation was severely enforced in limiting contacts of scientists with their counterparts in the West. Many scientific advances developed in Western countries were deemed suspicious and labelled as bourgeois. This was also the fate of progress achieved in human reproductive physiology and the development of modern contraceptives.

The degree to which cultural life and leisure activities were constrained by the authorities also differed very much between countries. In some countries, and during some periods, a certain amount of freedom and creativity were tolerated. But, in general, attractive opportunities to spend meaningful time outside the household were relatively few, the burdens of domestic chores in addition to work were substantial, and, given the relatively low incomes, only limited financial resources were available for these activities in any case.

In sum, the various countervailing forces in the state socialist countries of Central and Eastern Europe during the 1970s and 1980s created a relatively favourable childbearing environment that resulted in a widespread prevalence of the two-child family (cf. overview chapter 2). There was remarkably little variation between CEE countries in terms of period total fertility rates, and there was a conspicuous absence in these countries of fertility postponement that was taking place in other parts of Europe. In the majority of CEE countries, the TFR in 1989 was between 1.9 and 2.1. In a few of these countries, the TFR was at 1.8 or less (Hungary [1.8], Croatia [1.7] and Slovenia [1.5]), while at the other “extreme” it was 2.2 or more (Estonia [2.2], Moldova [2.5] and Romania [2.2]) (Council of Europe 2006).

On balance, the socialist welfare state provided reasonably predictable and reliable risk-free conditions for family life and childbearing based on guaranteed employment, job security, free education and free health care. Couples received direct financial aid (birth grants, child allowances, paid maternity leave, etc.) and benefited indirectly by

sending their children to a crèche or kindergarten, receiving free school meals and after-school child care, and by buying subsidized clothing and school equipment. The usual route for young people to acquire a home was to get married and have a child. It could take a long time to gain access to housing, but the cost of maintaining a home was low because rents were state-subsidized. Various other circumstances indirectly contributed to early childbearing, such as limited career options, restricted choice of leisure activities, lack of travel opportunities, and a deficient supply of large-item consumer goods, especially cars. The fact that most women were gainfully employed, yet still burdened by difficult household maintenance and childrearing duties, acted as deterrents to having a larger number of children.

5. The contemporary historical context

By the end of the 1980s, the shortcomings of the state socialist systems in Europe became so acute that the regimes imploded. For a few years under the reform-minded leadership of Mikhail Gorbachev, there was an attempt to cure the existing system from within through economic reforms (“perestroika”) and some liberalization of the political structures and conditions (“glasnost”). The general malfunctioning of the system had become so untenable and the discontent of the populations of the CEE countries had become so severe that the authoritarian governments collapsed despite the reform efforts, and new governments sprang up. The primary policies of these governments were to restructure economies and reform state institutions based on the principles inherent in the Western countries. In other words, following the collapse of the state socialist regimes, a full-fledged transition to capitalist political and economic conditions ensued. The process was modified by the specific conditions of each country and thus varied considerably, but, essentially, the social, economic and political conditions of the Western countries were being adopted in CEE countries, and people adjusted to these new conditions. This was true as much for family formation and childbearing as for any other aspect of life.

The transition, i.e., the implementation of the Western societal conditions, turned out to be complex, and was more or less painful in various countries and for various strata of the populations of these countries (cf. all CEE country chapters). The conditions in the labour market changed rapidly as enterprises became concerned with productivity and profitability. Employment was no longer guaranteed and job security ceased. Employment conditions became particularly difficult for women. Demand for highly qualified positions increased, which required a well educated work force.

Institutions of higher learning expanded rapidly, as did tertiary and secondary school enrolment rates. Professional and leisure time opportunities became numerous, and young people started to take advantage of them. Many of the entitlements of the previous socialist welfare state were curtailed or disappeared altogether. Modern contraceptives became readily available, and, for the most part, access to induced abortion was retained (see overview chapter 3).

Family formation and childbearing patterns adjusted to the rapidly changing societal environment. Exit from the parental home, union formation and childbearing were being postponed, various forms of partnership arrangements became acceptable, and cohabitation became more popular (see overview chapter 4). The transformation of family formation and reproductive behaviour in the CEE countries can best be observed by looking at the changing fertility age patterns of successive cohorts.

6. Effects of changing cohort fertility age patterns

At the time of the collapse of the state socialist system, the changes in fertility behaviour affected by the political changes of distinct generations depended largely upon their respective ages (Figure 1).

Those born in or prior to the early 1960s were affected only marginally by the system transition because they had already completed a major part of their family formation and childbearing prior to the central turning point around 1990. They had their children early, and, by their late 20s, they had almost completed their childbearing.

Those born in the late 1960s were in the midst of their childbearing at the time when the state socialist system collapsed, and some of them adopted strategies that differed from those of previous generations. Nonetheless, these cohorts had started their childbearing under the socialist conditions. By their early 20s, they had already borne a considerable share of the total number of children they were likely to have. The effect of the transition was still not very large.

Those born in the early 1970s were starting out in their childbearing careers when communism fell apart, and their family formation and childbearing patterns differed significantly from those of previous cohorts (See the 1975 cohorts in Figure 1). They had fewer births when in their teens and early twenties, and they were starting to delay childbearing.

Finally, those born in the late 1970s and early 1980s entered adulthood in the rapidly changing societal environment. To date, their childbearing behaviour has been

very different from that of previous cohorts, with sharply lower fertility while young and with a strong propensity to postpone fertility.

The varying childbearing behaviour of the respective cohorts is a crucial circumstance contributing to the very low fertility rates of the mid- to late 1990s and early 2000s. The birth cohorts of the 1950s and early 1960s had essentially completed their childbearing by that time. Almost all of their children had been born by the early 1990s. On the other hand, many potential parents of the cohorts born during the 1970s and early 1980s were delaying childbearing until their late twenties or early thirties, and thus were not bearing many children during the mid- to late 1990s. Because the former cohorts were no longer having children in the mid- to late 1990s, and the latter cohorts were just gradually starting their childbearing, period fertility was at its lowest.

Let us take one specific example using first births only. The childbearing trajectory of the 1975 birth cohort in Hungary was much lower than that of the 1970 cohort (Figure 1, Panel B). At age 20, the ASFR in the 1975 cohort was almost the same as the ASFR at age 25 in the 1970 cohort. The respective cross-section sums of the cohort age-specific fertility rates of first births for calendar years illustrate the considerable changes that were taking place. The first birth period total fertility rate (PTFR) for the year 2002 was about 0.58, compared to 0.64 for the year 1995, and close to 0.82 in 1990. Starting in the mid- to late 2000s, the PTFRs are likely to increase as age patterns of childbearing in a growing number of birth cohorts start to resemble each other. The confluence of low fertility at different ages in the reproductive cycle will fade away.

During the political and economic transition, childbearing strategies were changing rapidly from one generation to the next. The general patterns of change were common to all the CEE countries. The direction of change is clear, but it is too early to know what the future general age pattern will be, or whether there will be major inter-country differences. One thing is, however, certain: early childbearing, which peaked around age 20 with most children born while women were in their twenties, is a matter of the past.

Figure 1: First birth cohort age-specific fertility rates^a, birth cohorts 1960, 1965, 1970, 1975 and 1980, Bulgaria, Hungary, Poland and Slovenia, 1975-2003

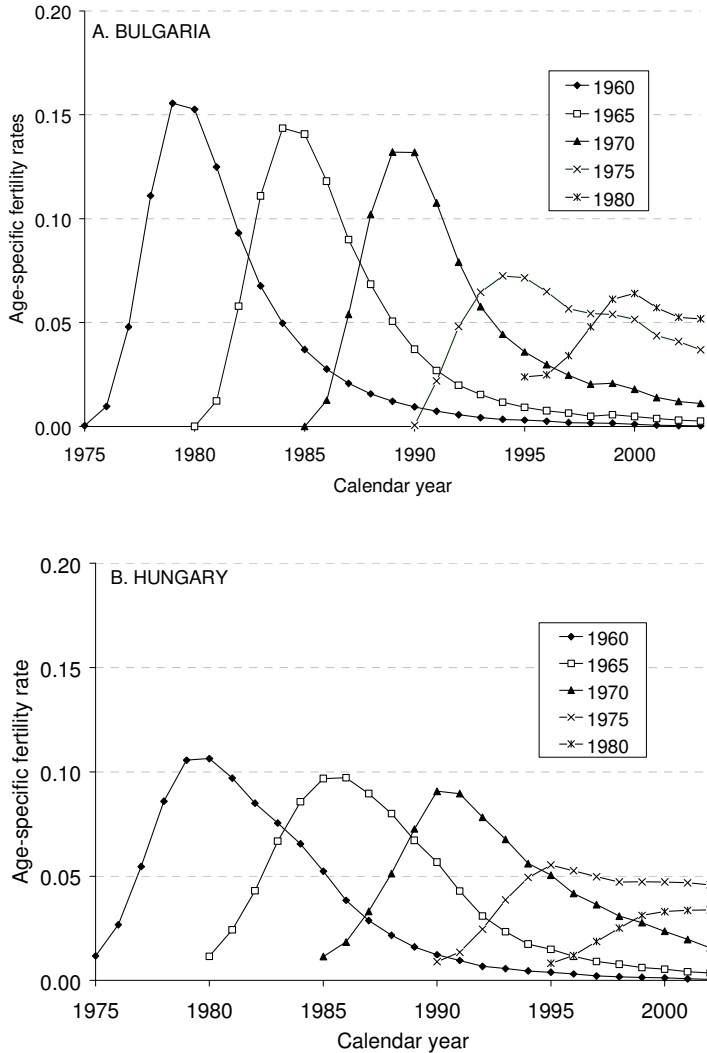
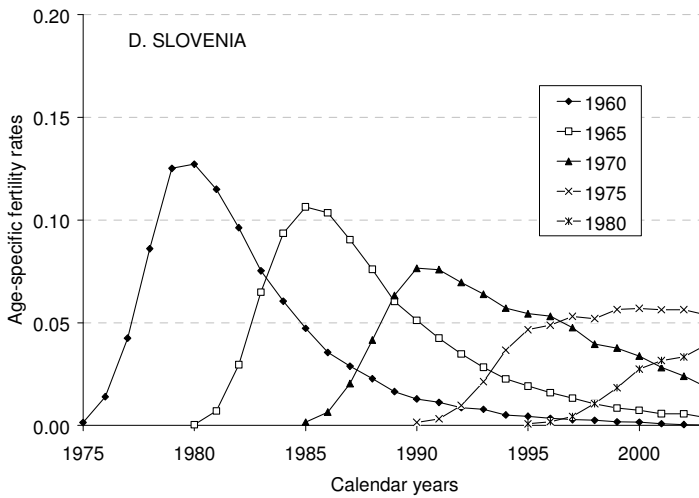
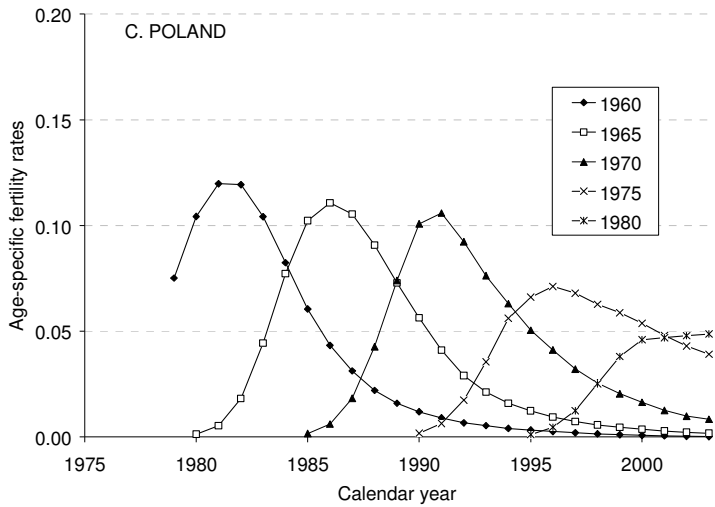


Figure 1: (continued)



Source: Observatoire Démographique Européen, 2006.
 Note: a – Incidence rates, i.e., rates of the second kind.

7. Understanding the causes of the fertility and family formation changes during the 1990s and beyond

Given the magnitude and the velocity of the changes in fertility and family formation, a number of scholars have grappled with the challenge of understanding and describing the mechanisms and causes of these processes (cf., for example, Rychtaříková 1996 and 1999, Rabušic 2001, Kotowska & Józwiak, eds. 2003). As Sobotka (2004) and others (e.g., Philipov 2003, Philipov and Dorbritz 2003) have pointed out, attempts to decipher the main determinants of the fertility declines of the 1990s were centred on two theories. The first saw the economic and social crisis of the early 1990s as the principal cause of the respective fertility and family formation trends. The other regarded the diffusion of cultural and ideational developments--namely, the adoption of new, Western norms, values and attitudes--as the main stimulants for the demographic changes. Many authors also recognized that both sets of determinants played crucial roles, with the former being more important early in the transformation process (Lesthaeghe and Surkyn 2002).

Analyses in the country chapters of this project have shown that such a dichotomization between the 'crisis' and the 'cultural and ideational diffusion' theories is a simplification and can lead to confusion, even if both were considered to have operated simultaneously. In addition to the economic crisis factors that impinged on childbearing decisions, a new set of economic factors previously unknown in the state socialist economies emerged, namely, the type that evolve naturally as part of the shift towards a market economy, such as competition in the labour market, job insecurity and rising costs of children. The nature of these factors is primarily economic, yet they do not fit into the category of either 'crisis' or 'cultural and ideational' factors. This suggests that neither of these theories defines the root cause of the demographic changes taking place in the CEE countries during the 1990s and the early 21st century. However obvious and simplistic it may appear, the replacement of the state socialist regimes by market economies and by fledgling democratic institutions of governance is the root cause of the demographic changes and trends during the transition period and beyond.

The crux of the matter is that the economic and political infrastructure of contemporary capitalism is being adopted. The family formation and childbearing environment is undergoing radical change as previous conditions are replaced by the respective conditions prevalent in the West. In individual countries, specific institutional conditions and the character of family policies and welfare support may differ as much as they currently differ in other regions of Europe. It is still unclear

whether these conditions and policies will come to resemble the Scandinavian, French, British, Dutch, Central European Germanic or Mediterranean types.

The conditions which were generally conducive for childbearing, such as job security, low-cost housing, free education, free health care, various entitlements associated with child birth and childrearing, as well as a lack of career opportunities and leisure activities; were replaced by the considerably more restraining conditions for childbearing of job insecurity, an increasing pressure to acquire more education, expensive housing, lesser and declining birth and childrearing entitlements, as well as the availability of a variety of career opportunities, consumption attractions and leisure activities. The citizenry of the state socialist countries had grown accustomed to a relatively care-free existence, although the standard living conditions were worse than in the Western countries, and there were numerous unpleasant concomitants to this life-style. All of a sudden, people were submerged into societal conditions which made it more difficult to earn a living, and under which various costs previously borne by the paternalistic state became the responsibility of individuals and families.

This broader explanation does not deny the validity of the ‘crisis’ or the ‘cultural and ideational’ theories. Both are inherent in the ‘root cause’ explanation. The change of the economic systems in the early 1990s generated severe economic crises often accompanied by hyper-inflation and high unemployment rates. These, in turn, led to a diminution of incentives and growth of constraints on childbearing. The radical overhaul of the economic, political and social infrastructure was the basis for emerging changes in the value systems, norms and attitudes regarding family formation and childbearing. The diffusion of western norms, values and attitudes proceeded because a corresponding economic, political and social infrastructure was emerging.

A number of the analyses in the CEE chapters in this book conclude that predominantly economic determinants, rather than ideational ones, were the overriding factors contributing to the fertility decline (e.g., Poland and Lithuania). At the same time, however, to date there has been the general perception that the only two explanatory frameworks for the fertility trends were the ‘crisis’ and the ‘cultural and ideational’ theories. Thus, by default, economic determinants were understood to fall into the ‘crisis’ category. By identifying the replacement of the socialist economic and political system with the capitalist system as the principal explanation – indeed, the root cause – of the contemporary demographic trends, it becomes clear that the observed economic determinants could be signs of emerging market economy conditions which are no longer associated with the initial crisis conditions.

In the Poland chapter it is argued “that for demographic behaviours observed in the 1990s the structural component played a much more important role both in terms of

economic restrictions and incentives than it did in [Western] developed countries. ... [I]deational change has not advanced until recently [in Poland] compared with its progress in other European countries” (Kotowska et al. 2008:845). In the Slovenia chapter (Stropnik and Širčelj 2008:1038) it is stated that “the surveys and public discussions in Slovenia repeatedly prove that young people would have children earlier if the two basic preconditions, i.e., a stable job and appropriate housing, were fulfilled”. Similarly, in the case of Bulgaria, “Koytcheva (2006) finds that during the 1990s the changes in fertility in Bulgaria were influenced to a higher degree by economic factors than by changes in values and ideas” (Koytcheva and Philipov 2008:392).

Other authors have *de facto* acknowledged the root cause explanation. For instance, Lesthaeghe and Surkyn (2002) summarizing their findings on new patterns of household formation in CEE countries stated *inter alia*:

“In short, a capitalist restructuring leads to greater individual autonomy in the ideational sphere, and this in turn means more convergence of family formation patterns to western types. Rather than the economic crisis per se, it is the entire restructuring of society that is the accelerator of the ideational and demographic changes.”

Nevertheless, while acknowledging that “there is nothing mutually exclusive about the operation of both economic and cultural factors” and that “they may be interwoven and mutually reinforcing,” Lesthaeghe and Surkyn believe that, in the long run, the cultural factors will become dominant and will eventually “take over.”

8. The array of specific factors as identified in country analyses

In the country analyses, numerous specific factors causing and modifying demographic behaviour in the transition countries have been identified and discussed. These are listed because they demonstrate the wide variety of circumstances that played a role. The interplay of these factors was somewhat different from one country to another, and, therefore, some are discussed in almost all CEE country chapters, while others are mentioned only in a few. While some of these factors were predominantly of an economic nature, others were mainly social, cultural, psychological, or political. Due to the instantaneous and rapid change from the state socialist to the capitalist system, particular conditions had an immediate forceful impact, while other factors are of a long-lasting nature. Thus, the economic factors are listed in two general categories: those operating mainly during the initial crisis years, and the long-term factors associated with the development of market economies.

8.1 Economic factors operating mainly during the initial years of the transition

- Massive inflation;
- Considerable unemployment, in particular among women;
- The loss of previously guaranteed rights and entitlements, particularly guaranteed employment and income, as well as the loss of free education and free health care in some countries;
- A decline in social functions and services provided by companies – e.g., health clinics, cafeteria and child day care facilities;
- A decline in real income of individuals and households; a delay in payment or non-payment of earned wages and salaries in a number of countries; the requirement that some employees take unpaid leave, often of long duration;
- Increasing levels of discrimination against women in the economy, in particular in the job market;
- Declining capacity/supply of public child care facilities, especially for children 0-2 years old;
- A lack of housing coupled with increasing costs of housing; lack of credit opportunities, particularly for young people;
- Increasing disparities in the income distribution, with some segments of the population becoming impoverished while others became more affluent and acquired wealth;
- A state of deprivation and anomie in some segments of the population.

8.2 Economic factors associated with the development of market economies

- A restructuring of the market with an increasing availability of consumer goods and services;
- A tightening job market and growing degree of labour market competition that resulted in an increase in required qualifications, and which, in turn, necessitated the acquisition of appropriate skills;
- Rising job insecurity;
- New career opportunities, especially for individuals with higher education;
- Rising direct costs for child care, education and health, an increasing proportion of which had to be borne by users;
- Rising indirect costs of children.

8.3 Social, cultural and psychological factors

- Changing norms, values and attitudes regarding marriage, cohabitation, separation, divorce, extra-marital childbearing, modern contraception (see overview chapter 6);
- A largely continuing traditional perception of gender roles in the family, although a more egalitarian modern perception is also starting to spread;
- Continued unequal division of responsibilities and work within households between genders (shopping, maintenance, child care, laundry, cooking, etc.);
- Continuing or further deepening marriage and union instability;
- Significantly enhanced access to, and increasing utilization of, modern contraception;
- Temporary and permanent emigration for work- and study- generated income/remittances, but with an accompanying destabilization of family relations;
- Amplified social stratification with more pronounced differences between the lower, middle and upper strata;
- A massive expansion of education, especially at the tertiary level;
- An expansion of consumerist behaviour;
- Increased opportunities in education, leisure activities and international travel.

8.4 Political factors

- A disarray in family policies; no clear family policy goals and strategies; curtailed family policy benefits;
- Legalization of induced abortion in Albania and Romania;
- Severe restriction of abortion legislation in Poland, and the possibility of some restrictions in other countries.

There are no definite dividing lines between the two types of economic factors. For example, the fact that various types of educational, health and child care costs borne by the state under the socialist regimes became the responsibility of the family might have initially been perceived as part and parcel of the crisis determinants. In a market economy, however, it is natural that some of these costs are mainly the responsibility of households, although specific policy measures can mitigate their burden.

In some of the country chapters, the discrimination against women and the continued unequal division of responsibilities and work within households between genders are considered important circumstances curtailing childbearing. “Female emancipation during the years of transformation progressed in a highly controversial way in Lithuania. It was, and still is, developing, along with the preservation of the traditional/patriarchal attitudes towards gender roles Society’s delay in adapting to the new female roles forces women to work out certain new strategies, which they use to the best of their needs and abilities, to solve the problem of reconciling the varied challenges of daily life. They postpone childbearing for a later period, have fewer children, or refuse to have children altogether” (Stankuniene and Jasilioniene 2008:731). “In Slovenia, the traditional gender division of roles in the family persists, leading to a double burden for employed women. Having less children may thus constitute a coping strategy for young women” (Stropnik and Šircelj 2008:1039). A peculiar perception on gender roles exists in the Czech Republic. “The continuing inequality in the gender division of housework has been documented in a number of research studies. ... Czech women contribute two thirds of the total time necessary for doing the housework ... Interestingly, even women who work full-time, as do their partners, opine that it is fair to work more in the home than their partners” (Sobotka et al. 2008:438).

Ukraine and the Czech Republic are vivid examples of how different the transition experience was in individual countries. According to the Ukraine chapter, “[a]fter the dissolution of the Soviet Union, Ukraine experienced a grave economic crisis, leading to individual level economic uncertainty” (Perelli-Harris 2008:1162). ... “This instability has led to social anomie, or a breakdown in social norms ... The negative change has caused individuals to feel they have lost control over their lives, resulting in high levels of stress and anxiety” ... “Social anomie, as opposed to simple economic uncertainty, may be one of the main reasons for the rapid decline in fertility in Ukraine” (Perelli-Harris. 2008:1163). The country chapters on Russia (Zakharov 2008), Romania (Muresan et al. 2008) and Bulgaria (Koytcheva and Philipov 2008) provide evidence of similar developments in those countries.

In contrast, in the Czech Republic “extreme shocks or turbulence as experienced in many other post-communist societies” were avoided. “Thanks to the existence of an extensive social security net, combined with a rapid expansion of small enterprises, the economic transformation did not entail severe consequences for the majority of the population” (Sobotka et al. 2008:404). However, the Czech Republic also experienced a considerable fertility decline during the 1990s. “The rapidity of observed changes can be explained as the outcome of a simultaneous occurrence of several factors, especially

the expansion of higher education, the emergence of new opportunities competing with family life, increasing job competition, rising economic uncertainty in young adulthood, and changing partnership behaviour” (Sobotka et al. 2008:403). Apparently Slovenia and, to a large extent, also Hungary and other countries of Central Europe had similar experiences.

9. Conclusions

By historical standards, the rapid changes in family formation and childbearing levels in the CEE countries during the 1990s were unprecedented. To date, two theories have been elaborated to provide an understanding of the determinants that brought about these trends. The first theory argues that the economic and social crises which occurred in the wake of the transition from the state socialist centrally managed economies to capitalist market economies in the early 1990s were the principal causes of the rapid demographic changes. The other theory claims that it was the diffusion of western norms, values and attitudes regarding family formation and childbearing that were instrumental in causing the observed demographic trends. The two theories were not considered mutually exclusive, and it was accepted that the economic crisis and the diffusion factors could be operating simultaneously.

Both theories make valid observations, but they do not reveal the principal underlying or root cause of the respective demographic trends, namely, the replacement of the state socialist regimes by market economies and by fledgling democratic institutions of governance. The former created the relatively favourable conditions for childbearing of job security, low-cost housing, free education, free health care, and a variety of entitlements associated with child birth and childrearing, as well as shortages of career opportunities, leisure activities, and consumer goods. These were replaced by the more restraining conditions for childbearing of job insecurity, an increasing pressure to acquire more education, expensive housing, lesser and declining birth and childrearing entitlements, as well as the availability of a variety of career opportunities, leisure activities and consumer goods. The populace of the CEE countries had grown accustomed to the socialist paternalistic welfare state circumstances over several decades, and, all of a sudden, young people were confronted with the need to deal with a whole new Western type of family formation and childbearing environment. Market economy principles and Western democratic institutions provided the framework for family formation and childbearing, and they also provided the basis for the adoption

and diffusion of western type norms, values and attitudes regarding demographic behaviour.

Individual generations were affected by the changing incentives and constraints on childbearing in very different ways. This turned out to reinforce the declines and extraordinarily low levels of the period total fertility rates during the 1990s. The birth cohorts of the 1960s had borne almost all their children when in their twenties, and, consequently, had very low fertility rates when in their thirties, i.e. during the 1990s. In contrast, the birth cohorts of the mid- to late 1970s were delaying many births into their late twenties and thirties, and thus had low fertility when starting out on their childbearing careers during the 1990s. Thus the low fertility rates of the former when ending their childbearing overlapped with the relatively low fertility rates of the latter when they were in the initial years of childbearing, resulting in the total period fertility rates of around 1.1 to 1.3 births per woman observed around the year 2000 in most countries of Central and Eastern Europe. In the foreseeable future, cohorts with similar age patterns of childbearing will, in all likelihood, overlap. This fact alone is likely to cause an increase in total period fertility rates. Any increase in period fertility will also depend upon the extent of recuperation of delayed births, which is likely to vary from one country to another.

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