

## REVIEW ARTICLES

LUTZ, WOLFGANG – RICHTER, RUDOLF – WILSON, CHRIS (eds.): *The New Generations of Europeans. Demography and Families in the Enlarged European Union*. Earthscan, London–Sterling, VA, 2006. 389 p.

By Péter Őri

This book gives an account of the demographic near past and present of the enlarged European Union ('Europe' in the volume) and, based on the experiences gained from the past and present, summarises the prospects for the next decades. The chapters of the published texts are the edited versions of the summary papers provided for the final meeting of a five-year (1999–2004) research program (*European Observatory on the Social Situation, Demography and Family*), which was held in Brussels in September 2004. The different parts and chapters of the book are based on ample empirical research material provided by the examined member states. The sources of the data varies according to topics, and, as the authors endeavoured not only to describe the demographic phenomena but to interpret them and to some extent to explore even the future, the type and sources of the used data also differ very much within each part of the book. Besides the population statistics of the member states, frequently qualitative data of European and national wide surveys based on sampling have been used in the analysis (e.g. *European Social Survey 2003*; *German Family Survey*; *International Population and Policy Acceptance Survey*; the Hungarian panel survey: '*The Turning Points of our Life*').

The book consists of four main parts (II–V) discussing the trends and correlations of the basic demographic phenomena (fertility, family, migration, health and mortality). Each part consists of three chapters, which separately show the demographic conditions of the 15 former EU member states and the 10 new members having joined the EU in 2004, and the demographic prospects of the enlarged Union. The different chapters not only use different sources, but they give an example of the scientific plurality of the research program in other respect too. Thus one can find theoretic approaches, empirical studies, comparative analyses and case studies in the book. The analytical parts are preceded by a detailed introduction, which describes the purposes of the research and the book, and gives an account of Europe's most important demographic problems. At the end of the book one can read a synthesis of the former parts and a summary of the most important challenges and problems to be resolved by the next generations.

In the introduction Wolfgang Lutz and Chris Wilson lay stress on the problems of low fertility and ageing. They emphasize that Europe's generous welfare systems and the possibility of the relatively early retirement were built up during 25 years after World War II when the European populations dynamically increased, fertility was well above the level of reproduction, and economic growth also broke the record. Therefore the sustainability of the welfare systems depends on the continuous population and economic growth, which conditions have not been realised for a long time. The problems of low fertility, ageing and unfavourable change in dependency ratios, as the au-

thors suppose, cannot be resolved by immigration because fertility decline seems to become a global process and, according to the former research, the reproductive behaviour of the immigrants quickly adapts to that of receiving populations. At most continuous, very considerable immigration of populations from very different cultures could counterbalance the negative consequences of low fertility and ageing, but it would make the integration of the immigrants very difficult. Anyway, in the European societies and among the European policy makers there is an emerging consensus that the welfare systems can be sustained in the long run only if serious changes are implemented.

Constantinos Fotakis and Fritz von Nordheim give an account of the social conditions of Europe (the enlarged Union) in 2004. They also show the demographic background, the probable development of the dependency ratios till 2050, the living standards in the member states, the state of civil societies (the proportion of those taking part in some organised social, religious, cultural, trade union or sport activities). Even from their brief account it becomes clear that there is a considerable difference in living standard and many other aspects between the old and new member states. At the same time, in the authors' opinion, a considerable amount of human and social capital has been accumulated in the new member states too, which can help in managing future problems. In this respect their conclusion seems to be too optimistic, especially when they discuss the 'advanced' status of pension and health care reforms or the moderate level of relative poverty and the relative power of social cohesion in the new member states (p. 26).

Juan Antonio Fernandez Cordón deals with the fertility problems of the EU 15. He demonstrates that below-replacement fertility has become a general European phenomenon, which, without immigration, would generate a population decrease in most of the countries even now or at least in the near future. In the EU 15 80% of the total population growth is due to immigration even at present. It also seems to be important that the level of marital fertility is more or less similar in the member states (TFR between 1 and 1,5), the differences are mainly caused by the variance in non-marital fertility. TFR below 1,5, however, appears to be a dangerously low level of fertility, under these conditions neither positive balance of migration, nor the increase of productivity and the growing proportion of working population could counterbalance the negative social consequences. As the authors argue, a new social contract would be necessary in order to assure a balance between the welfare system and the labour market. According to this new social contract, social policy has to lay stress on reconciliation of childbearing and female participation in the labour market.

Zsolt Spéder examines the correlation between childbearing and the attitudes towards children and family in the new member states and three of the old ones (Austria, Finland, Italy). He demonstrates that the new members, while they took part in very similar political, economic and social transition, produced very different patterns of fertility development, or we could say that they reached the nowadays general low fertility level in very different ways. In the new member states one can witness a great homogeneity of period fertility level, while non-marital fertility rates have become rather varied by now. At the same time, there are much more significant differences among the old member states, especially between North- and South-Europe. On the basis of some attitude surveys the author could point out that in the new member states the ideal or planned number of children is relatively high and childlessness or low child number is seen as a negative phenomenon. The author thus claims that it could be a

basis of a modest fertility growth in the future. This view appears to be a rather optimistic projection, which is based on the assumption that in modern societies social changes depend more and more on subjective factors (norms and values), as social behaviour is determined more and more by individual decisions. However, the development of modern demographic behaviour can be interpreted in a different way, the increasing significance of individual decisions can mean the strengthening material respects in choice, instead of norms and traditions. There can be differences between the values confessed by the respondents and the realised childbearing, but the former can conform to the latter, even with considerable time lag. According to this interpretation, we can expect a further fertility decrease or stagnation in the future, instead of its growth.

In the next chapter, instead of analysing the fertility prospects of the future, Wolfgang Lutz tries to survey those arguments and theories, which speak in favour of future fertility growth or decrease. He argues that recently we have no such a general theory on the basis of which we can predict the future development of fertility. The theory of the demographic transition prognosticated a demographic equilibrium at the end of the process, which has not been attained anywhere so far, while the theory of the second demographic transition intended to interpret Europe's demographic changes in the last 40 years but it has not presented any basis for predicting the future's fertility development. In the author's opinion, one thing is certain now, that the level of fertility (TFR) will be between 1 and 3 in the next decades. According to the arguments presented, the reader is inclined to assume fertility decline or stagnation in the future. On the one hand there are more arguments supporting the decrease of fertility (8) than favouring growth (6), on the other their character also differs. The arguments for fertility growth take their origin from theories which are not (or cannot be) verified yet (the existence of homeostatic systems, that of fertility cycles, the necessary minimum limit of fertility), or they are based upon phenomena which are not experienced and the impacts of which are very doubtful in the long run (the impacts of some future social policy, the strengthening of the national identity because of the increasing ethnic rivalry, the end of the postponement in reproductive behaviour). At the same time the arguments for continuously low or further declining fertility are all based upon processes present and observable in our societies (individualism, the changing gender roles, the instability of partnership, the impact of consumerism, the declining ideal family size, the spread of more and more productive contraceptives, the negative impacts of pollution, high population density and globalisation which latter brings the need of continuous adaptation, mobility in space and learning etc.).

The third part of the book deals with the changing forms of cohabitation and the situation of the young generations (Giovanni S. Gritta, Siyka Kovacheva, Clair Wallace). The authors describe the pluralizing norms of cohabitation, the national differences in becoming adult and its connection with the systems of social policy. Sgritta shows some basic social and institutional differences between the countries of Southern and North-western Europe. In Southern Europe the educational level and the level of participation among females in the labour market are lower, there are less part-time jobs and child care facilities, childbearing and childrearing put more stress upon the young generations, and working and childbearing are much more difficult to be reconciled, than in North-Western Europe. In Southern Europe childrearing or the care of the elderly entirely remains the duty of the family, in harmony with the traditional model. Gender roles and family survive in their traditional form in consequence of which the

transition to adulthood is longer and fertility is lower than in the north or in the west. This divergence means a delay of about twenty years as compared to the 'west', but today it is not clear yet that these differences will remain or will disappear in the long run. As for the integration of the young generations, Clair Wallace describes two possible scenarios. The one of them is built on flexibility and integration. In this model young people will receive the necessary support to becoming adult and to reconcile work and childbearing. They will prepare themselves for flexible life courses, they will learn perpetually, their varying individual life models and cohabitation patterns will be tolerated by the society, the labour market will also offer them a lot of possibilities and flexible forms of employment. The other can be characterised by polarisation and exclusion. In this case the interests of the younger generations are left out of consideration in favour of the elderly voters. In this model, except for a privileged group, there will be a high unemployment and political indifference among the young, the tension between the young and older generations will intensify and criminality and illegal migration will be strong. Both of these possibilities are present in the European societies and future political and social decisions will determine which model will become dominant in the next decades.

Johannes Pfliegerl briefly describes the migratory flows observable in the EU 15 in the last four decades and shows the attitudes of the Europeans toward this process. According to the data presented by the 'Eurobarometer', Europeans do not think about their societies as a permanent target of mass migration, they unambiguously regard this process as an episode, a historical exception. As the author argues, it is evidently a mistake, in which the responsibility of the politicians and governments is considerable. It is evident that Europe needs immigrants in order to counterbalance the negative impacts of its more and more unfavourable age structure and to cover the requirements of the labour market, especially after 2010, when the large baby boom generations reach the age of retirement. More than 50% of the Europeans think that too many foreigners live in their countries, at the same time two third of them guess that legal immigrants should have the same rights as EU citizens. It is clear from all this that the attitudes toward immigration and immigrants are not unanimous, aversion is expressed evidently to illegal immigrants. As the author argues, this fact could make the social integration of immigrants possible, in the case of a successful migration policy. Dušan Drbohlav describes the migratory patterns of the new member states, while Catherine Wihtol de Wenden deals with the migratory future of the EU. Both of them argue that the EU needs a common, general migration policy with exact strategic purposes and with the necessary concrete steps to reach these purposes, instead of the recent national level ad hoc decisions. Besides this, Drbohlav urges strict and effective measures against illegal migration, while de Wenden concludes that the recent policy of the 'closed doors' strengthens only the illegal immigration. In her opinion, Europe needs immigrants, the principle of the 'closed doors' is in contradiction with this need. This contradiction can be resolved if the possible values developed by immigration (e.g. multiculturalism, defence of minority rights, fight against discrimination, dividing citizenship and ethnicity) become the important elements of European identity.

In the part dealing with health care systems and mortality (V), both Hans-Joachim Schulze and Robert Anderson emphasize the significance of the differences observable between countries, social strata and income groups. They think the role of the individual decisions and life style important in the case of mortality, lay stress upon the role of

family as a considerable factor in protection of health. At the same time, Christoph Sowada demonstrates the difficulties and confusion characterising the transitional societies' health care systems in a detailed case study, by the example of the Polish health care system.

As a conclusion of the book, Jan H. Marbach examines the distribution of the social capital (the trust in other people and institutions, the fairness, helpfulness, participation in the activities of different organisations) among European countries. This chapter does not fit into the concluding part, its real place would have rather been in the introduction of the book. Marbach demonstrates that social capital interpreted as 'collective good' is distributed very unevenly among European countries, but this unevenness is systematic: regarding all elements of social capital the Nordic countries are at the top of the order of rank, while Central and Eastern Europe changing political and social system or Southern Europe stand at its bottom. It is also an important finding that social capital is in a close correlation with the length of time spent by education.

As a synthesis of the book, Landis McKellar summarises the experiences of the different chapters dealing with the main demographic problems of Europe. He concludes that Europe is not a homogeneous region at all, though for the external observer the similarities appear to be spectacular. The most important element of the European demographic regime is low fertility in consequence of which the growth of population and especially that of labour force is slow. Regarding this fact, Europe's role in the world population as well as in the world economy, without a considerable increase of productivity, will be smaller than now. The process of ageing will surely continue in the future in consequence of which the ratio of pension system beneficiaries to pension system contributors will dramatically change, and the systems providing health care and the long-term care for the elderly will come under great stress. As mortality in all probability will decline further in the next decades, fertility and migration will be the key elements of the system. Immigration must be strong, which is a basic European interest too, but, as McKellar argues, European policy which lays stress upon integration instead of assimilation may cause problems in this field. With regard to fertility, uncertainty increases, because the reason of the so significant fertility decline or that of so continuous low fertility is not clear at all, thus we do not know whether the process is reversible or not. Examining the changes in cohabitation, McKellar argues that the key element is not the longer education, which leads to a later entrance into the labour market, and the postponement of marriage and childbearing, but this correlation is quite opposite, the young generations' weak position in the labour market extends the time of learning, leads to a later transition to adulthood and the postponement of reproduction which results in (lowest) low fertility. As for the future, in McKellar's opinion the European welfare system will remain in some form, but in order to reach this purpose, Europe has to resolve three considerable dilemmas. On the one hand, the situation of the young has to be improved, their labour market participation and wages have to be increased while the relative position of the elderly will worsen (age at retirement will be higher, the right to a pension will be stricter, pensions will decrease and contributions will increase). At the same time the elderly can protect their interests more efficiently, realising the necessary changes is very difficult. On the other hand, productivity should be increased and economic growth should be accelerated, and both should be reconciled with the European social model. However, the consequences of the Lisbon Commitment carried out in 2001, which would make Europe the most productive economic

region in the world, e.g. the growing flexibility and uncertainty on the labour market, are inconsistent with e.g. the family policies intending to reconcile employment and childbearing and may be the cause of further fertility decline. The third challenge is in the problem of immigration: 'Europe needs immigrants, but it doesn't want them' (p. 371).

The book is a very useful reading for all who are interested in demography or in Europe's present and future. It gives a good but not even survey of Europe's most important demographic problems, which is suitable for gathering general information or can be useful in university education too. This picture provided by the authors can be rather regarded as an optimistic view: in their opinion the challenges are considerable, the problems to be resolved are serious, but the European societies have the possibility of solving them at their disposal.

THORNTON, ARLAND: *Reading History Sideways: The Fallacy and Enduring Impact of the Developmental Paradigm on Family Life*. University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 2005. Series: (PD) Population and Development Series. 344 p.

By Attila Melegh

Arland Thornton has written a very important book, which should be a starting point for all students and scholars studying the history of demography and modern social sciences in general. The key advantage of his book is that as a true sociologist he combines three aspects, which are discussed generally in a separated manner. He provides the critical history of theories, he criticizes the Eurocentric assumptions built into the philosophy of history in the field of family life and demography and at the same time tries to understand actual global demographic change in this field by reflectively reconnecting scientific and non-scientific ideas on family change in the real world of ordinary people.

First of all this is a book on the transformation theories of demography, most importantly the demographic transition theories, the elements of which were already elaborated as early as in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century. The author very convincingly argues that this transformation/transition theory towards the "modern family" and "modern" demographic behaviour has been the guiding principle for a very large number of major scholars working on demographic changes including among others Malthus, Le Play, Westermarck, Engels, Morgan and Notestein. He presents these views from the critical perspective of several historians who rightly threw doubts on the "great transformation" theories by taking a closer look at sources and by asking some intriguing questions. Following some historical and geographical insights of John Hajnal on marriage and household formation, Peter Laslett, Richard M. Smith and very importantly the anthropologist-historian Alan Macfarlane convincingly rejected English family history in terms of a great transformation from large, patriarchal, family based "peasant type" households to a more egalitarian, nuclear family-household (e.g. Hajnal 1965; Wrigley 1981; Smith 1984; Wall 1983; Macfarlane 1978, 1986, 1987). According to these latter historians there was an English and/or North West European Individualism in two respects: the individual historical development of England and North Western Europe and