
PREFACE

The third volume of the *Demographic Portrait* – the HDRI’s report on Hungary’s population developments – is presented to the interested readers in a renewed format but with a content characterised by continuity. The 2015 edition, which is published three years after the previous volume, has the same aim: to provide knowledge and highlight interrelations on the basis of scientific analysis – in a concise and accessible way, illustrated with figures and tables – to those interested in the topic.

Although, in essence our volume is characterised by *continuity*, it has some important *new features*, too. It mostly follows the topics and structure of the first edition published in 2009, but two new topics – the intergenerational reallocation of resources and the demographic characteristics of ethnic Hungarians in the neighbouring countries – are presented in separate chapters, while two previously separate topics – ageing and retirement – are discussed together in one chapter. As expected, the 2015 *Demographic Portrait* addresses the traditional questions of demography: fertility, nuptiality (partner relations), mortality, ageing, and migration. Their analyses focus on the presentation of key trends and their interpretation. While other chapters – such as those on family policy or retirement – concentrate on the

characteristics of the institutional system in Hungary. Population projection, possibly the demographic topic that interests the most people, is also included in the volume.

Again, we aimed to present all chapters in a similar structure, although this has not always been possible due to limitations of the topic or the data. As far as possible the discussion of each topic includes an international comparison: we believe that this perspective is crucial in order to understand the specificities of the Hungarian population. It is especially important to compare the Hungarian data to those from post-communist countries as well as Western European states. With regard to the timeframe of the analysis: although we are interested in current and most recent processes – in demography this includes the previous two to three years – it is difficult to interpret demographic phenomena without understanding longer term trends. Therefore, in many cases it seemed useful to present the key trends since 1989–1990, and sometimes to go back even further in time. Lastly, the regime change brought about clear changes in various demographic trends, and thus 1989–1990 represent a convenient starting point for the analysis; on the other hand, the published results of the last three population censuses (1990, 2001, and 2011) also provide reliable data for this.

It should be highlighted that the continuity in the topics and the timeframe mean that there is a certain degree of repetition. The intention that this Volume can be understood on its own – without knowledge of the 2009 and 2012 editions – means that inevitably there is some self-repetition. In demography three years rarely bring sharp changes and new interpretations. Therefore many chapters include the extension of the key indicators and trend lines from previous editions, as well as updated tables and their interpretation. Nevertheless, important new information and correlations are also presented in each chapter.

Two *new perspectives* were incorporated into this Volume that was not part of the 2009 and 2012 editions. On the one hand where possible, differences are also discussed by educational level that has a key role in defining social inequalities. On the other hand, we took advantage of the availability of data from three population censuses at the time of writing the studies; the comprehensive nature of population census data provides a unique opportunity for an in-depth exploration of demographic questions. At the same time spatial differences are not presented in detail in most chapters unlike in the 2012 edition, where this was an important feature. According to the tradition of *population reports* intended for a wider audience, not all statements are supported by academic references and relevant theories or methods are not discussed in detail. However, some exceptions were made when presenting research outside the Institute in more detail. Therefore the omission of academic references is on purpose. Those interested in the subject can find further information from the recommended literature on the Hungarian situation, websites and other publications of our authors listed at the end of each chapter. The aim here was to make the presentation of population trends as accessible as possible and make our current knowledge available for many people.

In line with the research traditions of the Institute, not only the objective trends are presented but also subjective indicators of demographic behaviour as well, namely how the people affected view these issues, what their motivations and values are.

Although the interpretation of demographic events is mainly based on time series and statistical relationships, this Report does not present the data in detail. For this purpose the *Demographic Yearbook* published annually by the Hungarian Central Statistical Office is recommended. Here only the key processes are presented and mostly by using graphical illustrations.

The brief *glossary* at the end of chapters is retained because the concepts of demography (similarly to other disciplines) are not always self-explanatory. These definitions are highlighted in the text by the letter ^G when they first appear. A summary of key points – following the structure of similar publications – can be found at the beginning of each chapter under the heading *Main findings*.

Demography is a fortunate scientific field because it has a great amount of data available for analysis, its subjects are fairly clear-cut and can be also easily interpreted in an international comparison. The analysis uses three key but fundamentally different sources of data. The *vital statistics* collated and presented regularly by the Central Statistical Office provide reliable information on births, marriages, divorces and deaths. The other important source of population data is the *population census*, carried out every ten years. As it has been highlighted previously, one of the features of the 2015 Report is that population census data are extensively used for the discussion of post-regime change demographic processes in Hungary. Survey data are not missing either. Some of the analysis relies on data from the *Turning Points of the Life Course* survey, closely linked to the *Generations and Gender Programme (GGP)*.

Furthermore, data from the *International Social Survey Program (ISSP)* and other surveys are also used. When presenting results based on data from the above (or any other) studies, clear references are provided. Those interested can find plenty of further information on these surveys; therefore they are not presented in detail here.

The *Demographic Portrait* series was launched because we believe that our research findings are also relevant outside the discipline of demography and we – demographers – need to publish our results taking into account the needs of the wider public interested in these issues. The renewed format of the *Demographic Portrait* aims to promote accessibility, and it also fits into a wider renewal process of the Hungarian Demographic Research

Institute. As part of the process, particular attention is paid to presenting our research findings in an accessible way and making sure they are easily available on our website. We also aim to ensure that our website (www.demografia.hu/en) is clear and accessible and that its new format promotes the understanding of processes and statistical interrelations.

It is hoped that this publication will be useful for people of many different professional backgrounds. We believe that the *Demographic Portrait* 2015 will be of particular interest to policy makers, researchers, academic lecturers, students and the press, and we hope that the general public interested in demographic questions will also find it useful.

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