

RESUME

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Our Demographic Fears: Global Population Explosion or a Declining, Aging Population?

Our questions about youth are predominantly future-oriented. Looking to the future, we can see that while we used to be primarily concerned with the shock effects of overpopulation, today we are talking more and more about the fact that families and other communities have become unstable, in some cases even disintegrated, and that young people are having fewer and fewer children. The old continent is thus aging and declining not only in name but also in population, placing a heavy burden on future generations. Even in the short term, one of the most pressing questions in Europe is what young people will do with this difficult legacy. The focus is mostly on maintaining the functioning of welfare societies, but it is also a matter of survival for nations and ethnic minorities. The latter is the subject of a research project on families living abroad, conducted by the Maria Kopp Institute for Demography and Families (KINCS) in collaboration with the Youth Research Institute and the Research Institute for Hungarian Communities Abroad. The aim of our introductory study, which accompanies the issue presenting the results of the research, is to review international trends, using the construct of demographic pseudo-trends as a theoretical framework.

Ágnes Réka DUSA – Tünde FŰRÉSZ – András PÁRI

**Evaluation of Family Images and Family Roles Among Hungarians
Living Beyond the National Borders**

The present study aims to explore the ideal perceptions of the optimal ages for marriage and for having a first child among Hungarians living beyond the national borders in the Carpathian basin. We analyze the dataset based on the joint research of a 2023 questionnaire survey conducted by The Maria Kopp Institute for Demography and Families (KINCS), the Youth Research Institute, and the Research Institute for Hungarian Communities Abroad (NPKI) ($N = 2,000$; ages 18–49; Hungarians of Transylvania, Slovakia, and Vojvodina). Using descriptive statistical methods, we first report the mean ideal ages; then, via cluster analysis, we identify four groups—those following “late family formation,” “early family formation,” “cross-border norms,” and “domestic patterns.” We examine the clusters’ demographic characteristics (region, gender, age, education, marital status, religiosity) through analysis of variance and chi-square tests, and finally by conducting a factor analysis to isolate four marriage attitudes (value, foundation, retention, benefit) and assess their cluster-specific differences. Our results show that the mean ideal age for marriage is 25.3 years for women and 27.7 years for men, while the ideal age for first childbirth is 25.7 years for women and 28.1 years for men. These clusters reflect the distinct norms of the kin-minorities in neighboring countries, while also highlighting the effects of modern life trajectories (higher education, labor-market delays) and family-policy measures. The study’s findings contribute to the development of policies for Hungarians beyond the borders and recommend further longitudinal and qualitative research.

Ágnes ENGLER

Relationship and Family Planning in Relation to National Identity

In our study, we explore the factors that play a role in the development of national identity, and we examine the relationship between national identity and relationship and family commitment. The basis of our research is the 2023 questionnaire survey entitled Hungarian Families in the Carpathian Basin (N=2000). The study dealt with the respondents' experience of being Hungarian, their family life, their well-being, and their future plans. In this work, we examined attitudes and plans towards childbearing from the perspective of national identity. In our analysis, we explored the possible demographic background factors affecting national identity, and then, using cluster analysis, we identified three groups of respondents according to the strength of their identity: we described their character by naming them groups with strong, weak, and uncertain national identities, and then compared their childbearing behavior based on different aspects. The comparison clearly demonstrated that the nature and extent of national identity are strongly related to the human relationships that determine and even connect both the present and the future. Whether we refer to the current life situation or future plans, family life, child raising, and the attitude towards different values and norms are a function of being rooted in individual and national existence.

Kornélia HIRES-LÁSZLÓ

Focus on Hungarian Families in Transcarpathia

The study examines the current living conditions, values, and coping strategies of Hungarian families in Transcarpathia in the shadow of the Russian–Ukrainian war. The research aims to explore how Hungarian communities in the region preserve the traditional family model and their identity amidst war-related crises, economic difficulties, and migration pressures. The study was conducted in the second half of 2023 using semi-structured qualitative interviews. A total of 16 Hungarian families from Transcarpathia, involving 26 respondents, shared their experiences regarding marriage, childbearing, the division of household roles, the effects of labor migration, and the war's impact on their daily lives. Key topics of analysis included the role of religion, family, and community as cohesive forces, as well as the tension between traditional and modern family models. The findings indicate that marriage and childbearing remain among the most important values in life. However, due to economic instability and the prolonged absence of men, women's roles have strengthened, and they often take on the responsibilities of family breadwinners. The war amplifies relationship conflicts and migration motivation, while also reinforcing communal solidarity and adherence to traditional values. The study highlights that the resilience of Hungarian families in Transcarpathia, their religious affiliation, and support from Hungary play a crucial role in their survival and in preserving their collective identity during these challenging times.