

Non-standard Life Courses of People in Transylvania

A Comparison between Romanian and Hungarian Ethnics

MIHAELA HĂRĂGUȘ

Four themes are central to the life course paradigm: the interplay of human lives and historical times, the timing of lives, linked or interdependent lives, and human agency in choice making.

Mihaela Hărăguș

Scientific researcher at the Center for Population Studies of Babeș-Bolyai University of Cluj-Napoca. She is the author of the book **Tranziția la statutul de părinte în Europa: Evoluții recente și posibili determinanți** (Transition to parenthood in Europe: Recent developments and possible determinants) (2008).

THE SECOND half of the 20th century was a period of important changes in the family related demographic behaviors, in all industrialized countries. Fertility dropped below replacement level and continued to maintain at this low level. Marriage rates also dropped, and divorce and non-marital cohabitation increased (see the case studies for European countries in Frejka et al. 2008). This downward trend of marriage and fertility was accompanied by a progressive postponement of marriage and motherhood. In their attempt to find explanations for these trends, researchers have extensively adopted the life course approach, moving from the macro level aggregate data to micro level data that account for all biographic events in the life of individuals (see Billari 2003, 588–589 for a brief account of data requirements).

From a life course perspective, the abovementioned transformations are discussed in terms of de-institutionalization and de-standardization, to em-

This work was supported by CNCIS-UEFISCSU, project number PN ii-RU PD 398/2010.

phasize the diminished role of normative guidance for family related behaviors and the variation that emerged in the organization of people's life courses. To study changes in the life course one needs detailed retrospective information about all stages in a person's life. Such a rich source of data is the *Generations and Gender Survey* that was conducted in Romania in 2005, as part of the international *Generations and Gender Programme*. In 2006, a similar survey was conducted in Transylvania, on the Hungarian population (*Turning Points of the Life Course—Transylvania*), which gives us the opportunity to go deeper in investigating the life course transformation of people from a specific area of Romania, namely Transylvania, comparing Romanian and Hungarian ethnics.

Based on these rich data sources, we wish to investigate whether the transformation of people's life courses that has been documented for Western Europe also characterizes the residents of Romania. We focus on the western region of the country, Transylvania, a region with an important Hungarian minority, which accounts for 19% of the population in Transylvania (Veres 2010, 6). We consider the comparison between Romanian and Hungarian ethnics interesting for several reasons. One would be that according to the classical theories of modernization, the "catching up with the West" is taking place at different paces in different geographical and historical regions, and Transylvania is situated closer to the Western countries. The presence of Hungarian ethnics is also important, as they are a specific population between the Romanian majority and the Hungarians from Hungary, which might act as a transmitter of modern behaviors.

Theoretical Considerations on the Transformation of the Life Course during the Last Decades

Key Concepts in the Study of Changes in the Life Course

THEORETICIANS OF the life course (Dykstra and van Wissen 1999, 6) argue that in a person's life there are different phases, ordered according to their time of occurrence and marked by events that occur at certain points in time. In the sphere of family life, such phases might be that of a child in the parental home, spouse, parent, grandparent, and the corresponding events are leaving parental home, marriage, birth of a child, birth of a grandchild. The sequence of phases delineated by such events form the individual's biography (ibid.; Billari 2003, 588). In other words, during their lives, individuals move between phases, building their life trajectories in different spheres of life. In this respect, the life course perspective offers a framework for exploring the dynamics of multiple, interdependent pathways (Elder 1994, 5).

Four themes are central to the life course paradigm: the interplay of human lives and historical times, the timing of lives, linked or interdependent lives, and human agency in choice making (Elder 1994, 5). Individuals born in different periods of time experience their life trajectories under different historical contexts and their life choices are influenced by various social constraints. In every society there are social norms about the right age for different transitions and life course events may be timely or ill-timed, with particular costs in the latter case (*ibid.*, 6). Teenage childbearing is a good example here. The timing of lives also refers to the synchronization of multiple trajectories, such as family and work. A person's life is embedded in social relationships with kin and friends and the principle of linked lives refers to the interaction among one individual's social worlds through-out the lifespan (*ibid.*). Intergenerational relations are of utmost interest here. Although the human behavior is conditioned by various social constraints, people are active agents of their biographies and make choices among available options, to construct their life course.

The changes in the family related demographic behaviors, such as the drop in fertility and marriage and the increase in divorces and non-marriage, are linked with changes in the organization of people's life courses. Individual biographies are nowadays less prescriptive and more variable than in the past. In this respect, concepts such as "de-institutionalization" and "de-standardization" are used in the literature (Bruckner and Mayer 2005; Widmer and Ritschard 2009) to describe these changes. According to Bruckner and Mayer (2005, 32), the life courses are standardized when "the specific states or events and the sequences in which they occur become more universal for given populations or that their timing becomes more uniform."

If we think of Romania and other Eastern European countries, the socialist period was characterized by the predictability and standardization of people's lives. The welfare provisions were generous and supported specific life trajectories. Young persons were allocated productive positions directly or soon after graduation from secondary (or tertiary) education. We can consider the "worker model" to be the main standardized life-path, with other situations (i.e. tertiary education graduates) tailored after it. Almost all welfare benefits (i.e. housing, pension, maternity and child benefits, but not health coverage) were linked to employment status (Popescu 2004, 28–29), and housing (often shared with other persons of similar status) was provided by a combination of national-local administration, but mostly by the factories. Moreover, marriage and having children were the paths to securing an individual dwelling (Castiglioni et al., forthcoming). It is no surprise that marriage and a (first) child were almost universal and had early patterns. After the change of the political regime, the state retrenched its support (Mureşan et al. 2008) and young adults' lives became

less predictable, giving way to diversity. Conversely, “de-standardization” appears when the life states, events and their sequences characterize an increasingly smaller part of a population or occur at more dispersed ages and with more dispersed durations (Bruckner and Mayer 2005, 32, 33).

Studies addressing the former socialist countries (and Romania in particular) noted several signs of de-standardization, such as the postponement of marriage and motherhood, the loss of motherhood universality, the increase in cohabitation and non-marital births, and the diminution of the share of the two-children family (Philipov 2002; Mureşan 2007; Hărăguş 2008). Postponement of marriage has been documented by Mureşan (2007, 30): less people marry by age 40, both in case of men and women, and consequently the mean age at marriage increases (from 22 years in 1980–1989 to 24 years in 1996–2005, for women). The appeal of direct marriage (not preceded by cohabitation) decreased since the 1990s, while cohabitation as a form of partnership grew steadily, as more people begin a first partnership in this form (Mureşan 2007, 35–36; Hoem et al. 2009, 245). In recent years (1996–2005) Romanians have entered cohabitation at a more rapid pace than in former socialist times: the cumulated percentages of women ever entering cohabitation before age 40 is 35% for the period 1996–2005, compared with 20% for 1980–1989. The vast majority of cohabitations are precursors to marriage, but far fewer are converted into marriage than in the past (Mureşan 2007, 39). We could say that during the most recent periods the life courses of people have become less similar and the domination of specific types of life courses has weakened (Elzinga and Liefbroer 2007, 227). It looks like an increasing category of young adults no longer make the standard transitions that once formed a person’s life course.

Another concept that describes the changes in the organization of people’s life course is “de-institutionalization,” which refers to the process whereby the social and temporal organization of the life course becomes less guided by normative, legal or organizational rules (Elzinga and Liefbroer 2007, 227). Researchers of the life course associated this concept with a weakened linkage between events in people’s life (ibid.; Liefbroer 2005, 4). In the past, certain events occurred closely together, such as leaving the parental home and the formation of a first partnership (in the form of direct marriage), followed by childbearing. Such life course events have become less intricately related: young people leave the parental home before forming a first relationship to a greater extent, and periods of single living are inserted before a first co-residential relationship. The decoupling of childbearing and marriage is also a good example of the de-institutionalization process (Kiernan 2004; Cherlin 2004). Children that are conceived in non-marital contexts are born outside of marriage to a greater extent than in the past, as the normative pressure to legit-

imize the births has been declining over time. The share of first births from cohabiting mothers has increased in European countries over the last decades, while the share of first births from single mothers has shown rather a descending trend (Perelli-Harris et al. 2009). In their comparative study about cohabitation and non-marital births, the same authors show considerable differences across countries in connection with the partnership status at first conception and at first birth, with Nordic countries having the highest share of births in consensual unions. Eastern countries show a more traditional family pattern, in the sense that although the first child might be conceived outside marriage, in many cases the birth takes place inside marriage, marriage being preferred as the proper context for delivering and raising the child.

The theoreticians of the life course propose several key aspects of the transition processes throughout the people's life that should be considered when discussing the changes in life trajectories (Bruckner and Mayer 2005, 35). In connection with our aim, we consider of particular relevance the following elements: prevalence, i.e. the extent to which a given state or transition occurs; age variance, i.e. the degree to which transitions occur at specific ages, and inter-event dependency, i.e. the extent to which the occurrence of an event is associated with the occurrence of another event. To emphasize changes in people's life courses, different cohorts must be compared, as birth year and cohort membership are a proxy for historical change (Elder 1994, 6).

Factors Behind these Changes

THERE IS no doubt that the processes described above have been characterizing the life courses of men and women during the last decades, and the impressive body of literature that address the new phases in the life course, i.e. cohabitation or unmarried parenthood, proves it. The universality of the sequence leaving parental home at marriage, motherhood, life-long marriage has weakened and a great variety of life paths has emerged in family formation and family re-composition (Widmer and Ritschard 2009, 29). Then the question remains: what factors contributed to these developments?

The explanations brought by the theory of the second demographic transition are proposed most often. The theory emerged in the attempt to explain a series of changes in family related behaviors that started around the mid sixties in Western and Northern Europe, such as the decline in marriage and fertility, the increase in cohabitation, divorce, and non-marital childbearing, all combined with the postponement of biographic events towards older ages. Lesthaeghe and van de Kaa, the two authors of the theory, linked these developments with ideational and value change, such as the increased focus on individual autonomy, the rejection of authority (especially religious authority), the rising importance of

higher order needs—self-actualization needs (Lesthaeghe and Surkyn 2002, 1). A re-ordering of Maslow's pyramid is taking place: as societies become richer and the basic needs of survival are fulfilled, higher order needs gain priority. The affective needs of individuals have become more important than social pressure for biological reproduction. Individuals want more from life in general and more from the couple relationship in particular. New minimal quality standards appear and relationships are more vulnerable.

Van de Kaa (2001, 9–10) specifies that the changes in family related behaviors occurred in a sequence and he distinguishes 15 steps in this process, as experienced by a number of Western/Northern European countries. Beginning with the decline in total fertility rates due to reduction in fertility at higher ages, the process advanced with the postponement of childbearing within marriage and the postponement of marriage itself, concluding with a strong increase in cohabitation, even in countries where this was not a traditional practice, and with a strong increase in the proportion of births outside marriage.

The theory has drawn considerable criticism, mainly on account of the fact that the theory was built on the experience of Northern and Western countries, researchers being skeptical to its relevance for the south, center and east of the European continent. Behaviors described by the second demographic transition theory are spreading in these countries, too, but researchers debate nowadays whether non-marriage is associated with emancipation, as the second demographic transition theory says, or it is associated with deprivation and certain socio-economic disadvantages (Perelli-Harris et al. 2010; Goldstein and Keney 2012). Authors who see non-marriage as deprivation argue that there is a common perception that marriage needs solid financial grounds and in this way marriage remains an ideal impossible to be accomplished in practice (Goldstein and Keney 2012; Seltzer 2000, 1250). Studies about non-marital living arrangements and non-marital childbearing in Romania show evidence for the latter perspective (Rotariu 2009; Hărăguș 2011).

Data and Method

Data

THE TRANSFORMATION of people's life courses, in the form of de-institutionalization and de-standardization, can be investigated only with micro-level data that accounts for all biographic events in one's life. Such a rich source of data is the *Generations and Gender Survey* (GGS), which was conducted in Romania in 2005, as part of the international *Generation and Gender Programme*.¹ Beside this, we have access to the database of a similar survey

that was conducted on the Hungarian population in Transylvania.² When studying the life courses of individuals, it is important to have retrospective data about the moments when all biographic events occurred, in other words, to have complete histories of partnerships, fertility, jobs, education. The retrospective design of the *Generations and Gender Survey* allows us to reconstruct the partnership and fertility history of people and to adopt a life course perspective (Vikat et al. 2007). This approach allows us to place the emphasis on the dependencies among different processes in the life of a person and on the way a particular behavior is influenced by the characteristics of the individual over time. Each individual biography is viewed as a complex process, and we are able to investigate how a particular event from someone's life can influence his/her subsequent life course (Courgeau and Lelièvre 1992, 2).

We excluded from our samples the persons with incomplete partnership and fertility histories. Thus, the working sample of Hungarian ethnics from Transylvania comprises 2,423 persons (1,262 women and 1,161 men), with ages between 18 and 45 years. In order to make comparisons between Romanian and Hungarian ethnics, we kept from the original sample of the *Generations and Gender Survey* in Romania only Romanian ethnics residents of Transylvania, from the same age group of 18–45 years. This left us with a sample of 1,789 persons (832 women and 957 men). In the Romanian GGS the region of residence was recorded, not the county, and we selected people from three regions—West, Northwest and Center—which include the same counties as in the Hungarian ethnics survey, with the exception of two counties that were not included in the latter survey (Caraș-Severin and Sibiu).

Indicators of Change in the Life Course

TO ASSESS the degree of diffusion of non-standard life courses, we look at the beginning of life trajectories, i.e. at the first events in the partnership and fertility histories, and at the possible combination of phases/events in life trajectories. We look at the diversification of early life courses, i.e. first partnership formation, and the interplay with the childbearing process.

A person can start his/her partnership with a period of (unmarried) cohabitation or with a direct marriage, which means that the couple did not live together before marriage. The duration of cohabitation may vary and it can be transformed into marriage, continued as cohabitation, or dissolved. In the meantime, a child might be conceived and the partnership situation at childbirth might be different than the situation at conception, or, in other words, conception of a child might change the partnership status of the couple.

In the next section, we describe the different situations that might characterize a person's life course in the sphere of family life and their diffusion in

the population. We follow several key aspects proposed by Bruckner and Mayer (2005, 35), which are prevalence, age variance and inter-event dependency. For prevalence, we describe the extent to which direct marriage or cohabitation occur as the first event in the family life trajectories of people in Transylvania. We consider cohabitation as the non-standard path and the increase of its prevalence among younger cohorts would be considered as a sign of de-standardization. Regarding age variance, we look at median ages for the transition to first partnership among cohorts, and regarding inter-event dependency, we look at the partnership status at the conception³ of the first child and whether/how it changes before birth. Based on these indicators, we construct and test several hypotheses regarding the changes in the life course of people in Transylvania, following the concepts of de-institutionalization and de-standardization. De-institutionalization refers to the less normative guidance of family-related life course transition, and we expect to find variation from the standard order of family building events, which was marriage–conception–birth. We also expect a decline in the share of non-marital conceptions that end in marital births, due to the decline in the normative pressure toward marriage. De-standardization refers to the weakening domination of specific life trajectories, in our case, to the weakening domination of the standard path of direct marriage and conception inside marriage. To emphasize changes over time, most often we make comparisons across three birth cohorts (1960–1969, 1970–1979, after 1980), besides the Romanians-Hungarians comparison.

Non-standard Life Courses

First Partnership

THE RESULTS from Table 1 and 2 represent the cumulative percentage of people that started a partnership with a direct marriage or with cohabitation, and these two are competing events. This means that a person could start either with direct marriage or with cohabitation, and once an event occurred, the person is no longer likely to experience any of the two events.

We see from Table 1 that from one birth cohort to the other, both for Romanian and for Hungarian ethnics, the share of persons that started with direct marriage has dropped. By age 20, 21% of Romanians and 25% of Hungarians born in 1960–1969 have already formed a direct marriage, while the share is 19% for the cohort 1970–1979 and 8% for the cohorts after 1980 for Romanians, and 17% and 9% for Hungarians, respectively. By the age 30, 80–81% of the people born in 1960–1969 have been married directly, while the figures are visibly lower for the younger cohorts: 72% for Romanians and 66% for

Hungarians. The youngest cohorts, born after 1980, were in 2005–2006 (the time when the data was collected) around age 25–26 and that is why there are empty cells in the table. Nevertheless, we notice the clear drop in the share of persons who formed a direct marriage by the age of 25.

TABLE 1. Cumulated percentage of people starting a partnership with a direct marriage, with cohabitation as a competing event

Romanians				Hungarians			
Age	1960–1969	1970–1979	after 1980	Age	1960–1969	1970–1979	after 1980
20	21%	19%	8%	20	25%	17%	9%
25	65%	56%	27%	25	67%	47%	29%
30	81%	72%		30	80%	66%	
35	86%	76%		35	82%	74%	
40	90%			40	84%		

SOURCE: for Romanian ethnics: *Generations and Gender Survey*, Romania 2005; for Hungarian ethnics: *Turning Points of the Life Course—Transylvania*, 2006. Author's calculations.

The declining propensity towards direct marriage has been compensated by an elevated propensity towards cohabitation as the first partnership. Table 2 shows a visible increase in the percentage of persons who start the first partnership in the form of cohabitation from the cohorts 1960–1969 to 1970–1979, both for Romanian and Hungarian ethnics. Nevertheless, cohabitation as the first partnership seems to be more popular among Romanian ethnics than among their Hungarian counterparts. By the age of 35, 40% of Romanian ethnics born in 1970–1979 started a cohabiting relationship, compared to 37% for those born in 1960–1969. For Hungarian ethnics, the figures are 22% for cohorts 1970–1979 and 15% for cohorts 1960–1969.

TABLE 2. Cumulated percentage of people starting a partnership with a cohabitation, with direct marriage as competing event

Romanians				Hungarians			
Age	1960–1969	1970–1979	after 1980	Age	1960–1969	1970–1979	after 1980
20	6%	7%	8%	20	5%	7%	9%
25	19%	22%	17%	25	11%	16%	19%
30	29%	35%		30	13%	20%	
35	37%	40%		35	15%	22%	
40	42%			40	17%		

SOURCE: for Romanian ethnics: *Generations and Gender Survey*, Romania 2005; for Hungarian ethnics: *Turning Points of the Life Course—Transylvania*, 2006. Author's calculations.

We have seen from the two tables that the predominance of the direct marriage as the beginning of the family life trajectory is diminishing and new behaviors—cohabitation—gain more popularity among younger cohorts. We consider this a sign of the de-standardization of the life course.

There is also age variation across cohorts for these life course transitions, in the sense that people from younger cohorts postpone their biographic events. Not only fewer people marry directly, but they do so at older ages. Half of the Romanians from the cohorts 1960–1969 who married directly did so by the age of 24, while the corresponding age for the cohorts 1970–1979 is 25. The postponement of marriage is more visible for the Hungarian ethnics: half of the people married directly by age 24 in the cohorts 1960–1969, while the corresponding age for the cohorts 1970–1979 is 27.

Partnership-Conception-Birth Relation

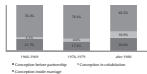
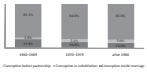
UNTIL NOW we have discussed the first partnership transition of both men and women. Now we turn our attention to women only and investigate the partnership-conception-birth relation. We consider women only because most studies on fertility consider men's accounting of their fertility history to be significantly less reliable than women's, especially regarding non-marital childbearing.

A standard life course would be marriage-conception-birth of the child, but we discover from Figure 1 that part of the births that happen inside marriage were pre-marital conceptions. The de-standardization, in the sense of the weakening domination of specific life trajectories, is more visible for Hungarian women. Across cohorts, increasing shares of marital births are actually results of conceptions that happen before marriage, in other words, the domination of the conception and birth inside the marriage pattern is diminishing.

Now we look at the same partnership-conception-birth relation, but from a different perspective, namely we look at the distribution of women by partnership status at conception and at birth. We want to see whether there are indications of de-institutionalization of the life course of women in Transylvania. This would be the case if increasing proportions of non-marital conceptions ended in non-marital births, instead of partnership transformation before birth.

We have found that for Romanian women born in 1960–1969, a high share of the conceptions that took place before forming a partnership (i.e. in the absence of a co-residential relationship with a partner) ended in marital births. This proportion becomes smaller across younger cohorts, meaning that increasing shares of non-marital conceptions would remain non-marital births. Similarly, an increasing share of conceptions in cohabitation end as births in cohabitation (71.4% for the cohorts 1960–1969 and 88.9% for the cohorts born after 1980).

FIG. 1. Women with births inside marriage, by partnership situation at conception and cohort, Romanian and Hungarian ethnics



SOURCE: for Romanian ethnics: *Generations and Gender Survey*, Romania 2005; for Hungarian ethnics: *Turning Points of the Life Course—Transylvania*, 2006. Author's calculations.

FIG. 2. Women by partnership status at conception and partnership status at birth, by cohorts, Romanian and Hungarian ethnics



SOURCE: for Romanian ethnics: *Generations and Gender Survey*, Romania 2005; for Hungarian ethnics: *Turning Points of the Life Course—Transylvania*, 2006. Author's calculations.

For Hungarian women the picture looks slightly different. High shares of conceptions before partnership remained births before partnership even for older cohorts (around 44%). For the youngest cohorts, born after 1980, only 31% of conceptions before partnership became marital births. Compared with Romanian women, fewer conceptions in cohabitation remained births in cohabitation, or, in other words, the pressure to legitimize the births seems to be higher than for Romanian women.

Summary and Conclusions

THE AIM of this article was to investigate, from a life course perspective, the transformation of the people's life trajectories in the family life domain, focusing on Transylvania, comparing Romanian and Hungarian ethnics. Following the underlying concept of de-institutionalization and de-standardization, we observed several key aspects, such as prevalence, age variance and inter-event dependency. For the prevalence of change, we described the extent to which direct marriage or cohabitation occurred as the first event in the family life trajectories. Considering cohabitation as the non-standard path, we have found that from one birth cohort to the other, both for Romanian and for Hungarian ethnics, the share of persons that started with a direct marriage has dropped and the declining propensity towards direct marriage has been compensated by an elevated propensity towards cohabitation as the first partnership. The predominance of the direct marriage as the start of the family life trajectory is diminishing and new behaviors—cohabitation—gain more popularity among younger cohorts, which we consider to be signs of the de-standardization of the life course. At the same time, ages at the transition to first partnership have increased across cohorts.

Regarding the inter-event dependency, we found indications of de-standardization and de-institutionalization, in the sense that there is increasing deviation across cohorts from the standard life course of marriage-conception-birth of the child. From one cohort to the other, increasing shares of non-marital conceptions remain non-marital births, with a stronger pressure to legitimize the births for Hungarian ethnics.

The differences between Romanian and Hungarian ethnics are not remarkable. It seems that ethnicity matters less than the actual social conditions that people live in, as Veres (2010) also found. In order to strengthen our comparison and as a further test of this result, Hungarian ethnics living in Hungary and Romanians living in the other regions of Romania should be added to the picture.



Notes

1. Access to the *Generations and Gender* databases is granted by the Populations Activities Unit of the UN Economic Commission for Europe, via the platform www.ggp-i.org.
2. Access to the *Turning Points of the Life Course—Transylvania* database granted by the Romanian Institute for Research on National Minorities.
3. The survey registered the date of the woman's first birth and we approximated the date of conception as nine months before childbirth.

References

- Billari, F. 2003. "Life course analysis." In *Encyclopedia of Population*, eds. P. Demeny and G. McNicoll. New York: Macmillan Reference USA.
- Bruckner, H. and K. U. Mayer. 2005. "De-standardization of the life course: What might it mean? And if it means anything, whether it actually took place." In *The structure of the life course: Standardized? Individualized? Differentiated?*, ed. R. Macmillan, 27–53. (Advances in Life Course Research, vol. 9) Amsterdam: Elsevier.
- Castiglioni, M., M. Hărăguș, C. Faludi, and P.-T. Hărăguș. "Does the family system in Romania follow the pattern of southern European countries?" Forthcoming.
- Cherlin, A. 2004. "The Deinstitutionalization of American Marriage." *Journal of Marriage and Family* 66 (4): 848–861.
- Courgeau, D. and E. Lelièvre. 1992. *Event History Analysis in Demography*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Dykstra, P. and L. van Wissen. 1999. "Introduction: The life course approach as an interdisciplinary framework for population studies." In *Population issues: An interdisciplinary focus*, eds. L. van Wissen and P. Dykstra. New York: Kluwer Academic/Plenum Publishers.
- Elder, G. H. 1994. "Time, human agency, and social change: Perspectives on the life course." *Social Psychology Quarterly* 57 (1): 4–15.
- Elzinga, C. H. and A. C. Liefbroer. 2007. "De-standardization of family-life trajectories of young adults: A cross-national comparison using sequence analysis." *European Journal of Population* 23: 225–250.
- Frejka, T., T. Sobotka, J. M. Hoem, and L. Toulemon, eds. 2008. *Childbearing Trends and Policies in Europe*. Munich: Max-Planck-Gesellschaft.
- Goldstein, J. R. and C. T. Keney. 2012. "Too poor to marry? A cross-national comparison of the SES gradient in non-marriage." Presentation at European Population Conference, Stockholm.
- Hărăguș, M. 2008. *Tranziția la statutul de părinte în Europa: Evoluții recente și posibili determinanți*. Cluj-Napoca: Presa Universitară Clujeană.
- . 2011. "Nașterile în contexte diferite de cel marital." *Calitatea vieții* 4: 379–396.
- Hoem, J. M., A. Jasilioniene, D. Kostova, and C. Mureșan. 2009. "Traces of the Second Demographic Transition in selected countries in Central and Eastern Europe: Union formation as a demographic manifestation." *European Journal of Population* 25 (3): 239–255.

- Kiernan, K. 2004. "Redrawing the Boundaries of Marriage." *Journal of Marriage and Family* 66: 980–987.
- Lesthaeghe, R. and J. Surkyn. 2002. "New forms of household formation in Central and Eastern Europe: Are they related to newly emerging value orientations?" *Interuniversity papers in demography 2* (Vrije Universiteit Brussel, Belgium).
- Liefbroer, A. C. 2005. *Changes in the transition to adulthood in Europe: An empirical analysis of changes among cohorts born between in the 1950's and 1960's in Europe and among Dutch cohorts born between 1900 and 1982*. Report for the Robert Bosch Foundation, retrieved from <http://www.nidi.knaw.nl/Content/NIDI/output/2005/rbs-2005-adulthood.pdf>, on 1.07.2012.
- Mureşan, C. 2007. "Family dynamics in pre- and post-transition Romania: A life-table description." *MPIDR Working Paper WP-2007-018*.
- Mureşan, C., M. Hărăguş, P.T. Hărăguş, and C. Schröder. 2008. "Romania: Childbearing metamorphosis within a changing context." *Demographic Research* 19: 855–906.
- Perelli-Harris, B, W. Sigle-Rushton, M. Kreyenfeld, T. Lappegård, C. Berghammer, and R. Keizer. 2010. "The educational gradient of nonmarital childbearing in Europe: emergence of a pattern of disadvantage?" *MPIDR Working Paper WP-2010-004*.
- Perelli-Harris, B., W. Sigle-Rushton, T. Lappegård, P. Di Giulio, A. Jasilioniene, K. Renske, K. Koppen, C. Berghammer, and M. Kreyenfeld. 2009. "Examining non-marital childbearing in Europe: how does union context differ across countries?" *MPIDR Working Paper WP-2009-021*.
- Philipov, D. 2002. "Fertility in times of discontinuous societal change: The case of Central and Eastern Europe." *MPIDR Working Paper WP 2002-024*.
- Popescu, L. 2004. *Politici sociale est-europene între paternalism de stat și responsabilitate individuală*. Cluj-Napoca: Presa Universitară Clujeană.
- Rotariu, T. 2009. "Marital and extramarital fertility in latter-day Romania." In *Families in Europe Between the 19th and the 21st Centuries: From Traditional Model to Contemporary PACS*, eds. A. Fauve-Chamoux and I. Bolovan, 361–380. Cluj-Napoca: Presa Universitară Clujeană.
- Seltzer, J. A. 2000. "Families formed outside of marriage." *Journal of Marriage and Family* 62 (4): 1247–1268.
- van de Kaa, Dirk J. 2001. "The idea of a Second Demographic Transition in industrialized countries." Paper presented at the Sixth Welfare Policy Seminar of the National Institute of Population and Social Security, Tokyo, Japan, 29 January.
- Veres, V. 2010. "Transition to adulthood and the postponement of childbearing: the case of Transylvanian Hungarians from Romania." *Romanian Journal of Population Studies* 4 (1): 5–23.
- Vikat, A., Z. Speder, G. Beets, F.C. Billari, C. Buhler, A. Desesquelles, T. Fokkema, J. M. Hoem, A. L. MacDonald, G. R., Neyer, A. Pailhe, A. Pinnelli, and A. Solaz. 2007. "Generations and Gender Survey (GGS): Towards a better understanding of relationships and processes in the life course." *Demographic Research* 17: 389–440.
- Widmer, E. D. and G. Ritschard. 2009. "The de-standardization of the life course: Are men and women equal?" *Advances in Life Course Research* 14: 28–39.

Abstract

Non-standard Life Courses of People in Transylvania: A Comparison between Romanian and Hungarian Ethnics

During the last decades, important changes took place in the sphere of family life in all industrialized countries. From a life course perspective, new stages and new sequences emerged in the people's life paths, and the normative guidance for family related behaviors has now a diminished role. New living arrangements and demographic behaviors have spread, such as consensual unions and childbearing outside marriage. We investigate the degree of diffusion of these non-standard behaviors and the most common patterns of people's life courses, with a focus on Transylvania, comparing Romanian and Hungarian ethnics. We use for our investigation two rich databases, namely *Generations and Gender Survey* for Romania and *Turning Points of the Life Course—Transylvania* for the Hungarian ethnics in Transylvania, which contain retrospective information about the life course of several thousand people.

Keywords

life course, de-standardization, de-institutionalization, marriage, cohabitation, childbearing, Transylvania