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Hungary: Secular fertility decline with distinct period fluctuations

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Abstract

In this study, we demonstrate from different angles that Hungarian fertility basically decreased between 1965 and 2005, but also clearly fluctuated, and showed different patterns in the different periods within this epoch. As a result, the clear communist-era family pattern of “early marriage and childbearing with two children” was replaced, but new family model(s) have not yet fully emerged. We could show that profound changes in partnership behaviour –divorce and cohabitation– started before the change of the political regime, but also that changes in partnership relations accelerated after 1990, and that partnerships have become more fragile. In addition, Western-style values of “empty individualism” and consumerism were clearly present under socialism, but their motivating force was tamed by the communist system, in which population policy played a significant role. Of these institutional changes, we ascribe the greatest importance to the expansion in the educational system and the changes in the labour market. We show that, following the changes in the economic system, the conflict between family and work intensified. The synchronic consideration of values, labour market relations, economic development, and population policy; and the relationship of these factors to fertility and nuptiality trends, enabled us to formulate a developmental scheme of four phases concerning the evolution of fertility since 1965.

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Keywords

[childbearing](#), [fertility](#), [Hungary](#)

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