

## Chapter 14

# Historical Demography

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### **Morality and Populationism before the Twentieth Century<sup>1</sup>**

In Europe, a systematic idea of demographic regions was born in the late eighteenth century, more than a century after the birth of political arithmetics and demography. The idea of comparative population development (concerning relevant social institutions and processes of marriage, family, fertility, and mortality) and its relationship to other social institutions and arrangements appeared earlier, most importantly with regard to nations and local communities, but there was no concept of identifying various geographic spaces with specific demographic behavior.

Nevertheless, a latent idea of the spatial spread of population existed well before and in fact could be a major concern for various thinkers. Beyond some early thinkers such as Ptolemy, the most important of these is Ibn Khaldūn, who in the fourteenth century reflected upon the spread and increase of human population and civilization constrained by mainly climatic and environmental factors. He was followed in this by later geographers and, very importantly, Montesquieu. Montesquieu divided the world according to religions, among which Christianity was not presented as superior, at least in its effect on population development. He was a harsh opponent of the proscription against divorce in Christianity, especially among Catholics. He saw this as an unfortunate and historically recent social custom that reduced fertility by forcing people to live together without proper emotional basis, joining “living men to dead bodies.” At the same time, he also opposed polygamy among the Muslims, which also reduced the capacity of men to reproduce (Montesquieu 1964, letter 114). Thus he saw both cultures as being equally problematic, especially since they departed from the Roman experience of supporting monogamy and divorce. Protestant countries were praised for at least allowing

the marriage of priests and the clergy. According to Montesquieu, they were more populous and more industrious. Beyond religious norms and regulations, some other factors also mattered for him in demographic behavior. Very importantly from the point of view of later regionalization, stem family inheritance (one son inherits key assets) was seen as reducing fertility, and Montesquieu considered it a production of “vanity,” whereas equal heritage among sons supported fertility (Montesquieu 1964, letter 19).

Before Malthus appeared on the scene, we must mention a debate that had an impact on the way ideas of regions evolved (Tomaselli 1988; Teitelbaum 2006). Mercantilists held a pronatalist view that there was a need to increase the power of the monarch by increasing the labor force and/or the number of soldiers. This was a competitive idea in the arena of states fighting for territories and resources, but it lacked a direct link to spatial spheres beyond nation-states and their colonies. The mercantilists and the related utopians did not hold the pessimistic view that any increase of population would lead to obstacles in economic growth and the space of the polity. Their optimism was shared by thinkers outside France, such as Johann Peter Süssmilch, who argued that monarchs should do everything for the sake of increasing the population of the relevant political community by easing the access to marriage, controlling food prices, avoiding the unnecessary loss of people before “their time,” or even encouraging immigration and discouraging emigration.

The idea of increasing the demographic strength of the power of the sovereign through various methods of intervention, and thus thinking in terms of a compact territorial framework plus the possibility of an ever-increasing population, was first questioned by the physiocrats when they shifted their priorities concerning factors of production from labor to land (Vilquin 2006; Teitelbaum 2006). Physiocrats argued that only agriculture was a real source of value (not industry or commerce) and that population should grow only until land could feed the relevant population; this balance was regulated by the standard of living. Later, classical economists, most importantly David Ricardo and Thomas Malthus, introduced the idea that land was problematic among the factors of production, as the marginal increase of capital or labor investment led to diminishing returns, due to the fixed nature of land and the decline of the quality of additional inputs. This questioned the assumption that agricultural production could be increased infinitely and thus raised the concern that the increase of population might be a very serious problem in relation to the quantity of food. Malthus attempted to solve this problem, which led to his idea of demographic regions, which was part of a new way of conceptualizing international politics and moral control over human reproduction (Malthus 1826). Drawing on various ideas that all existed before his time, he combined them into a very simplistic but powerful colonial-Eurocentric epis-

temic mix: (1) the negation of social cooperation between individuals beyond sexual relationships and instincts to reproduce; (2) the idea of differential demographic behavior according to social classes and the required suppression of the lower classes in order to avoid unintended consequences (decline of wealth) of concern for the whole society; (3) the idea of differential demographic behavior according to the regions of the world. These, (4) regions and related states represented various levels of historical-moral progress according to the ration of ‘positive’ (war, famines, epidemics) and ‘negative’ (voluntary control of fertility through delaying marriage) “checks on population.” All (5) of these aspects were linked by establishing a unilinear global-local moral scale of various forms of control.

As opposed to Montesquieu, Malthus, a former Jesus College fellow, Anglican curator and East India Company educator, not only opposed overpopulation but had a fixed hierarchical “reading of history sideways” (Thornton 2005) and established a specific system that linked regions, historical development, and demographic behavior by scaling the ratio of negative and positive checks. This technique and the constant recalibration of this progress-regional differences-history rod of measurement have been the most important focus in demographic thinking over the last two hundred years (see Melegh 2006, 52–54). Malthus envisaged and established one of the key ideas of global biopolitical control based on liberal economic thought, the colonial gaze, and the internalization of global/local social hierarchies. This set the bounds of an intellectual arena in which most of the debates over demographic changes and resources took place until the late twentieth century.

There are various geographical divisions in the texts of Malthus. All divisions are understood as representing various stages of history. The “bottom of the scale of human beings” is that of Tierra del Fuego, described as living in a “miserable” state where there was no voluntary control over fertility. Concerning the “barbarian” characteristics among Australian aborigines and American Indians, Malthus mentions constant fighting, promiscuous intercourse, the low status of women, deformed children, filth, and nastiness.

Non-Europe is behind past Europe as represented by Greece and Rome. Modern Europe is explicitly seen as homogeneous in terms of habits, “owing to the similarity of the circumstances in which they are placed.” Europe is united in the use of preventive checks, as opposed to “past times” and “the more uncivilized parts of the world.” This can be regarded as a line of racial-historical differentiation (Malthus 1826: bk. 2, ch. 13, par. 41). Nonetheless, Europe is not completely homogeneous and Malthus, who traveled extensively in Europe, divides it up in various and somewhat conflicting ways. He draws a dividing line between North Europe (Norway, Sweden, and Russia) as opposed to other regions (as he calls it, the middle part with Germany

versus the region containing England, France, and Switzerland). The line is drawn not due to some major demographic characteristics (although the greater role of positive checks is raised in the case of Sweden and Russia), but due to a similar “internal economy,” while “the middle parts of Europe” differ very little from England.

Malthus had large-scale impact, and ever since there have been references to him and his biopolitical view. His concrete ideas of regions have not been so popular, however, and we can even say that they were rather unclearly formulated and have mainly been forgotten. Only the idea of Northwestern Europe has proved to be persistent, albeit with major modifications. But later we will see that his idea of regions based on marriage behavior (age at marriage and the proportion of ever-married) had a large influence in the twentieth century.

Malthus wrote little about inheritance and various other processes of family formation or family economy, though they were among the concerns of many other thinkers. The person who made this a crucial element was the conservative moralist Frédéric Le Play. Writing about the workers of Europe (1855, 1879/1937), about the organization of the family, he introduced a tripartite regional differentiation that was different from that of Malthus and based mainly on inheritance, parental control, cohabitation, and family budgets (Thornton 2005): (1) stem family (Central Europe)—Germany, France, as well as the two peninsula of the Mediterranean (Italian and Spanish); (2) unstable family (Northwestern Europe)—the industrial areas of Great Britain, the Netherlands, Belgium, Germany, Switzerland, and France; and (3) patriarchal family (Eastern Europe)—between the Arctic Ocean and the Mediterranean, Scandinavia, Russia, Poland, Hungary, and Turkey. Le Play is a clear representative of non-Malthusian French pronatalism, which can be dated to the eighteenth century, as can be seen even in the case of Montesquieu, and was promoted by various other thinkers, most notably Condorcet (Sen 1994, 1996; Teitelbaum 2006). France was a unique country in this respect. It was a major colonial power on the first level of the global hierarchy, but still, due to constant conflict with the British Empire and other European powers, most importantly Germany, it understood itself as being in constant struggle for dominance in population discourses. Malthus thus was clearly seen as somewhat irrelevant in the national-colonial imaginary of France (Quine 1996; Schneider 1990). Instead of colonial expansion, Le Play was concerned with domestic resources and was interested in measuring the moral strength of the nation. His field work in various European countries aimed at measuring the strength and the stability of intertwined work and family organization.

The classification of work and family social organizations was linked to regions, as well as to social and moral developmental scales. The key idea of Le Play was the difference between market-based industrial class systems and

various forms of integrated rural systems. This contrast appeared in his ideas of regions. Region for Le Play was not a clear geographical category, as industrial areas of Central Europe were also included in the category of the Western type. Nonetheless, he uses the idea of a line separating North Africa, the Middle East, South Italy, Hungary, Northern Europe, and “Slavic” Europe from Middle and Western Europe. He also had a clear idea of Western Europe, containing countries between Spain and Sweden, as being separate from the mixed areas characterized by stem family. His regional taxonomy proved to be very powerful in later demographic thinking. He was the first person to formulate ideas of regional variation of family systems, as opposed to Malthus, who saw only minor internal European borders and argued for overall homogeneity concerning Europe. Le Play was also the first person to categorize these regions by names such as “East” (“Eastern group”) and “West” (“Western group”), thus having a more explicit conceptual regionalization.

Following the region-history-development scale, he also sees advancement from patriarchal systems to modern unstable families as real development. But in contrast to the developmental scale, he has an opposing moral scale in which the stability of the patriarchal system is much praised. Thus Le Play is the first demographer to oppose the idea that the West was the most developed and occupied the highest moral position; instead, he sees social development as being accompanied by moral decline. He does not exclude the possibility of a moral solution in the most developed areas and in fact argues that such a solution can be found by changing various social institutions (such as partible inheritance in France) in order to unite moral and developmental focal points. This perspective also proved to be important in further debates in the twentieth century, which also concerned regional differentiation, most notably the fascist and later, with a different logic, the state socialist challenge to Western domination.

### **Regions versus Demographic Resources: Demographic Thinking between the Two World Wars**

Up to the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, the idea of direct intervention in population development had a somewhat limited impact. The strong support for direct control only came with the advancement of eugenics, the spread of family planning methods and the overall biologization of demographic discourses, which led to the open discussion of intervening in fertility control on the basis of social class. In these cases, morality as an external guide for behavior lost influence and more and more “moral” ideas were sublimated into (and to a large extent voided by) demographic and eugenic techniques of power. The population came to be seen as a direct resource that

needed direct management in a highly competitive world, marked by large-scale wars within Europe and in its colonies.

This was an era when mortality and fertility went through dramatic changes, but in a differential way. The tempo and the timing varied quite substantially, which pushed thinkers to reflect on the ways population could be managed, and of course the idea of regional differences gained momentum. There were three main approaches in ideas of managing population development.

A liberal approach utilized the idea of the West as a focal point of development and also of progress in control over fertility. This is the Malthusian tradition, but by the 1920s the moral element (i.e. avoiding “pauperism”) is sublimated into techniques of fertility control itself. In varying ways, this approach, which later was referred to as *demographic transition* or *demographic revolution*, from time to time made alliances with eugenics, promoting “quality” reproduction. Later it could even easily transform itself into a repressive idea globally aiming at direct interventions due to Malthusian crises. This approach was well represented by Thompson, (1929) Landry (1934, 1987), and Notestein (1945), all of whom had explicit ideas of regions.

The conservative and the only slightly varying fascist perspectives questioned the idea that the West represented the focal point of global development. The “us” community was defined in a fluid way as being a nation, ethnic group, race, or class. Very importantly, this type of demographic resource management relied on a biological or culturally essential understanding of ethnic, national, and racial characteristics. Morality was either sublimated into various repressive measures necessary for the rise of the nation, or it was embedded into ethnic, national, and/or racial types directly, and the rise of the valued group’s global position legitimized almost any measure taken against other groups or internal enemies, understood also in terms of demographic behavior (“racial hygiene”). Ideas of regions also appeared among these thinkers, and, as we will see, there was a certain convergence between their approach and that of the liberals.

Both of these approaches were challenged by so-called populist or Narodnik thinkers in Eastern Europe (e.g. Imre Kovács, Ferenc Erdei, Dimitrie Gusti), who shared the idea of a possible rise of otherwise declining national, racial, ethnic, and social groups with essentialized characteristics (Melegh 2006, 76-82). Very importantly, these populists focused on changing the social background of population processes instead of promoting ideas of demographic determinism or large scale immediate intervention. While they targeted the behavior and the wellbeing of the peasants and their structural constraints, the fascists saw pronatalist or social intervention only as a means to discipline the population and to directly achieve a higher relative position of the “nation” and/or “race” against “others” inside and outside.

In the first half of the twentieth century, there was a widespread panic over the decline in fertility, combined with other demographic processes in North America and Europe which forecasted the relative decline of population ratios of the “West” (Bashford 1914, 55–156). This sense of a change led to the idea of demographic transition as represented by Thompson, Notestein, and Landry (1929, 1945, 1934). This theory recombined class, history, progress, and regional scaling, and established one of the main interpretative frameworks utilized even by the rival approaches mentioned above (Melegh 2006; 2009). It is also important to note that this was the period when debates over various regionally located family types started in ethnography, sociology, and legal science.

Thompson (1929) used a threefold system of “group A,” including Northern and Western Europe, North America, and also Australia, versus “group B,” including Southern and Eastern Europe without Russia, and “group C,” including everybody else. Very importantly, the boundary between group A and B was the “Gdańsk–Trieste” line, which was close to the line between mixed and Eastern areas according to Le Play (with the important differences that it did not mark the end of the Northwest and that the mixed area included Italy and Spain). This line also satisfied the desire for a clear East–West division, and later the line drawn from Trieste began its career, named after John Hajnal.

It is important to note that Thompson’s regional idea proved to be one of the dominant ideas, as the combination of Eastern and Southern Europe appeared often. As we analyze below, Corrado Gini (1930) had somewhat similar ideas, but the combination also appeared in the works of Wilbert E. Moore (1945) on economic demography. Even more, we can argue that in some ways John Hajnal (1965, 1983) and Peter Laslett (1983) presented somewhat similar ideas.

The French Adolphe Landry (1934) was different from Thompson in the sense that he had much clearer ideas of a “demographic revolution” and demographic differentials among classes, while his concepts of regions were hidden in the text. He divided up the whole historical process into three stages, against a background of a long tradition of pronatalism and a fear of population decline. This approach was far less triumphant than the one promoted by Thompson and later Notestein. According to Landry (1934, 87), the first stage has automatic equilibrium; in the second stage equilibrium is achieved through various human strategies (e.g., marriage patterns to maintain standard of living); and in the last stage this control is lost, there is no equilibrium, and as a result population decline continues and there is moral decay (see also Vilquin 2006). In terms of regions he is much less explicit, although he concedes that in this revolution various stages were performed by

various areas in different time periods, and that between Italy and Romania, for example, there was a serious time lag in the decline of fertility.

In this perspective, the novelty of Notestein (1945) lies not only in his revision of the Thompson scheme but also in his ability to push these ideas to the level of international politics. This was due partly to the fact that the United States took a leading position in global politics, a position held earlier by the previous colonial European states, and partly to the appearance of international organizations such as the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations, which began to formulate policies for the global management of population and food production. The idea of demographic transition and of inherent regional differentiation was key in this formulation of global politics (Bashford 2014).

The full-fledged theory successfully combined various elements that had been circulating in demographic thinking before. It had a strong neo-Malthusian flavor in idealizing conscious family planning among the middle classes in the West. At the same time, it explicitly broke with the Malthusian framework and opted for social determinism (that is, population trends are not independent variables and they are influenced by various social institutions, industrialism, urbanization, and individualism). It should be noted nonetheless that after the Communist takeover in China in 1949, this society–population causality was reversed for the Third World, as there was allegedly no time to wait for social forces to do their job (Szreter 1993). In this neo-Malthusian turn, regionalization of global demographic processes played a very important role. As most historical discourses, this regionalization was put into a progress–region scale, but very importantly it also contained an idea of competition over resources.

Notestein's global map relied on the West-centric map of Thompson. But it contained new elements (1945). The linkage between Western Europe, North America, Australia, and New Zealand was maintained, but within Europe this first zone (characterized by the “incipient decline” of population growth) was extended to much of Central Europe and Southern Europe, whereas these countries (Italy, Spain) were in region B in the scheme of Thompson. Notestein maintained the Trieste–Gdańsk line, but the region beyond, called Eastern Europe (the region of “transitional growth”), was extended to the Soviet Union and Japan, and thus what was called the Third World (the region of “high growth potential”) was somewhat reduced. It is worth noting that actually Thompson (1929) was also toying with the idea that industrialism in Russia and Japan would get these two countries out of category “C,” but the territorial extension of the second group by Notestein was far more radical. This also shows that Notestein avoided the inherent racial element implied by Malthus and various other thinkers.



Ideas of demographic transition understood as a way of interpreting global demographic change did not go unchallenged, and this criticism had a clear impact on regional thinking as well. The challenge came from all those areas that were seen in the transition theory as not being in the forefront of demographic progress toward lower fertility and mortality, namely in Southern Europe and Eastern Europe. Demographic nationalism and also fascism were looking for ways to compensate for geopolitical territorial losses, or to regain “strength” as part of the global fight for resources. Italian and German fascism and Nazism are prime examples, along with East European conservative or Narodnik-type demographic nationalism (Ipsen 1993; Weiner and Teitelbaum 2001; Gregor 2005).

The fascist approach is well exemplified by people such as Corrado Gini (1930), who are largely forgotten, despite the fact that they were quite influential thinkers in their time. Gini was well integrated into various demographic and statistical networks and combined the issue of demographic revitalization to issues of redistribution already in the 1910s. Subsequently, he was an influential political figure (head of the Central Institute of Statistics of Italy between 1926 and 1932), and also a key advisor of Mussolini in demographic issues, even in the case of the famous Ascension Day Speech of May 1927 (in which he said, “Number means force”).

Though he also represented the same biopolitical fear, Gini was a firm critique of Malthus in several ways. First, following Spengler and in some other ways Pareto, he believed in cycles of population development. His originality lies in the fact that he combined regional demographic development with national and class demographic differentials. He followed a eugenic interpretation of population change (on eugenics see Turda and Weindling 2007). He called this theory demographic metabolism, according to which upper classes lose their biological potential and are replaced by a population coming from the lower classes, whose potentials are higher.

Gini had an idea of internal class dynamics in fertility. The upper class in the first phase of the cycle of the nation (race) is fertile, but with development its fertility declines. At the same time, demographic metabolism uses a supply of people due to the higher fertility of lower groups, who are then absorbed. In the long run their fertility also decreases. But this is just the local story, which Gini puts into a regional-global framework. “Dying nations”—that is, the richer ones—receive “fresh blood” from other, poorer nations. This terrain of population exchange can be within one race, most importantly his words the “white race,” in which “Western and Northern Europe” (together with North America, Australia, and New Zealand) represent the “upper class.” And Eastern and Southern Europe represent the lower class,

which still had high growth rates to be maintained and even strengthened, according to Gini.

It is very important to note that Gini in various ways was playing with the boundaries of race, nation, class, and region in his text, concepts that were used almost completely interchangeably. His regional ideas can also be found in the text, and his regional divisions followed the line which later became called the “Hajnal line.” His region of Eastern and Southern Europe contained Spain, Italy, the Balkans, Russia, and Poland, but excluded the Baltic countries, Austria, and very interestingly Hungary, due to its quick fertility decline. On the other hand, in some ways following Thompson and in opposition to the later Hajnal line, Gini was also drawing an explicitly racially understood division between Europe and non-Europe. To him, the white race stood above all the others, “the Hindu, the Malayan and the yellow races.”

It is important to note that in combining social, national, and regional “metabolisms,” Gini’s theory was also a theory of migration and even a theory of the assimilation of migration. Gini strongly argues that too quick and too intense migration leads to cultural conflicts, and that the tempo of assimilation should be slow. In this sense, when writing about global demographic change, he foresaw many of the later debates on migration well before demography paid attention to the phenomenon.

Overall, Gini’s ideas contained original elements, but mostly they fitted rather well into a wider anti-Malthusian discourse on eugenic and population concerns as related to the fate of nations, regions, and races. His ideas and even regional concepts resonated with, among others, the Hungarian geographer Pál Teleki and the statistician Alajos Kovács, who maintained that in the overall European and very importantly global fight there was a need to observe and to intervene directly into the development of social groups, nations, and regions from the point of view of racial hygiene, entailing a concern with how they can “properly” “amalgamate” populations and spaces (Ablonczy 2005, 26–33; Turda 2013). While Teleki himself was thinking in regional terms (the Danube region for instance), demography was not an important element in his regionalism. He had ideas of quickly growing Balkan states, but overall he maintained a national or Carpathian Basin perspective when he spoke about demographic issues and eugenic intervention.

With regard to the development of regional thinking, the work of Werner Conze, a young German follower of *Volksgeschichte* and future prominent historian of Eastern Europe, was also important. In some ways following Le Play, he was among the historians who established a research approach of linking family and household formation with inheritance patterns, and in this sense he was a forerunner of some later approaches (see: Szoltysek-Goldsten

2009). He was also creating the pathways toward the so-called Hajnal line, at least in the Baltic region. Conze was a follower and promoter of the “Ostforschung” in Nazi Germany, publishing his related thesis in 1940. On the basis of the so-called *Hufenverfassung* system, he claimed that there was a huge difference between the “Slavic” multiple household systems (*Grossfamilien*) based on partible inheritance, and the non-Slavic (e.g., Lithuanian) population, characterized by nuclear households and impartible inheritance (idem). According to Conze, the line fell along the Southern fringes of Samogitia and Grodno, which was later used for debates about the Hajnal line (Szoltysek-Goldsten 2009).

Some of the East European populist thinkers also used ideas of regions, and they often did so in order to understand longer-term developments. They were prominent in discussing various complex and changing family forms and family systems, such as the *zadruga* or *mir*. Among these thinkers there was an implicit logic in which not demographic behavior but regional development (“organic” West versus “distorted” East) was a key factor. In Hungary, these regional ideas were used in interpreting demographic changes, including sharp fertility decline, as East European distortions contrasted to the organic development of the West, where fertility decline was seen as a more normal, structurally less “crystalized” process (Erdei 1976).

In other countries, such as Romania, Bulgaria, and Russia, not fertility but mortality was the key issue. The key concern was mortality and overall well-being, most importantly infant mortality and the hygienic conditions in the rural population (Kiss 2010, 121–23; Baloutzova 2011, 32–36; Ransel 1981, 143). The “Gusti school” in Romania and also the Agrarian (BANU) party and the related activists in Bulgaria focused on village communities and rural land structures, but paid little attention to fertility. They mainly observed a huge discrepancy between Western and Central Europe and their own countries. The East–West dichotomy provided a rather strong comparative framework for Soviet demographers and statisticians in the 1920s (Porter 1993, 151–53). Among Russian agricultural economists, the so-called organization and production school (e.g., Maslov, Chayanov, Kosinskii, Brutskus) and the various Narodnik thinkers agreed that mortality in Russia became relatively much worse as compared to the period of Malthus. Beyond unexplored references to “Europe” or “Western Europe,” however, they thought mainly in terms of “national economy” and subregions of the national economy, as in the case of Chayanov (2006, xxv–xxxv). It is important to note that this school, by establishing a link between demographic family cycles and the behavior of peasant economies, not only made use of the macro- and microlevel assumptions of Malthus but also provided a model for later debates on the regional and temporal differences of non- or semicapitalist economies.

## **Debates after the Second World War: Political and Demographic Borders**

After World War II, the intensive and open discussion of regions and demographic processes in the context of struggle over resources somewhat receded but certainly did not disappear. It withdrew into more scholarly debates, which were less directly political and established links to geopolitical changes mainly through issues of identity. Nevertheless, with some notable exceptions, they maintained a rather clear Eurocentric vision of the West and more importantly of the supposedly unique origins of Western capitalism.

The debate over modernization and regions also appeared within Europe, when the emergence of socialism appeared in debates over population development and most importantly over Malthusianism. A clear East–West divide was set up along the bloc lines, which come to surface even in very recent discussions on the so-called second demographic transition. In East European demography, the idea appeared that Malthusianism was only applicable in capitalist countries and that the reallocation of resources and appearance of large-scale demand for labor made fertility control unnecessary in socialist countries (Petersen 1988, 90–95). Nonetheless, it is important to note that modernization theory was not questioned in East European pronatalist demographic thinking, but that instead it was claimed that East European progress toward modernity was quicker and more moral. State socialism also tried to integrate morality into its political techniques in order ensure a better position in geodemographic fights. On the one hand, it freed marriage, childbearing, and family life from some social constraints; on the other, it suppressed “improper” demographic behavior. Beyond the appearance of a clear-cut political border along the Trieste–Gdańsk line, the debate over historical regions somewhat declined through the 1950s. The issue came back only in the 1960s, when Hajnal formulated ideas of “European marriage patterns in perspective.” In his original article (1965) he successfully combined various elements. Most importantly, he openly followed Malthus when he focused on the age at first marriage and the proportion of ever-married (married, divorced, and widows together), as well as the regional and historical regional distributions of these variables. He also openly followed Malthus’s ideas concerning non-Europe representing not only difference vis-à-vis Europe, but also the past.

But he also revised him. In 1965, as compared to Malthus, Hajnal reduced the territory of “Europe” to the region beyond the Trieste and St. Petersburg line toward the West. In 1983, when he further elaborated his ideas with other elements of household formation (the existence of neolocality, life-cycle servants, various rules of household fission, etc.), he further reduced “Europe”

to “Northwest Europe,” and compared “joint household formation systems” with that of “Europe.” Thus he basically followed the line between the “Western unstable” region and the “mixed” stem family region as proposed by Le Play (1855), or the line between region A and B as proposed by Thompson (1929), and cleared all other regional lines in the world in a dichotomy with Northwest Europe. It seems that beyond these dramatic regional reductions, Hajnal (1983) was also able to push back the timing of the modernization (great transformation) from the late nineteenth century to the early seventeenth and the sixteenth centuries. In this he was supported by the growing evidence of various analyses of local parish registers and new data, including tax records. He was also aided by his technique of reading history sideways—that is to say, by his assumption that pre-seventeenth-century Northwest Europe was like Nepal in the 1970s.

This perspective sparked a huge debate among family historians and other social scientists interested in historical sociology or historical anthropology in the 1970s and 1980s. Foremost among these was Peter Laslett, a friend and long-time collaborator of Hajnal, who became a harsh opponent of the modernization hypothesis in family history. He argued that the great transformation of complex patriarchal families to modern “unstable” nuclear family households was a myth (Laslett 1972). In 1983, in the edited volume of Richard Wall (1983) Laslett proposed a typology of four historical regions based not only on household formation but also of organizing work on a microlevel: West, West/Central or Middle, Mediterranean, and East.

This typology was a break and basically provided a more detailed and sociologically more complex classification. Laslett never ventured to draw exact lines. So he had areas such as Tuscany, Emilia Romagna, the village Grossenemer, Great Russian serf villages, and Baltic provinces, but he was not looking for clear borders and was looking more for “tendencies” or, in other words, statistical probabilities only. Among his collaborators we find historians such as Peter Czap, Richard Smith, and Andrej Plakans; economic historians such as Anthony Wrigley and Richard Schoefield; but also anthropologists and sociologists such as Michael Anderson or the Hungarian sociologist Rudolf Andorka.

Interestingly, Andorka (1975, 1995) focused on a territory actually lying on the so-called Hajnal line. As a reformulation of the Hajnal idea, he constructed a mixed type. With this he managed to introduce some of the research problems (single child system, fertility control, etc.) of interwar Hungarian populists into empirically minded international historical research. He also formulated several research issues that became important during the deconstruction of the Hajnal line (e.g., Andorka and Faragó 1983; Andorka 1995). In this he collaborated with the historian Tamás Faragó, who later became

important in reinterpreting and reformulating the Hajnal line (Farágó 1997; 2001). Although no direct references were made, the above attempts at finding an in-between model or mixed territory fitted very well with the rise of the concept of Central Europe as represented by Jenő Szűcs (1983, 1988) or Péter Hanák (1989).

The questioning of modernization theory as put forward by Laslett was also elaborated by Alan Macfarlane (1978; 1986; previously working as an anthropologist on Nepal), writing about the origins of “English individualism,” and by Richard M. Smith (1984), who started a well-focused work on medieval sources from the point of view of family structures and inheritance. Both of them came up with the idea that the Hajnal hypothesis was misleading in its historical assumption of a great transformation, and they also argued that there was no substantial change, at least in England. In this way they gave an interesting new momentum to the Eurocentric interpretation of the birth of capitalism by emphasizing the somewhat essentialized, continuous individualism and regulative role of private property concerning demographic processes, at least in England.

Macfarlane’s work published in the late 1970s was also interesting, not only because of his criticisms of Hajnal’s idea of historical change, but also because he reconstructed the idea of East European peasantry out of the work of major thinkers (including Karl Marx, Max Weber, and Alexandr Chayanov, and also East Central European scholars such as the Polish Florian Znaniecki). He also showed that this classical model “hypnotized” English historians such as George C. Homans (Macfarlane 1978, 34–80). Nonetheless, it is notable that he did not refute the idea of Eastern Europe as a peasant society comparable to other regions outside Europe, with a special demographic regime due to its social arrangements, most importantly household economies.

Pushing back the Hajnal line historically was also a priority for the prominent Austrian historian Michael Mitterauer and the historical anthropologist Karl Kaser (Mitterauer–Sieder 1982; Mitterauer 2010; Szoltysek 2009). Mitterauer (2010, 28–57) systematically recontextualized the “European family pattern” into a hide system, the so-called *Hufenverfassung* system, which was already used by Conze. But instead of locating this division in the Baltics as did Conze, Mitterauer generalized it for most of Western and Central Europe, along the lines of the Carolingian Empire, and pushed it back at least to the ninth century. He argued that this system led to all the features of the modern European family as understood by Laslett (small age difference between spouses, retirement of the elderly, late age at marriage, life-cycle service) (Mitterauer 2010, 60–69).

As already mentioned, behind the above debates there were also implicit attempts to understand the development of political systems, such as Liber-

alism and Communism, from the microstructural perspective of the family history. This element was made explicit by Emmanuel Todd (1985), a firm Laslett supporter, but also a follower of Le Play, who drew both a global and a European map of various “anthropological” family systems: exogamous community, authoritarian, egalitarian nuclear, and absolute nuclear family. According to Todd, these could explain ideological differences. This led him to draw a rather complex map of Europe with England as an extreme type, Hungary, the Balkans, and the USSR as another opposing system, while the rest of continental Europe was different from both. The southern part of South Europe was also separated from the other parts. The nuclear family was typical in England, the Netherlands, Denmark, and Northwestern France. The authoritarian family was dominant in Germany and the adjacent countries of Central Europe—Austria, Czechoslovakia, Switzerland, and Belgium—in most of Scandinavia, in parts of France and Spain, in Ireland, and in Scotland. The egalitarian-nuclear family was typical in France, most of Italy, Spain, Portugal, Poland, Romania, and Greece. Finally, the community family characterized Russia, Finland, Hungary, Yugoslavia, Bulgaria, Albania, small patches of Italy, and Southern France.

As a systematic attempt to deconstruct the modernizationist understanding of family development related to ideas of historical regions, the historical anthropologist Jack Goody (1983; 1996) not only questioned that the modern family was created at the dawn of industrial modernity (or just in Northwestern Europe), but actually argued that precapitalist family systems have been more or less the same throughout Eurasia, as opposed to sub-Saharan African systems, where women played a very important role in the transfer of inheritance between generations. But the concept of Eurasia did not prevent Goody (2000, 100–18) from seeing differences within Europe. Instead of the East-West division, Goody stressed the North-South difference concerning pre-eighteenth-century Europe in terms of age at marriage. Europe was also divided by inheritance structures (Roman versus customary law), a difference that cut France into two parts. In this way, Goody followed Le Play very clearly, even by referring to the changes during the French Revolution and using the term “stem family.” Later he was followed by Christer Lundh (2014) and Tommy Bengtsson (2004) and other historical demographers, who refuted overall East-West dividing lines in family and household formation in a longer-term Eurasian project.

While Goody went beyond the European areas, and in doing so distanced himself from the Hajnal line and related ideas of historical regions, some other historians, mainly from Central and Southeastern Europe, either reformulated or even deconstructed regional ideas from a social and economic point of view by drawing attention to a complex interplay of various social and

economic institutions (inheritance, neolocality, geographic factors, the role of the state and of landlords, etc.). In her criticism, Maria Todorova (2006) came to the conclusion that if the concept of *zadruga* in the Balkans is to be maintained at all as an important social institution, then even within the region it should be linked only to specific areas and social groups, with several variations due to the interplay of various social, cultural, and, very importantly, political factors.

There was also a refusal of general models and patterns in Hungary, where Péter Óri (2003) spoke about mosaic patterns—namely patterns constrained by local economic, ethnic, and cultural factors—whereas Faragó (2001) maintained that preindustrial household structures were so complex and so dependent on various demographic, social, and ethnocultural factors that models had to be severely confined spatially and temporally. From the 1990s on, several historians have argued that regional models are useless on a macro level, or that, at least on a micro level, historical processes and relationships did not match overall patterns (Benda 2008; Pakot 2013). Overall, we can say that even in historical demography, microhistory turned away from sub-European regional models and differentiations in its focus on locally worked-out social relationships to explain local demographic developments.

## Conclusion

After this three-hundred-year-long debate, the conceptual history of demographic regions has certainly not reached its end. Nonetheless, we can safely argue that differentiation in nuptiality and most importantly in fertility lost its power by the end of the twentieth century. There are several factors behind this complex history.

The most important is the global decline of fertility, which would certainly amaze and shock the thinkers of the eighteenth century, who like Montesquieu and Süssmilch were firm believers of ever-growing populations and relatively high fertility. But even Malthus, who explicitly formulated the biopolitical balancing of resources and population, would be surprised to see that fertility has been and continues to be declining, with an almost complete detachment of marriage and fertility, a link that was crucial in the moral geography of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries (Tomaselli 1988).

This idea of moral control was later abandoned, and between the two World Wars it gave way to political techniques of liberal versus conservative, or fascist versus populist, political ideas of control that referred to, but basically sublimated, various versions of morality. This was the period when the intensifying fight over resources between blocs and countries led not only to the horrors of large-scale wars, but also brutal and coercive policies of fertil-



ity control for either increase or decrease, firmly contextualized in the interplay of local and global hierarchies (the targeted groups were either internal “threats,” such as “paupers,” “imbeciles,” and various competing ethnic groups, or external threats or both).

From the 1960s on, ideas of regions based on differential fertility and family formation have been severely attacked from various angles and positions, and have basically been deconstructed. It seems that with the convergence of fertility at very low levels (at least by global historical scales) and detached from nuptiality, this demographic process has become much less important from the point of view of the economic and political competition of regions, states, and communities. Furthermore, eugenic and other attempts to control family and childbearing behavior were politically challenged after the revelation of the inhumanity of colonial, Nazi, communist, and Western liberal population controls. Colonial and fascist genocides, experimentation, communist/nationalist antiabortion campaigns, plus forced migration campaigns and various other repressive techniques used by, for instance, Western family planners in the developing countries, all led to the questioning of demographic regimes as ultimate aims for political intervention. Thus overall models themselves became less and less legitimate areas of scientific research, especially with regard to fertility and nuptiality.

Demographic reproduction within this global competitive framework is now less interested in making use of these conceptual heritages and is focusing more and more on migration and migratory regions as areas that need to be observed and controlled to serve competitive geopolitical and geoeconomic interests. Migration has always been an important process in biopolitical coordination, but it seems that future historians and social scientists need to say more about how it has been spatially and socially organized.

Besides the overall demographic processes, there have also been other factors at play in shaping and then in deconstructing various forms of demographic regions. In the eighteenth century, there was almost exclusively anecdotal evidence of variations and historical change of demographic and family behavior. Malthus used rather problematic travel accounts, and even Le Play had just a limited number of interviews. Between the two World Wars, statisticians were already rather well equipped with various sources and had rather well-developed measurement techniques. They were also supported (if many times misinformed) by ethnographers and anthropologists; nevertheless, some of the basic issues of comparison were raised but left unsolved (the comparison of indices by regions and other communities). The real boom of demography came only in the 1950s, when it was seen as a major research area for poverty and through this a sphere of intervention. This boom was so strong that social historians soon formed an alliance with demographers

and historical demographers and started producing a huge number of case studies and historical statistics, digging into sources on a massive scale. Thus it is no accident that the emerging empirical evidence questioned the validity of major regional models and that the imposed homogeneity on past societies crumbled and led to, for instance, microhistories, a tendency that is also supported by the ongoing diversification and specialization of social and human sciences.

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## Notes

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