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The Security Policy Relevance of East-Central European Demographic and Migration Trends

1. Introduction

This chapter will focus on the security policy relevance of the common demographic traits and issues of the nine countries featured in the present volume. Its primary area of interest is whether the demographic and migration trends of these countries have any impact – and if yes, what impact – on the security of the respective societies. Could these be construed as topical security policy challenges, meaning whether their population and political elite regard these trends as such? And if the answer is yes: Do these countries have any plans, strategies and experience in solving them?

2. General characteristics

In terms of population, the nine examined countries cover a wide range, with the 42-million Ukraine at one end and the barely 2-million Slovenia at the other. The majority of them fall into the larger category of European states with populations between 2 and 10 million, with Romania as an exception with a population of 19 million. Looking at the most important factors driving the major demographic trends, these countries share many characteristics looking back the past 28 years. With regards to fertility, such common traits are the decreasing ratio of women in childbearing age, the dropping number of abortions and the women's increasing age at childbirth. In terms of relationships, such are the decreasing number of marriages, the rising number of divorces and children born out of wedlock. Moreover, another common trait was the increase in life expectancy of the population. Additionally, all of these countries have an ageing population (a rising percentage of the over-65 age group) and lower ratio of children. As a result, the average age of the population has increased in all countries (WB 2018). However, it must be mentioned – as the individual studies of this volume have shown – that the size and numerical values of these common phenomena vary largely from one country to the other.

There are many widespread misconceptions regarding demographic issues in East-Central Europe. From the regional press coverage and political discourse of demographic issues, the average citizen can easily draw the conclusion that after the 1989–1990 regime changes, all countries of the region have been affected by population decline. In support of this assumption, the United Nations' statistics are often quoted saying that with

the exception of Austria, this region is among the two most affected ones in the world regarding population decline (WPP 2017; ROMEI 2016). Given that the average citizen cannot really distinguish between a slowdown in population growth and actual decrease in population, the false belief that Europe is already in the stage of population decline in regional public opinion is quite strong. However, it is true that natural population growth has been slowing down since the 1950s, Europe's total population still rose by over 19 million even during the 1990–2015 period.

The statistical data from the examined countries also show a much more nuanced picture than public opinion. In the 1990–2017 period the population of five out of nine countries did indeed fall – most pronouncedly in Romania (–16.7%), followed by Ukraine (–14.4%), Croatia (–11.35%), and at a more moderate rate in Serbia (–7.6%) and Hungary (–6.9%), but the size of the population actually grew in four countries. The growth rate was more modest in the Czech Republic (2.2%) and Slovakia (3%), but quite outstanding in Austria (14.5%), where population growth was almost the double of the European Union average (7.3%) (WB 2018). This means that despite the similarity in the most important influencing factors in the major demographic trends, the end-results in population change are different. This also seems to indicate that the differentiating reasons could be found at the level of social and political responses.

3. Demography and security studies

Demographic trends stand out from social phenomena in several respects, but here and now we will only be looking at two factors which in our opinion have a defining influence on the potential securitisation¹ of demographic problems. One factor is that population dynamics is based on the decisions of individual families and because of that these are largely influenced by cultural tradition and the immediate social environment. As such, it is among the social phenomena that are least susceptible to political intervention. Demographic attitude is strongly linked with value sets and beliefs: influencing and altering them are complex, lengthy and very expensive processes (L. RÉDEI 2006, 7, 80). On the other hand, this is an area that by its very nature can only be influenced in the long term. This means that shaping it requires foresight, strategic approach and a strategic toolset from the actors wanting to influence them. However, approaching demographic trends as a security policy issue is remarkably problematic for politics not solely because of the above-mentioned reasons. The other issue to consider is the method of securitisation. Childbearing could

¹ Based on the works of Barry Buzan, Ole Wæver and Jaap de Wilde the present study refers to securitisation as the process resulting from the dialogue of society and political leadership that results in a particular issue becoming a security problem and is thereby excluded from the flow of normal policy. The first step of securitisation is the articulation of a (real or often just supposed) existential threat to the object of reference (e.g. state, people, nation), referred by a credible actor (e.g. political leader) towards the population. We can talk about successful securitisation in case when subsequently society will grant the credible actor powers to invoke extraordinary measures and circumvent regular political rules (e.g. re-allocation of resources, devising legal and institutional responses, usage of foreign policy methods, etc.). In this respect, securitisation is also an exercise of power mechanisms, given that the credible actor may be able to circumvent regular political rules by manipulating the subjective security perception of society even without the actual presence of an existential threat (BUZAN et al. 1998).

serve as a good example to discuss the issue. Raising a child anywhere in the world results in material disadvantage and a loss of living standards. Under ordinary political conditions, states tend to offset these by measures intended to increase the willingness to have children. It is, however, nowhere near certain that the securitisation of childbearing – i.e. presenting a lower number of births as an existential threat and treating it with extraordinary measures – will in fact create a social atmosphere actually conducive to solving the problem itself. Politics will want to solve population dynamics through the securitisation of demographic problems, an issue which is – as we have already mentioned – by its nature within the realm of the family.

Demographic trends and their consequences became the focus of international security studies – a discipline born after World War II – at the end of the 1960s and simultaneously also the forefront of global public opinion. We will illustrate this with three pivotal events. In 1968, Paul L. Ehrlich's demographic bestseller, *The Population Bomb*, which discussed overpopulation, was published. The *United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)* began its activities in 1969 in order to help developing countries tackle the problems of demographic policy, family planning, population statistics and the population-related aspects of economic and social development. Finally, in 1974 the so-called Kissinger Report was born, which was the first document calling the attention of top-level politics to the repercussions of the least developed countries accelerating population growth on U.S. national security. Less than half a decade later China, the world's most populous country officially adopted its *one-child* policy for fear that population growth would outpace economic development (AGONÁCS [s. a.]). Ever since, the majority of demography-related security policy studies has been dealing with security and the security policy aspects of overpopulation (e.g. deterioration of resources – freshwater sources, farmland, natural vegetation; environmental pollution; growing energy needs and the resulting energy shortages; climate change; conflicts stemming from the resource hunger resulted by population growth, etc.). We must add that this approach is entirely justified because the explosive population growth might be in its final stages in Asia but has only begun in Africa.

Another key element of demographic trends – that of an ageing population, i.e. the phenomenon when in any given time interval, the ratio of old and young people grows in favour of the elderly – has emerged from the arena of expert debates into the agenda of international politics. The United Nations held its first global conference on ageing (World Assembly on Ageing) in Vienna in 1982, where they adopted a 62-point list of recommendations to devise old-age policies and social agendas (VIPAA 1983). Although these recommendations mainly touched upon areas such as research of the issue, data gathering and analysis, education and training, moreover some specific sectors such as health and nutrition, protection of the elderly, housing and environmental protection, family protection, social welfare, income security and employment, we can still consider this date to be crucial when ageing became an official topic of security studies. This mainly refers to conclusions of the Copenhagen School formulated a decade and a half later when most of the countries in the world realised that population ageing requires joint extraordinary measures from the international community (BUZAN et al. 1998, 23–24). The Copenhagen School further reinforced the relationship between population ageing – and in a wider sense demographic issues – and security studies by inventing a sectoral approach to security, extending the notion of security beyond its military dimension to the spheres

of environment, economy, society and politics (BUZAN et al. 1998, 49–162). Since then hundreds of studies have dealt with the economic, social and political impacts of ageing, from its effects on the labour market, economic growth and social welfare system through the sustainability of armed forces to the changing political attitudes of an ageing population (BENGTSOON 2010; APT 2014; VANHUYSE–GOERRES 2012).

Nevertheless, we can only speak of actual population loss since the mid-1990s. The issue – as a potential future scenario – became the subject of serious debate among demographers, after the second half of the 1970s when the fertility rate indicator in America and Europe dropped below the sustainable population growth minimum of 2.1. The basic approach of the debate at the time was best summed up in *The Fear of Population Decline* by Michael S. Teitelbaum and Jay M. Winter published in 1985. The authors argued that besides family support to encourage child bearing, the potential population decline of countries with low fertility rates could also be compensated by migration coming from countries and territories with high fertility rates (TEITELBAUM–WINTER 1985, 153–154). This approach was essentially adopted by the United Nations on behalf of the international community (UNPD 2000; LESTHAEGHE 2000), and it remained dominant in the Western European debate about population decline until the mid-2000s. Although there have been diverging opinions, they mostly remained in minority and only with regard to a limited number of countries (VISHNEVSKY 2000). In response to the experts recommending migration to offset the effects of population decline, European critics had another response. They thought that migration towards Western Europe was primarily driven by the needs of the labour market instead of demographic and nation-building aspects and that migration without an increase in fertility rates in itself would be insufficient to sustainably counteract population loss (CHESNAIS 2000, 14; TAPINOS 2000, 12). In the wake of 9/11 and 2005 London terrorist attacks, as well as the 2015 European migrant and refugee crisis, the political debates about the challenges of European multiculturalism have become ubiquitous (JOPPKE–MORAWSKA 2003; FOMINA 2006; SARRAZIN 2011; RATH 2011; JOPPKE 2014; MALIK 2015). These debates have brought the European migration policy into question (deeming it excessively liberal) and at the same time amplified the voices of experts warning about the challenges of population decline. This is primarily because attempts to raise the European fertility rates failed in the 1990s and had only very modest success thereafter, meaning that from this point migration became the main source of European population increase (SALT–ALMEIDA 2006; MÜNZ 2007; BIJAK et al. 2007). Paradoxically, it is in large measure due to this migration-driven population rise that Europe has avoided the securitisation of population decline so far. One must also note, however, that despite the debates on migration policies not a single demographer has questioned so far whether the most effective way of handling population decrease is a demographic policy based on family support encouraging childbearing, a social system geared towards population ageing and a welcoming migration policy.

4. Migration and security studies

Migration – as old as humanity itself – has grown into a relatively massive, natural and growing global phenomenon in the last third of the 20th century and has also become the subject of security studies. The literature of security studies dealt with migration

as a security challenge from two angles mostly: firstly, from the perspective of national security, pointing out that losing control over migration could negatively impact national sovereignty within the realm of human security as an issue of individuals' safety (WOHLFELD 2014, 61). This second issue emerged in parallel to the rising number of forced migrants and refugees among all migrants since the mid-1970s.

It is, however, important to note that there are still serious debates within the security literature as to how and in what scenarios is it justified to discuss international migration as a security issue. This dilemma is strongly linked to the fact that migration is a phenomenon that is an opportunity and a challenge, one that has both advantages and disadvantages. For mostly poorer countries, it is an obvious advantage having to take care of less people, thereby reducing the strain on available resources while migrants will also transfer part of their earnings back home. Some of the disadvantages of migration for the countries of origin are the loss of the young, skilled, well-equipped and schooled population and the dismantling of families. Moreover, the fact that as a result of migration, the society's population pyramid becomes distorted and mortality rates among the remaining old will rise. Migration also has many advantages for the receiving or destination countries: labour can become cheaper, it may relieve workforce shortage, and low-prestige, poorly paid and unpopular jobs will be filled and the same stands – to a smaller extent – to highly qualified jobs (such as doctors). It can also reduce population loss and ageing. Some of the disadvantages are language problems, the emergence of ethnic, religious and cultural tensions and an increased pressure on healthcare and housing systems. Additionally, part of the country's citizens may lose their jobs as a result of the workforce inflow, and the arrival of migrants could encourage the emigration of the local well-equipped and well-educated workforce. Thus the image is neither black nor white, as some of the participants of the international discourse on migration would like to picture it.

Modern history shows us that migration mostly becomes a security issue only when states and the international community are unable to handle its consequences. That can be the case partly because they fail to take into account its long-term social effects, partly because migrants can arrive in such large numbers that the local administration is unable to receive and settle within the usual policy framework. These were the main reasons for the birth of migration crises after World War II and the one we have witnessed during the 2015 refugee and migration crisis.

Understandably, expert literature dealing with migration does not generally regard international migration as a phenomenon relevant from a security policy perspective, but only the irregular forms of it (WOHLFELD 2014, 64–65). States and societies can freely choose who they want to accept or are willing to live together with and only have international obligations to grant temporary refuge to a specific circle of migrants, well-defined by international law. Regular migrants – as we have already indicated – are considered a security concern primarily when their social integration is unsuccessful. Practical evidence shows that it happens most often to migrants with a radically different cultural background especially if they form sufficiently large separate/separated social groups within the receiving society (SCHÖNWÄLDER 2007). At the same time, the success of social integration depends on how any given society – as a (national) identity community – looks upon its sovereignty (from a territorial or ethnic-cultural perspective), how it defines the relationship between the community and its constituent individuals, and where it

draws the boundaries of its own political and cultural community – in other words who is considered a foreigner (CSEPELI–ÖRKÉNY 2017, 105). The 2015 European refugee and migration crisis has clearly demonstrated that in this respect there are significant differences between the societies of the European Union.

As it is the case with the handling of most global security challenges, the approach to migration is also characterised by a peculiar dualism. On the one hand, tackling the challenge seems to be easier in theory due to the fact that the majority of the world's states has already realised that handling the issue requires extraordinary measures on behalf of the international community. With regards to migration, this is well indicated by the fact that the European Union regards international migration as a political priority from 2005, while the 193 member states of the United Nations adopted the Sustainable Development Goals 2030 (SDG 2030) in September 2015. This framework agreement includes 17 points, nine of which are also related to international migration, and identifies the basic problems the solution of which would void migration of its security challenge status (APPAVE–SINHA 2017). This is a significant step forward in tackling international migration, as the Millennium Development Goals (MDG), adopted by the same group of countries in 2000, did not identify migration as a problem to be solved. On the other hand, the international community and the United Nations consist of individual states, whose long-term political commitment to extraordinary measures tackling global challenges is in practice defined by their national interests most of the time and the measure to which a given challenge affects them in the present, and the short and long term.

A number of other factors also make the handling of international migration difficult. On the one hand, migration – similarly to childbearing – is fundamentally an action based on the decisions and rationales of micro-communities (i.e. families or even individuals) and can only be considered an international social phenomenon because it transcends national borders on the account of its sheer size. This means that it is nowhere near certain that a global or national approach in itself is necessarily sufficient to understand its roots and to handle it (CSEPELI–ÖRKÉNY 2017, 116–117). On the other hand, any given society's attitude towards migration – as we have already mentioned – is strongly affected by how its members think about their sovereignty, the political and cultural boundaries of their own community, what they think the actual condition of their state society and what their fundamental attitude towards foreigners is. In other words, the social image of migration is strongly influenced by subjective elements linked to national identity. As a result, migration – especially international migration – is relatively easy and simple to securitise (ADAMSON 2006; CURLEY–WONG 2008; THEMISTOCLEOUS 2013). In addition, international migration primarily affects those security dimensions – political, economic, social – which one can most often see that the success of securitisation is not necessarily proportional to how much the object of securitisation is an actual threat to the community. This is well illustrated by Eurobarometer polls according to which after 2015 even countries (e.g. Estonia, Latvia, the Czech Republic) which remained practically unaffected by the effects of the 2015 crisis, still considered migration as a number one threat to their own country's security (Standard Eurobarometer 85-90 2016, 2017, 2018). The emergence of such public opinions was probably facilitated by the fact that international migration can be linked to several other phenomena affecting national security (e.g. terrorism, unemployment, conflicts stemming from religious and cultural differences), regardless of whether there is

a quantifiable statistical relationship between these phenomena (Journal on Baltic Security 2015, 7–124; ANDROVIČOVÁ 2016; TKACZYK 2017; BECK 2017). Finally, another problem is that international migration – due to its size and the nature of its origins – can only be handled through sustained and long-term cooperation among states, given that most of them lack the effective means and necessary resources to tackle it on their own. Partly as a result of the above mentioned factors, most states concentrate on handling the direct consequences of migration (with border defence, setting up refugee camps) even when they are fully aware that without talking about the roots of the problem, the results will be neither lasting nor effective. Joint action, however, can only be effective if the measures are taken with identical political goals, which is again very much a function of the social perceptions of migration. It is also crucial to note that it is the decision of a given society to draw the line from which it considers the phenomenon a security challenge. Since the 2015 crises, these differences have become obvious within the European Union and have been the main reason why the member states could not even agree on the handling of such fundamental migration tasks as joint border defence, common criteria for accepting migrants and the distribution of refugees arriving on EU territory.

5. The limits of securitising demographic and migration issues

There is a fairly strong consensus among demographers that an effective demographic policy must rest on three main pillars: a family policy to encourage childbearing, increasing life expectancy (through reducing mortality among the young and middle-aged and through elderly policies) and a migration policy (besides immigration this also includes policies regarding emigration and return migration). Neglecting any one of these areas will lead in the long and sometimes even in the short term to population decline and ageing. Both statements are clearly visible on the examples of the nine countries discussed in the present volume. On the one hand, we have seen that in Austria population growth was mainly a result of immigration and higher fertility rates. In the Czech Republic, the rise was almost exclusively a result of immigration and only to a small extent was it affected by the fact that childbearing among the numerically large Husak-children did not fall as steeply as among the Hungarian Ratkó-grandchildren. On the other hand, the severe population loss in Romania was both the result of massive emigration and the drastic fall in fertility while in Ukraine lower fertility was the main reason.

We may think that even the average citizen should easily realise the security policy relevance of population decline and social ageing. This realisation – i.e. accepting that population decrease and social ageing represent an existential threat on society – is the precondition to the securitisation of demographic policy so that extraordinary measures could be implemented. The examples of the nine countries examined in this volume clearly indicate that presenting demography or its elements as a security issue is in practice not as straightforward as it may seem at first glance. Not even in countries the societies of which in the examined time span were faced with real and relatively large population losses (Romania, Ukraine, Croatia). One of the main reasons for this is that the components of demographic policy can only be securitised to varying degrees. With regard to this, it is important to note that the defining criterion for securitisation is to prove that a given

(real or perceived) existential threat has demonstrable or at least plausible roots and it cannot be handled through alternative means. This process is the so-called securitisation speech act, a mean by which the ruling powers attempt to convince society that the given phenomenon is a problem that poses an existential threat which can only be tackled with extraordinary measures (BUZAN et al. 1998). Nowadays, this speech act is delivered mainly through mass media and political public discourse. In the age of global digital information flow this makes securitisation easier even if the phenomenon intended to be introduced as a security issue does not impact the given society. Terrorism is an excellent example which is considered a serious security policy threat even by those European societies where the phenomenon is not or hardly present (TÁLAS 2016). In these cases, successful securitisation is the result of the fact that our sense of security is mostly subjective, based on perceptions and can easily be dissociated from objective threat experiences. Paradoxically, this remains true even when the threat is unknown in that society's everyday life. This is why we can often see – in the case of terrorism as well – poll results showing that the populations of countries with actual terrorist threats perceive this threat lower than the societies where no terrorist acts are being perpetrated (Standard Eurobarometer 85-90 2016, 2017, 2018).

As we have already indicated, members of a society often have a very subjective image of the security of their larger environment, given that it is mainly shaped by media and political public speech. Also, they only have actual experience regarding the security situation of their immediate environment. But this latter is also what makes the securitisation of any problem or phenomenon more difficult. These security-related factors are based on the decisions and beliefs of individuals or families (such as childbearing, immigration and emigration). This is the sphere where it is most difficult to actually prove the veracity of an existential threat because this is where our actual experiences and perceptions affect our security perception the most. This is also where it is the most difficult – and politically most hazardous – to point out the reasons for the extraordinary because these may well be ourselves or those living in our immediate environment and where pointing out the culprits could lead to conflicts that not only interdict the original goal of securitisation but could ultimately lead to the fall of the political power attempting securitisation. This is the area where it is the most difficult to demonstrate that extraordinary measures have no alternative within normal politics. It is especially hard for a political power to attempt securitisation while it may well be held responsible for bringing about the situation itself. Thus it is not accidental that governments shy away from solving demographic problems by measures (such as pension reforms or making family subsidies more rational) when there is in principle a social consensus regarding their necessity and where the benefit of extraordinary measures can be proven by existing international examples.

With regard to international examples supporting securitisation, it is worth mentioning that demographic problems have led to population decrease in the majority of Eastern and East-Central European countries (13 instances out of 20). Even in five within the seven countries who managed to avoid this consequence, there have been periods of population decrease. The effects of this common problem were not strong enough to lead the regions' politicians at least to form some kind of international consensus to facilitate the securitisation of unfavourable trends and phenomena in the past 30 years. It was because these societies have had to face the issue of population decrease at different points in time (Hungary as early as the 1980s, Poland only after 1999) and in several regional countries,

population change has been fluctuating in the past 28 years (e.g. Croatia, the Czech Republic, Slovakia and Slovenia). In addition, these individual societies also have varying traditions, value sets and behavioural patterns that define population dynamics, as we have already mentioned with regard to the different childbearing attitudes of the Ratkó-grandchildren and the Husak-children, the two most populous generations of the past three decades.

Regional differences are even more obvious with regard to the judgement of migration. While in Hungary and the Czech Republic migration and taking in refugees have clearly appeared in the political discourse since 2015 as a hard and immediate security policy problem almost reaching existential threat levels (TÁLAS 2018; FRANK 2018), immigration has already been the subject of social debates before the onset of the migration crisis and remains a separate issue from the political debate regarding the intake of refugees (RIEDERER et al. 2018). In contrast, in Romania, Croatia and Serbia emigration is admittedly one of the most important demographic challenge and the 2015 crisis did nothing to change this (TODOR 2018; LÖRINCZNÉ 2018; ÖRDÖGH 2018). And one has not even mentioned the diverging judgments of these phenomena at the level of families and individuals, where demographic trends are actually made/decided on. Convincing people that emigration is detrimental to demographics might be more difficult in the case of the former unemployed who have gained employment after others have left the country or in the case of those who benefit from earnings wired home from abroad but it might be easier in the case of businesses faced with a workforce shortage. Usually it is easier to convince those who fear the loss of cultural and religious cohesion of their society that immigration is a bad thing and more difficult to convince those who employ cheaper labour from abroad.

We can say in general that in practice those demographic and migratory phenomena are easiest to securitise which as a security problem has for some time already been the subject of wide (international) consensus (e.g. overpopulation, ageing), or those which the political powers can blame on external factors (e.g. immigration). It is most difficult to securitise issues that are traditionally based on individual or family decisions and belong to the private sphere (e.g. childbearing, abortion, emigration and immigration) or those that on account of their novelty, rarity or alternative solutions have not been identified by (international) consensus as security issues (e.g. population decline). It is thus not by accident that although demographic issues have been present in the national security strategies of all examined countries (i.e. have been identified as security issues), with the exception of Croatia, sectoral strategies or action plans involving practical measures have only been devised for handling the elderly (SCOPPETTA–MACHAČOVÁ–MOSER 2013, 47) and the immigration side of the migration issue.

6. Demographic and migration issues – The specificities of extraordinary measures

In our region the handling of unfavourable demographic trends and processes as classical security policy issues is very limited with regard to the use of demographic policy tools and methods. First and foremost, in a general and fundamental sense, the extraordinary measures in these areas – due to the previously mentioned particularities of demographic and migration decisions and to the fact that general European values are different from

extraordinary measures in any other field – cannot be overtly punitive and repressive (such as the total ban of abortions or a childless tax in several regional countries in the early 1950s). Besides moral constraints, those in power must also accept this due to the projected efficiency of demographic policy measures. Although there are some who continue to advocate a tightening of abortion regulations for demographic reasons, the examples of Romania and Ukraine should quickly dispel any illusions. In these two countries, the number of abortions was significantly reduced between 1990 and 2015 from 992,000 to 700,000 in Romania and from over one million to 101,000 in Ukraine, while the number of live births respectively dropped from 314,000 to 200,000 and from 657,000 to 441,000 (JOHNSTON 2018). This means that radically reducing the number of abortions through sexual education has not increased the childbearing disposition of Romanian and Ukrainian women at all. With this example we only wish to show that demographic issues are also unique in that the extraordinary measures to tackle them must almost always be incentive ones. As an example of incentive measures one can mention the institution of compulsory maternity leave that nowadays has become part of the regular political sphere in the European Union.

In the past decades all of the regional countries – with the exception of Austria – have been conducting a demographic policy heavily centred around a family policy promoting childbearing and within that primarily giving financial support to raising children in families. Much less attention and resources have been devoted to developing the infrastructure of child rearing (e.g. increasing crèche and nursery capacities), developing the human capital involved in child rearing (e.g. the training and resupply of nannies, nurses and paediatricians) and on reinforcing the nurturing care nature of the human capital (e.g. to ensure that any child will have an easily available nanny, nurse and paediatrician during his/her life). Partly because of the above-mentioned factors and partly because the governments could only show modest success in further involving women and especially women with small children into the labour market (e.g. by expanding the availability of part-time work, teleworking or flexible working hours), family support systems remained heavily dependent on conjuncture in their financing and entirely inflexible in their behaviour. This means that on the one hand the systems were significantly exposed to the fluctuations of a given country's economic performance while on the other they did not really give women the choice whether they want to remain at home with their children. Moreover, the family policy elements (e.g. part-time work, teleworking and legally ensuring the choice of flexible working hours at least in the state sector) have been developed the least through which the governments could enforce positive extraordinary measures and by communicating this also send a signal to society that they do regard demographic issues as serious security policy problems. Also, because the previous (i.e. the Communist) regimes also offered direct financial aid to families, societies continued to regard these as part of the normal – as opposed to extraordinary – workings of family policies. This means that these forms of support have not been differentiated from support meant to ensure social security and thus failed to demonstrate the importance of demographic issues.

The majority of the examined countries also remained without tools and methods for migration policy as applied to demographic policy. In terms of immigration these lack simply due to the fact that with the notable exception of Austria and to a smaller extent the Czech Republic after 2008, the others have not been destinations for immigration. All the other countries were either transit routes for international migration (Hungary, Serbia,

Croatia, Slovenia) or have not been affected at all by international migration (Romania, Slovakia, Ukraine). Following the 2015 migrant and refugee crisis, the demographic relevance of migration has been further marginalised. This resulted from the fact shortly after the beginning of the crisis, the governments of several countries have swiftly and efficiently securitised the migration problem (e.g. Hungary and the Czech Republic) but did this in a way that further deteriorated the chances of migration to be regarded as an acceptable and effective demographic policy tool by their respective societies. Conversely, every government in the region is apprehensive about securitising the other side of migration policy, namely emigration and re-migration. This is because doing so would inevitably lead to discourses about causality – unavoidable for devising efficient extraordinary measures – which would also mean that their societies would inevitably also assess governmental performance.

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