

DEMOGRAPHIC AGEING AND LIVING ARRANGEMENTS OF THE ELDERLY

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Introduction

In consequence of demographic ageing and the fact that older people have been increasingly likely to live longer and alone the living arrangements of elderly is becoming an important topic. It has great influence on living conditions, social networks, health and several other aspects of life, in addition on the social burden of demographic ageing. Elderly living in different family arrangements have diverse unsatisfied needs whereupon the nonresidential family members and the state institutions have to react. The paper investigates the main characteristics of living arrangements of the elderly and the factors which have influence on these in the European countries, especially in Hungary. Some previous research made an attempt to group the countries based on the distribution of the elderly by household composition and tried to define the social determinants of living arrangements. They found out that Central and Eastern European countries differs from the others, and they constitute a separated group. They suggest some Northern European countries certain relations, but some of their characteristics are similar to the Southern European countries. The contributions of this paper is the deeper insight into the specific characteristics of living arrangements of the elderly in Hungary and revealing for the social implications.

Literature review (short version)

Some of the previous studies have focused on the description of regional differences in Europe, and tried to make country groups according to the main characteristics of the elderly's living arrangements. Using the European Household Panel Survey Iacovou (*Iacovou, M.; 2000*) made a cross-country analysis, but data from Central and Eastern-European countries were lacking. It was found that the elderly in the Southern European countries tend to live with their children, at the same time their counterparts in Northern part of Europe are much more likely to live with their partner only or to live alone. The subsequent researches formed more complex classifications in which some of the European countries do not fit into the north-south gradient. (*Glaser, K. - Tomassini, C. - Grundy, E., 2004*) Reher and Requena's research (*Reher, D- Requena, M. ; 2018*) investigated the ratio of living alone among the old population on a large set of countries. They pointed out that per capita GDP, the TFR of older generation and the prevalence of extended households among the middle-aged generations are in very strong association with characteristics of the elderly's living arrangements, especially with the proportion of one person households. Only a few Central and Eastern European countries - especially Hungary - deviate from the general pattern. In spite of the low per capita GDP, the

relatively high TFR of older generations, and the high proportion of households with two adult generations the ratio of one person households is one of the highest in Europe, especially for women. These analyses draw attention that several countries in Central and Eastern Europe show diverse picture than other countries in Europe and the determinants of the living arrangements of elderly are also differing.

Beside the investigation of the incidence of different living arrangements, a large body of literature demonstrated that several social and demographic characteristics associated with living arrangements. Studies have generally found that age, gender, marital status, health, income, educational level and also the number of children have an effect on living arrangements of the elderly. (Grundy, E., 2001; Palloni, A., 2001; Gaymu J. - Delbe's C. - Springer S. - Binet A. -De'squelles A.-Kalogirou S. - Ziegler U.; 2006) Some of them have a very strong effect in certain countries, but they less influence for the household structure in other countries.

Data and methods

The analysis uses country-level data and also microdata (*Censuses, Gender and Generation Surveys, SHARE databases*) for needed to explore the individual determinants of different living arrangements. In case of Hungary the Census 1990, 2001 and 2011 were used to analyse the macro-level changes the last two decades. Micro level changes in the family structure in old age are presented on the basis of the Hungarian GGS, which started in 2001. The survey followed the lives of individuals in the sample for 11 years. So far they were contacted five times: in 2001, 2004, 2008, 2012 and 2016. The starting sample size was 16,363 people in 2001. Over the years some of the sample passed away, moved abroad or into an institution, and drop-out was also considerable (refusal or loss of capacity to respond). Overall, the survey was administered to 8,103 individuals in each of the four waves. The present analysis includes individuals who were aged 55-69 in 2001 – i.e. born between 1932 and 1946 – and stayed in the survey for the whole time. The size of the unweighted sample is 1,908, and that of the weighted is 1,588 people. The analysis also use some supplementary information from SHARE.

In cross-country analyses decomposition models were used to distinguish the composition effect and the other factors. The determinants of living arrangement of the elderly are estimated by means of multinomial logistic regression. In that case the IPUMS Census data was used.

Country level analysis

The paper reveals that in Hungary the high mortality rate among the men, the big gender difference in life expectancy, the increasing proportion of marriages dissolved after two or more decades, the very low exit mobility from the one person households all in one contribute the high proportion of elderly living alone. These are the main explanation of the relatively low proportion of elderly living with spouse only. The very high proportion of one person households were observable in different age groups and also in the various social strata. In cross-country analysis shows that the Hungarian distinctiveness can't be explained only by the

composition differences. Moreover the Hungarian situation can't be described by the modernisation theory. The proportion of one person households are very high – higher than most of the countries –among the elderly with low education and in poor living conditions.

The other Hungarian feature is the high ratio of living arrangements with two adult generations, which can be explained by the needs of younger generations. The adult children – especially the men – frequently move back to the parental house after a divorce or in case of other financial difficulties. It is also revealing that the never married men do not move from the parental house in their young- and middle ages. These are not multigenerational households because the grandchildren generations are missing in that families. In that cases the younger generations' needs shape the living arrangements of the older generations. In Hungary the incidence of multigenerational households is very low, despite the fact that it was a prevalent living arrangements three or four decades ago.

Micro level analysis – the case of Hungary

The cohabitation patterns of the elderly population are influenced by a variety of demographic and sociological factors. Multivariate analyses show significant differences in the patterns of living arrangements between men and women. These differences are not explained by differing age structures because they remain significant even when controlled for age. Women are more likely to live alone or with their children without a partner. They are also more likely to live in an extended family, multi-family household, or other complex family structures. On the other hand, men are significantly more likely to live in a family with only their partners.

The age is also an important determinant of the living arrangement. The likelihood of living alone actually increases with age. The coefficients increased with age more sharply at the times of the 2001 and 2011 survey waves than in 1990. This result also supports the observation based on bivariate analysis, namely the fact that the proportion of those living alone is increasing in the elderly population aged over 60 not only because of the growing share of the over-80 age groups, who are more likely to live in a one-person household, but the likelihood of living in a one-person household is also higher among the over-70s than previously. The probability of living alone doesn't decrease among the oldest olds. This is very unique in Europe, since most of the countries the probability strongly decrease among the elderly aged 80 and over. The age coefficients of those living with a partner – without children – show an inverted U curve. In the younger age groups the likelihood of living in such family structure is increasing and it decreases from the age of 75 or over, in 1990 it turns negative compared to the reference category. The increase in the younger age groups is due to the fact that many young people move out of the parental household around this time, thus the household 'living with partner only' becomes dominant in older age groups. However, with age more and more people lose their partners, therefore the proportion of this household type starts to fall. It is less well-known and more difficult to explain why the probability of living without a partner but with an offspring increases with age. The same can be concluded for the odds ratios of 'other family structures'. The latter might be explained by the fact that some elderly people decide to move together with closer or extended family for support with daily living as their health status deteriorates with age.

As regards education, there were no significant differences in 1990, some in 2001, and in 2011 differences were significant in nearly all aspects. In 2011 graduates were significantly more likely to live alone or as a couple with their partner, while those with lower education were more likely to live with their offspring or in 'other' family structure.

It was also assumed that the broader family environment surrounding the elderly influences the patterns of cohabitation. A good indicator of this could be the number and sex of living children. Various international studies emphasise that the elderly are more likely to move in with their daughters than with their sons. Therefore, the proportion of those living alone or in a residential setting is higher among 'parents of boys'. Unfortunately census data did not allow us to test this hypothesis, however in most cases the number of live-born children was significantly associated with the cohabitation patterns of parents. Even if the number of children alive in the year of the survey, or information on the number of 'non-biological' children should also be taken into account. Available data on children indicate that those who do not have children are more likely to live alone than their peers with children. Those without children are also significantly more likely to live in 'other' family structure. Children have a clear protective effect against being alone in old age. Those with two and especially those with three children are significantly less likely to live in a one-person household. They are also much less likely to be in the 'other family type' category.

Differences by type of settlement are significant in many cases. In particular, all effects were significant in 2011: town and village dwellers were significantly less likely to live alone than their counterparts in Budapest. Also, Budapest residents were more likely to live with their offspring without a partner. This relationship was already observable in 2001.

Demographic and sociological determinants of family structure in the elderly population aged over 60,
2011 (Multinomial logistic regression)

	2011							
	Alone		Couple without children		With children only		Other	
	β	Sig.	β	Sig.	β	Sig.	β	Sig.
Intercept	-1.614	0.000	1.151	0.000	-3.240	0.000	-2.830	0.000
female	1.284	0.000	-0.008	0.544	1.633	0.000	0.673	0.000
age60_64	0 ^b		0 ^b		0 ^b		0 ^b	
age65_69	0.533	0.000	0.441	0.000	0.166	0.000	0.270	0.000
age70_74	1.003	0.000	0.656	0.000	0.411	0.000	0.609	0.000
age75_79	1.475	0.000	0.787	0.000	0.741	0.000	1.107	0.000
age80_84	1.687	0.000	0.685	0.000	0.907	0.000	1.576	0.000
age85_x	1.802	0.000	0.547	0.000	1.218	0.000	2.080	0.000
without secondary education	-0.237	0.000	-0.431	0.000	0.234	0.000	0.421	0.000
secondary education	-0.111	0.000	-0.133	0.000	0.061	0.073	0.092	0.032
degree	0 ^b		0 ^b		0 ^b		0 ^b	
No children	2.095	0.000	1.210	0.000	0.810	0.000	2.646	0.000
1 child	0 ^b		0 ^b		0 ^b		0 ^b	
2 children	-0.446	0.000	-0.270	0.000	-0.213	0.000	-0.497	0.000
3 or more children	-0.863	0.000	-0.910	0.000	-0.098	0.000	-0.759	0.000
settlement_Bp	0 ^b		0 ^b		0 ^b		0 ^b	
settlement_county_capital	-0.023	0.339	0.135	0.000	-0.202	0.000	0.116	0.002
settlement_town	-0.078	0.000	0.128	0.000	-0.314	0.000	0.240	0.000
settlement_village	-0.151	0.000	0.072	0.001	-0.349	0.000	0.193	0.000

Reference category: Couple with children, male, aged 60-64, graduate, has one child, Budapest resident.

Source: Census 2011 10% sample. Author's calculation.

Conclusions



The paper emphasizes relevance of taking into account not only the numbers and proportion of the elderly but also their socio-demographic characteristics and living arrangements that determine their needs. In other words the effect and challenges of demographic ageing very depend of these factors. In a country where the ratio of elderly living alone is very high, the social burdens of demographic ageing is more serious. In general the more wealthy country/ or social strata the higher proportion of one person households. But it doesn't apply for Hungary, where the ratio of the elderly living alone is one of the highest in Europe beside the very low per capita GDP. The main explanation that the likelihood to be a widow is very high for the Hungarian old women due to the big gender differences in the life expectancy.



Literature

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