

Session: **Mortality and reproduction**

Title: *Ageing in Transition. Austria and Hungary 1985-2000*

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Longevity is a very recent component of ageing in the transition countries of Europe. It would give a new impetus to this process which had been set in motion by fertility decline long ago.

The purpose is to reveal similarities and dissimilarities in the underlying factors of ageing in neighbouring Austria and Hungary, during a period when Hungary was undergoing transition.

Basic demographic data derive from the Demographic Database of the UNECE: annual number of births by age of mother, population and deaths by age and sex 1985–2000. Two indicators of ageing are considered: (a) the ratio of population aged 65+ over 0–14 and (b) the ratio of population aged 80+ over 65–79. An attempt is made to compare changes in these two ratios between countries and decompose them to the impacts of age structure, and age-specific fertility/mortality rates. Structural effects are estimated using the European standard age composition.

The initial age composition of Austria was more favourable than the European Standard would have been: it resulted in 175,000 extra births during the 15 year period studied. In Hungary this effect was negligible. But Hungarian fertility level was well above the Austrian one, at least during 1985–1995, then suddenly dropped due to steep falls in the 20–24 age bracket. Differences in mortality levels were taking ground in explaining dynamics of ageing. Up to 2000 no real improvements could be seen in Hungarian old age mortality. While ‘single’ ageing ratios got very close to each other by 2000, the distance between ‘double’ ageing indicators did not get smaller.

Cross-country comparison of complex demographic indicators may conceal important differences in their constituent elements. Decomposition is useful and the methods presented can be further refined by caring for variant male/female ratio and the migration component.