

JANINA JÓŹWIAK
– STRENGTHENING POPULATION SCIENCE
IN CENTRAL EASTERN EUROPE

The Central Eastern European – the Polish, Czech, Hungarian, Bulgarian population science rests on strong foundations. It has firm research traditions, demographic datasets are abundant and accessible, and public opinion is sensitive to population issues. The key population issues related to fertility and migration processes, to aging, and to morbidity and mortality will not become irrelevant and unfashionable in the future. All these factors point towards a bright future in population studies in the CEE countries, but also in many other countries in the world. Still, we can't be entirely satisfied if we consider the state of population science, moreover if we consider the institutionalization of population science, namely, if we look at its place in higher education, at university departments, and at research institutes working on population issues. Even though population issues are getting more and more serious social problems, neither the number of these institutions nor the number of researcher working there is growing.

Among us, who live and do population science in the post-communist countries, Janina Józwiak knew the most about the state of the art and the key problems in population science, and she did the most after the societal transition to maintain the institutionalization of population science in these countries. She was familiar with the overall situation of sciences and in particular of social and population sciences during the transition to market economies and mass democracies. She was aware of the need for the population science to work according to its own scientific principles, to employ valid scientific methods, and to test the results via falsification. However, she also stressed that population science should shape policy making by sound scientific evidences, but at the same time should avoid becoming a “servant” of policy making. As she wrote in one of her latest essays, “a good demographer, like any good scientists, will have the strength of will and faith in the scientific methods to accept results that do not match their worldview.” (*Population Insights* No 3. 2016). She knew also that the civil society and the market economy are not strong enough and the state is not resilient enough to support the independence of science during the time of transition. She knew also that population science should refurbish itself if it would like not only to survive but develop and expand. It is not enough to have a great tradition and excellent data; old methodological

knowledge should be revised, and new methodological approaches taught, learned, and employed. Furthermore, the views emerging from the Central Eastern European societal context can extend our overall knowledge on population development, if integrated into accepted paradigms of population science. However, she was well aware all that is necessary but insufficient to maintain the Central Eastern European population science. She worked continuously for stabilizing and expanding the institutions of population science, to build research infrastructure and to ensure financial resources for research. It is not surprising that Poland was the first Central Eastern European country where the European Population Conferences took place (in Cracow 1997, in Warsaw 2003). The collection "*Population of Central and Eastern Europe. Challenges and Opportunities*", co-edited by Janina for the 2003 EPC conference in Warsaw is also a milestone in her efforts to renew and revitalize Central Eastern European demographic traditions.

She was a devoted scholar also in integrating demographic knowledge into higher education. If we consider the youngest generations of demographers, we can observe that Janina Józwiak and her colleagues at the Institute of Statistics at the Warsaw School of Economics (SGH) built an educational site that continuously teaches and produces young, ambitious demographers.

Janina's activities, her efforts and her results teach us that CEE population science does not reproduce itself automatically if we do not continuously work on it! The challenges remained: the position of science in our society in general, and that of population science in particular should be strengthened, and further institutionalization is needed if we would like to have a bright future for population sciences in the Central Eastern European countries.

Professor Zsolt Spéder

President, EAPS

Director, Hungarian Demographic Research Institute