ABSTRACT: A lot of empirical evidence on demographic changes in 'countries in transition', those which belong to the semi-periphery of Europe, has been undertheorized, or theorized in the framework of the theories on the First and the Second Transition. However, both of those metanarratives have proven to be applicable only to a certain degree when it comes to the development off population at the semi-periphery. This paper argues that specificity and unprecedented population developments of the semi-periphery of Europe call for a different approach, one which will actually clearly acknowledge the structural difference between the core and the semi-periphery, and the developmental dependence as a core of the problem. The main arguments are related to the specificities of gender regimes at the semi-periphery [Blagojević 2009; Blagojević 2013; Bobić 2013], as well as to the process of 'de-development' which results in a profound social structural change. The starting epistemological points for this type of approach relate to the three strands of theoretical developments: 1. feminist standpoint theory (semi-periphery is both strategic standpoint for knowledge articulation, as well as a location where connection between the ontology and the epistemology of gender could be reaffirmed – [Wickramasinghe 2006; Blagojević 2009]; 2. Connell’s critique of ‘metropolitan theory’ [Connell 2007],

1 The paper is based on the work of two authors related to the projects of the institutions they are engaged in, funded by the Ministry of Science, Education and Technological Development of the RS: Marina Blagojević-Hughson, subproject: Social Inequalities and Social Inclusion (No 47011), which is being realized at the Institute of Criminological and Sociological research in Belgrade, and Mirjana Bobić, the project ‘Challenges of New Social Integration – Concepts and Actors’ (No 179035), carried out by the Institute for sociological research Faculty of Philosophy.
and her vision of 'polycentric social science' [Connell, 2013]; and finally, 3. the idea of multiple modernities and multiple trajectories of modernization [Eisenstadt, 2002]. Historically speaking, demography as a discipline has been empirically rich, but theoretically 'poor'. Striving towards more theory, towards grounded theory, can profoundly enrich our understanding of the population change, by connecting micro, mezzo and macro level into a more heuristically rewarding manner, and, at the same time, it would be moving towards effectiveness and meaningfulness of the population policies.

KEYWORDS: semi-periphery, first demographic transition, second demographic transition, de-development, countries in transition, depopulation, gender regimes.

INTRODUCTION: WHAT IS THE PROBLEM?

The face of East and South East Europe has largely been changed in the last few decades, during the ‘transition’ towards ‘democracy and market economy’. Many volumes have been published on the nature and quality of ‘transition’, its failures or successes. However, population changes, although often equally dramatic, have been rarely explicitly connected to other structural features of the ‘transition’, to future prospects of development of those societies, or to the immanent quality of the present mode of neoliberal globalization. Demographic approach, descriptive by its nature, often struggles with theoretical generalizations, and it is usually focused on interpretation of data from mostly simplified and ideologically biased theories from ‘the core’. Both the Theory of Demographic Transition (the first transition – FDT) and the theory of the Second Demographic Transition (SDT) failed to explicate, to a large extent, specific population developments of the transitional societies. Knowledge which will offer adequate explanatory propositions is simply missing. Population policies in those countries, as a consequence, also fail to respond adequately to serious population issues.

So, much of the dramatic change, which populations from the semi-periphery have experienced, simply stayed undertheorized and inadequately understood. The aim of this paper is to theorize on population change in countries in transition, which are geographically speaking the countries in East and South East Europe. This will be done by re-affirming and, in fact, reconceptualizing the notion of the semi-periphery. Conceptualization of the semi-periphery will offer a necessary framework for understanding the population change during the ‘transition’ in the countries in East Europe. Theorizing, here, is not taken as an aim for itself, but as a necessary tool for the advancement of knowledge beyond demographic descriptions, into the sphere of deeper understanding of the structural causes of population developments, from micro, individual and family level to the global level. Population development in East Europe is seen as in connection to neoliberal globalization, which is affecting, downward, different intermediaries, including regions, sub-regions, states, local communities, families, individuals, as well as different economic and non-economic organizations and institutions. The paradox of the moment we are living in comes out from the fact that the causes which are produced on a
global level, are creating, downward, many negative consequences at all levels of human organization, without the institutional possibility, at the moment, to counteract. However, the very first precondition for any kind of rational intervention at any level of human society is to actually understand ‘how the things work’. This is why we are offering here an explanatory framework in a form of a set of theoretical propositions and generalizations. Theory of the semi-periphery can be seen as an empirically based theory, a type of a ‘grounded theory’, which is connecting developmental issues of the semi-periphery, as a part of the global community, with the present globalization process. This paper is written with deep conviction that there is a possibility of a rational response to the growing chaotic global condition, population issues being one of them, but only if there is adequate knowledge basis which can explain that very condition, its causes and consequences.

**POPULATION ISSUES AT THE SEMI-PERIPHERY: WHAT IS THE PROBLEM?**

UNFPA publication from 2010, under the name *Emerging Population Issues in East Europe and Central Asia: Research Gaps on Demographic Trends, Human Capital and Climate change*, was the first step of UN which actually recognized that there was some kind of a ‘problem’ with population in East Europe. The region which is covered by this population actually consists of three subregions: 1. European part of the former Soviet Union (which is dominated by Russia, Ukraine and Belarus) but does not include Central Asia; 2. East Europe consisting of former socialist countries which were not part of the Soviet Union, and 3. Countries belonging to the Central Asia [Lutz 2010:3]. Although not all countries in those three subregions share exactly the same population problems, which are mainly the consequence of different age structures, many of them do share numerous similarities and similar trends of developments. The semi-periphery of Europe, term which we will use here to go beyond geography into the level of structural dispositions, is according to the above document going through an unprecedented demographic change. That change, in short, can be described as a combination of extremely low birth rates, migration losses and high or moderate mortality, leading to a combination of rapid population aging together with population decline [Lutz, 2010: 1]. Even though these changes were already present at the beginning of the 1990s, there was huge resistance to address them. We believe that the resistance to acknowledge population problems in many transitional countries was a result of complex blindness which resulted from different sources. The first source

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2 The Report does not specify which countries belong to the three regions.

3 The list of countries is subject to change, since those countries which become members of the EU, get excluded from what we here consider to be 'the semi-periphery'. However, structurally, countries like Croatia, Romania, Bulgaria are very much part of the picture. Other semi-peripheral countries in Europe, or at the border with the EU include: Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Bulgaria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kosovo, Kyrgyz Republic, Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Serbia, Tajikistan, TFY Republic of Macedonia, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan.
was political in its nature, since the change from communism to postcommunism was framed as both positive and inevitable, so population problems in countries in transition could not be seen and interpreted as ‘problems’ either. Secondly, UN tends to see the world divided into the two poles (North and South), with the EU belonging to the North, which does not experience ‘population problems’ which are ‘reserved’ for ‘the South’. Since population ‘problems’ are regularly connected to economic development, there is no intellectual tradition or background to see population development as a ‘problem’ if a country is developed. Finally, there were ‘pure’ epistemic reasons, since there were missing theories, missing generalizations, missing explanations. However, those three were interlinked, in short, the political interest and will to create the missing knowledge were also absent on the global UN level.

Until the above mentioned publication was published, population problems in East Europe, from the perspective of UN, had been mostly invisible and covered mainly by Millennium Goals, which were, again, largely shaped according to the problem agenda of the developing countries. The gap in knowledge about population problems of East Europe and other developing countries became even wider in the two decades of the ‘transformation’, when it reached a point when UNFPA stated the following: ‘Rapid population decline and all of its possible consequences, ranging from changes in individual health and well-being due to changing socioeconomic structures to changes in the structure of society, regional population redistribution, economic growth and national identity and security, are clearly emerging population issues that require attention and scientific analysis’ [Lutz 2010: 5].

In the above mentioned document, UNFPA states that because the phenomena of population problems in East Europe is such a new phenomena, it has not received enough attention either in the international political and intergovernmental community or in the scientific community. Although we do not fully accept the thesis that it was ‘new’, we also believe that in the last few decades, in fact, during the ‘transition’, the problems became even more pronounced.

So, what is actually new in population development in the countries in transition? Most importantly, what is new is the fact that population decline at the semi-periphery is not connected with the economic growth, but it is reverse. The economic crises or unfavorable economic situation is linked to low voluntary fertility. What is also new is that intense aging is even intensified with high emigration of young people, and that there is even a reverse trend in mortality rates (mortality of Russian men, for example [Somach 2011]), which all together have led to depopulation. Also, what is new is that depopulation is framed as a problem only by individual governments in the region, and not by UN. In fact, depopulation was never before really linked to development problems.

4 Of course, issues such as aging of the population, or immigration (illegal, especially), even low fertility rates could be framed as ‘problems’, however in the case of developed countries they are mostly framed as ‘normal’ consequence of development, which can be treated rationally with adequate policy measures.
MISSING THEORY: GAPS, BLIND SPOTS, BIASES

There are various complex, often chaotic and ambivalent changes in contemporary societies worldwide which affect population developments. 'De-standardization of life course and chaotic biographies in a risk society of the late capitalism mean that life is not taking place according to standard patterns' [Bobić 2013: 43]. If we engage in a critique of what was/is taken for 'standard' we can easily come to the conclusion that it is a model of industrialized developed society of the West. The knowledge, theory, policies, explanations, expectations, all have been basically following this 'standard'. In its deep nature, the prevailing social theory is still reflecting colonialism and/or neocolonialism [Connell 2007]. Therefore, to deal with societies outside the core, such as the societies in the European semi-periphery, it is necessary to articulate and accept very different epistemic propositions, starting with the idea that the whole of knowledge body is simply a construct and that it is reflecting power and interests of those who create it. The next step, then, is to call for a creation of multiple knowledges, or 'polycentric social science' [Connell 2013], those which will respond to real differences both in social conditions and the societal needs for knowledge. In other words, the 'ontological turn', a full recognition of ontologies of both humans and contexts, needs to become the basis for this paradigm shift. However, even when we accept the necessity for a different Theory, an open question remains to what extent valid generalizations can be made, and how to move towards causes instead of being focused on the consequences.

Still, before we continue exposing our arguments in this direction, it is necessary to discuss briefly what exactly the problems with the 'Theory' are at the moment. The first problem is that 'Theory' is actually missing. There are no adequate and well accepted explanations, and valid generalizations within academic communities in the countries in transition, or even within the general public, about the background and causes of present day population situations in those countries. This fact reflects much deeper problem of knowledge creation in those countries [Blagojević 2009]. Secondly, gaps in terms of disparities between the developed countries of the core and countries which belong to the semi-periphery are not really taken into account, except on a phenomenological level. Similarities (low fertility rates, delay of the first marriage, postponement of births, decline in the total first marriage, higher divorce rates, differentiation of family forms, increase of cohabitation and single living, etc.) are obvious on the surface, and they cannot be ignored, but the causes of those similar trends are very different in East and in West. However, demographers of the East European countries were, and still are, tempted to simply borrow explanatory tools from the FDT to explain the low fertility rates. They blamed 'emancipation' of women and even, 'women's selfishness' [Blagojević 1997] for changed reproductive behavior. Demographers simply misunderstood that it is not 'modernization' but rather the absence of 'modernization', expressed in a low living standard and low quality of life, and that it is not 'emancipation' but rather lack of true emancipation expressed in a heavy burden
of women to be ‘blamed’ for their low fertility rates [Blagojević 1997; Bobić 2010]. Borrowing of readymade formulas only blurred the difference between the core countries and the semi-periphery, further leading to distorted knowledge about demographic processes. Atheoretical nature of demography, especially its divorce from sociology, prevented deeper understanding of relevant contextual and structural differences between the West and the semi-periphery.

Thirdly, there are other, more specific, blind spots in explanations which mainly refer to two different aspects: position of women and gender regimes in the said countries, and de-development of the said countries. As Bobić notices, feminist authors still struggle for their position within the demographic field, and demography is late in accepting gender paradigm in comparison to other social sciences [Bobić 2013: 48]. In countries in ‘transition’, marginalization of gender issues in demography is even more pronounced. There is profound absence of feminist demographers. The consequences are multifold. Fertility is not understood as what it is in today’s semi-peripheral societies: mainly woman’s decision to have or not to have a child [Blagojević 1997]. The link between fertility and women’s position is yet to be explored in different contextual settings. For example, Bobić claims that educated women, especially in the developed countries, do not necessarily have lower fertility rates since their position is improving and they can rely on other sources to fulfill their desire for children [Bobić 2013: 53]. Feminist authors in semi-peripheral societies, who are usually not demographers, have done considerable body of research related to instrumentalization of women in the national projects through pressure for birth giving [Drezgić 2010]. However, they have not dealt with other side of the problem – profound frustration of young women and men who would like to have children, but do not have adequate economic conditions to make decisions in this direction [Blagojević 1989; Blagojević 2013]. In fact, the formula of ‘freedom of choice’ as a human right, when it comes to decision about children, was mainly ‘working’ for developing countries to promote women’s rights but it was of limited use for the semi-periphery which was experiencing ‘negative freedom of choice’. In other words, freedom of choice should work on both ends: freedom to both have and not to have children, and responsible and rational choice should be supported by society.

Finally, both the theory of FDT and SDT suffer from serious issues related to ethnocentrism and tempocentrism. For example, Slovenian demographer Kuhar has found that non-postmaterialist value orientation, which plays prominent role within SDT theorizing is not among important predictors of childbearing in succession countries of former Yugoslavia (except in Slovenia). Instead the findings indicate that material conditions and socio-economic status are relevant [Kuhar 2010: 55]. Kuhar thinks that SDT is a useful umbrella concept in analyzing changes in fertility and family formation in developed countries, but it is not useful for East European countries.

Both theories assume that there is unilinear development, often referred to as ‘modernization’, which is inevitable for all the populations of the world who will experience it sooner or later. Not only that there is a hidden assumption of superiority of such a model which bears the colonial bias, but the major
failure of that model to be applied successfully on countries in transition comes from the fact that not taking into account historically different situations of developed, semi-peripheral or developing countries is a serious distortion. In fact, the core of that distortion is disregard of different structured developmental interdependences of those societies, at different points of time. This disregard of interdependence as a relevant explanatory variable is distortion more than ever, under the conditions of the present neoliberal globalization.

It seems strange to be in a situation in 2014 to repeat the arguments which were given to the FDT years ago [Šijaković 1980; Roca 1987] but it still seems necessary for the reasons mentioned above. FDT was already criticized in the 1970s and 1980s. However, with respect to our approach here, not all of the critiques are equally relevant. The most relevant ones are those which put in focus the very basis of generalization: the fact that it was founded on the experiences of few countries in the West and their demographic development. As any generalization in social sciences, FDT was also faced with an open question of validity and scope of generalization. So, for our approach here it is not relevant whether, and to what extent, it could be empirically tested and whether it was coherent, especially when different authors were compared. The quest for consistency and coherence is largely outdated, having in mind contemporary knowledge developments in social sciences, and abandoning of the metanarratives as such. However, what remains a key challenge to FDT and to theoretical thinking about population development in general, then and now, is the very question of which structural characteristics could be taken as the most relevant ones: what is the connection between social, economic, cultural structures and population development? Theory is mostly an epistemic tool which enables ordering of a certain segment of social reality. However, for that ordering it is not necessary to have all examples and statistical series in line but to understand the deterministic, cause-consequence, set up of reality. Regarding FDT, the major factors related to population change in the West were linked to industrialization and urbanization. In some cases, some authors even claimed that FDT was preceding urbanization and industrialization, that it was in fact a factor which was a precondition for industrial development. So, cause-consequence explanation in theory could be refined with more subtle analysis of synchronicity of different changes leading to the same direction.

However, the major flaw of FDT, from epistemological, and not only ethical perspective, is that it was ethnocentric, as much as it was tempocentric. Most of the authors linked to FDT failed to recognize that developing countries, those outside the West, actually find themselves in a very different set of circumstances. It was not an issue of simple 'lagging behind', as much as an issue of...
of dependent development. Croatian demographer Zoran Roca coined a term ‘dependent demographic transition’ and proved that external factors played an essential role in demographic transition of developing countries, in comparison to their internal developments [Roca 1987]. What was characterized as ‘irrational’ behavior leading to ‘population explosion’ of developing countries, in fact was rational behavior of population under the conditions of the countries in question. In other words, the main problem with both FDT and SDT is that they ignore interdependence of populations, which happens under the conditions of unequal and unjust global economic development. As ‘transition’ is not just an endogenic process, neither is the population development of countries at the semi-periphery a self-driven process of collective self-suicide and rationally or irrationally ‘chosen’ collective disappearance (self-extinction).

From the perspective of this fundamental failure of FDT, it is not difficult to understand the failure of SDT theory, since it is, again, locked in the same antinomy: how to theorize on a world population development if the model is just extrapolation from the West to the rest, instead of focusing on structural connections between the West and the rest, which is taking place in the code of neoliberal globalization. In fact, SDT is disclosing absolutely the same type of blindness as FDT, but this time especially strong in connection to the semi-periphery. Deeper explanation of this ‘mistake’ lies in the fact that colonial approach in the FDT was replaced by neocolonial approach of SDT, which means that it became more ‘soft’ and ‘politically correct’, but not different in its essence. Both approaches are based on two ideas: that development is unilinear, so the underdeveloped, developing or semi-peripheral societies are ‘lagging behind’, and secondly, there is powerful convergence leading to the same outcome. Without necessarily rejecting those very general ideas, in fact metanarratives, which are still very much ideologically shaped in colonial and neocolonial terms, we can safely say that even if they are taken as valid assumptions to describe long term developments, the relevance of contextual analysis and relevance of an issue of actual human costs of ‘development’ short term and medium term could not be simply ignored. They are epistemic, but ethical issues are interconnected, as well.

CONCEPTUALIZING THE SEMI-PERIPHERY AND ITS GENDER REGIMES

The semi-periphery, as explained elsewhere [Blagojević 2009; Blagojević Hjuson 2013] is a concept which enables better understanding of structural relation and dependence between the core and the semi-periphery. It is a necessary concept, since its omission results in dangerous blindness which often produces inadequate public policies and developmental interventions, frequently bringing profound counter effects [Blagojević 2009]. Inspiring work of Connell, with elaboration of Southern Theory and development of the idea of ‘polycentric social science’ [Connell 2013] could easily be translated into the quest for contextual and contextualized knowledges, which would be interconnected in the grid of wider generalizations.
The semi-periphery is more than 'geography', it is a 'strategic concept' [Harding 1998] which enables naming of a specific entity with specific structural characteristics. In this case, the most relevant characteristic of the semi-periphery is that it is shaped by its structural, not only positional relationship with the center which is the one of: dependence, imitation, resistance and transfer. The semi-periphery cannot simply be understood from the post-colonial theoretical aspect, not only because of the innovative strategies of neocolonialism through sweeping privatizations and financial manipulations [Klein 2007; Horvat and Štiks 2012], but because it is also the subject of its own colonization, it is subjected to the process of 'self-colonization' [Kovačević 2008]. Different trajectories of modernization also imply that differences between the core and the semi-periphery or periphery, are not simply quantitative, but also qualitative (some of which can be quantified, though). In developmental terms, being previously industrialized to a large degree, and then largely de-industrialized during the 'transition', makes the semi-periphery a quite different social setting from the periphery and its developmental path. Although these may seem as overwhelming generalizations, the facts are that there are huge differences, for example, between structural poverty in the Third World Countries and the process of impoverishment in the Second World during the 'transition'.

Without going into further theoretical explanation of the concept of the semi-periphery, we would like to focus here on several important characteristics of the semi-periphery which are closely connected to population development. One of the major structural characteristics of the semi-periphery is that it is constructed, from within and without, as an entity which is 'lagging behind' and 'catching up' with the core [Blagojević 2009; 2013]. 'Catching up', as deliberate political and developmental choice of the countries at the semi-periphery, profoundly shaped their gender orders: for that goal to be achieved, the women's resources were extensively and intensively used both in private and public spheres. In that light, egalitarian ideology during communism could be seen as highly instrumental for high mobilization of women's resources. This is the background of the explanation of high education and employment levels, as well as early voting rights for women in East Europe. In some countries at the semi-periphery, contrary to the general misconceptions and prejudices about the 'backward women from the East', voting rights were granted quite early: in 1918 in Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, and Poland, in 1920 in Czechoslovakia, in 1929 in Romania, in 1937 in Bulgaria [Enwise Report 2003: 23].

Another key characteristic of the (contemporary) semi-periphery is a process of 'de-development' which is qualitatively different from the lack or absence of development, or slow pace of development. 'Transition' for the 'Second World', former industrialized communist countries in Europe, took a form of 'de-development' in many ways. De-development is a deep structural change which is in economic terms related to depreciation of human, institutional and infrastructural capital [Meurs and Ranasinghe 2003], but it also has its profound social side effects. That process could be well understood from
the perspective of global change, in the code of neoliberal paradigm [Klein 2007]. In social terms, the de-development is related to many negative consequences such as: increased social insecurity, decreased social protection and stability, institutional destruction, anomie, increased crime and violence, population crises, increased mortality, and even 'barbarization' through the violent conflicts [Blagojević 2009]. De-development is not a simple 'regress', since it is not a simple 'going backward' along the same line, but instead it is distancing from the genuine developmental path, in terms of modernization and creation of some kind of structure-less, chaotic, anomic social environment, which is more pronounced at the bottom (micro level), than at the top (macro/nation state level).

The de-development, if it lasts long enough, is not only a social process but it becomes a social condition and a new social structure. This extremely relevant social fact, unfortunately, largely stays invisible and not understood since there is a 'blindness of theory' grounded on an assumption of unilinear development, which is backed up by efforts to 'Europeanize', to bring EU standards to the rest of the European continent. Increasing pressure on societies to adapt to the requirements of global players, results in a number of strategies of passive and active resistances and subversions. It is almost impossible at this point, and with the existing theoretical apparatus, to understand the exact direction of social change which is currently taking place in large part of the European semi-periphery.

De-development as a process is very territorial and closely linked to the statehood, and the best example of it is the EU Accession. Different states and different regions within the states are, to different degrees, integrated into a global capitalist system. Those that stay excluded from the transnational flows of globalization could easily become 'losers' of the 'transition' [Blagojević 2013]. Not all levels of territoriality and population from one territory (however the boundaries defined) are equally 'transnationalized', exposed to transnational flows and merged with them. Still, all levels of territoriality, from micro to macro, are immersed into global neo-liberal restructuring of the world. Even when they stay non-included in the transnational flows they are still included in the globalization which creates huge developmental differences. Paradoxically, the fast and often unpredictable transnational capital flows, make concrete territories and peoples more vulnerable than ever. With neoliberal globalization, dependence on territoriality for social positioning of individuals, groups and even societies, has become more pronounced and more prone to fast shifts and changes.

De-development, being related to depreciation of capital (human, infrastructural, institutional and environmental resources), also represents the major obstacle for further development, or going back 'on track'. In the new neo-liberal setting, states are increasingly losing the ability to control their own destinies, as well as large parts of their population. In fact, de-development is the most plausible explanation of why many countries, or large regions within the countries, have found themselves in a circle of non-development. In that setting, both women and men are increasingly becoming 'losers' of 'transition',
but in different ways. The overall framework of depreciation of human capital has led to the phenomena of 'surplus of humans', surplus of both women and men, especially of those who belong to the fast growing underclass (uneducated, rural, old, or even urban, educated but unemployed labor force). 'Surplus of humans' phenomenon is not expressed only in high, permanent, structural unemployment, but also in an obvious erosion of labors’ rights, as well as shrinking of the middle class, class of the professionals at the semi-periphery. In demographic terms, 'surplus of humans' exhibits itself in fast changing reproductive norms, where voluntary infertility becomes a logical response to 'surplus-ness' of population at the territory of the semi-periphery.

For biological reproduction which is still taking the place mainly within the family and which is largely shaped by gender regimes, two very distinctive features of gender regimes at the semi-periphery also play a role, and they are closely connected to the economy of care: the first one is existence of 'self/sacrificing micro-matriarchy' [Blagojević 1994; Blagojević Hjuson 2013], and the second one is the existence of 'masculinity crises' [Blagojević 2009; Somach 2011; Blagojević Hjuson 2013]. The two are closely linked together, thus producing a combination of high level exploitation of women's resources, on the one hand, and strong patriarchal ideologies with pronounced misogyny which boost demystification and pacification of women, thus enabling that exploitation [Blagojević Hjuson 2013]. In fact, the greater dependence on women resources in public and private domain, the stronger ideological patriarchalism to counterbalance it. The combination of the two often seems to be paradoxical, and, therefore, it often stays invisible for the 'Western eye' in theory, research or policy making. The result is, from the Western point of view, a strange amalgam of a 'super woman', strong, powerful, but at the same time, sacrificial woman, who is 'more than equal' ('Polish mother', for example). Masculinity crises, on the other hand, is a result of dependent position of men in a model of 'self/sacrificing matriarchy', in combination with actual male identity crises, since identity cannot be organized around the nonexistent 'male breadwinner' model, due to the 'surplus of humans', high structural unemployment and dependence on women’s resources. At the same time, re-traditionalisation and re-patriarchalization, as part of an overall change of value system in 'transitional' countries [Blagojević 2003; Milić 2009] additionally put burden on men to comply to their role of 'breadwinners', a role which during the socialism was largely cancelled due to the prevailing 'dual earner' model of family organization. On the other hand, 'self/sacrificing micro-matriarchy' model is a solid basis for creation of women’s identity, and women actively participate in this model, experiencing high emotional rewards and strengthened subjectivities. At the same time, to integrate into the patriarchal setting, women actively participate in misogynous discourses and practices, often deeply internalizing them [Blagojević 2000; 2004] and acting negatively towards other women.
CONCLUSION

The evidence shows that population developments at the semi-periphery in the last several decades are unprecedented, that they, in many ways, relate to something new, and that the adequate theoretical explanations are largely missing, mainly because the semi-periphery is not recognized as being structurally different from both the core and the periphery. Therefore, the whole question about population developments at the semi-periphery needs to be reframed. Population development cannot be understood by a simple descriptive approach or very simplified modeling related to few macroeconomic variables (GDP for example), or indicators which in reality contain great variety (education, for example). The approach we suggest in this paper is the one which is based on the following theoretical assumptions:

- population developments at the semi-periphery of Europe are reflecting the position of the semi-periphery in the global neoliberal project;
- phenomena of the "surplus of population" is closely connected to the de-development of the semi-periphery, and reflected in the voluntary infertility (extremely low birth rates);
- de-development and decay of public sphere, due to the budget cuts, together with high unemployment, lead to micro based survival economy which is anchored in the private sphere;
- economy of care (both for elderly and minors) is limited by women’s resources, and caring for the aging population competes with the caring for the young generations;
- semi-periphery suffers from de-appreciation of all kinds of resources in the present day globalization, including human resources and environmental resources, therefore 'human capital' approach is insufficient and misleading;
- intense aging, low fertility, high mortality, depopulation and intense emigration, all combine to additionally worsen developmental situation;
- states at the semi-periphery are faced with serious security issues due to depopulation of large parts of their territories, which feeds national populist approach to population policies;
- immigration for the semi-peripheral countries could not be seen as a solution as it was, and still is, the case with the core European countries, since economic and political conditions are very different;
- low fertility at the semi-periphery is closely connected to development of a specific gender regime, concentrated on self/sacrificing micro-matriarchy model, masculinity crises, and interrelated crises of fatherhood.

In other words, the proper theory could provide proper explanation if it would properly acknowledge the realities of power differentials between the core and the semi-periphery, instead of feeding the myths of unilinear develop-

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6 That is the approach advocated in UNFPA publication in 2010, under the name Emerging Population Issues in East Europe and Central Asia: Research Gaps on Demographic Trends, Human Capital and Climate Change.
ment and convergence. It would acknowledge the existence of different modernization paths, as well as the right and necessity for the countries of the semi-periphery to create their own knowledge and understanding of the processes which shape their developments, instead of accepting readymade images and explanations, including readymade policy solutions. Imitating solutions without recognizing basic differences, even when the outcomes might appear similar (i.e. low fertility rates), is necessarily creating even more problems. Instead of advocating positivist critique, which is so present in demographic debates and which is often concentrated on finding data that approve or disapprove some generalizations, the approach we advocate here is theoretical in terms of finding the key structural explanations for the present population situation at the semi-periphery. The basic assumption here is that only that kind of knowledge would allow for rational and effective intervention in the population developments.

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**INTERNET SOURCES:**

http://europa.eu.int/comm/research/science-society/women/enwise/events

РЕЗИМЕ: Много емпиријске евиденције о демографским променама у земљама у „транзицији”, тј. у онима на полупериферији Европе недовољно је теоретизовано, или је теоретизовано унутар оквира теорија о првој и другој демографској транзицији. Међутим, обе ове метанарације су само делимично примењиве на популациони развој полупериферије. У овом раду ауторке тврде да специфичност и изузетност популационог развоја полупериферије тражи другачији приступ, тачније приступ који ће јасно признати значај структуралне разлике између центра и полупериферије, и развојну зависност као кључни проблем. Основни аргументи односе се на специфичност родних режима на полупериферији [Blagojević 2009; Blagojević 2013; Bobić 2013], као и на процес „раз-развоја” који резултира дубоком друштвено-структуралном променом. Полазна епистемолошка становишта за овакав приступ односе се на три струје теоријског мишљења: 1. Феминистичку теорију позиционирања (полупериферија је и стратешко поље артикулације знања, као и локација на којој се реафирмису онтологија и епистемологија родности [Wickramasinghe 2006; Blagojević 2009]; 2. Критику „Метрополитанске теорије” Р. Конел [Connell 2007] и њена визија „полицентричне друштвене науке” [Connell 2013]; 3. идеја вишеструких модерности и вишеструких путања модернизације [Eisenstadt 2002]. Како је, историјски посматрано, демографија као дисциплина била емпиријски богата али теоријски сиромашна, померање ка теорији, ка утемељеној теорији ("grounded theory"), може дубински обогатити наше разумевање популационе промене, повезујући микро, мезо и макро ниво на хуеристички плодоносан начин, уз истовремено унапређивање ефективности и, у суштини, смислености популационе политике.

КЉУЧНЕ РЕЧИ: полупериферија, прва демографска транзиција, друга демографска транзиција, раз-развој, депопулација, родни режими