

# **“EUROPE NORMAL” OR “EUROPE CRISIS”: A CULTURAL CONSTRUCT DRILLED INTO POPULATION?**

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## **Abstract**

*The unequal weighting of cultural views within the current European context stemmed largely from a preference for more quantitative type analysis which lack the ability to explain the changes that lead to today's reality and tomorrow's future. We argue that the demographic formation of today's European society has been accompanied by the formation of a new type of cultural model. The contrast between the “Europe normal” as we were used to perceived Europe and “Europe crisis” as currently Europe is depicted clearly depends also on a change in the cultural construct . We argue that the development of a new cultural model has been accompanied by a new type of population development. It can be seen that in its pervasiveness, cultural change, threatens to undermine economic development, inscribed in the European policy. The current more robust cultural model comprises the cultural life of the European citizen. This study wishes to fill a gap in today's research. We desire to widen the scope so as to capture the place of the cultural European model within the order of things which is no longer clearly fixed and legitimated by the same binding cultural system of beliefs and values. This abstract is naturally a sketch and deliberately so, but the study promises to be less condensed and more complex. We seek to indicate central and pertinent developments in the European framework.*

**Keywords:** *cultural model transition population European*

## **Introduction**

Few areas need more expanding than the study of population in the current context of globalization and the current economic crisis. The EU is confronting an economic crisis, but which has deeper roots in the social. It is our opinion that this is the starting point of an economic crisis with roots into a social crisis. If any research can have the desire to attempt to chart the complex map of population in the context of globalization it needs to employ systematic and different approaches to any research. Until now the study of demography and cultural studies have been selectively used according to the way in which the researcher has perceived reality. We wish to encourage research on population based on the clashes and common ground between demographic research and the research of cultural models that impose a certain type of behavior. Albeit we consider necessary that in this context of trying to use such distinctive methodologies we consider it necessary to exercise more cautiously and conjecturally this type of research. The expected overall result should materialize in a synoptic view on where we are now and where it is likely for the current context to be going. By understanding the importance of a cultural model in people' life we can forecast their future decisions and we can better apply and create policies meant to foster social cohesion and social support, which might cure the current social crisis with a powerful impact on the economic. Europe has to deal with the aging of population which leads to increase social spending, in a context of shrinking working force, which means less small and medium business and less money from taxes. There have been voices that lobby for a shift from the European continent to the Asian and American continent. Their power has a population source and many are keen on researching the new “celebrities” in the current international scene. In the context of globalization we still believe in the importance of the EU as a global player, backing the following statement“ Europe has been the

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continent that built the first economical region of the world. An economical edifice raised gradually, with a purely pragmatic attitude in mind, so much so that its allure grew in time”<sup>2</sup>.

Dominated by the classic demographic transition theory, the settled view of demography has since been profoundly challenged by a series of successive theoretical influences, derived, also, from cultural studies and, perhaps most critically, from the debates in and around new perspectives to guarantee a lively and productive research climate for some time to come.

Our methodology involves an historical perspective on the evolution of population in both Western countries and Eastern countries and the variable of social security expenditure and the moment in which East and West started to have direct contact. We recognized that despite the existence of the Iron curtain cultural exchanges have taken place, but in a limited amount. We believe that we are dealing with a process of acculturation, but with limited acquisition, limitation that triggered a demographic crisis also in the Eastern part of Europe.

Moreover, we argue, that the findings of demography and cultural studies, of these two separated research traditions, are not so far opposed as is usually supposed. Albeit they express change in different terms, they both agree on its existence and view it from a different angle. They agree about the degree of power that can be attributed to the changes that take place in Europe, but it's a difference in the nature of these changes. We believe that an acceptance of a so called incompatibility of a meeting between the two may close means of research of both theoretical and empirical critique. We understand the need for a sufficient diverse of contending perspectives so as to be able to guarantee a lively and productive climate of research. The meeting between cultural studies and demography is meant to reflect a multifaceted reality, as truthfully and objectively as possible. Thus, again, we would like to underline that in this case competing interpretations although are provided by wrongly considered rival perspectives, the evidence deployed by both is similar. Questions about the demographic change in Europe are therefore more likely to be resolved by generating both empiric and theoretical argument.

## MAIN BODY

Demography is generally discussed as if it were exclusively a phenomena linked with only predictors like urbanization, infant and child mortality, migration, industrialization, freedom of movement. We agree with the statement that “According to the population projections published by Eurostat in 2010, meaningful demographic changes in the age structure of population in Europe are forthcoming”<sup>3</sup> but we wish to add further information regarding possible ways of investigating this situation. Indeed, this assumption is embodied in the vast majority of demographical studies in most scientific approaches, but it also being challenged through comments by Susan Watkins, Barbara Anderson, John Knodel. Our concern will be with the impact of a little understood variable, cultural setting or cultural model, on the rates and shape of demographic transition that mostly is represented by a decline in various regions of Europe. Inevitably, such a topic covering so broad a canvas will be highly selective. Hopefully, it is intended as an antidote for the conventional approach to demography, which has become a major concern in Europe. The cultural setting is tacitly portrayed as autonomous and isolated from demography. This approach has dominated demographic and cultural research for so long. To some extent the demise of the classic demographic transition theory facilitated the extension of this field of research. Through increase permeability between the two fields of research we believe the resources of the two can be harness to the advancement of knowledge in the broader benefit of human development.

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<sup>2</sup> Paul Dobrescu, *Geopolitica*, Editura Comunicare.ro, Bucuresti, 2008, p. 122

<sup>3</sup>Cinzia di Palo, *The demographic challenge on pension systems: empirical results from Italy*, Review of Applied Socio-Economic Research, Issue 2, 2011, [www.reaser.eu](http://www.reaser.eu)

The role of the cultural model has therefore received very little considerable attention, both from critical perspectives theory and from that of developmentally-oriented action research. We believe that the cultural model in Eastern countries was also the informal source for social support for the individual. The connection between the cultural model and traditional sources of social support is a systematic one in the case of Eastern countries. Much recent research has been focused more upon the evolution of the traditional family in an attempt at explaining the demographic decline in the Eastern countries, which in the beginning were seen as the promise “demographic land”, sources of experienced and trained young specialists. We understand the importance of the family in this process of demographic transition, but we believe that cultural change plays an equally important role. The decline of the traditional family<sup>4</sup> has been noticed also by Beck. His theory and research paradigm has been further developed by Gernsheim. Thus, it is still the case that very little is known about actual cultural model effects in relation to demography. Much more attention needs to be given to the processes by which this process happens so as to be able to interpret, translate and transform these experiences into knowledge. It is our hypothesis that we need to draw more from a micro-analysis at small groups and individuals so as to be able to engage with and to illuminate the macro-analysis.

The rise of a new elite, strongly linked with the development of our society towards economic growth, has tended to destabilize the demographic structure by generating or in some cases exacerbating tensions within it. The development of a new cultural model had a destabilizing impact in another, more indirect way. The new cultural model encouraged people to exploit their control over family issues in the benefit of economic targets, so as to build economy, which provoked a demographic reaction throughout contemporary Europe. Market forces succeeded in containing the rise of the population against the background of growing prosperity and the assertion of a new dominant cultural model. The operation of the free market, with its accompanying rise in education costs, childcare costs, living costs, responsibility both self imposed and law imposed towards raising a child, led to a progressive transfer from a traditional cultural model which proposed a numerous family to a more reluctant to an extended family cultural model. It also led to a new economic dependence on money that encouraged the creation of a family or eliminated an early desire for a family, inhibiting the emergence of the old cultural model. Significant changes have occurred since the new cultural model has taken effect.

The possibilities and limitations of the autonomy of individual preferences for a specific cultural model within the society cannot be considered without reference to the economic base. The effects of the introduction of a cultural model that has been constructed having as a center the economic core have already been related to the family policy of the individual. In another sense, people are primarily limited by a form of social control, through reference to living standards, cultural taste and accessibility to infrastructure, coupled with cultural acceptability. Cultural decisions are rooted in straightforward notions of business and economic efficiency and cultural acceptability. Paralyzed by the ferocious economic conditions in a contemporary society in a crisis, people respond by minimizing all possible risks, hedging all bets and the cultural model of the time sees any new member of the family, like a child as a risk.

Rather, the general conclusion must be that demography is indeed bound with, and bounded by, the interest of the dominant cultural model in society, but that these interests are constantly redefined according to a process to which the persons themselves contribute. We can conclude that the external cultural model locks the person into a situation of a latent presence. Consequently, the capacity of influence of the cultural model, if not even its capacity to control, rests on an understanding of the powers and consequences which may for the most part remain latent. The politics of accommodation with the cultural model is played out at different levels: between the

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<sup>4</sup> Beck-Gernsheim, E., *On the way to a post-familial family: from a community of need to elective affinities*, *Theory, Culture and Society*, 1998, vol 15, no 3–4, pp 57.

individuals, between the individual and the group and between the society and the individual. Within this accommodation, the limits of control are in a constant negotiation. Through these negotiations different interests are served. The precise nature and the implications of the cultural controls have been only loosely defined and interpreted. We agree with Giddens that underlines that traditional sources of support are no longer available<sup>5</sup> for people in Eastern countries, but we have a more nuanced view upon what these sources of support are.

Cultural studies arguably incorporate a stress on experience. The stress on experience is seen as a sort of humanist position. Cultural studies conceive society as a complex expressive totality. That is why we consider that the change of the cultural model in Eastern countries is equal with what Giddens calls "lifting out of social relations"<sup>6</sup> which inevitably has lead to an economic crisis, more visible right now, but with a core made out of a social crisis which puts in danger the very existence of the European Union.

My primary purpose in this essay has been to create an illustrated summary encapsulating the central areas of debate concerned with the reality-defining role of cultural studies in a demography type research. Yet I have also stubbornly sought, but I must admit in a lower key, to debate the degree in which today's reality is conceived and represented using only traditional methodologies. We wish to guarantee the validity of positing a duality between the plane of demography and that of cultural studies. Although, confirming the place of traditional identifiers in the effort of explaining the social reality, we believe that cultural studies should be brought into line. We believe that it is not difficult to easily identify a number of demographic inadequacies that can be explained by taking into account the uneven and less than total consume of the Western cultural model by the Eastern states that newly adhere to the European Union. In the first place, we consider that by baldly confronting the reality of demographic decline in the Eastern countries, which were in the beginning perceived as a source for young and professional workforce, able to help the EU in maintaining its economic development we can better understand what proper measures can be taken to address this sensitive and civilization frightening issue. The current distance between the quantitative and number based research of demography and cultural studies mainly focused on social and human aspect may lead to a different light upon the problem of both cultural and demographic transition which explains the current economic crisis, which will apparently be followed by a social crisis. Obviously, we must continue to make a distinction between the two elements of analysis, with different methodologies, but we should regard them as paramount in understanding today's reality.

In many ways, the Western cultural model is an economic one. The Western cultural model is also a control mechanism. It allows a certain type of society to develop and be prosperous. The possibilities and also its limitations become apparent not only in the Western society but especially in the Eastern unprepared society. While in the West it has to deal with the variable of population, which has not taken into account, in the Eastern countries it has to deal with the lack of social cohesion support sources, that were responsible for both population issues, but also strongly linked with economic efficiency. The individual in Eastern countries was paralyzed by the competition in which the Western dominant cultural model and the Eastern cultural model engaged. This struggle is illustrated in particular by the presence of a cultural transition, which emerged in Eastern countries in the early 1990s.

It is our belief that the development of a society is strongly linked with the institutionalized cultural model. The cultural model of a people has been long intertwined with that of the people consuming it. There have always been grounds for exploring the cultural significance of a model followed by the people inhabiting an area. However, the case is particularly acute at present because of the changes that have taken place on the European continent. Obviously, it has been a significant rise in transnational contact between Western Europe and Eastern Europe. In turn, nowadays,

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<sup>5</sup> Giddens, A. *The consequences of modernity*, Cambridge: Polity Press, 1990.

<sup>6</sup> Giddens, A. *The consequences of modernity*, Cambridge: Polity Press, 1990, p. 21.

Europe's reality raises some crucial questions about cultural identities and its economic, demographic evolution. This situation points to the desirability of a multidimensional and even a multiperspectival research so as to be able to understand what happened.

The first concern is to talk just a little bit of the difference between Western and Eastern Europe before the URSS break-up. Historically speaking we had in the past a different reality. On one side we had the Democratic Bloc characterized by a high level of democracy and freedom of speech. On the other side it was the Communist Bloc which in short can be described as a low level of democracy at best and mildly putting it, a serious lack of freedom of speech. Within this framework it is very interesting to distinguish a similarity, the presence in both cases of an hegemonic cultural model that was applied in the day to day life. The noticeable difference is that in the case of Western Europe the cultural model was won and not given. It was constantly re-won and re-negotiated transforming the cultural model into a perfect terrain for conflict over meaning. The dominant European cultural model was not imposed, but rather a set of policies and laws both written and individually assimilated were created through the multiplicity of streams of meanings that resulted into an ascendant acknowledged and citizen support practice. In Eastern Europe, the cultural model was given, not won. It was the result of direct intervention and through a conscious attempt at manipulating the outcome of routine attitudes and working practices. People learnt the conventions and society's codes of "how things should be done" through replicating the given policies and laws. The constant growing intervention of the state in the private life of persons has tilted their behavior towards certain patterns. For example the state was not really that interested in spending and investing in social security because the cultural model in Eastern Europe assured constant social security through inter-personal relationships. The economy was not in the situation of offering much support for taking care of those in old age, because the family had this responsibility. At the same time there was no need for investing in childcare, special periods for women to have maternal leaves, because it was understood that the cultural model that existed in Eastern countries would take care of this by enforcing tacitly a certain pattern of behavior towards the family. Grandparents would act as childcare assistants, actively helping with their upbringing. The vast majority of young people were able to settle down and have a family because they were relying on the support of their parents. The Eastern cultural model also relied on the existence of a special type of family that would provide social capital for its members. We can identify two types of social capital sources in the theoretical break between West and East. On one side we have the network, born in the west which began to occur with the emergence of the Western cultural model of social cohesion and the family as a source for social capital. Mircea Brie further engages this topic of networks "The field of cultural cooperation tends to become „multipolar”, as the concept of "cultural networks" is introduced. These networks have begun to shatter old structures and support identity, communication, relationship and information (Pehn, 1999:8)<sup>7</sup>", opinion with which we agree in this article being one of the hypothesis in explaining the current situation of Eastern European countries. This relationship between family and social capital<sup>8</sup> is not a new idea, but its change in the Eastern cultural model of life has been not sufficiently stressed. In fact, we are debate the problem that stems from the lack of social capital for people in Eastern countries. The role of social capital is crucial both in social prosperity and social order. Presently, this is no longer just a family issue, but we are in danger of acknowledging a growing sense of social exclusion. There might be some research that might consider this statement going too far, but lets consider a more nuanced discussion. It is obvious that the Western cultural model dominated the Eastern one. In this case we have in our contemporary one a case of cultural consumption, but not a total reproduction of the cultural model. The dominant western cultural model

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<sup>7</sup> Mircea, Brie, Ioana Horga, Europe: A Cultural Border, or a Geo-cultural Archipelago, Eurolimes, vol. 9 The Cultural Frontiers of Europe, Spring 2010, Oradea University Press, p. 153-171.

<sup>8</sup> Edwards, R., *Present and absent in troubling ways: families and social capital debates*, The Sociological Review, vol 52, no 1, pp 1-21.

was not functionally adapted in the Eastern countries because not all of its elements presented interest. In this case some cultural elements that handled much of the social cohesion existing in Eastern countries have not been reproduced. I have borrowed the principle of “reproducing the dominant ideology”<sup>9</sup> or in this case the dominant cultural model from Althusser. The real sting of this situation is the fact that social exclusion appears the moment the person finds himself without an entity capable of offering social capital and social cohesion. This is the case in Eastern countries where the previously established cultural model handled the need for social cohesion and social capital of the individual. Once the old cultural model was replaced by the Western cultural model, which supplied social capital through networks not family, through financial support and direct support from the welfare state, not the family, the Eastern states did not adapt. Social exclusion becomes another factor in the influence upon the population of Eastern states. People more and more feel socially isolated and can no longer rely on informal sources of support, nor formal social of support. Formal sources of support<sup>10</sup> are present particularly in Western culture, but were not totally transferred in Eastern countries.

1								Direct Contact between West and East			
2		Population								Population	
3	Year	1960	1970	1980	1985	1990	1995	2000	2001	2006	2010
4	Country										
5	Romania	18.319	↗20.139	↗22.137	↗22.687	↗23211	↘22712	↘22455	↘22430	14%	↘21469
6	Hungary	9961	↗10322	↗10709	↗10598	↗10374	↘10336	↘10221	↘10200		↘9985
7	E. Germany	17285	↗17074	↗16740	↗16660	↗16433	↘15531	↘15217	↘15120		
8	Bulgary	7829	↗8464	↗8846	↗8971	↗8767	↘8427	↘8190	↘8149	15%	↘7364
9	Czech Republ	9637	↗9789	↗10272	↗10333	↗10362	↘10333	↘10278	↘10266	18.07%	↘10664
10	Estonia	1209	↗1351	↗1472	↗1523	↗1570	↘1448	↘1372	↘1367	12.20%	↘1340
11	Latvia	2104	↗2351	↗2508	↗2570	↗2668	↘2500	↘2381	↘2364	13.20%	↘2067
12	Lithuania	2755	↗3118	↗3404	↗3528	↗3693	↘3643	↘3512	↘3487	12.40%	↘3199
13	Netherlands	11417	↗12957	↗14091	↗14453	↗14892	↘15424	↘15864	↘15987	30%	↘16722
14	Austria	7030	↗7455	↗7545	↗7574	↗7689	↘8039	↘8102	↘8121	28.90%	↘8419
15	W. Germany	55257	↗61194	↗61439	↗62456	65478	↗66569	↗66946	↗67140	29%	
16	Belgium	9128	↗9669	↗9855	↗9857	↗9947	↘10130	↘10239	↘10263	29.90%	↘10274
17	Italy	50025	↗53685	↗56388	↗56588	↗56694	↘57268	↘57679	↘57844	26.60%	↘59715
18	France	45468	↗50528	↗53731	↗55157	↗56577	↘57752	↘58748	↘59038	32%	↘63601
19	Ireland	2835	↗2943	↗3392	↗3544	↗3507	↘3597	↘3776	↘3842		↘4231
20	Iceland	174	↗204	↗226	↗240	↗253	↘267	↘279	↘283	23%	↘312
21	Spain		↗33513	↗37241	↗38353	↗38826	↘39196	↘39733	↘40121		↘46777
22	Slovenia	1580	↗1719	↗1893	↗1948	↗1996	↘1989	↘1987	↘1990	23%	↘2050
23											
24											
25											
26											
27											

Figure 1

In the table below named FIGURE 1 we have followed the population of several Western and Eastern countries. Population is represented in millions, for example 1.000=1.000.000. It can be noticed that till the 1990s moment both Western and Eastern countries enjoyed positive demographic

<sup>9</sup> Althusser, L., *Ideology and ideological state apparatuses*, London, New Left Books, 1971.

<sup>10</sup> Warr, D.J., 'Gender, class, and the art and craft of social capital', *The Sociological Quarterly*, 2006, vol 47, pp 499.

growth, after the moment 1990s while Western countries continued to experience demographic growth, Eastern countries have started a severe demographic decline. Actually, we understand the many benefits that came with the existence of the European Union, we only wish to underline that Eastern countries need to do more to fit better in the EU world. The variable of social security was introduced and we can see that the higher the expenditure the higher or stable the demographic variable is. It seems that in Eastern countries the total expenditure on social security is still at low values, this leads in turn to the decrease of the population. Social spending was never too high in Eastern countries, but its cultural model helped social stability to be kept through special practices and particular behavior. Once this system of social support broke down it was not replaced through a more formal social security expenditure. The difference is seen in the case of Slovenia, which actually experiences demographic growth, but the social security expenditure variable is the highest among Eastern countries, in the same category as Iceland. We have used countries which are from all categories of population: small size population, middle sized population and large European countries for both Western and Eastern Europe. We have used countries in both categories that have an high emigration rate and a low one.

Next, we can take a look at the economic situation that raised quite a barrier between East and West. The economic needs of each European hemisphere were perfectly aligned with the cultural model which determined people's behavior. For example, in the West the cultural model imposed that people, having plenty of economic opportunities should focus on their career. Once financial success was assured they could afford paying for childcare and would have special benefits that would ensure they could afford to have a family. At the same time, according to the work and its financial efficiency you would be rewarded in your old age. The Eastern cultural model was based on inter-personal relationships. The bigger the family, the higher were the chances for parents to have somebody to help both physically and financially in their old age. Both the number of children and their geographical closeness was important, not so much their economic power. The support was expected to arrive not so much from the state, through its own system of pensions and rewards for a working life, but from your own family. Obviously, the tensions between the Western Pole and the Eastern Pole were also of an economic nature. On one side we have the prosperous economic states in the West, which proliferated the welfare state. They could afford the construction of the welfare state due to economic success. The promise of a welfare state encouraged people to focus more on the economic aspect of life. This created a constant flow of career oriented people which fused instantly with the economic nature of the state. In short, the development of a living cultural model for persons living in Western Europe became intrinsic to contemporary citizens and is bound up with issues of social power and social behavior. We wish to underline that the differences were not present at the level of the individual, but at the level of the context.

In the new context, the old certainties that managed the evolution of population and the social relationships that maintain the demographic growth disappeared. The cultural model that dominated people's behavior, that of sharing housing with several generations, the grandparents had an active involvement in the housework activities and in the raising of children, the children lived with or near their parents so as to provide financial support and to help to decrease the financial burdens while confronting old age. Unfortunately, it was not replaced by a coherent welfare type state model for supporting population in a search for economic growth. Although both Western and Eastern countries have the same problems demographically speaking.

## CONCLUSIONS

It is an interesting context to witness in one's life time the rise of a new cultural model, leading to a new type of society. Eastern society is characterized by a shift from the old cultural model centered on social dependence to a cultural model that prizes the individual's human capital, not involved in a dependence network, not at the same degree at least. While in this period policy

makes have to understand that they need to create an efficient formal social security support to replace the no longer valid traditional informal one. In doing so the need for increasing expenditure on social security is actually an investment in long term growth and economic stability. Current figures on social security expenditure and currently even cutting down the budget of this activity may lead to a depletion in population. For Romania, specifically, it can mean a shrinking market which will be less attractive for exporters and investors. Loss of population can also mean less power and leverage on the international political stage. Let us not forget that even in the European parliament each country is represented according to the number of people. Not properly catering for the new cultural model means that the population will bring forth less active individuals into the workforce and more people needing social support.

This type of cultural model plays a key role in a knowledge driven production and planning society centered on economy. In this view, cultural change is the driving force of social change as a prerequisite to economic success. Pivotal to the conceptions of the Western cultural model is the personal development of the individual and its efficiency as part of the economic world. This in turn is central for the citizen's satisfaction with life, higher general health and the existence of the welfare state. Many of the social processes present in the Western world are economic in character. This cultural model has been propelled by the constant search for new sources of profit and out of the need for growing efficiency. Due to the direct contact with globalization, people in western countries were involved in global networks which extended far beyond their immediate physical locations. With the fall of the URSS and the Communist Bloc, Eastern countries entered into a process of socio-cultural adjustment. We believe that Herbert Schiller captured the proper term for this situation, namely "cultural imperialism". The Western culture dominated the Eastern culture and a process of acculturation took place. The process was far from being even, but we agree with Robins "For all that it has projected itself as trans-historical and trans-national, as the transcendent and universalizing force of modernization and modernity, global capitalism has been in reality about westernization – the export of western commodities, values, priorities, ways of life." Bechnar helps us to elaborate this idea, underlining the importance of the meeting between the two cultural models "when culturally disparate people come into continuous direct contact with each other, the cultural differences tend to become salient and origin changing". No doubt the first wave of change was of economic nature. The dynamic spread of western cultural model implied firstly economic contact. We can call this first contact the mercantile phase. The mercantile phase gave way to a more direct influence, the western cultural model that was perfectly suited to the economic model sought and succeeded to impose its cultural form in tandem with economic power. This in turn added up to a general decentering of western cultural model about economic progress, social relationships and social behavior. As we stipulated earlier, this process is not an even one. The type of welfare system existing in Eastern societies broke down without being replaced by the type of welfare system present in the Western culture. This can be seen in the following image that underlines the level of expenditure on social security.

The existing cultural model regarding family relations were inadequate in the face of the new complex, in contemporary times overlapping past system. Once the competence and autonomy from the economic life of the past cultural model that framed social behavior meant to sustain the population was undermined there was nothing left to sustain demographic increase. Because the meeting between Western cultural model and the Eastern cultural model triggered an uneven process, some of the powers of the social relationships that in a way represented "the welfare state" in the East were not fully carried out to a replica of the "welfare state" that existed in the west. This is not to suggest that the western influence was not positive, far from saying such a thing, but we wish to underline the need for a complete understanding of the importance of a complete cultural model, able to regulate the complex mechanism that is society. Subsequently, with a lacking cultural model, that does not regulate social life through its balance between economic progress and cultural development the productive dynamism of a society suffers. Today we begin to understand that Eastern societies



lacking a social regulator, have lost one of the most important factor in economic development, population. This reflexivity involves the knowledge that we hold regarding social life. Social life is a constitutive element of economic development. The western cultural model of living and of progress has been considered and rightfully considered an emancipatory project, through which people had the opportunity to reach economic progress and a better quality of life. But the receipt for success was not complete. With an incomplete cultural model, society has encountered several problems. The initial advantages present in Eastern countries: a young population in comparison with the western countries, a large portion of it educated and active, was gradually lost. We believe we point to a rupture in the understanding of the link between economic ambition and the sustainability of social relationships in a state. It seems that we are dealing with a break off of dialogue between economic aspirations and social aspirations. Our stress on discontinuity is an aspect of our questioning of the current cultural model present in Eastern countries and the problems it creates.

Cultural studies have an undeniably material aspect in so far as it is possible to help in identifying the demographic crisis that takes place in Europe. Social formation is facilitated for instance by culture that is why we believe special care should be placed on either "securing the identity matrix"<sup>11</sup> or properly understanding any cultural model that comes into contact and is consumed by a population. Perhaps in order to further prove our point that cultural contact can be dangerous if not properly mediated we can bring into question the relationships between Orient and Occident, a subject brought also into question by the perspective of "the clash of the different cultural concepts"<sup>12</sup>.

We cannot state that the existence of a cultural model and a specific demographic evolution is a purely random encounter. We start by referring to this encounter as an entrenched and enduring pattern of European interconnectedness between the two realities. As a consequence culture can come to have a serious demographic impact. This does mean that culture represents a significant producer of real material conditions or existence. The cultural model becomes embedded within the more expansive set of social existence under the constraints of historical conditions. What distinguishes our view is our new differential emphasis on the dynamics of demography as a consequence of a historically specific cultural model. A cultural model is never a neutral existence. It is worth dwelling on this as one of the stages in clarifying the dynamics of European demography. We believe that this research takes into consideration future trends in Europe. Nowadays, a lot of attention is given to the international relations that are built around the major players, more to individuals and less to the key part played by the masses. Demography and living cultural models shape also history as much as individuals or political relations. We consider that our research helps in determining future trends according to which visionary policies can be constructed as the following author considers as well: "When we debate Europe, we are accustomed to debate the big issues (and most probably those regarded as traditional): trans-Atlantic relations, the diplomatic relations with Russia, China and with Asia as a whole. In other words, we debate the links with the major players. Less attention is directed towards the future tendency, the reality of tomorrow which will certainly become more important; a tendency that will most likely become permanent and will exercise a powerful influence that can't be measured today."<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Malina Ciocea, *Securing National Identity in a Globalizing World*, Comunicare.ro Publishing house, 2007, pp. 36

<sup>12</sup> Ioana-Mihaela Firicel, *International Terrorism – A Serious Conflict Between the Occident and The Orient*, Romanian Review of Social Sciences(2011), No. 1, [www.rrss.univnt.ro](http://www.rrss.univnt.ro)

<sup>13</sup> Paul Dobrescu, *Viclenia Globalizarii – Asaltul asupra puterii americane*, Institutul European / in English "Globalisation's Deception - The Assault on American Power" *The European Institute*, 2010, p. 268.

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