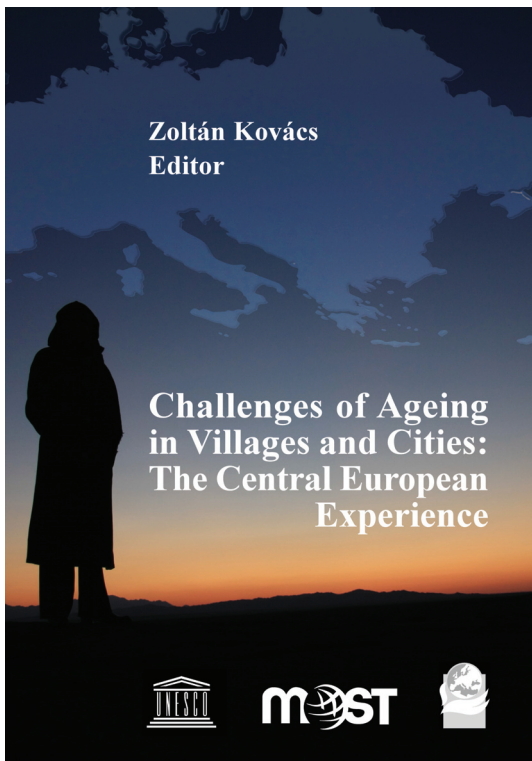


## LITERATURE

*Hungarian Geographical Bulletin 59 (3) (2010) pp. 331–332.*

**Kovács, Z. ed.: Challenges of ageing in villages and cities: the Central European experience.** Department of Economic and Social Geography, University of Szeged, Szeged, 2010, 208 p.

During the recent decades there have been two main trends of demographic challenges in our planet: over-population and ageing. The coincidence of these processes are without precedence during the population history. In global view the phenomenon of demographic bomb is over at its height. The process of ageing is developing strongly and it is impossible to forecast when and at what level it will culminate. In these respects there are enormous regional differences in our planet, too. The wealthier part of the world suffers from the process of ageing, while the poorest countries make a bitter attempt to combat over-population. But spreading development and welfare cause that the age structure of developing countries are getting increasingly older in the future. Ageing is anticipated to become one of the principal global problems.



Ageing and its consequences represent serious challenges heretofore never seen in Europe and more particularly in Central Europe. For instance, the effect on health condition of population (DARÓCZI, E. 2007), pension system and intergenerational transfers (GÁL, R.I. *et al.* 2008), consumption behaviours (ILLÉS, S., VÉGH, K. 2010) are the hottest topics of most recent studies in Hungary. Undoubtedly, the book edited by Zoltán Kovács contains current issues including perspectives on ageing, spatial spreading of the process in Europe, determinants of ageing (first of all the declining fertility), and international comparison of the specific housing conditions among the elderly in some selected post-socialist cities. The second part of the book consists of case studies on Moscow, Bratislava, Prague, nine large Hungarian urban regions, Switzerland and on a small village in Romania.

The authors of the book have different disciplinary background:

geography, demography, demogeography, geodemography, sociology, economics, and ethnography. The aim of this book is to provide a platform for scientists to exchange ideas on different aspects of ageing in an effort to find potential answers how the challenges triggered by the process of ageing would be handled on different territorial levels. The volume was sponsored by the Hungarian National Commission for UNESCO.

After the preface by the editor and the welcoming address by György ENYEDI, the first research paper is that by Joos DROOGLEEVER Fortuijn entitled "The challenges of ageing: towards an inclusive perspective". The author of the second contribution is László HABLICSEK who provides a broad scale picture on "Population ageing in Hungary and Europe". Ewa FRATCZAK and Iga SIKORSKA analyse the "Relationship between fertility and population ageing". In the followings Zoltán KOVÁCS emphasizes one of the partial results of an international research with special attention to the "Housing conditions of elderly in post-socialist cities". The unit of case studies is introduced by Irina MOLODIKOVA and Alla MAKHROVA with the paper "Ageing population in Moscow: Does the capital city suffer differently from the rest of Russia?". Branislav BLEHA and Ján BUČEK depict the capital of Slovakia: "Theoretical issues of local population and social policy in 'shrinking' cities – some findings from Bratislava". Czech Republic was represented by two geodemographers, namely Boris BURCIN and Tomáš KUCERA with the meaningful research material: "Changing age structure of population as a challenge for local authorities: Population prospects for city district Prague 3". The Hungarian case study is a slice of the huge project. Viktória SZIRMAI, Zsuzsanna VÁRADI, Szilvia KOVÁCS and Júlia SCHUCHMANN deal with "The issue of ageing in large Hungarian urban regions". Three scientists from Switzerland, Doris WASTL-WALTER, Sabin BIERI and Andrea CH. KOFLER combine a theoretical question (abled ageing) with a practical one (the need for flexible living conditions) in their article. Only one publication written by Tünde TURAI tackles the problems of ageing in the countryside: "Strategies in the care for the elderly in a Romanian village".

This book is the first in the row of future publications concerning the spatial aspects of the phenomenon of ageing, its causes and consequences. Unfortunately, a highly relevant aspect did not appear in this book: migration. Internal elderly migration and mainly international retirement migration could be a topical section of the book.

All in all, the reviewer recommends this book for those scientists and university students alike who are interested in the ageing process from the spatial viewpoint.

## REFERENCES

- DARÓCZI, E. 2007. Ageing and health in the transition countries of Europe. The case of Hungary. *Working papers on population, family and welfare* 9. Budapest, HCSO Demographic Research Institute, 55.
- GÁL, R.I., IWASAKI, I. and SZÉMAN, Zs. (eds.) 2008. *Assessing intergenerational equity. An interdisciplinary study of aging and pension reform in Hungary*. Budapest, Akadémia Kiadó, 209.
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