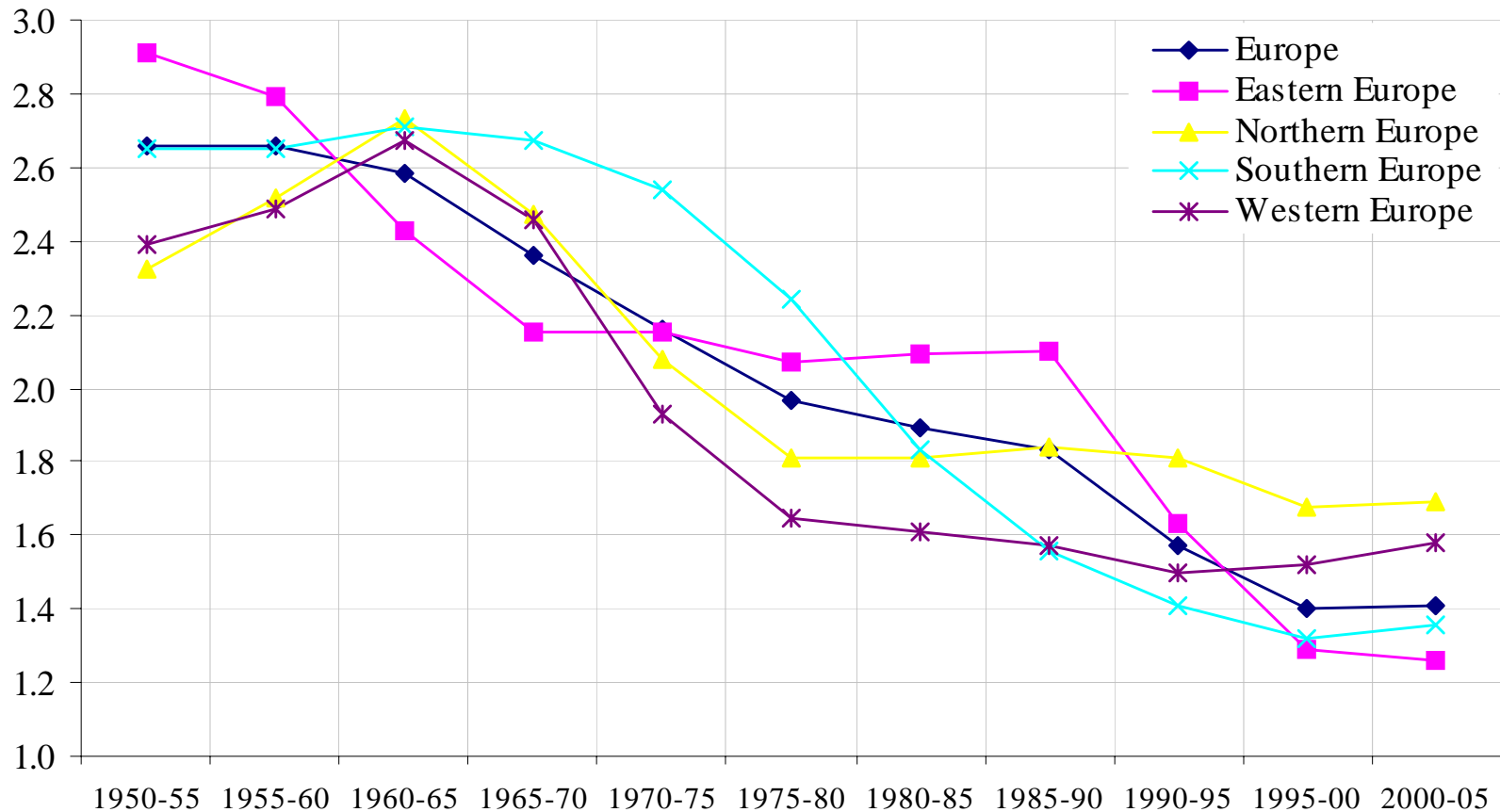

Overall assessment of measures and policies in promoting fertility

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Low fertility (extremely low in many cases) has been an element characterising the European population



Profound change is currently taking place in the relations between individuals and conjugal unions

In various Western countries, many conjugal unions are aimed at forming a couple as such; but many others not, as their function is to assure the coexistence of two individual partners even if their lives run in parallel without reaching the status of an actual couple, which is a subject that is different from the two individual partners that compose it.

couple
A
male female

H
male female

A profound change is currently taking place in the position of individuals within conjugal unions

An example of complexity in the field of population policy

In various Western countries, many conjugal unions are aimed at forming a couple as such; but many others not, as their function is to assure the coexistence of two individual partners even if their lives run in parallel without reaching the status of an actual couple, which is a subject that is different from the two individual partners that compose it. A visual representation of these two types of conjugal unions could be the letter A for the first one and the letter H for the second one.



In the first type of conjugal union, male and female continue to live as individuals, but they share an interaction that forms a couple with its own psychological, economic and organizational dynamics. As for the second type of conjugal union, the interaction between male and female grants a mere profitable life in common.

Clearly, the first type of couple is more child-oriented than the second one, which is more concerned about the two individuals that form the conjugal union. In many western countries “H unions” are becoming prevalent, specially among younger generations.

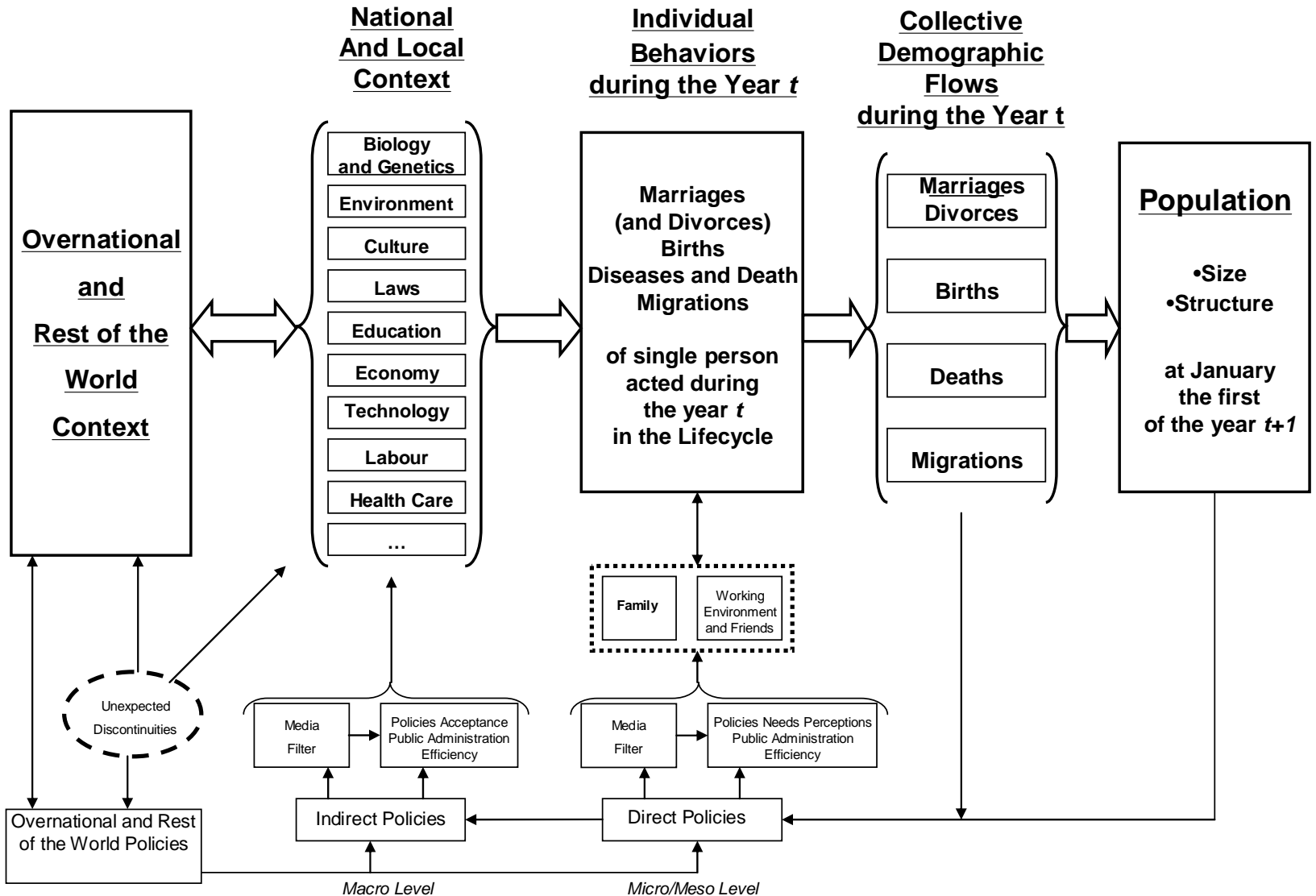
A. The hard matter related to population policies and to their efficiency lies in the circumstances such policies must be referred to:

- ❑ the *micro* level (individuals and families' expectations, beliefs, stereotypes, biases, needs, and behaviours);
 - ❑ the *meso* level (behaviours, expectations and needs among their peers and in their work environment);
 - ❑ the *macro* level (the country's set of regulations, values and needs which affect political goals, including the expectations of voters). In any case it causes some difficulties to fully understand that the macro level is the complex and collective effect of individuals behaviours. This is specially true also for demographic behaviours which are caused by: biological and genetic reasons; economic reasons; social reasons; and all these reasons are related with individuals and societal psychology, which furthermore interact each other. Therefore the stimulus for a single decision of a single individual is multidimensional and multifactorial.
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B. The hard matter related to population policies and to their efficiency lies in the circumstances such policies must be referred to:

- the *short, medium, and long term*. Difficulty is exacerbated by the circumstance that the medium-long term vision can be totally different at macro and at micro level. In the last one indeed, individual decisions are taken and behaviours implemented in a given calendar year, but they are thought and framed in the life cycle, which is dynamic and changeable along the life
 - the *local, national, supranational and international level and context*. Each level has its own policy, not necessarily harmonized each other, which in any case affects policy of any other level and context both in an explicit and in an implicit way. The difficulty is stressed by the fact that a local perspective may be totally different from the national and/or international perspective of the problem and its solution
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**Outline of Connections between External Factors, Individual Behaviors, Demographic Events
and Population as an Iterative Process** Golini, 13.01.07



A systematic analysis of factors that influence fertility

The first general scheme indicates the four contexts to which fertility is bound:

- A - Cultural and psychological context
- B - Economic context
- C - Organizational context
- D - Demographic context

and the three levels involved in fertility policies:

- 1 - *Micro* level (individual partners and the couple);
 - 2 - *Meso* level (relatives/peers/friends/work environment);
 - 3 - *Macro* level (society, country as a whole and local community area).
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Structure of factors which raise, or even lower, fertility

LL Level/ En Context	A – Cultural and psychological context	B – Economic context	C – Organizational context	D- Demographic context
1 – Micro - Individual partners of the couple <i>Female</i> <i>Male</i> - Couple	A1 – 9 factors Values, attitudes, and behavior of individual partners and of couple	B1 – 4 factors Family income and the cost of children	C1 – 7 factors Life cycle of individual partners	//
2 – Meso - Relatives, peers and friends environment - Work environment	A2 – 4 factors Values, attitudes, and behavior of relatives and milieu of the two partners	B2 – 3 factors Direct and indirect economic support by relatives	C2 – 4 factors Attitude and behavior of relatives and employers in supporting the family	//
3 – Macro - Society - Country - Living local area	A3 – 7 factors Children values and other values in the society	B3 – 6 factors Direct and indirect economic support by the society	C3 – 6 factors Structure of labor market and structure of services	D3 – 6 factors Positive or negative population structure and prospects

An example of complexity in the field of population policy – Fertility context

37 major factors that influence an increase or, even, counteract an increase of fertility

A - Cultural and psychological context

MICRO	A1.1	Value of a child (first child, subsequent children) and attitude of any individual partner regarding children
	A1.2	Way of life of the conjugal union (conjugal union as a mean to form a couple vs. conjugal union to assure the living together of two individual partners)
	A1.3	Convergence or divergence and interaction among partners about number and timing of wanted children
	A1.7	Consumption vs. investment attitude in life
	A1.8	Work vs. family value in life
MESO	A2.3	Value of children and respect of maternity and paternity in the work environment
	A2.4	Attitudes and behaviors of other couples of the same milieu regarding number of children
MACRO	A3.1	Value of a child as a community good
	A3.3	Value of family/household as element of social cohesion
	A3.4	Immigrants considered as substitutes for births and full acceptance of immigrants, from a cultural and social point of view
	A3.5	Perceived or real environmental constraints (pollution, lacking of space or water etc.)
	A3.6	Society with a high confidence in the future and strongly oriented to the future

An example of complexity in the field of population policy – Fertility context

37 major factors that influence an increase or, even, counteract an increase of fertility

B - Economic context

MICRO	B1.1	Family income (also in a comparative way considering other families of the same milieu)
	B1.2	Family asset
	B1.3	Cost of the first child
	B1.4	Cost of a subsequent child
MACRO	B3.1	Huge economic growth of the country and good economic situation
	B3.2	Adequate familiar allowances and certainty of them in the long run
	B3.3	Adequate fiscal exemption and certainty of them in the long run
	B3.4	Existence of a good pension system and its sustainability in the long run
	B3.5	Existence of a good and easily accessible health system and its sustainability in the long run
	B3.6	Degree of automation in goods and services production

An example of complexity in the field of population policy – Fertility context

37 major factors that influence an increase or, even, counteract an increase of fertility

C - Organizational context

MICRO	C1.2	Age at marriage or at first union
	C1.3	Age at birth of first child
	C1.4	Present work conditions and expectations for the future
	C1.5	Career status: none, one or both partners
	C1.6	Opportunity costs for the mother, and also for the father
MESO	C2.1	Attitude and behavior of employer regarding pregnant employee and parents with infants and little children
	C2.2	Compatibility of business, school, life timetables
	C2.3	Parents capacity to give possible operational support to the couple
	C2.4	Presence of grand parents to be assisted
MACRO	C3.1	Structure of labor market
	C3.2	Structure of house market
	C3.4	Existence of accessible and cheap day nurseries and nursery schools

An example of complexity in the field of population policy – Fertility context

37 major factors that influence an increase or, even, counteract an increase of fertility

D - Demographic context

MACRO	D3.3	Sustainability of a rapid and huge aging and shrinking of working age population also as factor of international competitiveness
	D3.5	Availability of foreign immigrants
	D3.6	Possible economic crisis originated by demographic factors

Specific interventions selected should be supported by an:

- *active,*
 - *diffused,*
 - *continuous*
 - *penetrating information action,*
-

Table 1 – Hypothetical distribution of women according to the number of children and their total fertility rate

Number of children	Distribution of women			Number of procreated children		
	a	b	c	a	b	c
0	35	25	15	0	0	0
1	39	29	17	39	29	17
2	20	29	35	40	58	70
3	5	12	21	15	36	63
4+	1	5	12	4	21	50
Total	100	100	100	98	144	200
TFR				0.98	1.44	2.00

The table clearly shows that if TFR is more or less equal to 1 and the goal is to arrive to a value more or less equal to 2, then the proportion of women with 0 or 1 children should decrease from about 75 to about 32 per cent; while the proportion of women with 3 or 4 children should increase from about 6 to about 33 per cent.

This intervention, in case of a prolonged excess of low fertility, should point out:

1. its demographic and economic unsustainability in the medium and long run, due to the strong ageing and the decrease of working age population;
 2. its social unsustainability linked to population extreme ageing, and the parallel transformation of family in which the large number of elderly people increases and the small number of young people decreases; the latter will consequently produce an even decreasing number of adult children.
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3. the circumstance that if the total sum of individual decisions produces a number of births that is supposed detrimental for the society as a whole, then corrective intervention must be established and *a child must assume the character of a public good*;
 4. the circumstance that *in raising children parents perform a “service” to the community*, that is socially indispensable;
 5. the circumstance that the institutional rearrangements that might have a chance to generate the desired demographic effect are likely to have a cost, probably high cost, both in monetary and in political terms (Demeny, 2005, p.8);
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6. the circumstance that adequate familiar allowances are certain in the long run;
 7. the circumstance that adequate fiscal exemptions are certain in the long run;
 8. the circumstance that in the short-medium run immigrants should be considered as substitutes for births and that a full acceptance of them should be necessary, or at least desirable;
 9. the circumstance that a cause of the possible economic and social decline of the considered area is a possible lacking of a “sufficient” number of births and immigrants.
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... But a very low fertility requires a more articulated response on behalf of society and economy which involves the labour market in the first place, and specially: an increase of activity and employment rates, with special regard for women and the 'young elderly' (people aged 55 to 64), and a postponement of retirement age. It also requires a deep quantitative and qualitative renewal of goods and services production. ???
