Chapter 3
How Do Societies Cope with Complex Demographic Challenges? A Model

Abstract This theoretical chapter begins with a short review of the existing literature in economics and sociology on how societies cope with demographic change. Then demographic means of coping with demographic problems are discussed in terms of family policy and migration. As most effects of demographic change cannot be countered by demographic coping—at least in the short term—a systematic theory of non-demographic coping with demographic change is developed. This theory focuses (a) on the process of problem framing, (b) the development of coping strategies, (c) the institutionalisation of adaptability and (d) mentalities as the longue durée of coping. The general concept is specified by an analysis of labour market flexibility and the division of labour in public sectors that have been confronted with demographic change. We theorise on the basis of a realistic model of problems, which are constituted by a discrepancy in the resources available to a social unit and the aspirations it develops. A second element, coping attempts, is characteristic of coping strategies that follow a similar but not completely congruent logic: The coping strategy of expansion tries to regain resources by shifting the focus to new areas of activity either by following a plan or by improvising collectively. The coping strategy of reduction seeks to readapt aspirations either by reducing activities or by switching identity, which can be carried out by cultivating diversity. The coping strategy of reorganisation either replaces people or changes structures. The coping strategy of threat rigidity is characterised by non-reaction.

If one attempts to understand how societies cope with demographic change, the answer is part of general theories of social change. During the last century a whole range of theories of social change was developed, the most prominent ones being evolutionary theories and modernisation theories (e.g., Parsons 1971). Most of these sociological theories did not include demography (with the exception of the theory of Durkheim, to which we will return later). Within the narrower field of demography, demographic change is interpreted by the theory of demographic transition, which highlights the development of growing populations but has little to say about declining ones (Lutz 2007, p. 16).

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In this open-ended situation, we use the concept of challenge and response, originally developed by the British historian Arnold Toynbee (1949, 1957) to analyse the rise and fall of the 23 human civilizations the earth has seen up to now. His concept stresses that there is no deterministic regularity in human history. He also points out that civilizations have the potential to learn when they are confronted with new problems. Yet he is realistic enough to state that whereas some civilizations successfully solved some of their problems, most of them failed at some point.

To build a more precise model of how societies cope with demographic challenges, this chapter proceeds in three steps: (1) it gives a short selective review of the existing literature, (2) discusses demographic means of dealing with demographic effects and (3) develops the concept of *coping with demographic challenges*, proceeding from the level of individuals to organisations and from institutions to mentalities.

3.1 A Short Review

If we think of the entire body of demographic literature as a bookshelf, the largest part will be on fertility, a smaller portion will be on mortality, an even smaller pocket will deal with migration and the smallest segment will report on the consequences of demographic developments (see Mackensen 2001). Up until the first third of the twentieth century, the social science disciplines were still intermingled. The name of this single mixed field of social science varied according to time and nation. In Germany, for instance, demography was part of the sciences of the state (*Staatswissenschaften*). Demographic questions at that time addressed both causes and effects. Nowadays, causes are analysed in demography and sociology, whereas demographic effects are discussed in economics, sociology, political science and human geography, to name just some of the major disciplines involved. In this short review, we want to outline approaches in economics, sociology and fields of interdisciplinary research.

Most systematic theoretical thinking about the effects of demography on societies has been done in economics. Whereas in the early economic thinking of Bodin or Quesnay natural processes such as population growth or decline were seen as central to explaining economic growth or decline, in current theories the symbolic nature of the price regulation of economic exchanges and the near-perfect substitutability of factors of production (capital, labour, land and knowledge) are taken for granted. The watershed between the two positions (still mixing both perspectives) can be seen in the work of Keynes (1937) and Hansen (1939). In a thought experiment, Keynes shows that a declining population will reduce capital growth as realised demand lags behind expected demand, which promotes a pessimistic mood in contrast to a situation of population growth. However, Keynes argues that population dynamics are not deterministic since rising consumption and rising productivity are possible substitutes. So one could argue that Keynes combines natural with social arguments. He does not follow the neo-classical tradition in economics

that has been dominant since the 1970s insofar as he even suggests that institutional reform influencing either the interest or savings rate might prevent both excessive population growth and unemployment.

Subsequently, the knowledge of these economists of the Great Depression (who witnessed a sharp drop in the total fertility rate) got lost. "Keynes and Hansen raised the spectre of secular stagnation due to the hypothesised effect of slowing population growth on investment demand in Europe and the US, a concern that subsequent historical experience and recent scholarship reject" (Lee 1997, p. 1100). Later economists, like Lee, see factor substitutability in markets as a self-regulating mechanism that can deal with all external factors (population included). For them, population growth is an (insignificant) explanatory variable.

Following Keynes' logic, population decline (in his time) would adversely affect growth rates only if interest rates were not kept below market rates. Similar to Malthus, Keynes successfully influenced the social causality of the processes he studied. His ideas partly inspired the Bretton Woods system, which *ceteris paribus* was successful in holding interest rates below the level of the thirties and thus paved the road for the 'golden' post-war decades from 1950 to 1980 (Reinhart 2012; Sbrancia and Reinhart 2011).

Whereas Keynes thought that population numbers as such influence growth rates, recent empirical work has shown that the demographic transition influences growth rates through its age structure. Whereas in early phases of demographic transition the high proportion of young people dampens growth rates in the form of a demographic burden, a combination of declining birth rates, rising numbers of people of working age and still few people of old age produce a demographic dividend in later phases of the demographic transition. About half of the extraordinary growth rates in East Asia during the last decades are explained by this effect (Bloom and Williamson 1998; Reher 2011).

Implicit in this argument is that as the demographic transition moves to phase five or six (stagnant or declining population), a drop in the working-age population combined with a growing number of old-aged persons will erase the demographic dividend or might even turn it negative (Mishra 2008). Whether this will happen is still open to debate. Neoclassical thinking sees a solution in substituting the factors of production: lower labour supply will raise efficiency, which will solve negative demographic effects (Kosai et al. 1998). Generally, more investment, especially in knowledge, is seen as a counter-strategy (Reher 2011). In a simulation, Mason and Lee (2006) even postulate that a higher rate of wealth (and capital interests) will yield a "second demographic dividend". After the financial crises, with interest rates near zero in many OECD countries, this seems to be an unrealistic assumption. Coleman and Rowthorn (2011) share the view that the substitution of labour by investment in both human and economic capital and higher efficiency will offset the demographic effects of declining populations, but they cautiously add that in the case of long-term shrinking populations over a 50-year timespan, investments might be avoided in countries such as Germany and Japan (Coleman and Rowthorn 2011, p. 238).

An important caveat to the debate on demographic dividends and burdens is that they do not emerge automatically in the course of markets adapting to the new

situation. They merely provide a window of opportunity that societies either take advantage of by coping or which is lost, perhaps even aggravating the problem through wrong decisions (Pool 2007).

Besides economics, sociology is another discipline in which demographic change is discussed in a broad perspective. Sociological analysis of demographic effects has concentrated on two elements of the process: How can we explain the genesis of demographic discourses? And what are the societal consequences of a declining population? Demographic discourses come and go in societies, but they become prevalent at certain times. A common pattern of demographic discourses is that they describe social processes as if they were natural ones. Therefore, in the process of the construction of social problems, the interpretation of a problem as a demographic one suppresses other interpretations—a process that can be described as the "demographisation" of a problem (Barlösius and Schiek 2007). A prominent example of such demographisation is the wave of demographic discourses that set in around 2000 in Germany (Bartl 2011). In public debates, empty housing estates in East Germany were attributed to dwindling birth rates and outmigration. A national emergency programme (Stadtumbau Ost) subsidised the tearing down of surplus housing so that housing markets are more balanced today. However, detailed analysis shows that growing preferences for larger flats have offset the demographically caused drop in demand. The imbalances in the housing market were mainly created by excess subsidies for building and refurbishing apartments and houses in the 1990s (Bundesministerium für Verkehr, Bau und Stadtentwicklung 2008). (A comparison with other transition countries, Poland among them, also shows that despite similar demographic developments, most countries did not produce an oversupply of housing. In those countries, politically curbed rental prices were more likely to create a shortage of housing than an oversupply).

Discourses, however, are just one element of demographic effects. Kaufmann (2005) gives a more general picture of the effects of declining populations. He sees population decline as being caused by de-industrialisation, suburbanisation and demographic change. In this view, substitution between the factors of production is limited as raising children is part of the formation of human capital in a society. In certain segments of the labour market, a higher quality of human capital might offset the impact of fewer children, but not across the entire economy. His main argument is the interconnectedness of the effects of population decline: with less competition and less in-migration, a shrinking population might turn complacent and a pessimistic mentality could prevail. Each individual effect of a declining population (e.g., lower population, lower housing prices, stagnation of domestic demand, imbalanced public budgets) might be countered, but the interconnectedness of effects constitutes a problem, especially as a declining population also reduces the adaptability of a society. For Kaufmann, the slumpish growth of the French economy in the long nineteenth century and the first half of the twentieth century, with stagnation in housing construction, rental price controls, prohibition of layoffs and capital flight, is an example of such a weakened society that only rejuvenated after a successful implementation of family policies. An interesting aspect of Kaufmann's

concept is that he not only concedes that both declining populations and its effects are social processes and possible arenas for coping with demographic change, but that he also postulates that the crucial factor might be the adaptability of a society, which may be influenced by population dynamics.

Besides these more general concepts in economics and sociology of the effects of demographic change, I want to sketch a few areas of interdisciplinary research on the effects of demographic change, which move between disciplines.

One such area is the "Easterlin effect" (Pampel and Peters 1995; Easterlin 1990). According to Easterlin, cohort size is connected with cyclical processes of competition, wages, unemployment rates, values and fertility rates. Despite the face plausibility of a drop, for instance, in unemployment rates of East German youth after the job entry of the latest baby bust generation, empirical research shows that volumes do not automatically translate into prices and equilibria. One current counterexample is Spain. In spite of a declining proportion of the population being in labour market entry age, youth unemployment rates have skyrocketed there.

Another interdisciplinary area of research is whether a demographic decline in the number of schoolchildren translates into lower expenditures for schools (Poterba 1997; Baum and Seitz, 2003; Rattsø and Sørensen, 2010). Most research shows that in many cases there are either no cost-saving effects or that the cost savings are less extensive than could be expected from a mere shift in demand. Obviously the different ways that societies cope with demographic change influence whether there are 'demographic dividends' and what levels they reach.

A rather broad area of interdisciplinary research is organisational demography (Pfeffer 1983; Carroll et al. 2000). The crucial variable for organisational demography is not the age structure of a society or the decline or growth of a national population but the respective parameters of an organisation. The employees of an organisation have both an age and cohort structure; the staff of an organisation may also grow or decline in number. Contrary to societies, organisations are founded or dissolved quite often. These processes are analysed by organisational ecology (Carrol 1984; Hannan and Freeman 1993). The main results of this research show that both rapidly growing as well as shrinking organisations are prone to difficulties: rapidly growing organisations tend to develop very imbalanced cohort sizes that create problems for career development, cooperation and innovativeness later on. Shrinking organisations more often than others either accumulate higher wage bills (if seniority rules apply) or incur diminished dynamics (as the renewal rate of the organisation is reduced).

The short review of the literature has shown that, as opposed to what popular scientific publications would have us believe (Birg 2006; Hondrich 2007; Butterwegge 2006), demographic change is neither seen as a single determinant of societal effects nor as a completely irrelevant factor. Most research, especially on the effects of a declining population, draws attention to the challenges constituted by demographic changes, the detrimental potential of which depends on the coping of society. We will therefore develop elements of a coping theory of society in the following parts of this chapter.

3.2 Demographic Ways of Coping with Demographic Change

First, we want to look at demographic ways of countering demographic change. To do so, we have to consider fertility, mortality and migration.

Most popular are strategies to influence fertility. As was discussed in Chap. 2, reasons for a fertility rate below the reproduction level are manifold. Without going into too much detail, one approach to coping is by means of state expenditure for families (this can take the form of either child allowances, tax reductions, maternity leave or childcare provisions). The OECD countries differ with respect to their expenditure in this area. In general, there is a correlation of medium strength between state family expenditures and the total fertility rate (D'Addio and d'Ercole 2005). Simulations for Japan, for instance, which currently does not invest much in family policies at all, suggest that a rise in expenditure could raise the total fertility rate from 1.3 to 2.0. In the case of countries with already (comparatively) high family expenditures, such as Germany, simulations show that this instrument cannot increase the fertility rate any further. Besides this quantitative logic, there is a qualitative logic: all 'familialistic' countries that originally operated on a strong breadwinner model, such as Germany, Italy, Japan or Spain, face the challenge that a rise in the fertility rate can only be achieved by implementing effective anti-discrimination policies for gender equality, which takes time (Billari 2008; Holthus 2011).

There is not much debate on the possibilities of influencing mortality to alleviate demographic change. One cause for the absence of such a debate is that in nearly all countries rising life expectancy is already reducing the numeric effects of low fertility rates, thus reducing shrinkage. This effect could paradoxically reduce the detrimental effects of demographic ageing as well if it comes with longer 'healthy years'. Empirical data in Germany and Poland (Chap. 2) show that this is indeed happening. Current procedures to classify age groups in terms of 'age burdens', 'demographic dividends' and so forth tend to obscure this effect. For one, it is unclear whether a person in retirement is not productive for society anymore. Secondly, and even more importantly, in the case of an increase of healthy years, the markers 'age 60' or 'age 65' (to take just two common age markers) change their potential meaning from 'too old to substantially contribute' to 'still being a productive pillar of the work society'. The legal raising of the retirement age and the actual trend toward later retirement socially acknowledges this development (Sackmann 2008).

Migration is already an important constituent of population dynamics. Both in Germany and Poland the migration balance (and its dynamic) is just as important as birth rates in explaining the difference between a stagnating and a declining population. Currently, a negative migration balance (a lower number of immigrants in relation to out-migrants) can be the result of migration barriers and/or unattractiveness of the destination.

Migration barriers are the result of nation states regulating immigration. Davoudi et al. (2010) contrast two scenarios for Europe. In the scenario "silver

century", immigration is sharply restricted, which leads to a rapidly ageing and soon shrinking European population with a range of prospective negative effects. In the scenario "open borders", these effects are offset by immigration, which allows this world region to continue to bloom. Similarly, Coleman (2006) sees immigration as the main solution for low-fertility countries. His data show, both in Europe and the US, an increase in immigration between 1960 until 1988, a peak in 1992 and a highly volatile development afterwards. Political decisions to place stricter restrictions on immigration were a major cause of the demographic slump in Germany in the first decade of the twenty-first century (Kemper 2011). Similar (demographically counterproductive) regulations were strengthened in most European countries and the US. In most countries, there is an open debate on how to combine integration efforts and diversity within nation states. Whereas traditional immigration countries, such as the US, and rather new immigration states, like Germany, have developed routines in coping with immigration, some states, such Japan and China, mainly have tried to avoid immigration entirely. For the latter, offsetting low fertility by encouraging immigration is still a far step from current reality, as their very complicated and restrictive procedures of selective immigration policy show (Vogt 2011).

Whereas migration barriers are instruments mainly of the nation state, unattractiveness of destination applies to both regions and nation states. In Germany, for instance, there exists a pattern according to which the cities are regaining attractiveness as places of residence while the suburban areas have been attractive all along and peripheral areas, especially in the economically weak parts of the country, are hit by outmigration and extremely low immigration. Is this a pattern of regional polarisation that follows the rules of the game of the second wave of globalisation since 1980? The literature on "global cities" would underline such an interpretation, but is there a homogeneous periphery to complement it that could be termed "global countryside"? Woods (2007) theoretically and empirically argues that so far there exists no real "global countryside". We can postulate an ideal type of such a global countryside with homogenising tendencies towards commodification, concentration, migration, tourism, non-national property, discourses, social polarisation and political alienation. But Woods also insists on their heterogeneity whereby some regional countrysides have a growing potential to shift the new flows of tourists, migrants and entrepreneurs in their favour, whereas others do not have the same opportunity. Woods fails to consider population movements related to (tertiary) education, which has increasingly become a driver of migration regionally and internationally and seems to foster urban attractiveness at the expense of peripheral remoteness.

In sum, investments in children (and their education), health and immigration (and integration of immigrants) are possible ways of coping with demographic change. In the case of all three strategies, it depends on the context whether they are viable options. As investment strategies, the time horizon for these demographic strategies to yield results is more a matter of decades than of immediate returns.

3.3 Non-demographic Ways of Coping with Demographic Change

Many people think that labelling a problem as a demographic one implies that the solution also has to be sought in changing the demographic situation. However, the relation between 'causes' and 'interventions' is not necessarily a direct one. Whenever the causes are either hard to influence or the effects of the intervention take too long, a societal unit can only concentrate on coping with the problem irrespective of its causes. For instance, if a society wants to come to terms with natural disasters, it is not feasible to prevent earthquakes, floods, volcanic eruptions or tsunamis from happening. Far more important is to enhance the level of resilience to be able to effectively handle the consequences of a disaster and—even more importantly—to socially prevent such consequences from occurring by investing in the ability to adapt to situations, for example, by building houses that survive an earthquake without collapsing.

Some demographic problems can be solved by demographic means, that is, by influencing fertility, mortality or migration. Quite often, however, these processes are hard to change, and sometimes it takes a long time to produce significant effects. Irrespective of whether a demographic or non-demographic approach is adopted in tackling demographic problems, the effects of demographic change are of major interest as existing institutional procedures might collide with demographic developments, resulting in second-order problems that might be worse than the original demographic problem. These second order problems can be manifold: for instance, a rise in longevity might be not a problem in an age-conscious society, whereas a rise in longevity occurring in a society that prefers early retirement may endanger the whole pension system.

Since non-demographic coping can occur in all parts of society, the empirical analyses will concentrate on some obvious fields: educational institutions and their personnel policy in coping with smaller birth cohorts, and municipalities attempting to come to terms with shrinkage.

Before analysing empirical problems and problem solving in detail, it is useful to have an idea of the directions in which demographic problems can be solved by non-demographic means. As a heuristic instrument, we have developed a theoretical tool that encompasses four components: (a) 'problem', (b) coping, (c) institutions and (d) mentalities. Coping theory was originally developed in social psychology, but for decades both sociology and psychology have worked with similar key concepts (Greve and Strobl 2004), which have to be adapted to the particular research context. As the demographic problems we are interested in are of a social nature, we will focus more on organisational and institutional levels than on individual experience and action.

3.3.1 Problem Framing

A prerequisite of coping is that there is a *problem* to be dealt with. In social sciences there is a discussion about the nature of problems. We take a realistic approach in

that we assume that there are real components of problems caused by demographic change. To analyse the nature of a specific demographic problem, one has to concentrate on three elements: (a) resources, (b) aspirations and (c) the framing of the problem. At the heart of most social problems there is a discrepancy between the resources a social unit can use and the aspirations it develops.[1]

In the line of social constructivist thought (Spector and Kitsuse 1973), a problem is a social interpretation of an unknown reality that some groups in society successfully define by convincing the public that there is a problem to be dealt with. Without doubt, the interpretation, the framing of a problem, is an important feature of social problems. However, it is not convincing that all social problems are just communication acts. Whereas accounts of meeting extraterrestrials and discussions about how to avert the detrimental effects they cause (Schetsche 1998) are only discursive products, the problems of demographic shrinkage are real challenges that may indeed have a negative impact on society. 'Real' in this context does not claim that there is just one reality out there, of which a scientist can make a perfect picture. It simply says that within a range of interpretations of real processes there are some interpretations that we can claim to be more accurate than others by scientific standards. Such a realistic view of social problems is connected with a pragmatic view of the social sciences (see Mead 1929): among the procedures suggested to solve a problem, we can say that, by scientific standards, some suggestions are more likely to work than others.

If a social problem is constituted by a discrepancy between the resources at hand and the aspirations and expectations the social unit has developed, the problem will be 'caused' either by a drop in resources or by a rise in aspirations. In his classic study "Children of the Great Depression" (Elder 1999; Elder and Caspi 1990), the social problem that was relevant to a large part of a generation of Americans in the 1930s was caused by a drop in resources: an economic crisis led to a loss of jobs, income and assets. What are resources in the case of demographic change, especially shrinkage? Kaufmann (2005) states that population is a basic form of societal resources, which he calls "human capability" to suggest that a large range of social production and reproduction rests on the care and work humans perform and the ideas that they bring forth. For a general theory of coping with demographic change, the characterisation of resources in reference to a demographic problem as "human capability" seems to be too broad at times. In a number of cases, a loss of resources can be specified as the existence of fewer people, resulting in a decline in demand; in other cases, it can mean a drop in the available number of potential co-workers or collaborators; or from the perspective of a taxing regime, fewer people in a political unit can cause less revenue; or in democracies fewer people may constitute a decline in certain groups of voters and thus in the weight of their preferences; or in familialistic regimes fewer children may also mean a loss of potential caregivers to the elderly. Common to the resource nature of demographic problems is that the

[1] We prefer the more concrete formulation of a discrepancy of resources and aspirations, as Greve and Strobl's (2004) more general formula of a problem as being an is-ought discrepancy seems to be overgeneralized, especially since "is" constitutes a rather opaque term.

availability of a certain number of people and/or the existence of certain categories of people are important for the proceedings of a social unit.

If an imbalance of resources and aspirations is at the heart of a social problem, there is also the possibility that a rise in expectations can trigger a social problem. Tocqueville (2011), in his famous study on the French revolution 1789, showed that the hardship of the French people in the last decades of the eighteenth century was not extraordinarily high (compared with other European societies at that time). Instead, the rise in wealth and income in the decades before the revolution had influenced expectations and aspirations that were frustrated in the last years before the revolution when growth rates turned negative. In a similar line of thought, Durkheim was able to show that a downturn after boom years caused anomic aspirations constituting social problems that were later labelled as relative deprivation. Are there increasing aspirations connected with demographic change (especially shrinkage) that are strong predictors? In demographic terms this does not seem to be plausible as population numbers do not have a strong "ought" component that could constitute aspirations. For instance, there is neither a strong social norm nor a strong desire underlying the often-quoted replacement level of 2.1 children (in present modern societies) that could constitute a very strong aspiration, the violation of which would cause problems. "Human beings are not motivated by the population-resources ratio even when they know about it" (Davis 1963, p. 351). Whereas people do not have strong feelings about total fertility rates, they have strong emotions on whether they want to raise a family and how large the family should be. It is a matter of political processes whether these 'private' desires for a particular number of children are aggregated into a public discourse on aspirations of societies.

Empirically, non-demographic aspirations have also been important for the constitution of demographic problems insofar as, in the East German case for instance, aspirations on non-demographic grounds might be raised and subsequently not fulfilled, which coincidentally occurred parallel to a loss of resources for demographic reasons. In the 1990s in East Germany, aspirations for quick results of the transition from communism to democratic market economies were higher than in other transition countries (Sackmann 2010). In such a constellation, a 'demographic problem' emerges as the result of aspirational dynamics as well.

The perception of a problem requires an interpretation, a subjective definition of the situation accordingly. We call the perception of a problem its framing. Based on the work of the classic interpretative sociology of Thomas, Schütz and Goffman, current theoretical work by Esser (2001; 2010) and Kroneberg (2011) tries to formalise this concept. In this book, we are not so much interested in the formal adaptation of these models to define demographic problems (see Rademacher 2013) but in the process of framing that takes place in these instances.

Each act of framing includes a simplification of perception to reduce complexity. This simplification usually refers to given models and types already known to actors. In general, frames are shorthand typifications of reality. One aspect of such a frame is how collective actors such as organisations or municipalities frame an issue. Collective actors use routines to observe their environment; they use schemes to evaluate changes in it. For instance, a commercial organisation will register its

monthly sales volume to see whether it is growing or losing ground. In Chap. 5, we will see which indicators municipalities use to register environmental change and how this is related to demographic discourses.

Formal theories of framing concentrate on the specificities of mixed-mode rationalities and their logic. When Esser (1996a) first applied the concept of framing to processes of defining the situation, he focussed on public conflict over the frames to be applied to the situation in question. We want to specify this for demographic problems. If demographic change is a new development in a society (which is the case in most shrinking countries), then existing frames of the situation will be challenged. Since we have defined a problem as a discrepancy between resources and aspirations, the framing of the demographic problem can focus on two elements and their combinations: on resources, on aspirations, on both or on neither. In current advanced societies, from which we draw our examples, some frames are more widespread than others. In the following, we sketch a growth frame as an example of a resource-centred frame of demographic problems; a demographisation frame as an example of an aspiration-centred frame of demographic problems; a realistic frame as a mixed observation of resources and aspirations; and a denial frame, which ignores both resources and aspirations.

The Growth Frame As resources might dwindle in a demographic problem situation, some actors are interested in remedying the situation as quickly as possible. In a number of regions and municipalities, we find a frame that interprets a shrinking community as a community with an economic growth problem. Such a frame quite often accentuates growth potential more than demographic components, which might even be ignored. Farke (2005), for example, shows that the West German city of Salzgitter accepts federal funding for shrinking cities but tries to avoid the image of a shrinking city as it adheres to an economic growth frame. A radical growth frame might even ignore the consequences of a decline in resources. The Japanese government using public debt to finance its public debt service within a frame of inciting growth by stimulus packages is an extreme instance of this frame—also driven by the horror of powerful groups over losing support by admitting that resources are already lost.

The Demographisation Frame In situations where non-demographic aspirations have been raised, sometimes to high levels, but cannot be fulfilled in times of crisis, the public can be convinced that demography is the reason why retrenchment must be accepted. A demographic frame is used to lower aspirations. The wave of demographic discourse in Germany at the end of the 1990s is an example of such demographisation framing. An oversupply of housing, caused by excessive subsidies and aspirations, was attributed to demographic shrinkage. A demographisation frame is not uncommon in politicising social problems since it fulfils some of the criteria that must be given to enable reframing a social problem as a political problem (Cobb and Elder 1972). The likelihood of defining a social problem as a political problem is higher the broader the scope of the problem, the easier it can be defined as socially important, the better it can be defined as being important because of its long-term consequences, the more it is characterised by a low degree of complexity,

and the closer it is related to previously set agendas. Particularly the combination of stressing long-term consequences and offering explanations of low complexity highlights the potential of demographisation as a frame for the politicisation of social problems. It gives powerful groups the opportunity to communicate the need to lower aspirations without raising questions as to the authorship of excessive aspirations or the non-demographic causes of crisis.

The Realistic Frame Not all social problems that are framed as demographic problems overestimate the influence of demography. Some framing simply refers to the demographically caused drop in resources. In the case of shrinkage, this is usually connected with a lowering of aspirations since the turn from a demographic growth regime to a demographic shrinkage regime is not without transaction costs. As framing is not necessarily connected to specific action plans, a realistic frame does not implicate whether this appraisal will result in a retrenchment response, a growth response or an innovative response.

The Denial Frame There is some debate in the literature as to whether a denial of a problem is a part of coping at all (Greve and Strobl 2004). For a radical social constructivist, a problem that is not subjectively defined or intersubjectively communicated is non-existent. Therefore non-perception dissipates the problem. But does ignorance solve problems? On the other hand, rationalist objectivists would insist that an actor who does not frame a problem will not develop a coping strategy at all. Hence such actors are limited to the irrational denial of the problem in question. We do not share either view. Demographic problems caused by a loss of demographic resources, which is the case in most social units hit by shrinkage, will not disappear if they are ignored. Even if this situation is attributed to fate or other out-of-hand frames, the loss of resources will be felt. On the other hand, in any social unit, at any point in time there are a vast number of social processes that could be highlighted as a social problem waiting to be solved. Any rational social unit will thus somehow prioritise which situations (marked by discrepancies of resources and aspirations) are framed as problems requiring attention and which situations (representing such discrepancies) are not (yet) framed in these terms. In this perspective, a denial frame is sometimes the result of another strong frame referring to other problems. The above-mentioned growth frame can be seen as one type of a denial frame accordingly.

3.3.2 Coping

The framing of a problem is just one element of coming to terms with a demographic problem. The act of *coping* is the next step in a coping theory of demographic change. We have defined a problem as a discrepancy between the resources of a social unit and its aspirations. “Coping consists of cognitive and behavioural efforts to manage specific external and/or internal demands that are appraised as taxing or exceeding the resources of the person” (Folkman and Lazarus 1988, p. 310). Thus,

coping is a reaction to a perceived discrepancy of resources and aspirations. To develop a more general model of coping, it is useful to (a) discuss different levels of social units, (b) reflect on the logic of categorising types of coping, (c) illustrate the type of coping we call *expansion*, (d) illuminate the type of coping we refer to as *reduction* and (e) state more precisely what *threat rigidity* (Staw et al. 1981) could mean in coping. Coping theory is an interdisciplinary effort involving heterogeneous fields of research. We will refer to social-psychological literature, to organisational studies and to literature on the consequences of disasters. We will initially exclude any discussion of institutional effects in terms of macro-social structures, which will be added once we get a firm grip on what is meant by coping as a form of meaningful action.

Original work on coping theory was mainly done by social psychologists who focused on the level of the individual. It is not uncommon in the literature to draw analogical conclusions from the individual level to the level of organisations. This is not flawed per se as these two units of social action share a number of attributes, such as decision making, capability for action and reflection, a definite beginning (birth/foundation) and a limited duration. Since the overlap is large enough, some analogies can be drawn. However, we see also a major difference between these levels of social action, which is mainly the result of the logic of institutions. We will discuss the importance of this difference later.

What is the logic of categorising types of coping? In early behaviourist theory, informed by animal experiments, a positive or negative stimulus provoked a response. Modern coping theory can be traced back to a social behaviourist critique of these deterministic models. Coping is seen as a response mediated by the definition of the situation or, in Lazarus' terms, by the "appraisal" of aspirations and resources. Since modern society sees itself as an activist meritocratic society, the preferred mode of coping is solving the problem. After checking the importance of an issue and, most importantly, evaluating the resources available to solve a problem, a "problem-focused form" (Folkman and Lazarus 1988, p. 310) is chosen if the situation is appraised as amenable to change. If the situation is appraised as unchangeable, a second type of coping is chosen: an "emotion-focused form" (Folkman and Lazarus 1988) that tries to regulate distress.

Whereas mainstream social psychology stresses active problem solving, life course psychologist Brandtstädter and his collaborators have underlined the importance of seemingly passive complacency. For them, coping is either "assimilative", which means changing the situation in a direction that is more in accordance with one's aspirations, or "accommodative", which means to accept the situation by re-adapting one's aspirations (Greve and Brandtstädter 1994). Brandtstädter's positive evaluation of accommodative coping is not a preference for fatalistic world views; its cause is more to stress that a considerable part of the social world is not in our control, but people still are capable of actively adapting by re-adjusting their aspirations. While being sceptical towards an easy activist paradigm of life management, the Brandtstädter team underlines the potential of non-intentional action and reflection to counter distress (Brandtstädter and Rothermund 2002).

Whereas literature in social psychology has developed a logic of categorising coping strategies, influential literature in organisational studies has proceeded more empirically (but also with some normative undertones). Boyne (2006) labels "retrenchment", "repositioning" and "reorganisation" as possible ways for organisations to counter a turnaround situation (his equivalent term for a declining organisation). A turnaround situation in this view is defined as a longer (2–4 years) period during which an organisation achieves its aims only below an acceptable level. Public services, which he focuses on, are viewed as private organisations with blocked response strategies. As retrenchment and repositioning are not available options for public services, only reorganisation is important as a possible counter-strategy. (In our empirical data analysis, we will later show that this diagnosis is only appropriate for the cases that Boyne reviews). Staw et al. (1981) identify "threat rigidity" as a frequent type of coping, which they characterised as maladaptive. In their view, environmental change always requires a coping strategy that should be oriented by more than control and efficiency.

Typologies of coping have also been developed in the field of disaster research, which for a long time existed on the fringes of sociology but has become more prominent in recent years. Kreps et al. (2006) highlight findings from empirical research according to which traditional models of command and control in response to disasters failed to provide effective relief as opposed to a flexible resource coordination model. Improvisation by well-prepared communities is important in models of the latter kind, which have recently also been called models of social resilience (Lorenz 2010). The idea in this case is that self-organisation and the capacity to organise self-help are decisive. In contrast to communities and societies of the resilient type, disaster research has also provided a typology of societies on their way to disaster-proneness (Dombrowsky 1995). Disasters are seen as the result of a series of failures along an interaction chain. Disaster is a social disaster insofar as response strategies have failed as a result of an accumulation of the destructive forces related to a certain division of labour (Geenen 1995). If more and more class divisions form, ruling groups are more frequently inclined to offer empty promises instead of actual achievements (Clausen 1994). If reform options are not adopted, societies become more vulnerable to disaster. As a result, they are unable to mobilise sufficient cooperation in situations of crisis.

After this short review of literature on coping in social psychology, organisation studies and disaster research, we want to combine these approaches. In our theory of coping with demographic change, we differentiate four types, which roughly correspond to the types of frames of problems that we introduced above. There is some relation between the frame and type of coping action chosen, but it is not a perfect fit as actors can follow different frames and strategies of coping. These four types of coping we call expansion, reduction, reorganisation and threat rigidity. They correspond to ways resources are acquired (expansion), to ways aspirations are set (reduction), to ways not to change things (threat rigidity) and to ways to reshape the organisation as an actor (reorganisation).

Expansion Since demographic change in the form of declining population numbers is connected with a drop in resources in many circumstances, expansion is a type of coping that tries to regain resources by shifting the focus to new areas of activity. In terms of organisational studies, this strategy is called repositioning as the focus of market activities is changed by countering declining demand for one product/service by offering another product/service. Expansive coping strategies are usually oriented towards growth and innovation (Boyne 2006, p. 379). To give just one example related to demographic development, a kindergarten confronted with a drop in demand for preschool due to a declining number of children can react in the form of expansion by additionally offering childcare services to the youngest children. In terms of social psychology, an expansion strategy would correspond to assimilation; the outer world is transformed by additional activities. The problem is addressed by taking action to change the situation in the direction desired (Greve and Brandtstädter 1994, p. 57). Usually this direction is motivated by self-efficiency and self-cultivation (Brandtstädter and Rothermund 2002, p. 121). The usual model implies problem-focussed coping: a plan is set to tackle the problem, followed by a reappraisal after activities have successfully changed the emotional mood (Folkman and Lazarus 1988). In terms of disaster sociology, an expansion strategy would correlate with emergent activities. This offers an add-on to an over-rationalistic approach: some expansions are not achieved by a master plan but in an enabling process. Disaster research shows that the most successful help is not achieved by deploying big professional rescue teams but by emergent voluntary activities at the locality in question (Poteyeva et al. 2006). In conclusion, one could say that the coping strategy of expansion aims at re-equilibrating the imbalance of resources and aspirations by regaining resources. This can be achieved either by finding new fields of activity, by formulating a plan on how to tackle the problem, which is then re-evaluated later on, or by improvising collectively to protect against all hazards to come.

Reduction Demographic change in the form of decreasing numbers is accompanied by aspirations that cannot be fulfilled to the same degree as before. Reduction is a type of coping that tries to readapt aspirations to the level of current resources. In organisational studies, this strategy is usually pursued by closing down units, by laying off employees or by cutting back expenditures in other ways. This can also reduce the spectrum of activities offered. In terms of social psychology, a reduction strategy would correspond to accommodation. This line of research stresses that this form of coping can be unintentional. As a process of disengagement, it preserves the identity of the social unit by maintaining self-esteem through adapting aspirations to available resources. Aims and future scenarios are actively recalibrated (Greve and Brandtstädter 1994). In disaster research, adaptation would correspond to a reduction of resource dependence (Lorenz 2010). A higher diversity of structures and ecological variance reduces the vulnerability of organisations and societies. It is important to note that reduction with respect to identity is an element of flexibility. Only if a social unit can switch between parts of its identity (including departing from former elements thereof) is it able to reconnect the past with the present in

formulating appropriate goals. So in general, the coping strategy of reduction tries to regain agency in the case of demographic decline by adapting aspirations to the new situation. This strategy can either include reductions in the number and kind of activities, a preservation of identity by disengagement (switch of identity), or it can involve an anticipatory component in that it reduces resource dependence in a crisis situation by cultivating a diversity of structures and identities that can be used within the social unit.

Reorganisation This type of coping is only part of the coping strategies of organisations and societies. Reorganisation implies that there is more than one person involved (which has no parallel in standard social psychology models) and that there is enough time for reorganisation to have positive effects (which is usually not given in case of disaster). As a coping strategy, reorganisation is either a replacement of persons in positions or a change of the formal structure of positions. The organisational studies literature mentions a replacement of persons in positions as the most frequent coping strategy aimed at turnarounds, both for the coping strategy of reorganisation and for all coping strategies by public administrations (Boyne 2006). One could even say that the idea of democracy mainly rests on creating opportunities for reorganisation since each election can result in the replacement of the ruling personnel. Further implications of possible changes in the division of labour, which might also be seen as a kind of reorganisation, are discussed later in this chapter under the heading of institutional responses.

Threat Rigidity It is unclear whether this is a genuine empirical type of coping. For analytical purposes, however, it might be useful to have an extreme type of non-coping, especially as there are already models to describe such behaviour. A general characterisation of the form of coping referred to as threat rigidity is that nothing helpful is done to restore the equilibrium of resources and aspirations. Neither resources nor aspirations are adapted. As disequilibria between resources and aspirations are normal, one could even say a large part of human cultural formation is due to disequilibria between resources and aspirations. Therefore, one has to specify when such disequilibria can be termed threat rigidity and when not. This requires a time dimension, a criterion for the degree of imbalance and a criterion for the time dynamic. For the time dimension, the criterion of duration is important. Boyne (2006), for instance, defines a state of imbalance lasting 2–4 years as constituting a crisis (for an organisation). It seems that societies can endure even longer periods of hardship as they are less threatened by extinction. The degree of imbalance is easiest to define if there exist strict rules for the formal dissolution of a social unit. Insolvency would be an example of a clear-cut large discrepancy between aspirations and resources. For all other forms of social units, a time dynamic of either decreasing motivation (e.g., all efforts to regain resources fail and therefore self-efficacy is reduced) or an increasing threat (e.g., ever larger amounts of the budget have to be used to service increasing debts) is a possible operationalisation of a large discrepancy of aspirations and resources.

Influential literature on coping in social psychology rejects the concept of threat rigidity (Folkman and Lazarus 1988, p. 309). Whereas in animal behaviour the

alternatives available to an ape threatened by a lion is either attack (in our terminology expansion), escape (in our terminology reduction) or non-reaction (and being eaten) (in our terminology threat rigidity), the case of human coping is less clear as a threat is usually subject to appraisal. Anxiety, a perceived threat, does not necessarily lead to non-reaction. In organisational studies, Staw et al. (1981) have popularised the concept of "threat rigidity". The authors do not specify what a threat is (and why it should determine a specific response in the form of rigidity), so we will discuss this later. However, they do specify what makes organisations more rigid in situations of threat. On the one hand, organisations become more uniform and groupthink prevails. On the other hand, power is more concentrated as procedures are re-centralised, formalised and standardised. In disaster sociology, rigidity itself is seen as a major characteristic of a disaster. A disaster is often seen as a social event involving some perception of evil magic that might paralyse those affected (Clausen 1994). More concrete, and of greater importance in our context, certain types of coping are prone to threat rigidity. If there is one central unit responsible for coping with disasters, as was the case in New York in 2001, for instance, the destruction of this unit disorganises the opportunity structure for cooperation for a long, valuable period of time (Poteyeva et al. 2006; Britton 2006). In this context, rigidity is both part and a result of an institutional structure. To summarise the characteristics of threat rigidity, one can say that it consists either (a) of non-reaction in situations requiring resource expansion or aspiration reduction or (b) of failed strategies of expansion or reduction that accumulate and result in a higher likelihood of non-reaction. Such non-reaction can be the result of failed coping strategies, of the organisational dynamics of groupthink and centralisation, or of institutional settings that increase the vulnerability of organisations and societies.

In the discussion of the coping strategy of threat rigidity, it becomes clear that rigidity usually is not the result of biological fear, but more often the result of a certain kind of institutional structure. To take the example of 9/11 in New York, coordination deficiencies after the terrorist attack were not the result of anxiety but of the institutional structure of disaster control, which was vulnerable because it was centralised.

3.3.3 Institution

The institutional structure of coping is the third important ingredient in a theory of coping with demographic change and of equal importance to the nature of the problem and the coping strategy. Drawing an analogy, one could say that institutions are for society what personality structure is for the individual: they form and orient coping strategies, and they are also important objects of analysis for a sociology of coping with demographic change.

There are different concepts of institutions in social sciences. In line with Lepsius (1995), we define an institution as a programme of rules guiding and controlling action by resting on an idea of a legitimate order. In the process of institutionalisa-

tion, the guiding idea is made more concrete, the context of action is differentiated, positive and negative sanctions are introduced. An institution restricts the range of possible action in that some paths are either outright prohibited or are subject to sanctions of some lower degree. At the same time institutions enable a specific range of action by granting such action legitimate status or by encouraging such action through positive sanctions.

During the last century, modern societies have developed a characteristic kind of institutional structure that achieves both adaptability and similarity. For the purpose of this book, it should suffice to trace only the grand lines of this structure while only going into a bit more detail with respect to labour market flexibility and division of labour. We will refrain from elaborating all the differentiations of variation, deviance or the different levels of the general institutional structure of modern societies here.

The adaptability of societies relies on three major functional systems (Parsons 1971). As coping is always related to adaptability, those systems are relevant to our context. In the political system, democratic orders allow a periodic reorganisation of the ruling elites. Voting against existing structures and reforming them are normal features of modern democratic systems. At the same time, democracies enable people to cooperate toward common goals by openly discussing possible alternatives and by giving space for political movements, parties and non-governmental organisations to build power in a competitive environment. In the economic system, market orders regulate the periodic reorganisation of collective actors, and thus the reshuffling of power structures, by providing mechanisms of market exit (e.g., insolvency) and entry (e.g., establishment of a new business). Information in the form of prices bears the potential for firms to specialise in production and for consumers to select according to individual preferences. Knowledge also follows a path of high adaptability as the science system allows the critique of all forms of current knowledge and hence continual revision of the current state of knowledge. A wide array of theories, methods and scientifically collected empirical data enables science to reorient its content in a rational way.

It would be misleading to see the modern institutional structure only as a way of raising the level of innovation and adaptability (despite the fact that in comparison to former societies the rate of permanent innovation has increased). Neoinstitutionalist theory highlights that the structures that allow permanent change at the same time increase isomorphic tendencies in society (DiMaggio and Powell 1983). Political systems with a democratic order imply the rule of law. This produces coercive isomorphism as some actions are prohibited and some are privileged. Economic systems in the form of market orders do not coerce people in this way. However, the high degree of uncertainty in this field makes it more likely that organisations (and people) model their behaviour after successful competitors. By this mimetic isomorphism organisations become more alike. Within the system of science, groups of professionals are educated. As this takes a number of years, a high degree of internalisation of values, norms and practices is achieved, which results in normative isomorphism. Normative isomorphism is increased by the fact that scientific

disciplines, as well as certain think tanks, produce epistemic orders that preform cognitive models of the world.

The explicated modern institutional order is more an ideal type of how given structures are generally shaped in the innovative and isomorphic structures of modern society. If one proceeds to analyse certain organisational fields, in this book education and public administration, one has to specify the main features of these fields. For analytical purposes, we want to pinpoint what labour market flexibility and division of labour means with respect to demographic change. These two dimensions seem to be important both for the educational system and for public administration. Large parts of the education sector in most countries in the world are publicly organised. In a situation where population decline results in a declining number of pupils, organisations facing the need to cope with this development cannot turn to a market reaction in the form of adapting the price of education since large parts of the educational system either do not charge prices at all or at least do not charge prices that cover costs. Instead labour market flexibility is a possible alternative for organisations to adapt to this situation and reduce costs. A similar logic applies to public administration. Let us take a closer look at labour markets and division of labour.

Labour 'markets' are a special kind of market insofar as a number of features are quite different from markets for other kinds of goods such as bananas or cars (Solow 1990). The price of labour (wages and salaries) is usually not as flexible as mathematical models of labour markets would suggest. Wages are more sticky. In times of crisis, they are rarely reduced in nominal terms; in times of good business, they are raised less than in the case of more price-sensitive goods. Moreover, labour market prices are strongly influenced by organisations in the form of unions, which try to set wages for groups of workers and not for individual workers. As a result, the price flexibility of labour markets is reduced. A second feature making labour markets special markets is that work contracts usually not only regulate the exchange of certain services, but they also constitute a cooperative endeavour, which usually lasts for some time. Neo-modern labour market theories are full of accounts of what cooperation means and why it results in wages above equilibrium (implying that it produces unemployment as an unintended side effect). For instance, efficiency wage theories state that workers who keep their position for a longer period of time are more efficient than new workers (Raff and Summers 1987), or insider-outsider theories (Lindbeck and Snower 1988) claim that the exchange of workers implies transaction costs. What is more, long-term employees might harass new employees or refuse to educate them sufficiently for their new jobs if they are dissatisfied. In consequence, employers rationally opt to enter labour contracts to reduce labour market price flexibility and personnel turnover since they rely on cooperative work relations between workers and between employers and employees. A third distinct feature of labour markets is the meaning given to the activity involved in the exchange. The social position of being in paid employment and the content of work are important elements in the identity of individuals. In a society centred on dependent labour where most citizens do not possess easy access to either subsistence

production or self-employment, meaningful employment is a privileged value held by many members of society.

All three of these distinctive features of the labour market provide potential avenues for intervention and regulation. Historically more precisely, the idea of a pure labour market with fluctuating prices, easily terminated contracts and unspecific aims of cooperation is so far removed from reality that it took centuries to surface as an idea (Polanyi 1957). At present, labour markets are institutionalised everywhere in some way or another as a part of the legal fabric of society. This legal order of the labour market (and its informal practice) always has to strike a compromise between guiding legitimate ideas and contrasting interests.

In the following three subchapters, we want to specify the causal relation between labour markets and a declining population. For this purpose, we want to proceed in three steps: (a) in the first step, we will analyse how and why public labour markets, more than other labour markets, are prone to inflexibility (and what possibilities are given under this condition to react to a declining population); (b) in the second step, peculiarities of professions and civil servants will be discussed in relation to demographic change; and (c) in the final step, we will discuss Durk-heim's argument of a general correlation between demographic change and the division of labour.

3.3.3.1 Do Public Labour Markets Lack Flexibility?

One element of demographic change in relation to institutional structures is that a declining population implicates a shift in demand. Fewer children constitute less demand for teachers, and more elderly increase the demand for the care professions. Besides a discussion of whether adapting demand is a perfect strategy for coping with demographic change, we want to first analyse why shifts in demand in labour markets do not smoothly translate into shifts in the workforce accordingly. This is usually discussed under the heading of labour market flexibility.

As we have already seen, labour markets are not homogenous institutional structures. Both transaction cost theory sensu Williamson and segmentation theory analytically distinguish an internal from an external labour market. An external labour market resembles most the classic economic idea of a labour *market*. In these spot markets, a shift in demand will translate into changes in wages and job placements. Fewer children would result in lower wages and fewer job opportunities for teachers if the labour market for teachers were an external labour market.

In most present-day labour markets, we find some variant of an internal labour market. In an internal labour market, employees have a rather general labour contract that lasts for a longer period of time. Employees are part of an organisation that collectively produces goods or services. In which instances do employers prefer internal labour markets? Williamson (1985; Williamson et al. 1975) states three conditions: the more task-specific the labour is, the higher the degree of intangible output, and the higher the degree of uncertainty. As opposed to an orange picker (a classic example of an external labour market), not everybody can be a teacher of Polish history (task-specific) and we cannot easily observe whether his students

actually did learn the right things (intangible outcomes). Under such conditions it is useful for a school to employ teachers for a longer period of time and create a kind of internal labour market. Segmentation theories (Piore 1978; Kopycka 2013) add two explanations to transaction cost theories of internal labour markets: (1) employers are more powerful if they can differentiate workers, and (2) their actions might be guided by norms. The latter is more than true as extensive labour market legislation and labour law decisions constitute a normative framework within which employers (and employees) act.

There is some discussion in the literature as to whether the criterion "uncertainty" is a strong indicator for rational internal labour markets (Picot et al. 2003; Winch 1998; Struck 2006). It is stressed that uncertainty in the form of high volatility might be pushing companies to externalise parts of their production or differentiate employees into a core group and more flexible peripheral production units.

Taking up these concepts of labour market segmentation, one would expect three possibilities for public sector labour markets to react to a declining population. If the responses in the public sector labour market were similar to what we commonly observe in external labour markets, we would expect a reduction of wages and/or redundancies in sectors with a drop in demand (*external labour market hypothesis*). If the responses in the public sector labour market were to follow the common pattern in internal labour markets, long-term labour market contracts would not be touched and there would be a hiring freeze or a reduction in hiring in sectors with a drop in demand (*internal labour market hypothesis*). If the public sector labour market were to combine the responses commonly found in the external and internal labour markets, long-term labour markets would remain untouched while hiring would turn to fixed-term contracts to raise flexibility by inducing high volatility (*dual labour market hypothesis*) (see Kopycka and Sackmann 2010). Generally, one would suppose the internal labour market hypothesis to be the most likely one as public sector labour markets are primarily internal labour markets. Some authors even argue that they are the archetype of an internal labour market (Henneberger 1997; Keller 1985). If this is correct, one would even expect that there are second-order problems arising from this constellation. If demand drops faster than internal labour market flexibility can react, production costs would rise and quality might drop as well. To take the example of fewer children referred to above, adaptation to demand would rely only on hiring fewer teachers (internal labour market). This might raise the costs of education per pupil and result in an older teacher workforce, which after some time might be less innovative as there is no influx of new colleagues (Sackmann and Bartl 2007).

3.3.3.2 Peculiarities of Public Sector Labour Markets: Professions and Civil Servants

Two types of employees, professionals and civil servants, are far more numerous in public labour markets than in other labour markets. It seems worthwhile to briefly sketch their relevance to coping with demographic change. Civil servants are char-

acterised by a special kind of labour contract, which is often in the form of lifelong employment, yet with more discretion on part of the employer to adjust the tasks to be fulfilled than under normal labour contracts. Important for coping with demographic change is also the particularity that they often have retirement benefit systems of their own. In general, one could say that a higher rate of civil servants restricts labour market flexibility to internal labour market flexibility. For the empirical studies of this book, civil servants are not of major importance as only a small minority of German employees in municipalities work on civil service contracts and the rate of civil servants is also generally very low in Poland (Bartl 2011).

Professions are characterised by a high degree of task specialisation and a low degree of tangible output. Due to these characteristics, it is plausible that they are quite often part of internal labour markets. At the same time, professions usually are rather independent social groups, which compete with each other (Abbott 1988). They seek to demonstrate expertise by solving difficult problems, rely on some set of professional ethics to regulate member behaviour, and mobilise state approval to license their job monopoly. Their weight in present societies is growing as they successfully participate in innovating society by combining their efforts with academic knowledge.

However, all professions are not alike. In education, semi-professions prevail (Parkin 1979; Kirkpatrick et al. 2005). As opposed to other professions such as doctors and lawyers, their prospects of self-employment are quite limited so that they have to come to terms with their main employer, the state. Some semi-professions, such as teachers in Germany and Poland, have been quite successful in establishing a near monopoly on jobs in school organisations. Even the heads of these organisations are usually teachers. A specific employee-friendly form of management, custodial management, dominates (Kopycka 2013). Other semi-professions, such as nursery school teachers in Germany, have been less successful in claiming monopolistic scientific competence in solving certain problems. So far, it seems unlikely that they will be successful in raising the bar for recruitment so as to require academic credentials, which is standard for this group in many other countries.

For semi-professions, not only their independent knowledge base is important, but also their capacity to organise in trade unions. Whereas teachers unions in Germany are restricted in their capacity to act as a collective force by being split into a number of separate professional organisations, their unionist stance in Poland is quite strong. The late communist regime even put into practice a so called Teachers Charter in the 1980s that codified a number of privileges that are usually part of contested contracts in other countries. This law was amended in the transformation period but never abolished (for a detailed analysis of the changes, see Kopycka 2013).

Since the 1980s, there has been a transnational movement against civil servants and professions in public sector employment that has tried to reinforce private personnel policy in public sector organisations under the banner of ‘new public management’. For the limited purpose of our book, it has to be stated that Germany lags far behind in implementing the principles of new public management. By contrast, Polish public policy reform has been much more influenced by new public manage-

ment. One piece of evidence for this is that Polish school heads have considerable discretion in hiring and firing school personnel.

Despite some things being in flux, it can be stated that in general demographic change constitutes a potential problem for public sector labour markets in Germany and Poland as both show a high likelihood of reacting to this challenge in ways associated with an internal labour market.

3.3.3.3 Demographic Change and the Division of Labour

Labour markets not only relate supply and demand by a price mechanism, they also organise forms of cooperation into a specific kind of division of labour. In the social sciences, there is a long tradition of relating demographic change to degrees of competition in demand for resources. In this vein, Malthus argued that large birth cohorts result in famine waves due to too many mouths to be fed. Much later, Easterlin (1990) stated that large cohorts are characterised by a high degree of competition, resulting in lower wages. Despite differences in theoretical and empirical background, approaches in the tradition of Malthus and Easterlin directly translate quantities into social processes. In this line of thought, some authors even explain Islamic and Hutu terrorism in terms of excessive population growth (Heinsohn 2008).

As opposed to these mechanistic approaches, the classical sociologist Emile Durkheim, in his first major work, stated that a quantitative process, the number of inhabitants in a society, might influence the division of labour of the population insofar as a higher degree of specialisation reduces competition.. Thus for Durkheim, the division of labour is an intervening variable, a possible coping mechanism, to come to terms with demographic change. An intensification of social life, which he perceives as a trigger for civilisation, can alleviate competitive forces: a soldier will usually not compete with a priest, an oculist not with a psychiatrist (to name just a few of Durkheim's examples). Later theoretical critique tried to re-translate Durkheim's mixture of a natural process (population growth) and a social response (division of labour) into a purely symbolic transaction: population dynamics are irrelevant, only the mechanisms of supply and demand are important (Rueschemeyer 1982). However, for a discussion of coping with demographic change, this overgeneralisation by Rueschemeyer is not helpful as it replaces the more specific concept of population dynamics with the rather general concept of a change in demand.

Empirical research by and large supports a correlation between the size (and interactivity) of a social unit and its division of labour. The share of administrative and specialist jobs increases in larger social units, whereas the share of managerial positions decreases (Kasarda 1974; Clarke 1982). Cross-cultural research illustrates that two threshold levels of 150–200 and 2000–3000 members are indices for social units to differentiate. However, size on its own is not as important as a cooperative effort for collective action (Feinman 2011). Division of labour is a way to process this interactivity.

Durkheim elaborated his theory mainly in view of a fast-growing society in the late nineteenth century. Can it be applied to a shrinking society as well? Organisational demography has compared growing with shrinking organisations. It has shown that the general correlation between division of labour and size holds; however, some professions grow and shrink proportionally with organisational growth and decline, whereas others grow quicker but shrink slower than others (Freeman and Hannan 1975). Observations of shrinking municipalities show that changes of social infrastructure are open processes: some parts compete with each other, others are even dropped completely. Similar incoherent observations can be made on the presence of professions in shrinking regions: some stay, whereas others disappear completely (Kersten et al. 2012).

For a model of the effects of demographic change on labour markets, it seems to be important to be precise concerning the level of the social unit in question. At present we are living in a world society characterised by a growing population with increasing interaction. Therefore structural forces in the global economy point to an increase in the division of labour (Münch 2011). At the same time, some nation states and a number of regions show decreasing populations. In this situation, decreasing the division of labour can serve to enhance the potential of the local economy and local public services. It has to be stressed that a lower degree of division of labour in general can be implemented in two forms: the division of labour can be shifted towards lower specialisation and more general tasks, or it may include innovative and more complex than specialised forms. To use an example from Durkheim, doctors in a thinly populated area may either turn to less specialisation, that is, become general practitioners instead of specialist doctors, or they can combine specialisations, for instance, an oculist who is also a psychiatrist might be more successful in a shrinking region than a specialist in only one profession.

A general hypothesis for analysing processes of coping with demographic change is that in a situation of a decreasing population, the likelihood of innovations in the direction of de-differentiation and multi-dimensional professionalisation increases (*division of labour hypothesis*).

3.3.4 Mentalities

In the last step toward a theory of non-demographic coping with demographic change, we want to construct a heuristic instrument to evaluate the role of mentalities in this process. Some theories on the consequences of demographic change state that such change has an impact on the mentality of the social unit. Keynes (1937), for instance, thought a pessimistic mood might prevail. Kaufmann (2005) has predicted that complacency will become the dominant discourse, and a pessimistic mentality will weaken the adaptability of a society in the case of a shrinking population. If Kaufmann's theory is correct, the impact on mentality would be crucial as it would not only influence the way a society copes with a specific problem, but a society's capacity to cope as such. However, mentality is quite a broad concept that

is hard to come to grips with theoretically. Within our limited purpose of a theory of coping with demographic change, we will highlight three elements of the relation between demographic change and mentality: (1) we will define mentality; (2) we will specify it referring to the concepts of framing, collective efficacy and reflexivity; and (3) we will make suggestions in which way demographic change might influence mentality.

Since mentality is a rather opaque concept, it has to be clarified what the term, as we use it here, does not mean and what in our view is a viable definition. We will not use the term to mean unspecific kinds of thinking and feeling (e.g., Spode 1999, p. 10). There is a certain tradition to continue old patterns of folk psychology under the guise of mentality that are closely related to stereotypes such as 'happy Balinese people' or 'a German mentality is characterised by anal fixation'. Quite often the concept of mentality is simply used for the othering of groups or nations.

In contrast to this stereotypical concept of mentality, we follow Mauss (2004, p. 137), who argues that a collective mentality is formed by a civilisation's representations (techniques, art, religion, law etc.) and its practices. Noteworthy in the case of Mauss' concept is that, as opposed to the German usage of the term, practices are included. One could conclude that Elias' famous studies on the process of civilisation would be in line with this concept of mentality.

What is the relation of this holistic concept of mentality and individual behaviour? Farberman (1970) already clarified that, in the tradition of Mead, mentality is not something above or outside an individual but refers to the individual's selectivity of perception, to the representation of social conditions in each unit of social action via a reflective "inner forum", and to the plurality of perspectives that one can adopt in society to respond to social situations.

Despite the fact that this concept of mentality would fit our purpose, it is still too broad to be a heuristic instrument for the study of the impact of demographic change on mentalities. Therefore, we will sharpen certain partial elements of our definition of mentality that are closer to empirical research. One element has already been mentioned and discussed in detail: each cycle of coping with problems results in (collective) experiences, which guide the perception of new problems; they are framed in perception. Typical frames are one element of mentalities. Typical frames with regard to demographic change are, as discussed above, a growth frame, a demographisation frame, a realistic frame and a denial frame.

A second element of mentalities is also a result of a cycle of coping, which is re-introduced into a new cycle of coping: in social action, people develop an idea of how effective they are in influencing the situation at hand. In social psychology and sociology, the concept of self-efficacy has been refined and extended to ideas of collective efficacy (Sampson and Raudenbush 1999, 2004; Friedrichs and Oberwittler 2007): collectivities also have a notion of how successful or unsuccessful they are, for instance, in leaving a mark on their neighbourhood. Signs of disorder in neighbourhoods, such as derelict buildings, communicate that people are not able to shape their environment in the ways they would like to. Studies show that the degree of collective efficacy in a neighbourhood is dependent on the economic resources and the duration of residence in an area. Low collective efficacy, especially signs of

disorder, increase anxiety, decrease efforts of social control and increase criminality. In reference to a declining population, it is important to note that derelict buildings, which sometimes accompany shrinkage, have a symbolic meaning that represents collective efficacy: they are signs of humiliation that influence self-esteem and quality of life (Häussermann and Siebel 2004, pp. 169–170; Ross et al. 2001).

A third element of mentalities is a form of social reflexivity. Mentality is a form of inner conversation with the social environment. People differ in their patterns of applying social reflexivity. Reflexivity can be defined as a regular exercise of the mental ability to consider oneself in relation to one's social context and to evaluate the social context in relation to one's projects (Archer 2007, p. 4). Archer differentiates empirically four forms of social reflexivity: autonomous reflexives, communicative reflexives, meta-reflexives and fractured reflexives. The forms of reflexivity, which will be described in more detail, are differentiated by their relation to the social context: autonomous reflexives move beyond their context, communicative reflexives stay in their context, meta-reflexives do not fit in their context and fractured reflexives are usually unable to pursue a coherent path.

In detail, autonomous reflexives (Archer 2003, pp. 210–254) not only engage in reflection, they also come to clear decisions. They leave their social context, develop strategic agency and are self-disciplined. A characteristic is that they reflect on their social context autonomously in a self-contained way (Archer 2007, pp. 113–127). Their projects result in contextual discontinuity; upward mobility and orientation beyond the local context are common.

By contrast, communicative reflexives (Archer 2003, pp. 167–209; 2007, pp. 158–191) reflect in talking with others, especially family and friends, whom they appreciate. They do not reflect on their circumstances, they try to evade them. They struggle to attain a stable modus vivendi. Usually they reproduce their social group of descent. They develop a self-sacrificing habitus. Their projects keep them in a state of social immobility while they are well adapted to the local context. Contextual continuity is the norm. It is worthwhile to mention that only this type of reflexivity resembles the concepts of "mentality" associated with the process in which social groups reproduce their social position (Geiger 1932). These concepts were refined and popularised by the concept of habitus by Bourdieu (2010). Archer accentuates in her empirical typology that a continuation of one's social group is only the result of a specific kind of agency.

A third type, called meta-reflexives (Archer 2003, pp. 255–297; 2007, pp. 127–141), reflects on reflection. They are characterised by contextual discontinuity. They are idealists, value-oriented and try to transform the self, in a quest for self-improvement. They hold on to ideals in contrast to reality.Consequently, they are to some degree incongruous with their context and sometimes subversive in their actions. Being open to the local and the global, and sometimes involved in community organising, they are potentially universal citizens.

A fourth type, fractured reflexives (Archer 2003, pp. 298–341), is defined more by the absence of effective reflexivity than by the mode or content of social reflexivity. Fractured reflexives are unable to develop an instrumental orientation in their internal conversations. No projects are formulated. Their agency is impeded, which results in agential passivity.

Archer's concept of social reflexivity can be useful for a model of coping with demographic change as it provides a clear description of the mode of agency of social actors. However, it has to be specified how these types, originally developed for individual social actors, can be transferred to larger groups of social actors, such as municipalities. In posing this question, we follow the general line of this book: corporate actors can be treated as a special kind of social actor that can be analysed in ways that are similar to individual actors. Archer herself referred to a self that is either an individual "I/me" or a corporate actor that is a "we" (Archer 2003, p. 124). In the case of corporate actors, conversations that constitute reflexivity then refer to spoken conversations and not to inner conversations. The items on the measurement scale have to be modified only slightly.

Institutions constitute a second distinct area of applying the concept of social reflexivity. For instance, a country's institutionalised political structures privilege decisions, deliberations or norms to a greater extent than in another country. Sometimes they even result in a powerful stalemate. In theory, it is possible to develop such an institutional component of social reflexivity parallel to autonomous, communicative, meta-reflexive and fractured forms of reflexivity, especially since it can be constructed along the lines of Montesquieu's standard model of the separation of powers. But since we do not use an institutional concept of social reflexivity in the empirical part of this book, it is not elaborated here.

In this chapter, we have operationalised the concept of mentality by three more detailed elements: framing, collective efficacy and social reflexivity. In view of demographic change, a declining population is especially seen as influencing the mentality in society in the direction of a pessimistic mood and complacency (Kaufmann 2005). We can be more precise in formulating a hypothesis here: a social unit with a declining population is more prone to lower collective efficacy (*efficacy hypothesis*). In this sense, a 'pessimistic mood' would be the result of a reduced capacity to act collectively, communicated by a high degree of distrust within the population or by symbolic signs of disorder. Another mentality mechanism to produce Kaufmann's complacency would be the effect of a declining population on social reflexivity (*social reflexivity hypothesis*). A very strong effect would be if forms of fractured reflexivity occur more frequently in municipalities with a declining population. This would damage the capacity to formulate autonomous projects. A weaker effect in this direction would be that in social units characterised by a declining population, forms of communicative reflexivity are more frequent than in other municipalities. In this case, there would still be projects but of a less innovative kind.

3.4 Short Summary

The theoretical model of this book is structured as a heuristic tool to analyse the social processes constituting the effects of demographic change. Demographic change, especially a declining population, constitutes a challenge to modern societies. This challenge, however, does not immediately produce effects in a deterministic fashion: it is mediated by the specific responses to these challenges. Those

responses fall either in the category of demographic or non-demographic responses to demographic change.

Demographic responses try to either influence fertility rates, exploit gains in longevity by restructuring the life course, or increase population influx by either reducing the structural barriers to or raising the attractiveness of immigration. Demographic responses generally take too long to counter all the consequences of demographic change. Sometimes demographic responses are not even viable options at all. Therefore, non-demographic means of coping with demographic change have to be an important area of social reflection when responses to demographic change are considered.

Due to their importance to our context, and also to the lack of clarification in the existing literature, heuristic models of non-demographic ways of coping with demographic change were spelled out systematically and in more detail. Relevant to the coping model are four elements: a social definition of the problem, a coping strategy, institutions and mentalities. We theorise on the basis of a realistic model of problems, which are constituted by a discrepancy of the resources available to a social unit and the aspirations it develops. In general, the problem in question is socially defined by the social unit by accentuating resources, aspirations, both or neither: a growth frame focuses on regaining resources, a demographisation frame stresses adapting aspirations, a realistic frame considers both and a denial frame neither. A second element, efforts of coping, is characteristic of coping strategies that follow a similar but not completely congruent logic: The coping strategy of expansion tries to regain resources by shifting the focus to new areas of activity either by following a plan or by improvising collectively. The coping strategy of reduction seeks to readapt aspirations either by reducing activities or by switching identity, which can be provided for by cultivating diversity. The coping strategy of reorganisation replaces either the persons in certain positions or changes the structure of positions within the social unit. The coping strategy of threat rigidity is characterised by non-reaction as a result of failed responses, organisational dynamics or institutional vulnerabilities.

A third element is institutions. Institutions are the backbone to societal and organisational ways of coping. In general, the institutional pattern of modern societies is geared toward producing adaptability and similarity. The focus of this book is on the organisational field of the labour market. Therefore a number of hypotheses are formulated with regard to the intervening variables of the labour market in coping with demographic change. It is postulated that the proceedings of internal labour markets in coping with demographic decline may produce second-order problems as they hamper adaptability. Alternative hypotheses see external and dual labour markets as empirical equivalents. As labour markets are forms of organised cooperation parallel to modes of symbolic exchange, the division of labour is also a potential intervening variable in coping with demographic change. The hypothesis proposed is that division of labour is one institutional coping strategy to influence the levels of competition shaped by demographic change. Levels of society have to be differentiated as each follows a different logic: whereas world society triggers differentiation, shrinking regions may bear the potential for either de-differentiation or

multi-dimensional specialisation. A fourth element is mentalities. Similar to institutions, mentalities are part of the longue durée of coping with demographic change. In our mentality concept, we follow Mauss and Mead in accentuating agency and a pragmatic concept of mentality. We operationalise mentalities in terms of framing, collective efficacy and social reflexivity. We formulate hypotheses that social units with a declining population might experience an increase in particular forms of social reflexivity, namely, in fractured and communicative forms.

The theoretical model developed in this chapter serves as a heuristic concept. The following empirical chapters are therefore not just applications of a general theory, but efforts to strengthen, rebut, refine and revise the theoretical tools. The different elements of the theoretical concept feature in some empirical chapters more than in others. Chapter 5 will elaborate framing by corporate actors in different countries. Coping strategies are analysed in Chaps. 6 and 7. Chapter 8 highlights the institutions of labour market flexibility. Chapter 9 dissects the division of labour in different patterns of organisation. Mentalities are the subject of Chap. 10. The general effects of demographic change, with a special reference to framing and demographic ways of coping, are treated in Chap. 11.

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