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Cristina OTOVESCU, Adrian OTOVESCU

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The Depopulation of Romania – Is It an Irreversible Process?

Cristina OTOVESCU¹, Adrian OTOVESCU²

Abstract

The present article has as the main ground a shocking reality, which unfolds almost imperceptible in front of our eyes: the population of Romania has started, since 1990, to decrease steadily, a fact that will surely lead to a gradual depopulation of the country. Consequently, the priority problems, for the central and local administrations, are those addressing the stopping of the national demographic plunge, and the improvement of the moral climate from the society. The both issues can become the object of a national project that concerns the strategically development of the country, in the near future. At the end of 2017, the social Romania had a population of 19.6 million, from which 5,528,199 were active employees, 9,154,473 were pensioners, pupils, students, unemployed etc., and approximately 5 million of them were left in other countries around the world. Although it is on the 7th place in the hierarchy of the 47 states of Europe, on addressing the number of dwellers, Romania might lose this position in the next decades. The demographic prognosis estimates that in 4 decade time, the population of our country will reach approximately 13,7 million dwellers, that is a smaller number than that from 1919 (15.5 mil.). Already, in 2017, there were 3.5 million dwellers less than in 1989, the most significant decrease of the population registering in the 5 counties from the South-West region of Oltenia. The causes of the national demographic decline are multiple, but the ones with the most direct impact proved to be: the maintaining of the birth rate at low shares (9 in one thousand dwellers), and the mortality rate at high shares, especially in the rural regions (14.9 for one thousand dwellers), to which there is added the high rate of abortion (311.5 for one thousand babies born alive in 2016), and the massive emigration towards the developed countries, which has been shifting 5 million dwellers. The high rate of the abortions and emigration placed our country among the first places, in the European states. The demographic phenomena are analysed from a statistic and sociological perspective, and in such a theoretical background, there is merged the diagnosis approach with the prognosis one.

Keywords: social depopulation, diagnosis, prognosis of population, demographic decline, birth rate, abortion, social development, social problem.

¹ University of Craiova, Faculty of Law, Craiova, ROMANIA. E-mail: otocris@yahoo.com

² University of Craiova, Faculty of Letters, Craiova, ROMANIA. E-mail: adiotovescu@yahoo.com

Introduction

The primordial and fundamental issue of the actual Romanian society is represented by dramatic decrease in the number of dwellers, an issue that must be fully acknowledged by the authorities of the state, and, implicitly, solved in a pragmatic manner. The data offered by the official statistics show that, on the 31st of December 2017, the Romanian population had with 3,507,214 less people than on the 1st of June 1989, a social situation that indicates a severe decrease, which can be regarded as a reason in the process of depopulation. Moreover, if there is also evidenced the fact that almost 5 million Romanians changed their residence and jobs in the last 28 years (leaving for different countries of Europe, or other world continents), that the demographic prognoses indicate a massive reduction of the dwellers from this country, there is found a number of 13.7 million people in 2060, which can be regarded as an ample and rapid process of depopulation in Romania.

From the historic point of view, the depopulation has started since the 1960, when an important share of the dwellers saves themselves from collectivisation by moving to the near cities. The phenomenon of leaving some of the villages, for the city life, was extremely dominant that some cities, as Bucharest, Cluj, Iasi, Timisoara, Craiova were declared “closed”. After 1900, the depopulation continued in the rural areas, but it also extended in the urban regions (as a consequence of the external migration), gaining a national character. This time, a significant share of the dwellers from the cities and villages chose a life strategy founded on the emigration into the developed countries, as an alternative to the harsh living conditions from their own communities. The actual statistical estimations indicate a continuation of the external migration of the Romanians, and the existence of two types of depopulation: definitive and temporary.

In relation to the actual volume of the population, Romania is on the 7th place in the hierarchy of the 47 countries from the European territory, and on the 56th place in the world, from a total number of 225 countries taken into account. It must be mentioned that the people of the planet live on 6 continents, and that there is a great number of countries on the other continents than the European one, such is: the African continent – 53 countries, the Asian continent – 51 countries, and the American one – 36 countries. Nonetheless, Oceania is a continent with only 15 countries.

If in the African or Asian countries there is, generally, a great volume of population, a high birth rate and, therefore, a stable demographic support for the economic and social development, on the other hand, in most of the European countries, including Romania, there can be noticed a tendency of aging within the population, which is correlated with a decline of the birth rate and a negative natural growth, increasingly obvious during the last three decades.

The process of depopulation in Romania proved to be more accentuated in the SW Region of Oltenia than in the other regions of the country, the area losing almost half of million people in the last 28 years (in 2017, unlike the month of July 1989, when it had over 2,450,000 dwellers). The actual demographic prognoses further anticipate a severe reduction of the population in the next 4 decades, from this moment on. Owing to these reasons, our analysis is to give a special attention to the demographic and social problems of the mentioned region.

The year 1990 signified, for Romania, the beginning of an era of historical transition from communism to capitalism. After 28 years, it can be noticed that there occurred both positive changes, necessary and functional for creating a new identity of the Romanian society, and negative ones, dysfunctional for its future evolution. Among the last mentioned ones, there ought to be remembered not only the demographic decline of the country, but also the phenomenon of moral degradation of the individuals, along with the interpersonal relations, their behaviour in the public life, a phenomenon manifested through the lack of respect on addressing the consecrated values, disrespectful language or the excess of hatred, malice and aggressiveness, corruption and discord etc.

The stopping of the population's decline and the re-establishing of the demographic equilibrium represent a concrete and vital problem for Romania, which is extremely complex, due to the fact that it requires not only a pronatality behaviour of the young generations, along with political will, but also financial resources or adequate institutional support, in addition to an urgent firm intervention. The moral betterment of the societal organism is still a delicate problem, whose solving is preponderantly sought in specialised institutions, which practice a systematic education, based on fundamental values, and that is why it needs a longer period of intervention for the bringing to an efficient state.

The both issues, the demographic and the moral one, imply integrated measures of acting, with the possibility to become the subject of "country projects", or a significant national project. It is known that the absence of the country project is a frequently mentioned request on the political scene, and obsessively invoked within the actual journalistic environment.

The fact that, for 28 years, the population has continuously and significantly been diminished, at national community level, and especially in the villages, there can be appreciated that the phenomenon has become not only historical and chronical, but also concerning, due to the fact that it affects the preservation and the perpetuation of the actual socio-economic and cultural Romanian realities. Further on, we are to try to understand whether this process is an irreversible one, or, on the contrary, it can be stopped or straightened, and what measures can be imposed in the actual period.

Theoretical and methodological background

In the specialised literature, consecrated to the scientific analysis of the population, there are met two major coordinates of investigation: a) through certain indicators that express the natural movement of the population, as the age, the sex, the birth rate, the mortality, the natural growth, the fertility and the rate of reproduction or renewal of generations, the life expectancy etc., and, b) through certain indicators that reflect the social life of the people – the relation between the active and the inactive population, the unemployment rate, the salaries and the pensions, the risk of poverty, the medium life expectancy, the territorial shift or the internal and external migration of the citizens, their occupations, the level of training and their residence etc.

The first category of indicators is predominantly used in the demographic studies, whereas the second category is frequently met in the sociological studies. The merging of the demographic vision with the sociological one leads to rigorous research studies, interdisciplinary, which can offer relevant data on addressing the population of a certain locality, region or country.

The present study has as a starting point a real social phenomenon – the inexorable decline of the population from Romania – and also represents an alarming signal on the multiple consequences of this phenomenon on the national society, in its entirety. Therefore, the main assumed objective is that to know in detail what is happening with some internal demographic processes, whose direction seems to be a risk for the future evolution of the Romanian society. The purpose is that to supply relevant data for the elaboration of some official policies for the stopping of the demographic decline, or to straighten certain processes deviated from their normal direction (related to the natural stability and reproduction of the population in Romania).

The theoretical background is specific for the sociology of the population, from which there has been chosen the systemic examination approach, owing to the fact that it allows us to decipher the national demographic structure, and, moreover, it offers us a unitary and general image on the internal social realities. The main method of analysis is the statistic method, because it supplies synthetic data, both at macrosocial and microsocial level. To them, it is added the comparative method, which helps us make differentiations and find similarities between the same demographic and social phenomena, at national, regional and county level. Because the evolution of the population is a social and historical phenomenon, within our research, we resorted to the historical analysis too. Equally, there has been used the method of causal explanation, in order to decipher the origin and the dynamics of certain socio-demographic processes, as that of the population decrease.

Results

The dynamics of the population from Romania, in the period 1859-2017, and estimations of the evolution, until 2060

From the chronological point of view, there are considered two categories of data: the historical ones, registered in different statistical evidence of the past times, which allow us a diagnosis-type study, and others that refer to the possible future evolution of the same demographic internal phenomenon, which are prognosis-type ones. The statistical data from the table below show that, during 201 years taken into account, 1856-2060, there can be noticed the existence of two demographic processes or evolution trends, of the population from our country: a continuously ascendant one, in the period 1859-1989 (130 years), and another, of irreversible decrease, during 1990-2017 (28 years), with tendencies of continuity in the near future, especially in the rural regions.

Table 1. The diagnosis on the historical evolution of the population from Romania until 2060

No.	Reference years / censuses	Total population
1.	1859	3,865,000
2.	1886	5,046,000
3.	1900	6,045,000
4.	1915	7,897,000
5.	1919	15,495,000
6.	1930	18,057,000
7.	Jan. 25/ 1948	15,872,624
8.	Feb. 21/1956	17,489,450
9.	Mar. 15/1966	19,103,163
10.	Jan. 5 /1977	21,559,910
11.	Jul. 1/ 1989	23,151,564
12.	Jan. 7 / 1992	22,810,035
13.	Mar. 18 / 2002	21,680,974
14.	Oct. 20 / 2011	20,121,641
15.	Dec. 31 / 2017	19,644,350
16.	Estimations 2030	18,117,713
17.	Estimations 2060	15,390,623

Sources: Axenciuc, 1996: 20-21 (for the period 1859-1930); INS, 2018 (for 2011, 2017); INS, 2017 (for 2030, 2060)

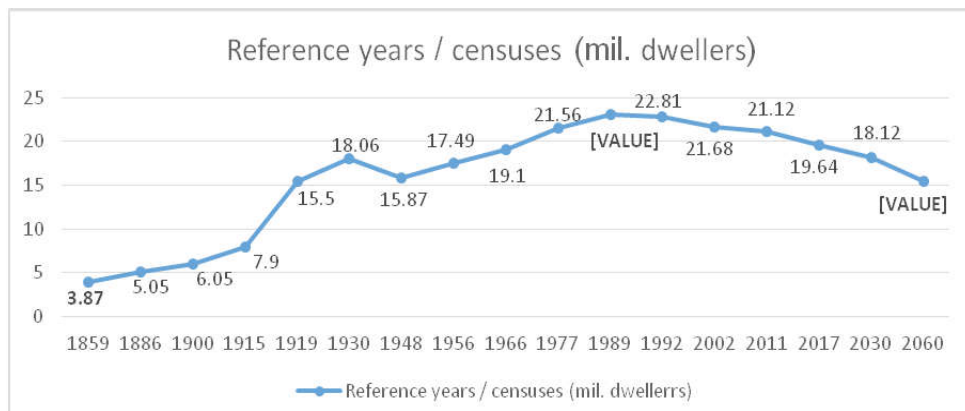


Figure 1. Dynamics of the population in Romania (1859-2060)

If we also take into account the fact that, nowadays, approx. 5 million Romanians live in different countries of the world, then there can be affirmed that, in reality, the phenomenon of population reduction from our country might become more drastic in the future, and the estimation that Romania will have 15.3 million dwellers in 2060 can be regarded as an optimistic prevision now.

The main causes for the demographic decline

The rapid decrease of the population in Romania is a demographic phenomenon, based on a diversity of factors, causes and conditions – some of them having a direct influence, others with an indirect action, some of them are related to the natural movement of the population, and others are related to the social dimension of the human existence. Among the causes that we consider directly involved into the process of reproduction of the population, we remark the following: (1) The continuous decrease of the birth rate, along with the aging of the population and the growth of the mortality rate; (2) The steep increase in the number of abortions, starting with 1990 (3.2 abortions for an alive new-born child), and their maintaining to a relatively high rate in the following decades; (3) The transformation of the manpower, especially the young one, into a continuous and intense process (especially in the period 1995-2007).

To these above, there are added other causes too, of a social nature essentially, and preponderantly indirect, such are: (1) The difficulty of the young people to form a family and to increase the marrying age to over 25 years old, and even over 30 years old in some cases, when, it is known, the fertility is reduced and, moreover, the number of the alive new-born babies is sensibly diminished; (2) The lack of an adequate dwelling place for the young couples, of a constant job and appropriate income for the material needs; (3) The unemployment or the incapacity to integrate on the labour market of a significant share of the 15-24 year olds, the

unemployment rate among them reaching 15.4%, in the second trimester of 2017, while the average rate of the unemployment in the country was of 4.8%; (4) The ignoring of the phenomenon of depopulation in Romania, by the governors who proved to be incapable, after 1990, to adopt pro-nationalist policies on long term, or to make major investments in the creation of jobs for the young graduates; (5) The changing of the conception on life of the young people, who prefer to have one child, a mentality often justified thorough the lack of time, or limited income. Further on, we are to approach few of the causes mentioned above.

The historical analysis of the data from the demographic statistical data shows that, in the 158 years that passed between 1859 and 2017, the population, at first of the two united Principalities (Moldova and Wallachia), then the whole Romania, registered a continuous growing tendency: from 3,965,000 dwellers in 1859, to 19,644,350 in 2017 – being 5.08 times higher in this year, than in 1859. It results a growth rate of the population of over 459% (also due to the union with Transylvania, on the 1st of December 1918).

In 1866, the population of the two united Principalities surpassed the threshold of 5 million dwellers, and in 1900 there was surpassed the threshold of 6 million dwellers. The union of the Romanian Kingdom with Transylvania, on the 1st of December 1918, represented both the completion and the consolidation of the state unity, and a significant increase of the territory (to 295,641 km²), and of the population, which reached over 15.4 million dwellers. Although, in 1939, there were registered almost 20 million dwellers, the historic events that followed led to a major loss of territories and population, by Romania. The former Soviet Union incorporated abusively Bessarabia, Northern Bukovina, and Hertza Region, in 1940, and through the Dictate of Vienna, from the 30th of August 1940, Romania lost the north-western part of Transylvania too (of 43,492 km²), along with the 2,667,000 dwellers, which entered under the administration of the Horthyst Hungary.

Great Romania was viable just for 22 years, in the period between the two world wars, lasting from 1918 until 1940, when its dismemberment started and, implicitly, the reduction of the territory. If, between 1918 and 1940 it had 295,641 km², later it was reduced to what is in present the surface of Romania, 238,397 km² (resulting a loss of 57,244 km²).

In exchange, the volume of the population increased permanently, not only in the period between the wars and in the post-war period, but along the entire history of our country, for the considered period of time (1859-1989). There was registered a peak in the growth of the population, of 23,151,564 dwellers, on the 1st of July 1989, which was also the final year of the communist regime in Romania. After this period, there was installed a constant decrease tendency of the population, at national level, in the period 1990-2017, as it can be noticed from *Figure 1*.

The highest rate in the diminishing of the population, between 1990 and 2017, was in the SW Region of Oltenia, of almost half of million dwellers, the area representing one of the 8 regions of Oltenia. Although it is subscribed to the national course on the evolution of demographic phenomena, it nevertheless presents certain specific features, at county level, as attested by the data below (The National Commission for statistics, 1990; INS, 2006; Tempo-Online, 2018).

Table 2. Dynamics of population from Oltenia, in the period 1930-2017

No.	Reference years/ censuses	Population					
		Dolj	Gorj	Mehedinti	Olt	Valcea	Total
1.	Dec. 29 1930	533,872	253,812	282,440	380,663	295,560	1,746,347
2.	Jan. 25 1948	615,301	280,584	304,788	442,442	341,590	1,984,705
3.	Feb. 21 1956	642,028	293,031	304,091	458,982	362,356	2,060,488
4.	Mar.15 1966	691,116	298,382	310,021	476,513	368,779	2,144,811
5.	Jan. 5 1977	750,328	348,521	322,371	518,804	414,241	2,354,265
6.	Jul. 1 1989	772,451	387,528	328,665	534,828	430,263	2,453,735
7.	Jul. 1 1990	776,161	387,444	326,816	530,425	430,656	2,451,502
8.	Mar.18 2002	734,231	387,308	306,732	489,274	413,247	2,330,792
9.	Jul 1 2005	718,874	384,852	303,869	483,674	415,181	2,306,450
10.	Jul. 1 2007	712,187	381,643	298,741	475,702	411,576	2,279,849
11.	Jul. 1 2012	656,787	338,564	263,061	431,048	368,828	2,058,288
12.	Jul. 1 2017	635,589	323,635	249,459	407,741	356,716	1,973,140
Losses of population in 2017 as compared to the peak year		- 140,572	- 63,893	- 79,206	- 127,087	- 73,940	- 480,595

The population of the SW Region of Oltenia increased permanently, since 1930 to 1989, when there was registered a historical peak, and after it remained on a demographic decreasing trend, in all its five counties, which is still continuing nowadays. In 2017, in the entire region, there were 226,793 more dwellers than in 1930, and with 480,595 fewer than in the “peak” 1989 year.

The most significant reductions were registered in the counties of Dolj (with 140,572 dwellers) and Olt (with 127,087 dwellers), together “contributing” with 55.7% to the total number of losses. They also have the highest number of dwellers from the total number of the counties from Oltenia. Among the most important causes of the demographic decline, there is the aging of the population, especially from the rural regions, the decreased birth rate and the migration of some dwellers abroad (for work, or family reunion etc.), the process of dis-industrialisation of some economic regions, at some point extremely attractive for the young manpower.

The diagnosis of the natural movement of the population at national level, and the Region of Oltenia, shows that the number of the alive new-born babies has permanently bigger than the number of the deceased, being a continuous growth in the volume of dwellers, until 1989 inclusively (The National Commission for Statistics, 1990; INS, 2002).

Table 3. The situation of the birth rate and mortality rate in 1989

No.	Characteristics Reference population	Total	Alive new-born babies	Deceased	Natural growth rate	
					Absolute data	For 1,000 dwellers
1.	Romania	23,151,564	369,544	247,306	122,238	5.3
2.	Oltenia	2,488,173	39,229	29,370	9,859	4.2
3.	Dolj	775,189	11,316	9,496	1,820	2.4
4.	Gorj	386,498	6,986	4,280	2,706	7.0
5.	Mehedinti	333,235	5,118	4,397	721	2.2
6.	Olt	549,361	8,646	6,452	2,194	4.0
7.	Valcea	443,890	7,163	4,745	2,418	5.4

The continuous growth of the population from 1930 and to 1989 determined a positive natural growth rate, in all the 5 counties of Oltenia, for almost 60 years, although during this interval of time there took place disturbing historical events, such as the World war II, and the double change of the social, political and economic administration, from our country (in 1945, and in December 1989).

It can be noticed that, in 1989, the natural growth rate in Oltenia was lower (4.2 for a thousand dwellers) than the one registered in Romania (5.3 for a thousand dwellers). Yet, this region contributed with 39,229 alive new-born babies in the total number of the 369,544 from the entire country, which represents 9.9%. The highest natural growth rate was in the counties for Gorj (7 for a thousand dwellers) and Valcea (5.4 for a thousand dwellers), while the natural growth rate in the other three counties of Oltenia was under the average of this region (4.2 for a thousand dwellers).

In 1989, the highest natural growth rate of the population was registered in three counties from the region of Moldova: Iasi (11.8 for a thousand dwellers) Vaslui (11.7 for a thousand dwellers) and Bacau (10.6 for a thousand dwellers). It ought to be remarked that, in the same year, the natural growth rate from the entire region of Oltenia was much higher among the urban region population (9.2 for a thousand dwellers) than within the rural population (0.9 for a thousand dwellers). The fact can be explained through the aging of the people from the rural regions and the depopulation of the villages, especially by the young people, who were irremediably attracted by the city life, although more than a half of the population from this region (57.7%) had their domicile in the village, as resulting from the next table (The National Commission for Statistics, 1990)

Table 4. The number and the share of the resident population (1989)

No.	Reference population	Total of dwellers	Urban		Rural	
			Absolute data	Percent	Absolute data	Percent
1.	Romania	23,151,564	12,311,803	53.2%	10,839,761	46.8%
2.	Oltenia	2,453,735	1,049,381	42.3%	1,404,354	57.7%
3.	Dolj	772,451	367,609	47.6%	404,842	52.4%
4.	Gorj	387,528	161,221	41.6%	226,307	58.4%
5.	Mehedinti	328,665	149,142	45.4%	179,523	54.6%
6.	Olt	534,828	207,223	38.7%	327,605	61.3%
7.	Valcea	430,263	164,186	38.2%	266,077	61.8%

Some demographic data from Romania have been radically changed in the last 27 years, from 1989 to 2016, as it can be noticed from the table below (NIS, Tempo-Online data basis, 2018). Thus, for example, the natural growth rate registered, in 2016, negative values at the national, regional and county level, being lower in Oltenia (-4.5 for a thousand dwellers) than the national average (-2.5 for a thousand dwellers), and, especially significant in the counties of Olt (-6.1 for a thousand dwellers) and Dolj (-4.9 for a thousand dwellers). The existence of the aging population fuelled the increased mortality rate, and the small share of the young population, with residence in Romania, narrowed the increasing of the birth rate.

Table 5. The situation of the birth and mortality rates in 2016

No.	Characteristics Reference population	Total	Alive new-born babies	Deceased	Natural growth rate	
					Absolute data	For 1,000 dwellers
1.	Romania	19,760,314	203,231	257,547	- 54,316	- 2.5
2.	Oltenia	1,993,741	17,477	27,215	- 9,738	- 4.5
3.	Dolj	641,113	6,022	9,403	- 3,381	- 4.9
4.	Gorj	327,550	2,904	4,070	- 1,166	- 3.1
5.	Mehedinti	252,711	2,462	3,747	- 1,285	- 4.5
6.	Olt	412,512	3,343	6,113	- 2,770	- 6.1
7.	Valcea	359,855	2,746	3,882	- 1,136	- 2.9

There ought to be mentioned that the young population (of until 39 years old) from the entire region of Oltenia, had, in 2016, 889,120 dwellers, that is 44.6% (that between 0-14 years old being of 280,776 people – 14.08%). The middle aged people (of 40-64 years old) were 720,525, that is 36.14% from the total number of the population of the region, while the old population (of 65 years old and over) was reaching 384,096 people, that is 19.26%.

The analysis of the population according to the region of residence (urban/rural regions) shows that, in the villages, there are born fewer children than in the cities, and that, in this region, there is a higher rate of the mortality, compared to the values registered in the urban regions, for 2016 (NIS Tempo-Online data basis, 2018).

Table 6. The natural growth rate according to the residence (2016)

No.	Characteristics Reference population	Total of dwellers	Urban (for a thousand people)			Rural (for a thousand dwellers)		
			Alive new-born babies	Deceased	Natural growth rate	Alive new-born babies	Deceased	Natural growth rate
1.	Romania	19,760,314	1.4	11.4	-1.0	9.9	14.9	-5.0
2.	Oltenia	1,993,741	9.6	10.4	-0.8	7.4	16.5	-9.1
3.	Dolj	641,113	10.0	11.1	-1.1	8.7	18.5	-9.8
4.	Gorj	327,550	9.1	9.4	-0.3	7.0	15.3	-8.3
5.	Mehedinti	252,711	8.8	11.1	-2.3	7.6	18.2	-10.6
6.	Olt	412,512	10.0	10.0	-	6.8	18.1	-11.3
7.	Valcea	359,855	9.2	9.9	-0.7	6.4	11.6	-5.2

The birth rate has permanently decreased in Romania of the last three decades: from 13.6 for a thousand dwellers, on the 1st of July 1990, to 10.3 for a thousand, on the 1st of July 2000, then to 9.4 for a thousand, on the 1st of July 2010, and to 9 for a thousand, on the 1st of January 2017. On addressing the fertility rate, it was, in 2015 1.58 alive new-born babies for a woman, in Romania, coinciding with the EU-28 average.

Another major causes for the demographic decline of Romania is represented by the high rate of the abortions, especially after 1990, in the period when there were introduced the democratic institutions and the capitalist values in our country. It must be underlined that, in 1966, the communist regime forbidden the abortion through laws. The freedoms obtained in 1990 created facilities of option for the practice of abortion, which 992,265 women used in this year, registering over 3 abortions for each alive born-baby, as shown in the table below (NIS Tempo-Online data basis, 2018). It is redundant to assert that, in the first year of democratic practice, the Romanian society lost the chance to increase with almost 1 million dwellers.

Table 7. The national number and abortion rate

Years	Alive new-born babies	Abortions	For 1000 women	For 1000 alive new-born babies
1990	314,746	992,265	177.6	3,158.4
1995	236,640	502,840	87.5	1,047.5
2000	234,521	257,267	44.3	1,099.5
2005	221,020	162,087	29	735.1
2010	212,199	101,271	17.8	478.9
2016	203,231	63,085	11.3	311.5

After a period of explosive increase of the abortions, in the interval 1990-2000, there appeared an annual diminishing of them, thus, in 2016, there were 63,085 abortions for 203,231 alive new-born babies, or 311.5 abortions to 1,000 alive new-born babies. The data show that the Romanian women resorted to abortion in a greater extent than the women from the other European countries, where the continental average was of 202 abortions for 1000 alive new-born babies, in 2015. In EU-28, the average was 210 abortions for 1000 alive new-born babies, in the

same year, and in the northern countries, there was registered a higher level – of 267 abortions for 1000 alive new-born babies. Therefore, it is obvious that, in general, the rate of the abortions influenced directly and negatively the rate of the natality in our country, affecting the natural reproduction of the population and contributing to the installation of the demographic decline. The highest share of the abortions was registered among the Romanian women, with an age between 20 and 34 years old.

A constant pressure on the volume of the stable population from our country has been exercised by the flux of the external migration of the Romanians. If, in the period after 1962, the internal migratory movement was characteristic, from villages to the cities, after 1990, the external migratory movement of the dwellers, both from the rural and urban regions, who went to work in different developed countries of the world, became defining. In the case of some countries as Italy and Spain, there can be mentioned even an exodus of the Romanians in these societies, due to the fact that, since 1990 and up to now, there have arrived over 1 million co-nationals, in each of the countries. The over 1.3 million Romanians from Italy are spread all over the territory of the country and contribute to its economic development (Otovescu, 2016). The same is in the USA, where there are over 1 million Romanian immigrants, and in Great Britain and Germany, there is estimated that there are communities of approx. 400,000 Romanian immigrants in each of these countries etc. The Romanians form a big community of immigrants in countries as Italy, Spain, England etc., the shift for working and the obtaining of higher income abroad being the characteristic of them, transforming their own country into a country of emigration (Otovescu, 2017). Some researchers evidence the positive effects of the external migration on the individual level, and the negative effects on socio-economic national plan (Cojocaru, 2006). Other specialists examine the negative consequences of the emigration on the families that leave the country, such are the psychical and emotional traumas, which the children experience when their parents leave away from home (Levai *et al.*, 2018), which can be correlated with other resilient factors (Otovescu *et al.*, 2015).

From the information presented in a recent Eurostat Report, there can be seen that, on addressing the “manpower mobility” indicator, Romania was situating, in 2017, on the first position among the EU states. Our country had, in 2017, a fifth (approx. 20%) of the manpower employed in different states members of the EU (being followed by Lithuania – 15%, Croatia – 14%, Portugal – 13.9%, Latvia – 12.9% and Bulgaria – 12.5%). In other words, 1 in 5 Romanians, aged between 20 and 64, had their residence in other states members of the EU, in 2017 (DC News, 2018). More recently, there is appreciated that, at world level, Romania is situated on the second place, after Syria, from the point of view of the number of people involved in the proves of trans-national emigration (approx. 5 million people).

The ampleness of the immigration phenomenon, towards the more developed countries of the European Union, imposed the adopting of community policies, for the control of the economic immigrant fluxes and refugees (Matichescu *et al.*, 2015).

Moreover, there was necessary the establishing of normative acts, based on which there can be observed the right to free circulation of the foreigners, and the other economic, social and cultural rights (Otovescu & Otovescu, 2017). Essentially, the impact of the migration on the countries of destination is appreciated as a beneficial one, on economic and demographic level, in the European Union, being a source of internal cohesion (Bostan et al., 2016) and community revitalisation, because most of the immigrants are young, have professional qualifications from their own country, and, extremely important, they speak a foreign international language.

In the last decade, the share of the Romanians who live in other states members of the EU increased with 12.3%, that is from 7.4%, in 2007 (the year our country was received as a state member of the EU), to 19.7%, in 2017, being considered the highest increase from the 28 states members of the EU. If this trend is continued, it might change into a threatening one, on addressing the demographic reproduction and the economic security of the Romanian society.

The demographic decline of Romania triggers a multitude of negative consequences, such as: (1) At national community level: the concentration of the population in the cities, and the gradual abandoning of the rural regions. This way the deserted villages have appeared, with fewer and fewer dwellers, or at all, without an economic activity and social effervescence. Through their disappearing, there are lost material and spiritual values, secular traditions, different viable behavioural patterns and authentic lifestyles; (2) At economic level: the deficit of the autochthonous manpower, Romania reaching the situation of importing different specialists and under-qualified workers on the construction market, trade and different public services; (3) At educational level: the decreasing of the school population, the disorganisation of the educational system, of all the levels, which becomes incapable to provide all the specialisations and working resources, necessary for the national economy; (4) At social level: the impossibility to pay the pensions for the next decades, the number of the employed becoming smaller than that of the pensioners; the decrease of the life quality level, a phenomenon that will just amplify the exodus towards the bigger cities from Romania, and the Developed European countries etc.

The social life diagnosis

A succinct diagnosis on the actual Romanian life, based on certain indicators, unravels some significant data. Thus, the decreasing of the population, in general, has involved a lot of demographic, social and economic instabilities, among which the relation between the active and the inactive population. From 1990 to 2016, the active population from Romania was permanently reduced (from 10.839 million, to 8.735 million), in 2016 being with 2,103,700 less active people in our country, and, in the region of Oltenia, the number of the active people decreasing with 359,200, in the same time interval. The amplest decrease was in Dolj County - approx. 100,000 people. In January 2018, there were registered 23,578 unemployed people,

from which around 22,000 in the rural regions. It is the county with the highest number of unemployed from the country.

According to the data presented on the site of the Minister of Labour and Social Justice (2017), the number of the active employed people from Romania was, on the 31st of December 2017, of 5,528,199 people. The average rate of unemployment, at national level, was of 4.02%, and 5 counties, among which 2 from Oltenia, registered over the average values. From the point of view of the unemployment rate, on the first 5 places, there were the following counties, at the end of 2017 Vaslui (10.19%); Teleorman (10.2%); Mehedinti (9.39%); Dolj (8.80%); Galati (7.86%). In relation to the number of the unemployed, there is another hierarchy (31st of December 2017): the municipality of Bucharest (18,275 unemployed), Dolj County (23,331), Galati (15,245), Buzau (15,001), Teleorman (14,893) (Minister of Labour and Social Justice, 2017). A high share, among the unemployed, is represented by the women, the possibility of employment being reduced, especially in the rural regions (Achimescu, Cace, & Stanescu, 2011). Due to this situation, the proportion of the women from Romania who migrated abroad increased, a phenomenon also met at international level (Islam, & Cojocaru, 2016).

There can be appreciated that, based on the statistical data we disposed of, in the 3rd trimester of 2017, in Romania, there was an inactive population made of 9,154,473 people, consisting mainly of the next big social groups: 5,224,000 pensioners, with an average monthly pension of 1,106 lei (the highest pensions being among the dwellers from the big cities of the country), 521,196 children, pre-school education, 2,524,399 pupils, pre-university education, 531,586 students, to which there are added 353,292 unemployed people (with and without indemnity), along with other social ignored categories. There result is that the 5,528,199 active workers had to provide for the 9,154,473 pensioners, students and unemployed, a situation which is practically impossible, even if the state takes a tax on the net income of approx. 43%. In reality, a substantial support was represented by the people who left to work abroad (definitively or temporarily), especially of those who come from families with children or pensioner parents. For example, the statistics shows that, at the end of 2016, 22,807 people emigrated definitively from Romania and 207,578 temporarily (compared to 2008, when there were registered 302,796 temporarily emigrated people, and over 100,000 definitively) (NIS, Tempo-Online data base, 2018), which indicates a dynamic and massive flux of the external migration from the actual Romanian society.

If we cumulated the number of the active workers, 5,528,199 people, with the number of the inactive people from our country, 9,154,473 people, we would reach a total number of 14,682,672 people, who, practically, represent the stable and real population from Romania, that is almost three quarters (74.91%) from the total number of 19.6 million dwellers (on the 1st of January 2017). The rest of over 4,917,328, the difference to the 19.6 million residents from the country, is made of the number of the people left for other countries of Europe, or other continents, and about which we do not know if they come back in their native

country. Certain sociological researches show that the Romanians who left to work abroad, and then stayed definitively in those countries, represent 21.1% from the people who left for work in Spain, 41.5% - in Germany, 25.8% - in England, 23.9% - in France and 21.1% - in Italy (Otovescu, 2017).

From the social presentation of Romania, there can be noticed that, in May 2017, only the employed people from 4 counties (Cluj-Napoca, Sibiu, Ilfov and Arges) and the Municipality of Bucharest, managed to earn a net wage over the national average, of 2,363 ron, the rest of the other 36 counties registering salaries under the national average. The lowest salaries from our country were in the counties of Teleorman (1,720 ron), Ialomita (1,789 ron), Braila (1,801 ron), Harghita (1,808 ron), Covasna (1,117 ron) (NIS, My 2017). The highest earning was of the workers from the county of Olt (2,184 ron), and the lowest in the county of Valcea (1,848 ron).

The actual information shows that, in Bucharest and in the counties of Cluj, Timis and Ilfov the workers had, in May 2018, the highest earnings from the country, while in the counties of Harghita, Ialomita and Bistrita-Nasaud there were registered the lowest salaries, making the estimation that, in the same time, the most unemployed people being in the regions affected by poverty, where the population faces severe material lacks (The National Commission on Prognosis, 2018). From the information given by Eurostat, it results that, in the Romania of 2015, the average rate of poverty was of 24.2%, yet, 4 regions registering a percent over this average (North-East – 35.9%, South-East – 32.03%, South-West Oltenia – 32.1% and South Muntenia – 30.6%), and three regions under the average (West – 19.6%, North-West – 19.2%, Centre – 17.8% and Bucharest-Ilfov – 5.9%) (NIS, 2015). The average life expectancy was, in the same year, 2015, of 75.4 years in our country, higher for women, 79 years old, and 72 for men. The lowest life expectancy was registered among the dwellers from the counties of Satu Mare, Calarasi, Giurgiu and Tulcea (approx. 73 years old), and the highest among the population from Bucharest (77.8 years), Valcea (77.5 years), Cluj-Napoca (76.7 years), Brasov (76.6 years) and Sibiu (76.2 years). Compared to the states members of the European Union, where in 2013 there was registered a life expectancy rate of 80.5 years (83.3 for women and 77.8 for men), Romania has a life expectancy rate reduced with 5 years. For example, the average life expectancy in France in 2014 was of 86 years old for women and 82.8 years for men (Mihai, 2016).

In order to attenuate the risk of poverty, the Government gave, in 2017, a social help, called the minimum guaranteed income, to 248,477 citizens (1.12 % from the population), most of them being in the county of Teleorman (10,837), and the least of them in Bucharest. In Oltenia, there were 40,342 beneficiaries (2.40 from the total of the population), the most in Gorj, and the least in the county of Valcea (Minister of Labour and Social Justice, 2017). A noticeable difference there is also between the living conditions of the population from the rural regions, confronted to those offered by the cities of Romania, the population from many of the villages being old and helpless, living on the verge of the surviving and

the risk of poverty, without running water, sewage system and corresponding medical assistance. The situation from the actual health system affects not only the rural population, but also that from other cities or areas of the country, due to the brain drain phenomenon of the white smocks, and other specialists, which have emigrated massively abroad, in the last years, extending the national problems (Boncea, 2014).

The prognosis on the evolution of the resident population from Romania and Oltenia, in 2030 and 2060

The estimations realised by the National Institute of Statistics in 5 variants, evidence a severe tendency of decreasing in the population of our country, a process which will be ampler in the counties from Oltenia. If we take into account the average variant, considered the most plausible projection, then it will be noticed that, in 12 year time, that is in 2030 (the end of the period 2018-2030), the population from Romania will have increased with over 1.9 million dwellers, reaching 17.8 million people, and registering a return point to the level of the population from February 1965. Over 42 years, in 2060 (that is the end of the period 2018-2060), the population will have reached approx. 13.7 million people, which represent a number closed to the total number of dwellers registered in 1919 (15.5 million), after the Great Union from the 1st of December 1918. There might be lost, in this case, over 6 million residents (confronted to the population of 19.8 million from 2015), a number that surpasses the actual population of other countries, such Croatia (4.17 million), Albania (2.87 million), Macedonia (2.08 million), or will get closer to the population of Serbia (7 million) and Bulgaria (7.1 million).

In the average projecting variant, the Romanian population will decrease in 2015-2060, oscillating “between —61.3% (Teleorman) and —7,5% (Iasi)”. “Of the 8 development regions, compared to 2015, the resident population of South-West Region of Oltenia would be reduced to half, in 2060. On the opposite pole, there will be the Bucharest-Ilfov Region, which will register a decrease with 10.8%, due to the increase of the population from Ilfov county. The decrease of the population from the other regions would be between —22.4% in the North-East Region and —44.5% in the South-Muntenia Region” (NIS, 2017).”

Compared to 2015, the lowest decreases of population from the territory of Romania will be registered, in 2060, by the following regions: SW Oltenia (-44.6%); South-Muntenia (-37.3%); SE (32.3%) and West (-20.2%), the national average being of -22.3%. on the opposite pole, the slightest reduction of population will be in the regions: Bucharest-Ilfov (-3.8%); NE (-13.5%); Centre (-14%) and NW (-14.4%). Until 2060, the highest losses of population will occur in the South-West Region of Oltenia, of over 50% from the population of the county, which will be registered, according to the intermediary calculation, by the counties of Olt (-53.9%), Valcea (-51.1%) and Gorj (-50.9%). The county of Mehedinți will

have with 46% less dwellers, and the most reduced loss will be in the case of Dolj County (31.3% of the total population).

Conclusion

The diagnosis on addressing the evolution of the population from our country unravels a permanent growing tendency, from 1859 to 1989 (130 years), after this period entering into a continuously decline period, from 1990 to the present (28 years). The demographic prognosis shows that the decline will continue in the next decades too (-22.3%), which means that it will generate a process of depopulation in Romania, affecting the most the SW Region of Oltenia, where the number of the dwellers will reduce to half (-44.6%). Such a major problem of the Romanian society requires an urgent demographic policy, inspired by the social intervention, that the depopulation will not become a general and irreversible process.

At the origin of the demographic decline, there is a multitude of direct and indirect causes, with a natural or social character, which affect the reproduction of the population. Among them, there are obvious the lower birth rate, the high abortion rate and the migration of the young manpower abroad. Thus, according to the Eurostat data, in 2017, one in five Romanians, aged between 20-64, had their residence in other states from the EU-28, which represents 20% of the manpower in Romania. This fact sent out country on the first position regarding the manpower mobility on the European market. Nonetheless, in the same time, there was lost an important resource that could supply the birth rate, if we consider the age of the emigrants, along with the necessary manpower, for the economic security of the Romanian society. In the present, there has been installed a deficit in the human resources on the labour market from Romania.

The decreasing of natality led to the reduction of the school population and the number of employees, which will influence considerably, in the future, the possibility to supply the national pension fund. Although Romania had, at the end of 2017, a lower unemployment rate (4.02%) than the average unemployment in EU-28 (7.3%), and the highest rhythm of the economic growth, from all the community states, yet, the relation between the active employed population and the inactive one, indicates a severe gap/ in this year of reference, the number of the active employees raised to 5,528,199, while the inactive population had 9,154,473 people – pensioners, pupils, students, unemployed etc. An important role in satisfying the needs of these social categories is played by the approximately 5 million Romanians who left abroad for working, and who systematically send money to their families, at home. The social diagnosis Romania shows discrepancies from one region to another, on addressing the salary, the pensions and the life conditions for the citizens.

The depopulation of Romania cannot become an irreversible or inexorable process, unless it is ignored or neglected in the present, unless the issue remains

unsolved, at legislative and governmental level, with the help of the specialists. For the demographic improvement of the country, there must be imposed several measures, with political, economic and socio-educational character, such is: (1) The adopting of proactive policies for the growth of the birth rate, through the real and substantial money indemnity of the families that decide to bring-up several children, over a longer period. In Sweden, for example, the monthly allowance for the care of the child is of 326 euro, for a period between 1 and 3 years; (2) The communication with the young people from abroad and effort to convince them to return into the country, by offering them fiscal facilities and opportunities for the economic integration; (3) Major investments in the rural regions and the creation of attractive working conditions for the youth, especially in the villages whose population is old and they are affected by the risk of depopulation, where the births have become extremely rare (in the Romania of 2016, the natural growth rate was of -5 for a thousand dwellers in the rural regions, and -1, in the urban ones); (4) The education of the young population, starting in school, to resort to a reduced extent to abortion, and to use contraceptive, healthier methods, and the assuming of 2-3 births. The average of the abortions in EU-28 is of 210, while in Romania is 311.5 for a thousand dwellers.

For each society, the population represents the fundamental factor of existence and perpetuation of species. It assures the continuity of the historical accomplishments and fuels the language communication, encompasses the economic and cultural life, along with the

In the case of the developed countries, the state treats the human capital as a primordial and incomparable value. Consequently, the state bears the responsibility for the quality of life, and the health standards of its citizens, for the internal stability of the dwellers, or their external mobility.

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