

**DEMOGRAPHIC RISKS AMONG THE FEMALE
POPULATION IN ROMANIA**
**RISCURI DEMOGRAFICE ÎN RÂNDUL POPULAȚIEI FEMININE
DIN ROMÂNIA**

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Abstract: Starting from the definition of demographic risk as a dangerous social phenomenon for a people and for society as a whole, this article aims to present the most significant and quantified risks for female population: the ageing, the reduction of the generation of fertile age, the unemployment. The study emphasizes some very sensitive indicators in the assessment of the risks such as: the index of feminization specific for the age groups of 15-59 years and over 60 years, and also the maternal death. If in the case of natural risks, the forecasts have a very relative character, the demographics risks can be avoided, can be kept under control, their prevention being possible.

Key words: demographic risks, female population, Romania.

Cuvinte cheie: riscuri demografice, populație feminină, România

Introduction

In the *Action Programme of the International Conference regarding Population and Development* held in Cairo (1994) there are included a series of major objectives meant to ensure the *improvement of women status*.

Seen from the perspective of these objectives, the processes and the evolutions of the female population in Romania testifies, on one hand for the improvement of women situation and the role they are currently playing in the Romanian society, and on the other hand, the appearance of some disturbing phenomena in the evolution and normal reproduction of the population (Grigoriu, 1995, p. 192).

Among the phenomena that interfered with the evolution of female population, and considered a demographic risk, we mention population ageing, fertility decrease, unemployment, maternal death.

Demographic risk may be defined as an extreme social event that is dangerous for human being and society as well. The extreme consequences of demographic risks take the form of the social disasters. Apart from the negative economic and social consequences, "the extreme product" of demographic risks are quantified by the number of casualties, just like natural risks. If in the case of natural risks, the

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forecast is rather ambiguous, the demographic ones, which are a result of human action and of the social situation, are somehow “more exactly estimated”, may be avoided, may be held under control, their prevention being often possible and always desirable (Surd, V., 2004, p. 184)

The objectives of the present study are: 1) to identify the main indicators used to outline the demographic risks within the female population of Romania; 2) to emphasize Romanian women’s aging process; 3) to analyze the way female fertility evolved from 1990 to 2006; 4) to present the geographical distribution of the female unemployment rate; 5) to demonstrate that maternal mortality and women’s migration constitute elements of demographical risk.

Material and methods

In order to attain the suggested objectives, we have used the data published in the Statistical Yearbooks of Romania, the Board of Health’s Statistical Reports of the Calculus and Sanitary Statistics Center and the Reproduction Health Studies (realized in 1993, 1999 and 2004). The processing and the organization of the data pursued the period comprised between 1990 and 2006. The research methodology was based on the use of statistical-mathematical methods, statistical correlations, analysis and synthesis.

Results and discussions

The female population ageing. After World War 2, the population ageing in Romania, as well as in other European countries, had a significant evolution and rhythm, once the fertility of the female population decreased after the war. The demographic ageing of the female population was the result of the combined effect of the decrease of the share of children aged less than 15 years old in the total population, and of the numeric and proportional increase of the population aged 60 and over, as a consequence of the important increase in the life expectancy. The evolution of this process was greatly influenced by the major changes that took place in the individual and family life style.

The age pyramid mirrors exactly the chronicle of the generations, highlighting the disparities in age and sex population structure. The ever fewer young population has shrunk ever more the base of the pyramid. (Fig. 1)

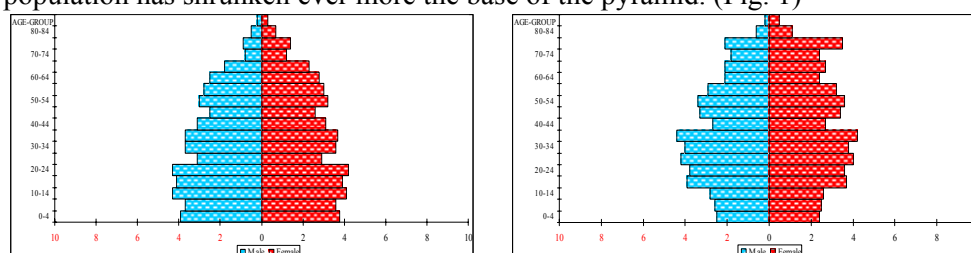


Fig. 1: Age pyramid on age and sex groups 1990-2006

Romania’s population is characterized by a surplus of women, (Table no 1) both on the whole, and for the groups aged 60 and over (Fig. 2), being more

prominent in their 80 and over, when the femininity index reached 1791 women/1000 men (in 2006). As a consequence of the continuous decrease of the birth rate, of the intensifying migratory flows and increasing death rate among adult males, there is a demographic ageing especially among rural female population. In some counties (Dolj, Mehedinti, Ialomita, Salaj, Botosani etc.) at countryside, the women aged 60 and over account for more than a quarter of the total female population.

Table no 1

Women share in the total population and on two main social environments

<i>Year</i>	<i>Total population (%)</i>	<i>Urban (%)</i>	<i>Rural (%)</i>
1930	50,9	50,3	51,3
1948	51,7	51,4	51,7
1956	51,4	51,0	51,6
1966	51,0	50,1	51,6
1977	50,7	50,6	50,8
1992	50,8	51,2	50,4
2002	51,2	52,1	50,3
2006	51,3	52,1	50,2

Source: Anuarul Statistic al României, 1993, 2007, INS, Bucuresti

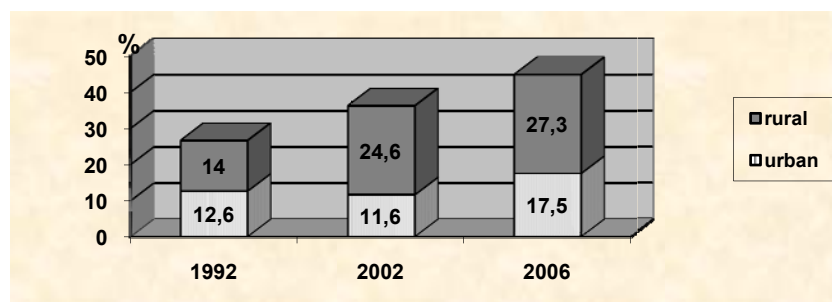


Fig. 2: The dynamic of the mature women percentage on two main social environments and counties between 1992 - 2002

The social and economic implications of the rapid increase of the very old population (over 80 years old) are very important. If younger generations of the old population may still be active from the economic point of view, being capable of supporting themselves, the oldest ones, and especially women, depend on the other, requiring special social and medical care.

The shrinking of female generation of fertile age. The fertility evolution was influenced on one hand, by the demographic behaviour of couples (the main trend being that of reducing the family size), and on the other hand by some changes of the number and structure of the fertile population. The fertility level has significantly diminished until 2002; after that year, there was a slight increase. (Fig. 3)

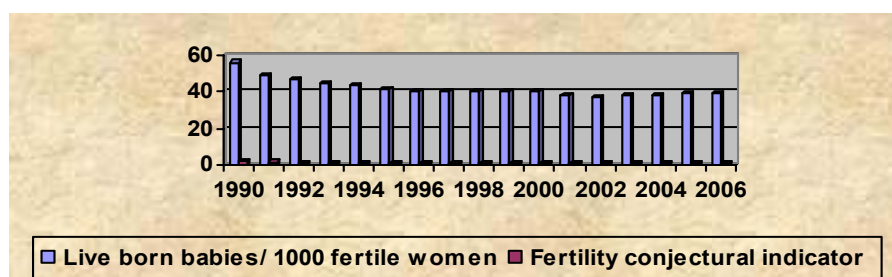


Fig.3: The dynamics of the main fertility indicators

Specific fertility has slightly increased during the last years; nevertheless, it is still low: 1.3 children/ women in 2006, compared to 1.8 children/ women in 1990. Moreover, the share of women aged 25 or less for carrying out the final lineage. Due to the great decrease of fertility at adult ages, more than 80 per cent of the final lineage is carried out in 30 years. The women that borne 3 children or more are ever fewer, their proportion falling from 27.6 per cent in 1990 to 16.8 in 2006.

Although the percentage of women of fertile age (15-49 years) in the total female population has an increase tendency (from 47.6 per cent in 1990 to 49.8 per cent in 2006), as well as those of the most fertile groups, i.e. 20-29 years old (from 29.5 per cent in 1990 to 30.0 per cent in 2006), there was no corresponding increase of the birth rate. The mothers of most of the newly born children are aged 25 to 29. (Table no 2)

Table no 2

The dynamics of female fertility by age groups during the 1990-2006 period (live born babies/ 1000 females)

Year	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
Total	56.2	48.7	46.6	44.3	43.3	41.1	39.9	40.0	40.6	40.2	40.3	37.8	37.5	37.8	38.4	39.4	39.5
15-19 years	51.5	49.8	47.4	47.0	45.0	42.0	40.0	40.8	40.3	40.0	39.0	35.8	32.7	33.4	33.8	33.5	35.0
20-24 years	145.2	131.1	127.1	124.6	119.3	109.5	102.2	100.7	96.6	93.3	90.2	82.2	81.5	79.7	77.2	73.3	69.8
25-29 years	97.8	78.6	77.1	74.2	75.8	73.4	72.4	72.6	77.6	77.6	78.5	73.8	77.6	79.0	80.7	83.9	82.7
30-34 years	46.4	34.2	31.1	28.3	28.7	29.4	30.1	33.9	36.3	37.3	38.7	37.4	38.3	41.7	46.2	51.8	54.0
35-39 years	19.4	13.9	12.9	11.4	11.3	11.0	10.9	11.2	11.7	12.4	13.4	13.7	15.0	16.1	17.6	18.7	19.0
40-44 years	5.5	4.0	3.7	3.2	3.2	3.1	2.9	2.9	2.8	2.8	3.1	3.0	3.0	3.1	3.4	3.6	3.5
45-49 years	0.4	0.3	0.2	0.3	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2

Source: Anuarul Statistic al Romaniei, 2007, INS, Bucuresti

Even if the fertility rate for the age group 20-24 are the most important for the evolution of fertility (32.7 per cent of the live borne babies in 2006, 12 per cent less than in 1990), it has significantly decreased. Due to the ever more frequent phenomenon of postponing the pregnancy, there can be noticed a gradual sliding of fertility intensity from the 20-24 years old age group (the rate of which is 82.7 per

cent) to the next one. During the last analysed year, the women aged 25-29 years have given birth to 32.7 per cent of all the live born babies (as compared to 21.2 per cent in 1990).

The average age at the first birth is continuously rising; for the analysed period, there is a gain of 2.5 years. The average age at children birth is also increasing, reaching 26.9 years old in 2006 (Fig. 4)

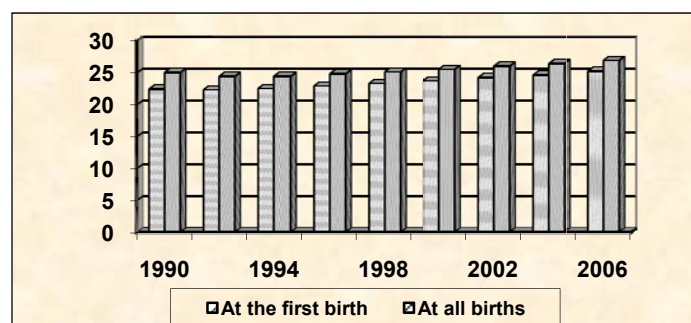


Fig. 4: Average age of the mother giving birth during the 1990-2006 period

Housewives and women with poor education still have the most children. In 2006, the children whose mothers have only basic education courses (primary and secondary level education) had the highest share. The same year marked a continuous tendency for the increase of the percentage of newly born babies by women with higher education (Fig. 5)

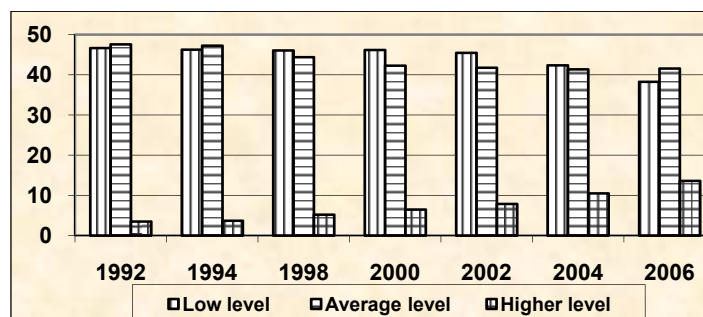


Fig. 5: The structure of newly-born babies on mother's level of education between 1992 and 2006

Although the general level of awareness regarding family planning methods, as well as the use of contraception by women has increased, they are quite rarely used by young fertile females and, most of all, by those living in the countryside. According to the Studies for Health Reproduction carried out in 1993, 1999 and 2004, the proportion of women that are using a contraceptive method has increased from 40.5 per cent in 1993 to 58.1 per cent in 2004. The accessibility and possibility of easily getting modern contraceptives is still limited, a fact that

increases the risk of unwanted pregnancies, that finally lead to abortion. According to the Studies for Health Reproduction, 48.7 per cent of the women that got pregnant, had unwanted pregnancies. Although the number of abortion has significantly decreased (in 2006, there were only 68 abortions for 100 live born babies, compared to 315 in 1990), the abortion is still the main means for controlling and reducing the family size, which in time increases women's risk of getting sick and sterile. (Fig. 6)

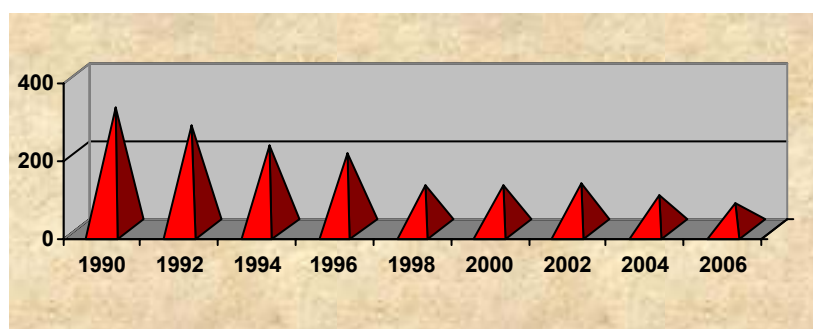


Fig. 6: The dynamics of abortion rate between 1990 and 2006

Although the children that are born during marriage keep accounting of the largest share, there is also an increase of the percentage of children born outside the marriage. Thus, if until 2004 the dynamics of their percentage had an ascendant trend, from 15 per cent in 1990 to 29.4 per cent, in 2005, it reached only 28.4 per cent. The following year, there was a slight increase in the share of babies born outside marriages (by 0.5 per cent), accounting for more than a quarter of all the live born babies. During the last three years, the mother of every forth newly-born baby was single (Fig. 7).

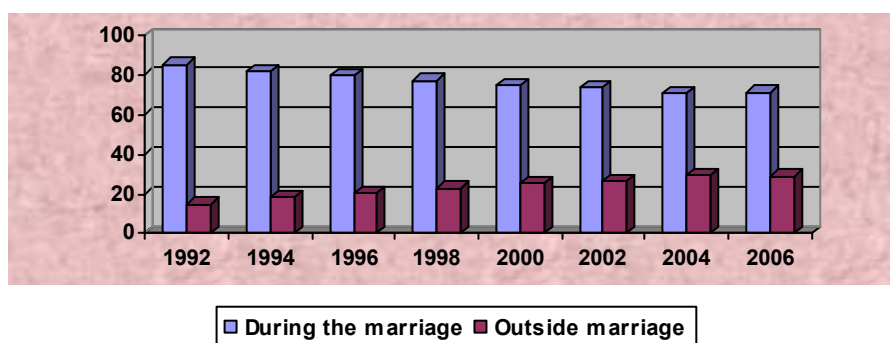


Fig. 7 The structure of newly born babies according to the juridical situation of the child between 1992-2006

Unemployment. A phenomenon which appeared during the transition period, unemployment registered at the end of 2006 a number of 460,495 persons,

representing 5.2% from the total number of labor force. From the total number of persons without a job, 41.6% were women, the rate of unemployment for female population at the national level being 4.6%. The highest rate of feminine unemployment was registered in Gorj county (8.0%), this fact being mainly explained by the specificity of the economy, dominated by the industry of energy and mining, which needs more males as labour force. The lowest rates for feminine unemployment (2.0%) are registered in Ilfov (connected to the multiple possibilities from the labour markets in Bucharest) and Timis counties, the later being included in an area of several counties located in the west of the country for which economic structure is lighter, the labour market being more dynamic (Fig. 8).



Fig. 8: The geographical distribution of the unemployment rate in 2006

Maternal death represents one of the most important public health problems. The World Health Organization defines the rate of maternal death as being the number of maternal deaths pursuant to pregnancy or delivery (at maximum 42 days from the end of pregnancy), occurred in one year, at 100,000 live births registered in that year. In Romania, the health of reproduction is high under the level accepted in Europe, and because of the missing progresses in this area, the health of reproduction has a deeply negative effect over the general health, well fare and over the development of population; this fact leads to one of the highest maternal deaths rates on the continent and to the need of certain corresponding measures in order to reduce its value. The premature deaths of mothers are determined by a series of causes, among which we mention: the insufficiency of financial resources, the incapacity of correct use of motherhood services, the limited level of decision

and education, the low level of knowledge of hygiene and care especially during the pregnancy period, the cultural factors, the deficiencies of sanitary system, etc. Other causes made this demographic indicator in Romania to register in 2006 an average value of 41 maternal deaths to 100.000 live births. The extreme values were between 86/100,000 in Dâmbovița county and 16/100,000 in Cluj county.

Avoiding the risk of maternal death is mainly done by prevention: attentive prenatal and generalized care, early detection of possible problems and complications during a woman's pregnancy, selection and treatment of pregnant women with high risk. Family planning, distance the births for multimammae women, education of young women starting with the school years are measures, which by consistency, can significantly reduce the risk of maternal death.

Women's migration. By the consequences over the familial cohesion, *women's external migration* represents an element of demographic risk. The deep transformations from the legal system and the free circulation of the personnel have constituted the premises of accentuation of emigration level. The emigration process is characterized by an emphatic feminization, in 2006 women representing 62.4% from the total number of emigrants (Fig. 9).

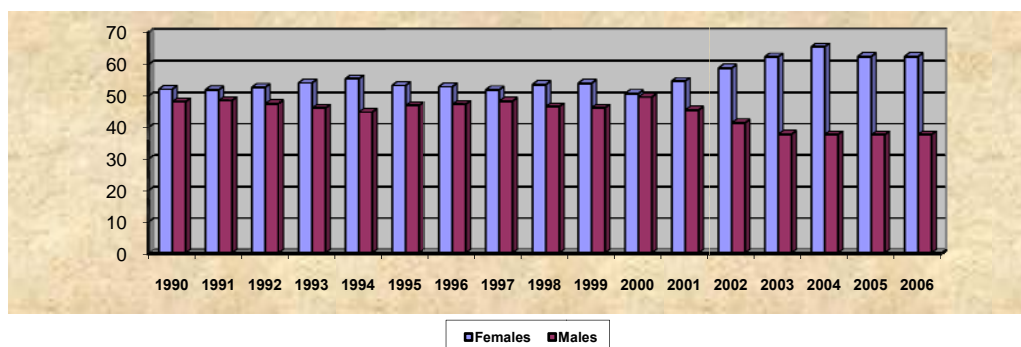


Fig. 9: The structure of emigrants on sexes during the period 1990 – 2006

The internal territorial mobility of population is also, dominated by women, in 2006 representing 55.1% from the total number of persons who changed their domicile. (Fig. 10)

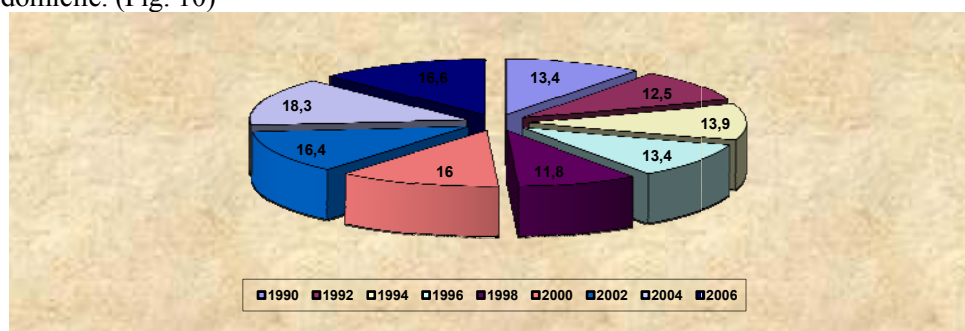


Fig. 10: The dynamic of internal female population between 1990 – 2006

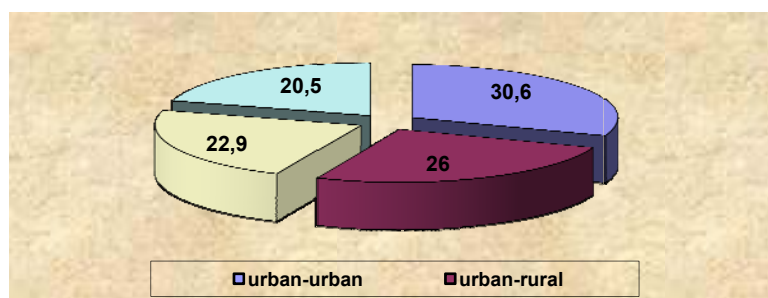


Fig. 11: The Structure of feminine migration flow in 2006

The urban – urban migration flow registers the highest feminization degree, more than a quarter of women who changed their domicile, also changed city. (Fig. 11)

The feminine migration is more emphasized among young women from the age group between 15-19 years, which increased from 5.4% to 19.9% and from the immediately age group which percent almost doubled. (Table no 3) The most changes of domicile registered at the feminine population of labour age (with values of 1.1 times higher than the ones registered for male populations) the sense being more pregnant from the urban area into the rural one.

Table no 3

The structure of internal feminine migration on age groups between 1992-2002 (‰)

	1992	2002	2006
Total	13,4	13,7	16,6
< 15 years	11,1	13,5	16,9
15-19	13,2	16,4	19,9
20-24	41,7	34,1	41,7
25-29	34,8	27,9	36,3
30-34	20,0	21,4	25,8
35-39	11,4	14,3	16,1
40-44	8,2	10,8	12,0
45-49	6,0	9,6	11,1
50-54	5,4	8,7	9,8
55-59	4,8	6,3	8,0
60 and over	4,2	3,9	4,7

Source: Anuarul Statistic al Romaniei, 1993, 2003, 2007, I.N.S, Bucuresti

Conclusions

Feature of the Romanian population during the period 1930-2006 is the women's fluctuating share. Their proportion, higher than that of the men, is increasing. The feminization is selective, affecting people over 40 years and emphasizes with the aging. The most important demographic phenomenon which characterizes the evolution of the female population is the demographic aging, with multiple social-economic implications. The situation of the female population's fertility, under the required level of the generation's replacement, dates from the

first years of the transition towards the market economy and was determined by the abandon of the pro nataliste politics, the acquiring of a new demographic behavior, the modest material level etc.

The unemployment rate of female persons is higher than that of the men, with the biggest rates registering the counties whose economic specific is dominated by the energy industry and the mining. In terms of maternal mortality, Romania is under the accepted level in Europe. With economic and social causation and with its many implications, the internal and external migration of the female population is a complex problem, difficult to resolve in the absence of some specific social policies.

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