

REGIONAL APPROACHES TO THE AGEING OF THE POPULATION

*Some people, no matter how old they get,
they never lose their beauty: they just move it from face to heart.*

Martin Buxbaum (1912-1991) was an American poet, author and editor

Florian Guramultă¹

Abstract

The phenomenon of population aging has become internationally and regionally a current one and which is of great importance because it concerns the evolution of the population throughout the world over an important period. As a result of some research, studies and analyses, it has been revealed that the world's population is facing an aging process that is to take place over a long period of time.

The evolution of the share of the elderly population will show a long-term upward trend especially in countries where the birth rate is higher than the replacement rate. It is important to note that the ageing phenomenon we are experiencing can be analyzed from the perspective of the population included in the three main categories or groups of the population, namely the young, adult and elderly population.

A new concept has therefore been developed to ensure intergenerational convergence, namely active ageing, which implies that solidarity between generations must be seen as a result of active ageing, which is an essential opportunity for maintaining solidarity between generations.

Keywords: demographic, population aging, young population

JEL classification: O15, O43, R11

Introduction

Demographic change is a process that highlights that populations are going down a path from a previous demographic regime, which reveals that birth rates and mortality were at high levels, to a current demographic regime that points out that these phenomena are experiencing a reduction.

The demographic change takes place as a result of the evolution of the population that takes into account a series of factors of which the most important are the social and economic ones, but also the legislative, or educational ones, respectively the sanitary and psychological ones, including the cultural ones.

Demographic changes have always preoccupied both theorists and experts, but also researchers and academia, especially when the transition from the society from the pre-industrial economy to the modern economy took place and who revealed that the birth rates and mortality recorded decreases.

Demographic changes were conceptualized in the theory of "demographic transitions" as which it was based on the reflexive behavior of classification and statistical systematization of the change in mortality and birth rate especially in Europe in the second part of the eighteenth century and especially in the nineteenth century, as a result of the process of industrial progress but also of various associated processes, which revealed the decline of the deadly fathers, continuing with the reduction of the birth rate.

The aspects related to the demographic transition have a major importance both internationally and nationally, for Romania. Social and economic changes have exerted an influence on its population, its structure, and on demographic trends. The evolution of economic and social development is, based on technical progress, the introduction of new technologies, the continuation of industrialization, the development of new fields of activity will be fast paced. Taking into account these realities, it appears as normal questions such as:

¹ PhD Student in Economics, NIER, "C.C. Kiritescu", Romanian Academy, email:floring14@yahoo.com

what is the demographic act of such development, how demographic development can be correlated with the economic one, what are the components on which social policy and demographics can use them in the future?

The research of the demographic transition in the case of Romania, under the specific national conditions, can lead to conclusions that have an impact on the modification of the legislation and regulations in the field, can influence the public policies that will be elaborated, can indicate the way of allocating the state's resources to investments that will help the young population but also the elderly, especially the active ageing population.

Following a U.N. study (1973), the French demographer Adolphe Landry described, in 1909, for the first time, the demographic stages, as primitive, intermediate and modern, respectively.

Among those who participated in the constitution of a theory and demographic transition, we can mention Warren S. Thompson (1929) but also Frank W. Notestein (1954). The theory was later extended by other researchers in the sphere of their demographers, their sociologists but also their economists, among whom we mention: C. P. Blacker (1947), G. Mackenroth (1953), E. Hoover (1958), A. J. Coale (1972), Francis O. Okediji (1974), J. C. Caldwell (1976).

1. The importance of the evolution of the demographic transition

The research of the papers and studies on the theories of the demographic transition, especially those published by the aforementioned authors, allows the formulation of general assessments, as follows:

- The theory of demographic transition – from a scientific point of view – has evolved a lot and the cooperation between sociologists and demographers can contribute to the consolidation of the theory that is capable of formulating an explanatory model – taking into account the social, economic and cultural component – but also a predictive model, based on the discovery of a rule, as a result of an objective need.

- The approach only from the perspective of biologists they were considered simplistic, which is why the problem was dropped and approached in a more comprehensive and rigorous way, on a scientific basis, but also appealing to the contribution of several sciences from which they concern: the economic theory that, the study of the description of the structure and physiology of society, of the interpersonal relations within the social groups, as well as of the institutions in the society, the study of origins, its evolution and various physical types of man, in correlation with the natural and social-cultural conditions, the study and analysis of its social psychologists but it's also demography. Such an approach allows a use of demographic variables correlated with those in the social, cultural, economic and behavioral spheres, of the approach both from a macro and micro perspective in terms of demographs, between independent, dependent, endogenous and exogenous but also intermediate variables.

- The theory of demographic transition tries to find solutions taking into account the cultural model that affects reproductive behavior and that uses cultural variables, intermediate variables that take into account the specific characteristics of a national population, regions or classes and categories.

- The use of systemic interpretation has been done more and more in the research and study of the demographic transition, which has led to an increase in efficiency; about these elements is spoken in the researches and works of the authors: Mackenroth (1953), K. Davis (1963), Irene Taeuber (1958), Cowgill (1949, 1953). Therefore, the benefits of these researches lead us to a coherent use of concepts and tools within the general theory of systems.

- The organization and grouping of statistical information puts us in a position to model developments to make better predictions to improve estimates to make the transition from the explanatory model of demographic transition to a predictive model.

- Apart from the general model, we have a number of specific peculiarities of the demographic transition for each country; which revealed in some situations either the decrease in

mortality was preceded by the decrease in fertility; either in others, the process of subtraction was at the same time. There are also situations from the past that when the decrease in fertility was prior to the decrease in mortality. There may also be situations when, during the transition, fertility has experienced growth for a limited period of time. Significant changes can also be found with regard to the length of the periods of time of the transition.

The national population can be likened to a system that reacts according to the state, more simply a system of self-regulation, which means that its condition is presented at each moment t by the population number corresponding to that moment. $P(t)$: represents the size of entry or command is the number of live births: $N(t) = n(t) P(t)$, where $n(t)$ = birth rate; the output size is the number of deaths: $M(t) = m(t) P(t)$.

Therefore, the key that reveals the evolution of the system is:

$$P'(t) = m(t) P(t) + n(t) P(t),$$

what can still be expressed in the form of:

$$P = N - M.$$

The two rates $n(t)$ and $m(t)$ – the rate of birth rate and the mortality rate – can be influenced by factors external to the population system; they describe the interaction of the population system with other systems. We mention that the sizes $n(t)$ and $m(t)$ can be affected by demographic policy but especially by social policy.

2. Active ageing and solidarity between generations – components of development

The concept of active ageing is not a new one, as it is defined by the World Health Organization (WHO) as the process of optimizing health, participation and safety opportunities to improve quality of life.

Active ageing brings benefits to all and maintains a concrete link between generations, brings gain for the whole of society and promotes care and interest in human resources and its experience in all areas of activity.

All this should be done at the same time as ensuring that adequate protection measures are taken. The promotion of active ageing should be approached on a multi-dimensional basis and based on mutual support between generations.

The problem of an ageing population is also topical at European level, the European Commission is showing solidarity and responsibilities between generations by adopting on 27.01.2021 in this area a document entitled *Green Paper on the ageing of the population*.

The aim of the document is to promote a debate in order to design directions on aging, to identify and analyze options on how to foresee but also to respond to the problems and opportunities required arising from this, especially since there are some elements in the The UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the UN Decade for Healthy Ageing.

In order to promote the protection of the rights of the elderly, in the context of the change in the age structure of the Romanian society and the decline of the population, it is necessary to structure the main directions of action of the national authorities.

They are aimed at changing the perception of elderly people, improving legislation and regulations on social assistance measures, supporting local public administrative authorities and civil society as providers of social services addressed to this category of people.

According to the estimates made¹ in Romania, it is facing a profound socio-economic transformation due to the unprecedented demographic changes. The estimates made indicate that the share of the population aged 65 and over will double from 15 percent to 30 percent by 2060, with the possibility of exerting a strong pressure on the costs of pensions, health services and long-term care services.

Among the effects of population ageing can be identified:

¹ World Bank - *LONG, ACTIVE AND STRONG LIFE Promoting active ageing in Romania*, which can be consulted to address <http://www.mmuncii.ro/j33/index.php/ro/politici-familiale-incluziune-si-asistenta-sociala/3995>

- affect the basic conditions for the functioning of the labour market,
- the decrease of the potential GDP, by reducing the contribution of the labor force, but also of the capital, in the conditions of affecting the internal savings,
- the increasing pressure on the state budget, both on the revenue side, by affecting the economic growth, and on the expenditure side, by increasing the expenditures for social assistance and health,
- the effect on the internal savings rate and, by extension, on investments,
- increasing the number of elderly people seeking specific health care and care

Conclusions and proposals

We can say that the evolution of the demographic transition has been researched and analyzed over time, following the contribution of several researchers and experts and with the support of several sciences, which brought a major improvement in the transition from the explanatory model regarding the demographic transition to a predictive model.

An active ageing offers the opportunity for the elderly to structure throughout their lives, all the essential conditions for achieving and strengthening the welfare of the countries, and even more to participate concretely in the life of the society in accordance with the needs, the desires it's also their capabilities.

We propose to the enterprise research studies and analyses that take into account:

- Finding ways to support healthy and active ageing contributes to the generation of new social and economic models, based on solidarity including intergenerational cooperation,
- Society must take into account the socio-economic potential that older people can provide. Here we are considering both increasing the quality of life and dignity of the elderly, as well as by offering new opportunities and methods to mitigate the anticipated effects of demographic change and transition,
- Removing barriers to the employment of the older population and finding solutions so that the elderly population is no longer a poorly used resource of the Romanian economy,
- Increasing the v eniturilor the older population by increasing the occupancy rate,
- Removing significant political, cultural and socio-demographic barriers to more frequent and broader social participation,
- Enhancing independence in long-term care.

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