

Family and labor force – individual lives, social outcomes

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Abstract

The increasing involvement of women in work, together with the taking over by various external bodies (others than the family) of tasks related to children growth, care and education, assistance of elderly or the sick ones, have led to new concerns regarding social capital research, deterioration of the family relations and deepening of intergenerational cleavages.

Considering these trends and taking into account the fact that the interferences between the profession and the private life are evident, in this paper we propose a secondary statistical analysis materialized in an exploratory desk-research, in which we analyzed the information provided by EUROSTAT, the National Institute of Statistics, the National Commission of Strategy and Prognosis – statistics, reports, studies or other official documents of the national or European forums containing relevant data on changes affecting work and family and the connections between the two.

Keywords: *work; family; demographic change; labor force.*

1. Introduction

The transformations concerning family types, their foundations, dissolution but also the spreading of forms that are currently considered atypical, bring several difficulties for statisticians, the authors of an Eurostat report considering that the differences between the EU Member States make it increasingly difficult to use the concepts in this sphere (European Commission 2015: p. 39). In the preamble of the chapter entitled "Marriages and divorces" of the Eurostat report it is clearly stated that the number of marriages is decreasing and that of divorces increases, the number of children born out of wedlock also increases, while alternative forms of cohabitation are diversified, and new rights are granted to them by the national laws.

While statisticians accuse problems in collecting and analyzing data, making it difficult to compare states, socio-human scientists are trying to explain marital dissolution just when marriage is based on the love of the two spouses, because at this time, more than ever before, family is based on mutual desire, the mutual love between the two partners (Iluț 2015). Almost half of marriages end in divorce, the European Union births outside marriage rate was 40% in 2012, which includes the children born in different alliances or by single mothers (European Commission 2015: p. 39). Age at first marriage has also increased in all countries, even if Romania still has one of the lowest values of 29.7 years for men and 26.3 years for women.

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Another issue that is often set on the table lately in western societies is the culture of unlimited individualism at the expense of an altruistic attitude, although social policies try to promote by different means the civic spirit. Also, as a manifestation of selfishness is sometimes seen the desire for personal affirmation by reaching a successful career, to the detriment of founding a family. In developed countries, people with high professional training postpone or even cancel the decision to start a family and have children in exchange for their professional lives and personal entertainment. It is frequently spoken about the consumer society that pushes us to consume more, with the purpose to produce more, and vice versa, in order to keep functioning a vicious circle.

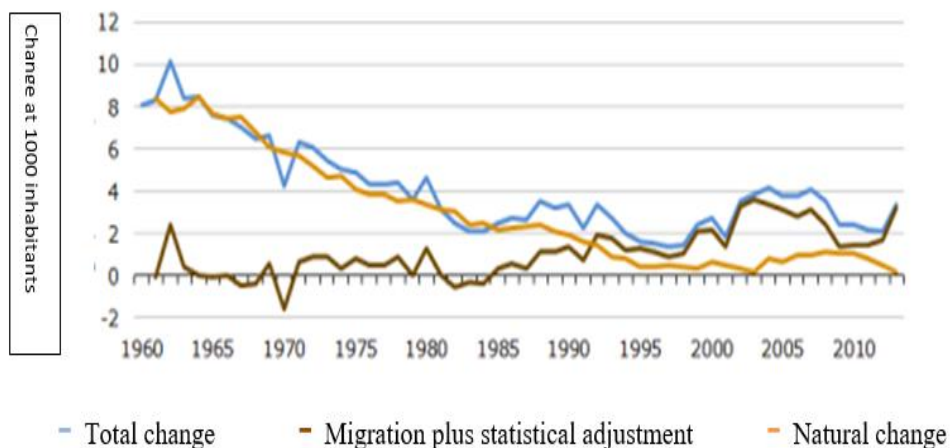
2. Evolution of demographic indicators in Europe

The demographic changes affecting Europe are of particular importance, both from an economic, political, social and even cultural point of view. A Eurostat 2015 report attempts to provide an overview of the current demographic trends of the continent, based on analyzes of national or regional statistical information on births, deaths, marriages and divorces, immigration and emigration rates, asylums and residence permits (European Commission 2015).

The data provided by the statistical authority of the European Union, Eurostat, show that while per consolidated overview, the population of the 28 member states has increased every year over one million people, in 13 of these countries has declined. Four states meet more than half of Europeans (Germany, France, England and Italy - 54%), and while some of them have registered an increase of population (Luxembourg, Italy, Malta, Sweden), others have faced with decreases (Lithuania, Cyprus, Hungary, Romania). The causes of changes in the number of inhabitants, migration and natural causes, have had a varying influence for each state, for example in Ireland the rise was due to natural causes, while in others, Germany, Italy or Austria, only migration has had an impact on this balance. However, there are studies that reveal the fact that migration as a cause of demographic changes “was not only limited to former Western European countries. The fall of the iron curtain and the transition of former Soviet Bloc countries to free market economies led to differential economic developments in these countries, triggering migration flows from the poorer countries to the richer countries” (Porumbescu 2015: p. 168). On the other hand, the decrease in population was caused only by natural causes in Hungary and as a result of the migration in Spain and Cyprus. In terms of this analysis, we see that in Romania the decrease is mainly due to natural causes (European Commission 2015: p. 7), indicating primarily a negative growth, completed by the migration of residents.

The rise of the 28 member states was due to natural increase only 5%, while for the most part this increase (95%) is a result of migration. Since 1992 the contribution of migration exceeded natural increase in the population growth (European Commission 2015: p. 5), as can be more easily seen from the following graph taken from Eurostat Demography Report.

Figure no. 1. Evolution of population by component (gross annual rates), EU-28, 1960-2013



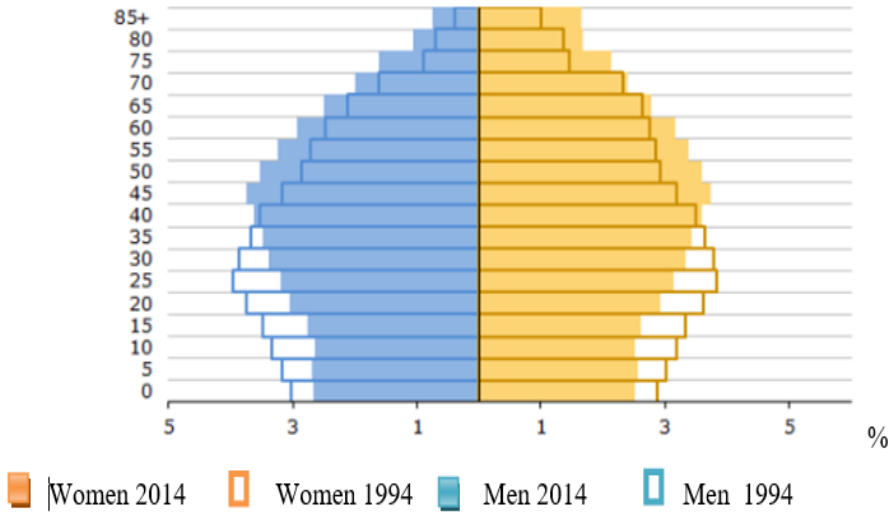
Source: Eurostat 2015: p. 5

This reduced contribution of the natural increase in population growth is attributed by the report's authors to the large number of immigrants in the EU since the mid-1980s, doubled by the dramatic decrease in natural growth (the difference between the number of births and the rate of deaths) since the 1960s. As the baby boom generation ages and the decline in birth rates continues, it is obvious that negative natural growth can only be counterbalanced by this migration, being the only one that will cause the continent to grow or decline.

The aging of Europe's population is already certain, and current demographic trends do not show a change in this phenomenon in the near future, taking into account low fertility rates. In total, at the beginning of 2014, 15.6% of the population was made up of people under 14 years of age, the working population accounted for about 65% (15-64 years), and 18.5% of the population consisted of people over 65 years old.

The average age in the EU was 42.2 years, the lowest in Ireland - 36 years and the highest in Germany, 45.6 years (European Commission 2015: p. 8). In Romania, the average age increased from 33.8 in 1994 to 40.8 in 2014, and the proportion of dependents increased by almost 10 percent in the case of young people and 7 percent in the case of the elderly (European Commission 2015: p. 9). If we analyze the entire continent, the evolution of population distribution by age is illustrated eloquently in Figure 2.

Figure no. 2. Population pyramid, EU-28, 1 January 1994, January 1, 2014
(Percentage of total population)



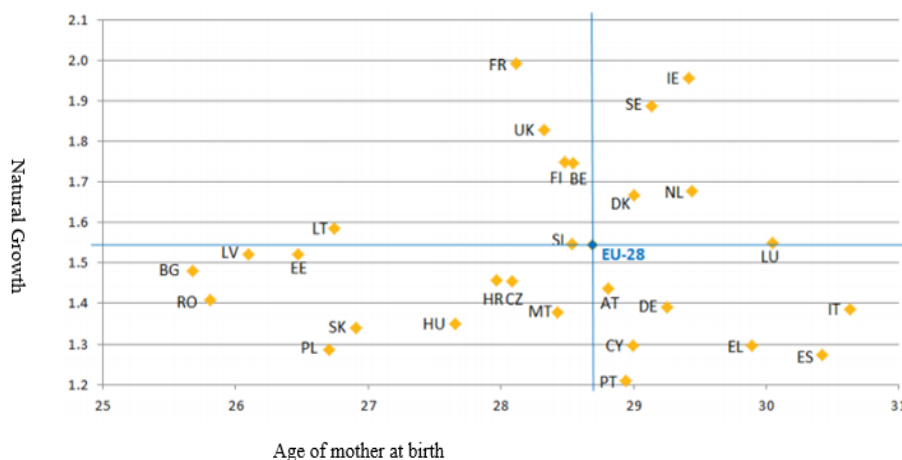
Source: Eurostat 2015: p. 10

Thus, while the base of the pyramid decreased over 10 years (1994-2004), the top of the pyramid, corresponding to older ages, increased. The decrease in fertility, doubled by the prolongation of life expectancy, determined these changes in the population structure. "Economists have long emphasized that there is a link between the high rates of women's involvement in work and the simultaneous decline in fertility since the late 1960s" (Olah and Fratzak 2013: p. 3).

While the population of the continent as a whole has increased, the number of births has declined steadily, from 7.7 million live births in 1964 to about 5 million in 2002, with a slight retreat in 2008 (5, 5 million). The average age at which women have children has also increased, with one year, over a decade, from 29.2 years in 2003 to 30.3 in 2013. In Romania, since 2000, live births for a woman fell below 2.1% (replacement value), ranging from 1.31% to 1.52%, while in countries such as France or Ireland the birth rate was close to 2% (European Commission 2015: p. 14).

However, in Romania, women have their first child at an average age of 25.8 years compared to Italy or Spain, where the threshold is around the age of 30 years. At the Union level, four groups of countries can be distinguished, depending on fertility rates and maternal age at birth, as shown in the following graph.

Figure no. 3. Mother's average age at first birth and natural growth, 2013



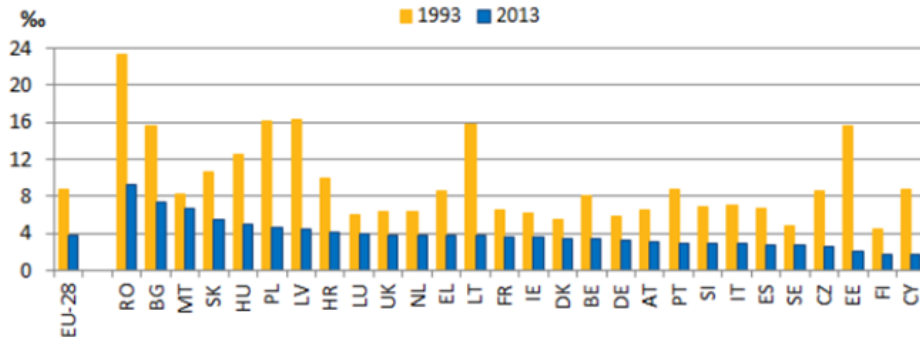
Source: Eurostat 2015: p. 14

Thus, we note how in Denmark, Ireland, the Netherlands and Sweden values of both indicators are high, while in the countries that joined the EU after 2004, the category to which Romania also belongs, these values are below the EU average (maternal age at birth is low, and natural growth is low also). We could put these differences on account of material conditions, because it is possible that in the first group of countries, families postpone the birth of children after providing a material base or establish career paths so that after these are certain women can devote to motherhood, as these countries provide them with a range of childcare facilities and material subsidies. On the other hand, in the former communist states, nurseries, kindergartens and schools have a number of shortcomings, which coupled with labor market insecurity can discourage parents to take the decision to have children.

The third group of countries, Germany, Austria, Italy and Spain, are characterized by low fertility rates and increased maternal age, and on the other hand, in the United Kingdom, Finland, France or Belgium, women are aged lower in the first birth and the natural growth is increased. It should be noted in the case of this last category the high proportion of immigrants, which can explain both characteristics, both the low age of the mother and the increased birth rate, considering, for example, that they are characteristic of Muslim families. The mothers were largely citizens of the country where they gave birth.

Another specific feature outlined by this report is the increase in life expectancy, largely due to socio-economic conditions, the development of medical services, the improvement of living conditions in general and also sustained by the reduction of infant mortality, with the expectation that elderly care will contribute to an increase in the future life expectancy. In all Member States, statistics show that women live longer than men, life expectancy being most prolonged due to the decrease in mortality after 60 years. Regarding child mortality (prior to the age of 1 year), Romania is unfortunately ranked first in the European Union, although its rate has fallen sharply between 1993 and 2013, but it is still very high compared to other Member States, as shown in Figure 4.

Figure no. 4. Infant mortality rate, 1993-2013

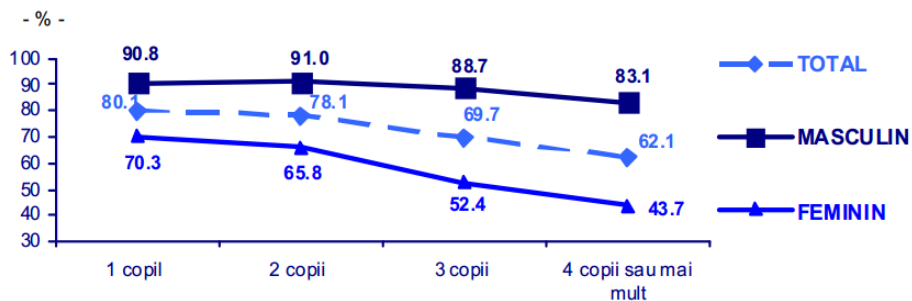


Source: Eurostat 2015: p. 21

Unfortunately, it is clear from this graph, unequivocally, the fact that the infant mortality rate in Romania is still above the average of Europe registered 20 years ago. The precariousness of the health system is an obvious cause of this situation, but the poor education of future parents and especially mothers, who in some cases disregarded doctors' advice, the ban on drinking alcohol or tobacco during pregnancy, some of the mothers do not even go to a doctor at all during pregnancy. On the other hand, in our country disadvantaged families, who have poor living conditions, low education, sometimes Roma, have more children, while in higher educated and higher income families the spouses take later the decision to become parents, and usually have one, maximum two children.

We can justify the infant mortality rate (first-year deaths) in Romania if we take into account the fact that most of the births belong to families who do not afford to provide their children the care they need, do not have adequate living conditions, live in isolated areas, and access to medical facilities is difficult, so not all the children they have manage to survive. Statistical data for our country shows that as the number of children in the family increases, the occupancy rates of parents decreases, as shown in Figure 5, from a press release of the National Institute of Statistics (National Institute of Statistics 2010: p. 2).

Figure no. 5. Employment rate by number of children by sex



Source: National Institute of Statistics 2010: p. 2

Nevertheless, the same press release shows that the occupancy rate of parents is almost 20 percentage points higher than the one of working age population, being 78.6%. Prevalent among single-parent families, with about 85 percent, it is a single mother formula. Research shows that the percentage of people with flexible working hours is about 9.5%, regardless of whether they have family responsibilities or not.

Of the approximately 15,000 people surveyed, about one-third - 34% had dependents in care, 70% of them were also employees, and the inactive accounted for about 20% of those with family responsibilities. Approximately 82% of the dependents are children, most of whom are part of complete families with both parents, just around 4% being included in single-parent families category.

As can be seen in Figure 5, we notice significant differences in the employment rate of mothers with one child and the occupancy rate of those with four children and more, with over 26 percent. This statistical difference is not as significant for men, as can be seen from the figure above mentioned. Here are portrayed the traditionalist attitudes specific to the Romanian people, the father being still the financial family support, and the mother is the one responsible to take care of the children. These aspects can be largely attributable to mentality, conservative orientation, but this perspective must not be exaggerated without recognizing the nature of things, the fact that only women can, by physiological construction, cover certain responsibilities with regard to children - the birth, breastfeeding, for example. In addition, the fact that men generally earn better than their partners may be one more reason for the fact that at a certain age when, let's say, maternal-child physiological dependence is no longer as prominent, women still devote more time to childcare than men.

3. Statistical differences between women and men in the workforce

In the view of the previous observations that women are less concerned with economic activities that generate income than men, the appearance of a child being also seen in many cases as a limitation, at least temporarily, to the professional development of a women, we considered useful to analyze the information provided by the National Prognosis Commission regarding the contribution of women to GDP, based on the statistical data of the National Institute of Statistics (National Commission for Strategy and Prognosis 2015).

Taking into account the fact that the capital and labor contribution can not be separated for the creation of the gross domestic product so as to make a breakdown for each of the two sexes, the National Commission for Strategy and Prognosis tried such a delimitation. In general, to make these statistics, certain conventions are used, such as that women's and men's productivity is the same, GDP is generated exclusively by the employed population, and economic outcomes are not influenced by the combination of wage and non-salary work. According to the same publication, the areas where women account for more than 60 percent of the occupied population are: financial activities, education, health, social work, cultural and recreational activities, as can be seen in the following table.

Table no. 1. Female employment structure by activities of national economy

- % women in the total occupied population		
National economy activities	2013	2014
Total economy	44.0	43.8
Agriculture, forestry and fishing	45.6	45.2
Total industry	39.6	39.3
Constructions	7.2	7.9
Total services	46.3	46.3
Of which:		
Trade, transport and storage, hotels and restaurants	45.5	45.9
Information and communications	38.7	36.5
Financial intermediation and insurance	65.7	66.3
Real estate transactions	45.3	36.1
Professional, scientific, technical and administrative service activities and support activities	39.4	39.9
Public administration and defense, social security in the public system, education and health	62.3	62.7
Performing, cultural and recreational activities and other activities	60.2	60.1

Source: National Commission for Strategy and Prognosis 2015: p. 8.

Women's contribution to Gross Domestic Product was calculated by 3 methods - production method, revenue method, GDP per institutional sector - and was somewhere between 41 and 43 percent. Those who performed these statistical analyzes explain these results on the basis that women have a lower period of activity than men, they retire early, plus the fact that their share is lower in sectors such as industry, agriculture or construction, which make a significant contribution to the gross domestic product.

On the other hand, if we look at a press release of the National Institute of Statistics on the structure of the use of free time, we notice differences between the sexes in terms of time devoted to economic activity and the one spent with family care and household (National Institute of Statistics 2013). Women spend more than an hour less time on their economic activity but spend almost three hours more than their partners with household and family care activities.

We can see from these statistical data the differences between the two sexes, the highest being recorded in household and family care, where women give more time than men, economic activity where the balance is reversed, as in leisure activities. Excepting house care, where women pay more attention than men, the latter spend more time for personal care, study, economic activity, travel or leisure activities.

These data show us, beyond the declarative level, the still traditional structure of Romanian families, and especially the unequal distribution of domestic tasks. The two previously analyzed categories of time and women's contribution to GDP complement each other, and if we take into account the required convention that only wage work contributes to gross domestic product, the information presented above is justified, for that it becomes visible through the corroboration of data that while men do wage work, outside, women spend more time working inside the house unpaid.

4. Connections between demographic change and the workforce

Although, as we can see, our country falls into the category of states with a rather traditionalist view of family and marital roles, as shown above, it seems that the problems affecting the continent are also manifest in Romania: the number of marriages being in decrease while the number of divorces increases, parents have their first child at a higher age, and natural growth is negative. Thus, we face the aging of the population, which makes it difficult to achieve the objectives of the EU 2020 Strategy.

Considering that demographic aging is an obvious reality for the countries of Europe, Eurostat has devoted a section analyzing the potential impact of these changes on employment growth, based on the latest demographic projections of Eurostat and EUROPOP (European Commission 2015). The 2015 Prognosis on the Aging Report issued by the General Directorate for Economic and Financial Affairs of the European Commission shows that while the number of elderly will increase by one percent each year by 2060, the active population will fall by around 0.3%, which will lead to worsening dependency, generating costs of about 2 percentage points of GDP needed for the elderly, to cover the costs of pensions, care and assistance (European Commission 2015). Thus, as projections show that workforce will decline, the solution of economies remains to increase productivity.

5. Conclusions

This overview of the numerical data showing the situation of Romania and the one of Europe has been done to statistically highlight their status and to emphasize the factual conditions underlying the decisions and recommendations of the European officials. Moreover, these statistical data support the opportunity of this approach and justify the need to deepen the studied topic, given its particular importance.

Thus, again, the interconnection of family life-professional life is emphasized, the quality of each of the two being in turn cause for the other but also effect. In particular, family satisfaction, harmony, the possibility to leave the child in a safe place also bring benefits to the professional level, the employee being able to be connected and dedicated to work concerns, but also a pleasant work environment with an appropriate and consistently remuneration provides the employee with professional satisfaction, but also provides him with the material means to fulfill his family needs, which of course contributes to personal satisfaction.

Going forward, financial security, but also a certain well-being and balance from an occupational point of view, also favor personal and family decisions, such as the foundation of a family or the birth of children. The emergence of younger generations, of course, also brings material advantages over the medium and long term, generating a gain in human resources, although in the short term it involves additional expenditure for both family and national budgets.

The two essential life sectors are mutually influencing and are of great importance to each individual, but their impact also affects communities and society as a whole.

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