CURRENT CHANGES IN THE POPULATION STRUCTURE OF DROBETA TURNU-SEVERIN, ROMANIA

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Abstract

The current changes in the population structure are the result of the concurrent action between economic factors (degree of economic development of the territory), social, cultural, historical, biological factors. The combined action of these factors on the population of this urban area generates changes in the number of inhabitants, the natural and migratory dynamics of the population, which in turn impart certain structural characteristics to the population. In terms of gender structure, we can notice in the last years a slight preponderance of the female population (51.42% in 2011 and 52.01% in 2018). The proportion of the elderly population increased from 8.79% in 1992 to 21.22% in 2018, while the rate of the young population decreased from 26.03% in 1992 to 12.53% in 2018, speaking of such a demographic aging of the municipality population starting with the year 2011. The character of the local economy can generate currents of migration and natural movement that contribute to the increase / decrease of the active population. The rate of the active population registered a downward trend in the studied period of time (48.7% in 1992, 42.4% in 2002, 37.7% in 2011), it is the result of a less developed economy (few investors, closure of some industrial units) and an increasing rate of the elderly population, which is accompanied by a reduced natural and sometimes even negative natural growth, the migration of the working population were factors that contributed to the gradual decrease of the rate of the active population. The rate of the active population increases slightly reaching 42.38% in 2016, due to the fact that in Dr. Tr. Severin several private investors have hired.

Keywords: *demographic aging, increasing the rate of active population, the decrease of unemployment.*

1. Introduction

The characteristics of the structural typology of the population reflect the changes that the population of a territory (urban or rural) / territorial system registers as a result of changes in the local economy in the first but also in the

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regional, national and even global, of social-cultural, historical, psychological, biological changes and of natural factors. Population is that component of an urban territory that has the most dynamic role in changing the characteristics of other parts of the territory, components that in turn imply changes in the geographical distribution of the population in that territory (in the past the characteristics of the natural environment had the major impact on the spread and concentration of the population in this territory, the most important role being taken now by the economic, social, cultural causes in the evolution of the number of inhabitants (natural movement, migratory movement – especially economic, social, historical causes), in population structure by gender, age, sectors of activity (especially economic or social development, the territory inhabitants' way of life). We must look at the administrative territory of Drobeta Turnu Severin as a territorial system, resulting from the interrelations between its two components, the natural macrocosm (relief, soil, water, climate, fauna, vegetation) and the anthropic/social macrocosm-economic (population, economic activities, human settlements, behavior of human communities), but also between the elements of the same macro system, relations that are usually of mutual conditioning.

> "The territorial system results, in fact, from the interrelationships that arise between the natural environment and the other artificial environments, respectively the economic, built, social and psychological environments, having a physiognomy and a functionality closely dependent on the intensity and the forms that the relations between them take."[4]

The characteristics of the population are conditioned by natural, biological factors, social, economic, cultural, historical factors, and the population in turn, by its qualitative and quantitative characteristics, influences these factors.

The natural setting by its characteristics: the city is located in the Depression of Severin, subdivision of the depression center Drobeta Turnu Severin-Bala-Comăneşti, separating the Mehedinţi Plateau from the Getic Plateau (the relief of the depression stands out by the fact that it is a compartment with an extended surface that imposes by a special smoothness in the meadow and the terraces of the Danube, the altitudes are reduced between 104m and 48m); the mild climate with submediterranean influences (we can speak of a relatively moderate heat regime, with no excessively high temperatures in the summer, but also without persistent frosts in winter, long autumn periods with quite high temperatures, without drought, relatively moderate wind, rich pluviometric regime but with great variability); fertile soils; the presence of permanent water resources; vegetation and forest fauna, provided favorable conditions for the early humanization of this territory through the appearance of human communities (old artifacts from a period before the Neolithic – epipaleolic or, in

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[4]   Ianoş Ioan, (2000), Sisteme teritoriale, Editura Tehnică, Bucureşti, p. 24.

the opinion of other specialists, mesolithic, whose age rises somewhere between 10,000 and 11,000 years (organic materials from the Schela Cladovei settlement), specific crops (Cultura Schela Cladovei – Lepenski Vir), of the human settlements (the oldest stable human settlement in Europe, about 9,000 years ago at Schela Cladovei, district of the town of Drobeta Turnu Severin)**, agricultural, craft, industrial and commercial practices** (the city located in the international crossing area – especially in the commercial sphere – connection gate between Europe and the Near East.) It benefits from the main European forms of circulation: road, train, naval. The transport of the ship is ensured on the European market through the North Sea-Rhine-Main-Danube-Black Sea river transport) and the continuity of living proved by the subsequent archaeological discoveries (the ancient town of Drobeta, the medieval fortress of Severin etc.).

The economy of Drobeta Turnu Severin gains consistency through the establishment of the port of Turnu Severin (1852), of the ship repair workshop (1858) which subsequently became the Shipyard (in 1914 it was the largest in Romania), the Candy Factory (1902), slaughtering plant, the Damianoff brothers' Tannery Factory, small shoemaking workshops, tailoring, locksmiths, shops. The industrial flare of the entire country during the communist period is also reflected on the city by opening the units: Wagon Company, Mechanical Enterprise, Shipyard, Pulp ,Company of cellulose and paper, Wood Industries Association, Factory of forgings, Garments Company, milling and bakery company, Wine Enterprise, Meat Industrialization company, Milk Industrialization Company, Sugar Goods Company, Beer and Alcohol Company, Tire Company, Iron Gates I and II Hydropower stations, Heavy Waters Plant (ROMAG), Halânga Thermal Power Plant

Of the above-mentioned units, the following are still functioning: The Iron Gates Hydropower Station – the largest hydropower station on the Danube; Iron Gate II Hydro Power station; SC Severnav SA (Naval Shipyard Turnu Severin) having as object the activity of shipbuilding and floating structures; SC Forsev SA (part of the Turnu Severin Shipyard which was privatized) producing various forged parts in the die, metal products; SC Meva SA (Wagon enterprise) manufacturer of tank or freight wagons, rolling stock manufacture; SC Cildro SA (Wood Industries Association); SC Euro Tyres Manufacturing SRL (Tire company); RAAN with Romag Prod (the production of heavy water for the Cernavoda Nuclear Power Plant). In 2013, the insolvency procedure started and the heavy water production stopped in 2015, there are 150 people, specialists with the mission to ensure heavy water maintenance). and Romag Termo. The closure of ROMAG Prod influenced other economic units that were involved in the operation of this unit, such as Halanga steam power plant (ROMAG TERMO), Mining Company, as well as hundreds of companies providing services of all kinds, from repair, maintenance, coal transport. In addition to these units we also mention Severconf SA; Hortindustrial Dealul Viilor SA; SC

Euroboiler SRL (Production of steam generators); SC Sevam SA (Manufacture of lifting and handling equipment); SC Abraxa International SRL (Cutting and planing of wood); IZOMETAL-MAGELLAN SRL (Wholesale of metals and metal ores); LAMDRO SA (Production of ferrous metals in primary forms and ferroalloys); TRANS BACO SRL; SECOM SA; FLORA SERCOM SA, etc.

The highly industrialized local economy in the communist period underwent changes following the transition from the planned economy to the market economy, the consequences of this change being the closure of some units, the privatization of others (with domestic or foreign capital), which competed in the phenomenon of deindustrialisation and the increasingly tertiary outlook of the tertiary sector (the tertiaryisation of the local economy). Initially (shortly after 1989) small commercial companies emerged throughout the city to see the development of commercial activities on the outskirts of the city in the last few years, where land was suitable for the location of large European commercial operators.

In the urban regeneration process, the image of the city is an integral part.[5] The image of the city – through indicators of the quality of urban life and housing – can directly influence the city's evolution by attracting investors, generating urban regeneration. In Drobeta Turnu Severin, in the last years there is a slight evolution in the sense of urban regeneration through the appearance of private investors (SUMITOMO, COINDU, CARREFOUR, CORA, etc.).

2. Materials and methods

The collected information has been processed and condensed into tables, graphical representations of the chart type, elements that provide a clear picture of the studied phenomena. Among the methods of research used are the following: analysis, synthesis, historical method, indicator method, comparison method, inductive and deductive method. Field observations, bibliographic materials, but above all (in the present case) the statistical data passed through the geographic interpretation filter give us the key to understanding the urban evolution of the town Drobeta Turnu Severin.

3. Results and discussions

The structure and number of the population

The structure of the population by gender is the expression of the proportion of women / men in the total population. The gender structure should

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[5]   Hall, T. (1997), Urban Geography Routledge Contemporary Human Geography Series, London.

be seen as a result of the natural movement (gender differences in birth, differences in male and female mortality resulting from different risks of gender-related mortality due to different social, economic events), and of migratory movements (proportion of the number of female and male migrants).

"These gender differences on mortality are less due to biological factors – genetic ones, especially to the difficult work of men, labor accidents (through the monopolization of risk jobs, construction, mining, transport), road accidents, diseases due to the consumption of alcohol and tobacco".[6]

It can also be influenced by the level and the specificity of the economic development of the territory (if the economic branches require a female labor force, a higher proportion of the population of this kind will emerge), the material, cultural, social and spiritual level. The gender structure of the population in the period 1992-2018 at the level of the city shows a slight preponderance of the female gender, the values oscillating between 50.72% and 52.01% due to the higher value of the general male mortality and the male migration higher than the feminine one. The higher frequency of the number of women or men has a particular influence on the development of the area.
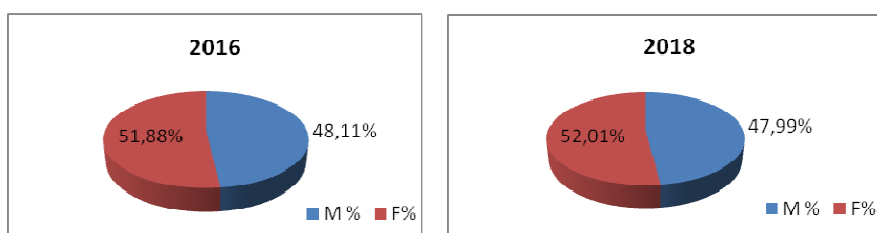

Fig. 1. Rate of population by gender (2016, 2018)
(*Source:* processed data after retrieved data www.insse.ro, DJSMH)

Since 1992 up to now, the rate of the female population has grown slightly due to the increase in urban population migration to other more developed cities or to other countries as a result of the restructuring of the industrial sector, the construction that affected a large part of the male population, but also of the biological causes (the average life expectancy of a woman is higher than in men).

The report of femininity is the ratio between the number of women and the number of men. In Drobeta Turnu Severin the feminine report registered slight increases, always higher than the male ones. In the period 1992-2018 the values have fluctuated between 102.78 and 108.37 female persons per 100 male persons.

6 Erdeli, G., Dumitrache, L. (2009), Geografia populației mondiale, Editura Universitară, București, p. 83.

The structure of the population by age and gender gives us information about the evolution of the population, the knowledge of this evolution being important in the economic and social-cultural planning works. The evolution of birth rate and mortality, the decrease of fertility, the evolution of migration (departures, arrivals), the increase of the average life expectancy, the higher life expectancy of the feminine population generated changes of population structure by age groups and sexes, increasing the rate of the elderly population and decreasing the rate of the young population. In addition to these, there are other factors influencing the structure by age and gender, such as some historical, social and natural factors (wars, droughts, etc.) that lead to the numerical decrease of the population.
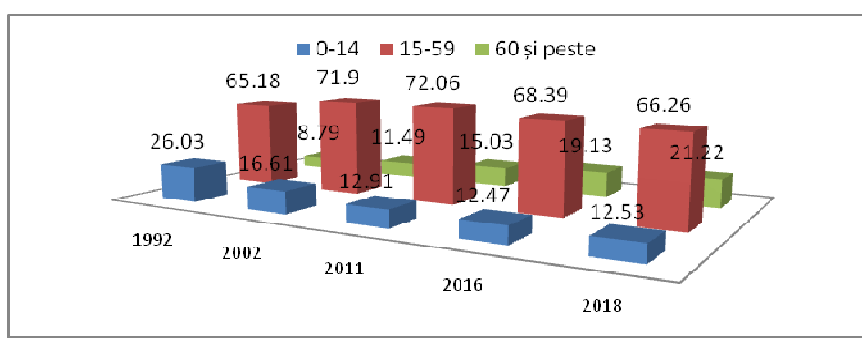

Fig. 2. Population structure by age group in Dr. Tr. Severin
(*Source:* processed data after retrieved data www.insse.ro, DJSMH)

Compared to the total population of the municipality, the proportion of the elderly population increased from 8.79% in 1992 to 21.22% in 2018, while the rate of the young group decreased from 26.03% in 1992 to 12.53% in 2018. Such a demographic aging of the municipality's population can start from 2011 (we can talk about demographic aging when the rate of the elderly population exceeds 13%). Demographic policy in our country pursues the demographic growth, the consolidation of the family, the maintenance of the vigor of the Romanian people. A demographic rejuvenation here is very difficult because this process can be accomplished by a birth rate recovery, which is quite difficult to achieve if we take into account the fact that the phenomenon of the single-parent family is individualized, that the lived economic period is not a very favorable one to birth. The rate of adult population here increases from 65.18% in 1992 to 72.06% in 2011, then falling to 66.26% in 2018. Female population is characterized by structure fluctuations by age group and gender. Thus, for the young population, the rate values dropped from 24.84% in 1992 to 11.69% in 2018, for the adult group they increased from 65.48% in 1992 to 71.64% in 2011, then falling to 65.52% in 2018, and in the case of the elderly group increased from 9.68% in 1992 to 22.80% in 2018.

Population structure by age and gender groups

GRUPA	TOTAL FEMININ									
	1992		**2002**		**2011**		**2016**		**2018**	
	nr.	**%**	**nr.**	**%**	**nr.**	**%**	**nr**	**%**	**nr**	**%**
0-14	14499	24,84%	9425	15,78%	7154	12,16%	6653	11,69%	6540	11,69%
15-59	38226	65,48%	42824	71,71%	42138	71,64%	38576	67,76%	36670	65,52%
60 și peste	5651	9,68%	7466	12,50%	9529	16,20%	11702	20,55%	12759	22,80%
GRUPA	**TOTAL MASCULIN**									
0-14	15477	27,25%	10082	17,47%	7610	13,70%	7034	14,53%	6942	14,54%
15-59	36842	64,87%	41594	72,09%	40280	72,51%	32092	66,28%	30742	64,37%
60 și peste	4474	7,88%	6021	10,44%	7661	13,79%	9294	19,19%	10073	21,09%

(*Source:* processed data after retrieved data www.insse.ro, DJSMH)

From the analysis of Table 2, in the period of time studied, it can be noticed that for the young age groups the rate of the male population is slightly higher than that of the female population, while for the adult and the elderly the rate of the female population is higher than the male one. In conclusion, we can say that the structure of the population by age groups and sexes influences the birth rate, mortality, but also imprints changes in the economic life of the settlements through the age of individuals, through the contribution of physical and intellectual strength. Knowing the structure of the population by gender can be identified the discrepancies or the balance between the two genders and thus demographic, economic measures can be taken to ensure the sustainable development of the urban settlement. The population youth can generate demographic, economic, intellectual growth, its aging generates a demographic, economic decline, a lower capacity to change (reconversion, re-technology).

Age pyramids reveal the existence of certain imbalances of population development in some age groups. The pyramid of 1992 has its broad base and narrow tip, it characterizes the young population, and in the years 2002, 2011, 2018 the pyramids have a narrow base and a peak with extension tendencies (hypertrophy) characterizing a population with aging tendencies. Pyramids with a narrow base indicate that the potential for population replacement by birth is reduced and the dependency ratio will increase over time. Generations with a small volume of children will have to support economically the current generations of adults, much more numerous ones. There is an imbalanced population distribution by age groups, with an increasing age population and a higher elderly female population, with low rates of young population (female population is less than the male one) and with a lower rate of adult female population compared to the adult male population in the years 2002, 2011, while in 2018 the situation is opposite.

Two generations with a slightly higher volume are identified in the young and adult population: for the 40-49 age group (as a result of the pro-birth policies during the communist period) and the age group 10-14 (the next period after the events of 1989 that coincided with the migration of the rural adult population able to procreate to the city). Then the birth rate has fallen, the number of children aged 5-9 years and 0-4 years being lower and lower. The largest volume of population is recorded for all segments of the adult population.
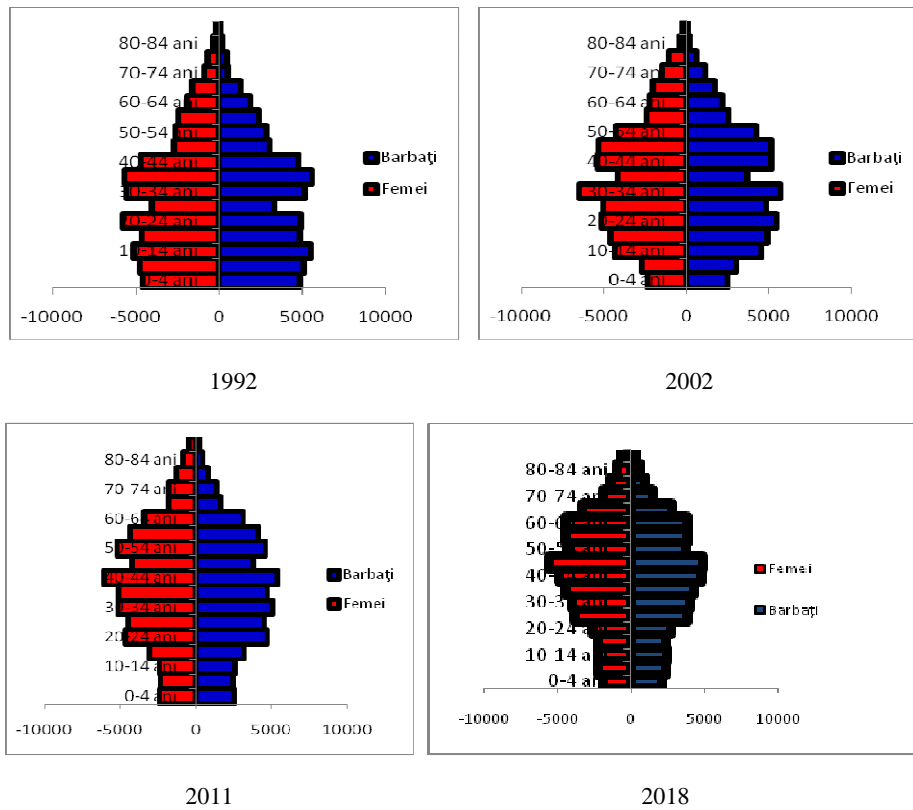
Fig. 3. Age pyramid – 1992, 2002, 2011, 2018

Changes in age and gender structure of the population have reflected the emergence and evolution of a demographic aging process.

Demographic dependency report

In order to highlight the consequences of demographic aging, *the ratio of demographic dependence* (of age) can be used. This report provides the picture of the pressure exerted by the young and the elderly population on the adult population, working population.
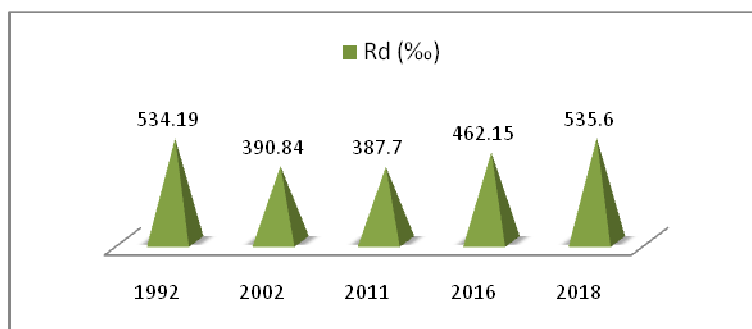
Fig. 4. The evolution of the demographic dependence ratio (‰)
(*Source:* processed data after retrieved data www.insse.ro, DJSMH)

In Drobeta Turnu Severin, the number of young people and the elderly reported to 1,000 adult persons has decreased from 534,19 ‰ in 1992 to 387,7 ‰ in 2011, then rising to 535,6 ‰ in 2018 , this increase was due to the sharp decrease of the adult population compared to 2011 and the increase of the number of the elderly people.

Demographic aging index

The Demographic Aging Index of a population results from the relationship established between the extreme age groups within a certain range. For the population of the municipality the average value of the index increased from 0.33 in 1992 to 1.69 in 2018. The values of the demographic aging index increased due to the decrease of the birth rate, the increasing rates of the elderly group, the emigration of the young population, thus appearing an increasingly prominent demographic aging process.
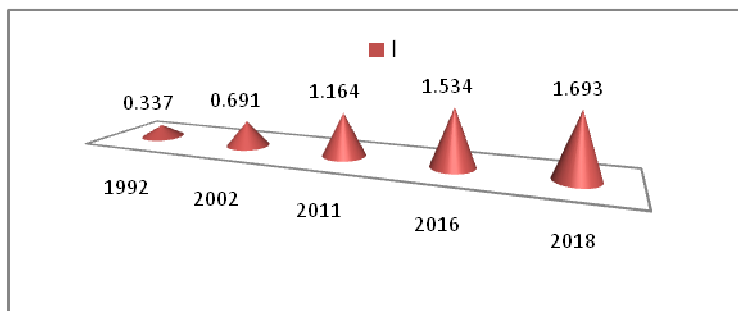

Fig. 5. The evolution of the demographic aging index
(*Source:* processed data after retrieved data www.insse.ro, DJSMH)

The ethnic structure of the population in the studied space indicates a very homogeneous area with regard to the population of Romanian origin. At the basis of any ethnicity is the language, the common language, the same customs, cultural traditions, common aspirations and the conscience of some descendants, all grouped on a well-defined territory. From the ethnic point of view of Drobeta Turnu Severin, the Romanians rate is of 99.08% in 2002, the gypsy people with a rate of 0.56%, the Hungarians (0.09%), the rest of the ethnic groups such as the Germans, Czechs, Serbs and Turks. In 2011 the population was made up of 99,02% Romanians, gypsy people – 0,61%, Hungarians 0,07%, and the rest of other ethnicities. It is worth mentioning that this town was extremely cosmopolitan, in 1865 it had a very diverse ethnic structure in which the German population was the majority (54.3%), followed by the Romanian population (27%), the Jews (8.5 %), Greeks (4%), Hungarians (3.4%), Italians (1.92), Turks (1.15).[7]

Population structure by types of religion. Religious confession is the reflection of a system of values and own practices that generate a certain attitude towards world and life. After the revolution in December 1989, the population had the opportunity to freely express their religious confession, which led to significant changes in the confessional structure of the population. Religion is the highest expression of man's spiritual life as a sign of his cultural and moral life. From the religious point of view in 2011, in DrobetaTurnu Severin the population of Orthodox religion prevails with a rate of 98.55%, Roman Catholics 0.42%, Baptists 0.23%, Pentecostals 0.17%, other religions.

Social – economic structure

Active/inactive population

Depending on the degree of participation of the population in the economic activities, a socio-economic structure of the population was shaped, structure influenced by economic, political, social, cultural and psychological factors. The socio-economic structure, as well as the demographic one, has undergone numerous changes due to factors of influence. Depending on the degree of participation in an economic activity, two categories of population are distinguished: the active population and the inactive population. The rate of the active population in the total population is determined by the character of the

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[7]   Ion Ionescu de la Brad, (1868), Agricultura județului Mehedinți, Imprimeria Statului, București, pp. 16-42.

local economy, which can generate migratory currents and of the natural movement (which contributes to the increase/decrease of the active population), the psychological behavior of the population (under the influence of culture) vis-a-vis of labor issues. The rate of the active population is directly influenced by the degree of economic development of the territory and the evolution of the demographic factors. In the municipality of Drobeta Turnu Severin the rate of the active population was 37.75%, the rate of the inactive population being 62.24% in 2011. The rate of the active population registered a downward evolution in the studied period (48.7% in 1992, 42.4% % in 2002, 37.7% in 2011), it is the result of a less developed economy (few investors, closure of some industrial units) and an increasing rate of the elderly population, plus a reduced natural increase and sometimes even negatively one, the migration of the working-age population were factors that contributed to the gradual decrease of the rate of the active population. Regarding the volume of migration, it varies according to: the degree of diversity of the areas included in the territory, the diversity of the population in the territory, the fluctuation of the economy and the state of progress in the territory.[8]
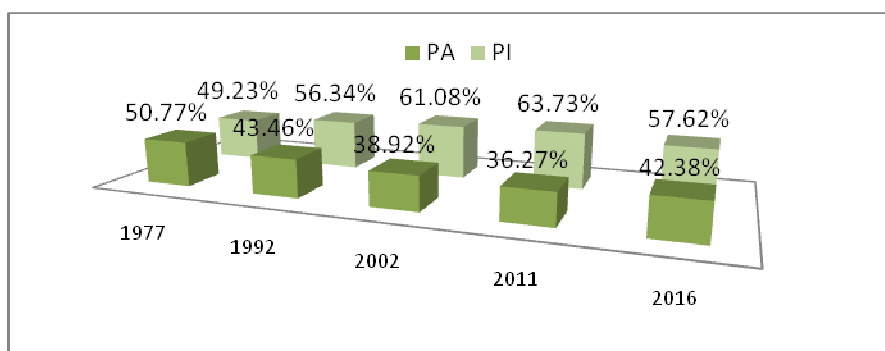

Fig. 6. Rate of active/inactive population in the total population
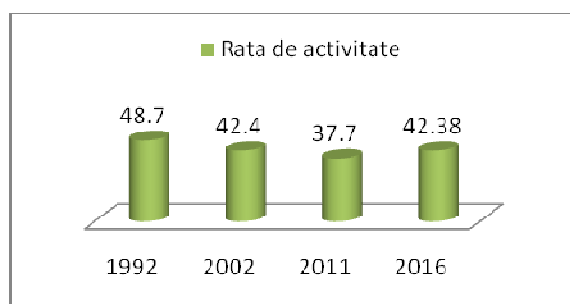(*Source:* processed data after retrieved data www.insse.ro, DJSMH)

The rate of active population is growing slightly reaching the value of 42.38% in 2016, due to the fact that in Drobeta Turnu Severin several private investors have hired, creating several thousand jobs (CELROM, the Japanese company SUMITOMO, Portuguese company COINDU, employments in the service sector). Knowledge of the ratio between the active and the inactive population is increasingly necessary, depending on it, both now and in the future, the way of assuring the labor force of different economic branches. Of the total population, the rate of the female active population is 16.9%, the rest

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8   Lee, E.S. (1966). A Theory of Migration. Demography, 3 (1), 47-57.

being the inactive population, the rate of the male active population out of the total population is higher than the female population reaching the value of 21.05%, the remaining 78.94% being the male inactive population (for the year 2016). Of the total active population, 85.48% represents the rate of the employed population, of which 55.44% represents the male employed population and 44.55% of female employed population.

Activity rate

Represents the ratio between the active population and the total population, expressed as a percentage, this indicator shows the degree of participation of the population in the economic activity. Activity rates dropped from 48.7% in 1992 to 42.4% in 2002 and 37.75% in 2011 respectively.

Fig. 7. Evolution of the activity rate
(*Source:* processed data after retrieved data www.insse.ro, DJSMH)

The decrease in activity rate was caused by the drop in the working population due to massive layoffs, especially in the industrial sector, the prolongation of the schooling period, the reduction of the retirement age for certain socio-professional categories, the migration of the working population to other cities, or other countries offering a competitive job market. The activity rate after this interval increases to 42.38% in 2016 as a result of the increase in the rate of the active population and the decrease of the total number of inhabitants.

Economic dependency ratio

The economic dependency ratio is the result of reporting the inactive population to the economically active population, reported as a percentage. The main causes of changes in the values of this indicator are related to the changes in population number (especially in age structure), the disappearance of some

economic activities, retirement before the age limit, the increase in schooling duration, the difficult economic period faced by our country, respectively the studied space.

Fig. 8. The evolution of the economic dependency ratio
(*Source:* processed data after retrieved data www.insse.ro, DJSMH)

The dependency ratio is calculated at the level of years 1992, 2002 and 2011, when at the level of the municipality there is an increase of this indicator from 105.33% in 1992, 135.84% in 2002 to 164.87% in 2011, after which decreasing to 135.91% in 2016. This indicator reflects the evolution of the rate of the active and inactive population.

Unemployment rate

The inconsistent relationship between job demand and economic supply leads to the emergence of unemployment, a phenomenon that has negative consequences on the active population that has lost its job. The emergence of unemployment is due to the existence of a disproportion in the ratio of demand, which expresses the degree of economic development and the supply that reflects the volume and dynamics of the population. Unemployment was not officially recognized before 1989, but after 1990 it became an indicator that characterizes the state of the social and economic environment. After 1990, there were high unemployment rates due to the layoffs in the industrial sector, the privatization of some industrial units, the insufficiency of investments in small, medium-sized enterprises. The local job offer was insufficient to absorb existing human resources. In 2016 the unemployment rate at the level of Mehedinți County was 10.6%, of which: the unemployed with urban residence, 24.56%; the unemployed with residence in the countryside 75.44%. The unemployment situation is a consequence of the difficult economic conditions that the county faces, the supply of jobs being totally insufficient to absorb the existing human resources. We can notice some obstacles for finding a job: lack of adequate qualification of the workforce in the fields required by employers,

denial of jobs due to inadequate wages, existence of inadequate mentalities regarding the employee-employer ratio, refusal of the unemployed of some jobs because they benefit from government support. Lack of jobs has led people to leave for unskilled work abroad.

Worldwide, the resulting high unemployment led to a strong international out-migration of active population from the former communist countries towards Western Europe.[9]

In the municipality of Drobeta Turnu Severin, the unemployment rate, expressed as a ratio between the unemployed and the working population, increased from 5.4% in 1992 to 14% in 2002. At the beginning of 2016, the percentage of unemployment was of 5,06% due to the fact that in Drobeta Turnu Severin several private investors have hired, creating several thousand jobs (CELROM, Japanese company SUMITOMO, Portuguese company COINDU, employment in the service sector), but there are also layoffs of the Creditors Assembly of RAAN (Autonomous Public Entity for Nuclear Activities) (when 1525 employees were laid off from 1st October 2015, and another 520, in the second stage, on 31st March 2016).

4. Conclusions

The historical evolution, the social and economic transformations that this space has gone through in recent years, naturally led to the evolution of the structure of the population and its characteristics. The selection of indicators used in this study had as their primary objective to express the transformations that this territory faces. Currently, several demographic problems can be identified in Drobeta Turnu Severin such as: low birth rates; positive migration balance; the aging of the population (the rate of the elderly population has increased to 21.22%, the demographic aging index has increased from 0.33 in 1992 to 1.69 in 2018); the demographic dependency ratio of 2016 (462.15 ‰) is lower than in 1992 (534.19 ‰), but increased compared to 2011 (387.7 ‰), this increase was due to the sharp decrease of the adult population compared to 2011 and the increase in the number of elderly people. However, we can notice an improvement over the last years of the situation of some indicators such as: increasing the rate of the active population (from 37.75% in 2011 to 42.38% in 2016) due to the fact that new private investors who hired are coming to Drobeta Turnu Severin; the activity rate increases compared to 2011 reaching 42.38% in 2016 as a result of the increase in the rate of the active population;

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[9] Blazek, J., Netrdová, P. (2012), Regional Unemployment Impacts of the Global Financial Crisis in the New Member States of the EU in Central and Eastern Europe, European Urban and Regional Studies, 19(1), pp. 42-61.

the economic dependency ratio decreases compared to 2011, reaching 135.91% in 2016; the unemployment rate drops to 5.06% in 2016 (growth in the number of jobs).

We should emphasize the fact that the significant changes taking place between the population (size of population, demographic and socio-economic structure) and economy determine an efficient development/decline of economy, of social and cultural characteristics, thus being able to highlight the positive or negative transformations of the territory.

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