

PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION & REGIONAL STUDIES
3rd Year, No. 1 (5) – 2010
Galati University Press, ISSN 2065 -569X
**TERRITORIAL DISPARITIES OF THE NATURAL MOVEMENT OF
POPULATION IN GALATI COUNTY DURING THE
POSTCOMMUNIST PERIOD**

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Abstract:

Galati is known as one of the counties in which most of the phenomena and demographic processes experienced over time values above the national average, the demographic vitality of the county being determined first of all, before 1989, by Galati city's economic development and secondary by Romanian pro-natalist policies.

The repeal of the latter, considered rightly forced, but mainly lack of strong and coherent policies to boost birth in the "90s, generated a continuous decrease of demographic vitality of Romania and also Galați County, the values of components of population natural movement being now below the national average.

Keywords: demographic vitality, population system, birth rate, natural balance.

1. Methodological aspects

The study aims to identify and reflect territorial disparities of the natural movement of population in Galați County according to the distribution of values of demographic indicators specific to each administrative unit for 4 years (1989, 1992, 2002, 2008). It also draws attention upon their trend values by reporting on national and county average. Finally, as a result of this approach, we followed the classification of administrative units in different types and subtypes in line with the demographic behavior.

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2. Birth Rate

The active element of the population system, birth rate, although recorded after 1989, downward values in the county, was located above the national average by 2008. Thus, in 1989, 1992 and 2002, the county birth rate exceeded the national value with $2,8 \text{ ‰}$, $2,4 \text{ ‰}$ and $0,8 \text{ ‰}$, but for 2008 it was $0,4 \text{ ‰}$ lower. The same trend is recorded in urban and rural areas of the county, values being above the national average birth (urban and rural) by 2008.

Returning to the county level, the analysis of urban values on the 4 moments reveals the following conclusions:

- Galati city recorded for all years a birth rate below the average of the country, national urban areas and national counties;

- the other three urban settlements (Tecuci, Tg. Bujor, Beresti) in the county recorded birth values above the urban average of the county in 1989;

- in 1992 and 2002 the number of cities whose birth is above the county urban average reduces to 2 (Tg. Bujor and Beresti);

- 2008 marks a return of Tecuci City whose birth rate ($10,5 \text{ ‰}$) is above the urban average, county and country average, its place among the urban settlements with a birth rate below the urban average of the county being taken by Beresti City which recorded one of the lowest birth rates in the county ($5,9 \text{ ‰}$);

- Galati and Tecuci cities have recorded an increase in birth rates since 2002, unlike cities (Tg. Bujor and Beresti) whose birth rate continues to decline by almost 50% for Beresti city.

The analysis of rural values in the 4 times reflects the following situation:

- reducing by half the number of parishes with birth values above the rural average of the county (30 parishes-50% in 1989; 25 parishes – 41,6% in 1992; 22 parishes- 36,6% in 2002; 17 parishes- 26,5 % in 2008);

- maximum and "huge" value situated on an upward trend recorded by the same parish -Brăhăsești- ($33,2 \text{ ‰}$ in 1989; $26,6 \text{ ‰}$ in 1992; $24,7 \text{ ‰}$ in 2002; $35,4 \text{ ‰}$ in 2008);

- minimum and decreasing value, zero in 2008, recorded either by the parishes surrounding the urban settlements, either the new ones created after 2004 (1989-Șendreni with $11,5 \text{ ‰}$; 1992- Vânători with $9,2 \text{ ‰}$; 2002- Corod with $5,3 \text{ ‰}$; 2008- Suhurlui with 0 ‰).

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The analysis of the birth rate evolution for each parish allowed the identification of the following types and subtypes:

- **parishes with falling birth rates during the whole period (34 parishes) with the following subtypes:**

- parishes with falling birth rate $\leq 50\%$: 12 parishes (Bălăbănești; Cuca; Frumușița; Independența; Liești; Reditu; Smârdan, Suceveni, Țepu, Tulucești, Valea Mărului, Vlădești);

- parishes with falling birth rate between 50-60%: 11 parishes (Băleni, Corni, Cosmești, Costache Negri, Fârțănești, Grivița, Matca, Nicorești, Oancea, Pechea);

- parishes with falling birth rate between 60-70%: 9 parishes (Bălășești, Băneasa, Cudalbi, Foltești, Fundeni, Măstăcani, Nămolosa, Piscu, Umbrărești);

- parishes with falling birth rate $\geq 70\%$: 2 parishes (Drăgănești, Movileni).

- **parishes with fluctuating birth rate (22 parishes) with the following subtypes:**

- parishes with growth trend: 14 parishes (Barcea, Berești-Meria, Brăhășești, Braniștea, Corod, Ivești, Jorăști, Munteni, Scânteiești, Șendreni, Slobozia Conachi, Tudor Vladimirescu, Vânători, Vârlezi);

- parishes with constant values: 2 parishes (Ghidigeni, Gohor);

- parishes with downward trend: 6 parishes (Buciumeni, Cavadinești, Cerțești, Drăgușeni, Priponești, Schela)

2. Death Rate

Galați County recorded an average death rate below the national average, confirming the demographic vitality of the Moldavian Counties, although the number of deaths was been continuously rising since 1989. However, after 2002, birth rate in Romania recorded a downward trend, Galați County and most of its administrative units following the same direction.

The evolution of death rate in urban areas of the county reflected:

- growing death rate during 1989-2002 for Galați, Tecuci and Berești while Tg.Bujor, although death rate is increasing, its progress is more fluctuating;

- slight decrease between 0,2 ‰ and 2,2 ‰, for all urban settlements since 2002;

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- values of death rate below the urban average of the county recorded by Galati and Tecuci in all 4 years;
- values of death rate above the urban average of the County for Berești during the whole period and only for the first 3 years for Tg. Bujor.

The evolution of values in rural areas reflected:

- 10% increase over the number of parishes with death rate above the rural average of the County (26 parishes-43% in 1989, 27 parishes-45% in 1992, 31 parishes-51, 6% in 2002, 34 parishes - 53.1% in 2008);
- maximum, high and increasing value, recorded either by parishes of the County border with Moldova , or those with reduced accessibility of its center (Oancea- 19,3 ‰ in 1989 and 25,1 ‰ in 1992; Băleni- 25,3 ‰ in 2002; Smulți- 25,8 ‰ in 2008);
- minimum and fluctuating value, very low and continuously decreasing (Pechea- 5,6 ‰ in 1989; Drăgănești- 7,5 ‰ in 1992; Brăhășești- 6,5 ‰ in 2002; Suhurlui- 2,7 ‰ in 2008).

The types and subtypes that emerged from the analysis of the death rate evolution of each parish are:

• **parishes with increasing death rate during the whole period (12 parishes) with the subtypes:**

- parishes with increasing death rate < 50%: Ivești
- parishes with increasing death rate between 50-100%: 6 parishes (Bălăbănești, Corod, Cosmești, Costache Negri, Măstăcani, Priponești);
- parishes with increasing death rate > 100%: 5 parishes (Berești-Meria, Cuca, Reditu, Slobozia Conachi, Vlădești);

• **parishes with increasing death rate between 1989-2002 and further decrease (21 parishes) with the subtypes:**

- further decrease of death rate < 20%: 12 parishes (Băleni, Drăgănești, Foltești, Fundeni, Ghidigeni, Grivița, Independența, Jorăști, Munteni, Piscu, Tudor Vladimirescu, Tulucești);
- further decrease of death rate between 20% - 40% :7 parishes (Băneasa, Corni, Fârțanești, Gohor, Movileni, Nămolosa, Scânteiești);
- further decrease of death rate > 40% : 2 parishes (Certești, Șendreni)

• **parishes with fluctuating death rate with the subtypes:**

- parishes with growth trend: 14 parishes (Bălășești, Brăhășești, Braniștea, Buciumeni, Cudalbi, Liești, Matca, Nicorești, Pechea, Schela,

PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION & REGIONAL STUDIES

3 rd Year, No. 1 (5) – 2010

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Smulți, Suceveni, Valea Mărului, Vânători);

- parishes with downward trend: 8 parishes (Barcea, Cavadinești, Drăgușeni, Frumușița, Oancea, Țepu, Umbrărești, Vârlezi)

3. Natural Balance

Spatio-temporal dynamics of the natural balance directly influenced by the evolution of natality and mortality has allowed classification of urban settlements in the county in the following types and subtypes:

• **urban settlements with natural increase between 1989-2002 and further natural decrease, with the subtypes:**

- increasing further natural decrease: Berești

- decreasing further natural decrease: Galați, Tg. Bujor

• **urban settlements with predominantly natural increase:** Tecuci

In rural areas I have identified the following types and subtypes:

• **parishes with continuously natural increase: 6 parishes** (Brăhășești, Drăgușeni, Ghidigeni, Matca, Schela, Smârdan);

• **parishes with predominantly natural increase (13 parishes), with the subtypes:**

- parishes with positive values at present: 5 parishes (Barcea, Certești, Munteni, Șendreni, Vânători);

- parishes with negative values at present: 8 parishes (Costache Negri, Drăgănești, Grivița, Ivești, Pechea, Slobozia Conachi, Umbrărești, Valea Mărului)

• **parishes with predominantly natural decrease (17 parishes), with the subtypes:**

- parishes with growth trend: 6 parishes (Buciumeni, Cavadinești, Foltești, Fundeni, Priponești, Smulți);

- parishes with downward trend : 11 parishes (Băleni, Băneasa, Berești-Meria, Gohor, Independența, Jorăști, Nămolosa, Scânteiești, Tudor Vladimirescu, Tulucești, Vârlezi);

• **parishes with continuously natural decrease: 3 parishes** (Oancea, Suceveni, Țepu)

• **parishes with natural increase between 1989-2002 and further natural decrease, with the subtypes:**

- increasing further natural decrease: 13 parishes (Bălăbănești, Bălășești, Corni, Corod, Cosmești, Cuca, Cudalbi, Liești, Măstăcani, Nicorești, Piscu, Rediu, Vlădești);

PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION & REGIONAL STUDIES

3 rd Year, No. 1 (5) – 2010

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- decreasing further natural decrease: 4 parishes (Braniștea, Fârțânești, Frumușița, Movileni)

4. Conclusions

Although 1989 was a major "break" for the Romanian society, deeply felt also by the demographic component, after 2002 Galati County recorded a slight increase in birth and natural balance rates due to a weaker death rate, growth recorded by an increasing number of administrative units both in urban and in rural areas.

However, many rural settlements preserve the demographic decline begun after 1989, the natural decrease being amplified by a negative migration balance felt in urban areas which maintain the downward trend of the demographic component of Galati County.

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Fig.1. Spatio-temporal dynamics of birth rate in Galați County between 1989-2008

(Note: processing by Iulian Șorcaru according to DJS Galați)

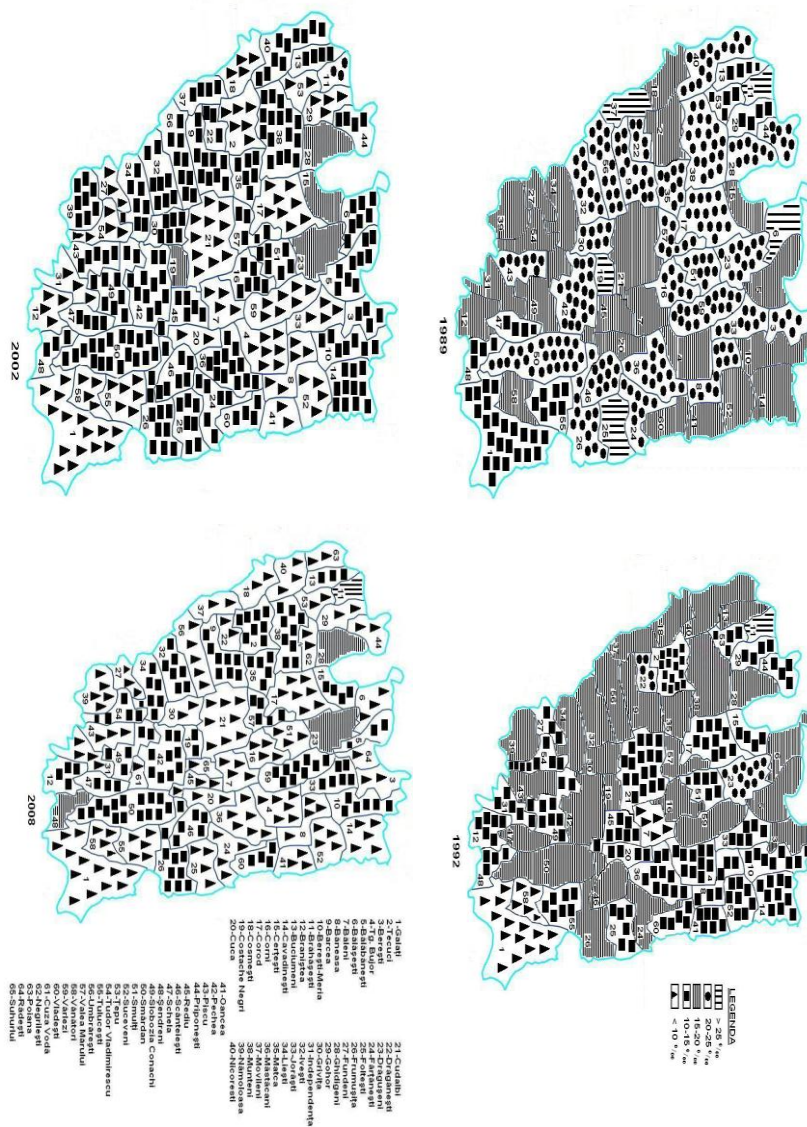


Fig.2. Spatio-temporal dynamics of death rate in Galați County between 1989-2008

(Note: processing by Iulian Șorcaru according to DJS Galați)

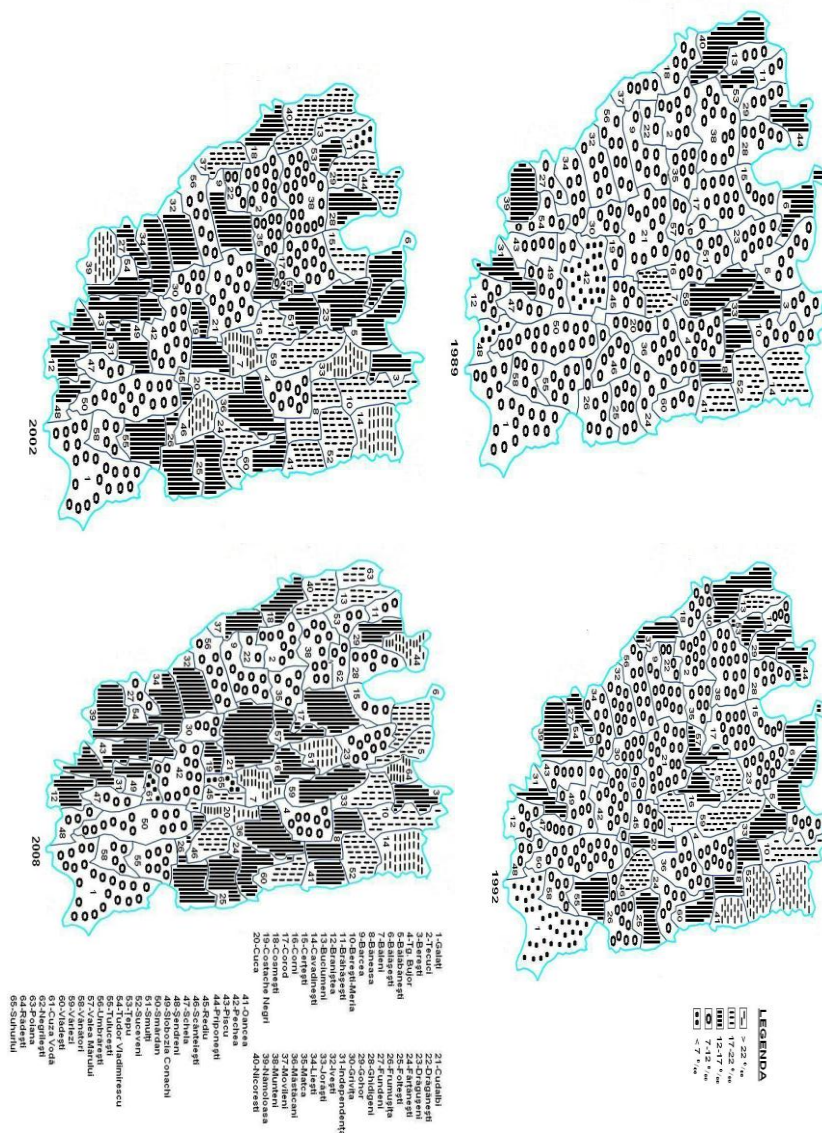


Fig.3. Spatio-temporal dynamics of natural balance in Galați

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