

## **GEOPOLITICS OF THE OCEANS: THE DEMOGRAPHIC INFLUENCE IN THE SEPARATION OF POWERS**

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**Abstract:** It has been argued that the strength in the world domination is found on land and it is represented by Central Asia. Thus, who will dominate the Heartland will also easily dominate the Rimland, which includes the major demographic centers of the world today, from Asia and Europe, but excluding Africa. Comparing the demographic change between different regions by the year 2100, it is noticed that Sub-Saharan Africa will hold 38% of the world's total population and the southern half of Asia, over 32%. It is understood that the world center of power will in the south, between these two major demographic regions, on ocean waters. The population around the Indian Ocean will reach over 40% of the world's population in 2050 and 50% by the year 2100. Thus, it can be said that whoever dominates the Indian Ocean will become the greatest power and will dominate the World.

**Key words:** population, evolution, sea trade, exceeds, the world center, the periphery of the world

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### **INTRODUCTION**

The water from the oceans of the world is the essence of life on Earth, making the difference between the planet Terra and the other planets in our solar system, sustaining life and giving it the name of the Blue Planet.

Representing 71% of the surface of the Planet, the oceans hold vast biological resources, finding here 357.000 species known till now, large oil and natural gas deposits, and 50 million billion tons of dissolved solid substances, which could cover the entire planet with a layer of 170 m, representing a great economic potential in the near future (Gâstescu et al., 2004, p. 9-23).

Also, ocean waters have an inexhaustible energy source that can be used to produce electricity, including: marine currents, tides, waves, temperature differences and hydrogen (Neguț, 2009, p. 12-13).

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**Table 1.** Earth's oceans

Source: Găstescu et al., 2004, p. 11; Soft and Taylor, 2010

Name	Area (km <sup>2</sup> )	Volume (km <sup>3</sup> )	Coastline (km)	Maximum length / width
Pacific Ocean	179.710.000	723.710.000	145.000	18.000 / 13.900
Atlantic Ocean	91.655.000	330.100.000	120.000	14.120 / 7.900
Indian Ocean	74.917.000	219.945.000	70.000	10.200 / 9.400
Arctic Ocean	14.788.000	16.700.000	45.000	5.000 / 3.200
World Ocean	361.070.000	1.362.455.000	380.000	

The maritime transport of goods represents 80% of the total merchandise transport and the appearance of containers, easy to transfer from ships to trains or lorries, has contributed to an increase of the percentage (Soft and Taylor, 2010, p. 23). Since ancient times, ocean waters have been a major geopolitical interest in establishing the powers of the world, and over the past five centuries, maritime empires have often won military or economic wars with continental empires. Expansion of the oceans was translated into the number of days needed to cross them, and the islands represented stands for monitoring, defending and protecting the ships. There are 94.000 islands in the world's oceans, of which 45.000 are found in the Arctic Ocean, 25.000 in the Pacific Ocean, 21.000 in the Atlantic Ocean and only 2.000 islands in the Indian Ocean (Găstescu and Cioacă, 2013, p. 8).

### **THE ATLANTIC DOMINATION: THE EUROPEAN EMPIRES**

#### **Europe: the dominant maritime power**

Equipped with European maritime powers, the Atlantic has dominated global shipping over the last 500 years, turning the Atlantic Ocean into its own lake, where the main transport was that of slaves from Africa to America, raw materials from America to Europe and from Europe to the two continents, finished goods and emigrants.

Trade between European powers has given the most widely circulated maritime area in the world from the Mediterranean Sea, the Black Sea, the Baltic Sea and the Atlantic coast of Europe, motivating also other territories in the Atlantic, where the shore closest to Europe had the best industrial and economic development at the same time. The US and Canada, located just 5.000 km from Europe's coasts, have developed high-end industries and high-skilled jobs with the technology and immigrants taken over from the Old Continent. Trade between the European States and the coasts of the US and Canada have transformed the North Atlantic into the first ocean area of the Globe and the Earth's leading decision-making nucleus, with more than half of the global GDP, the first industrial powers and megalopolises having their own territory here.

#### **World Ocean in the past**

Slightly explored and far from the European powers, the other oceans did not have the attention of developed countries, being considered as periphery waters of the world.

Until 1950, the Pacific Ocean, located in the periphery of the world according to Europeans, registering a rapid population growth in the surrounding countries, exceeds the population around any other ocean. Thus, the US is beginning to be economically attracted into the new competition by moving its core activities off the Atlantic east coast to the west coast of the Pacific Ocean, where the country's leading economy is the state of California, being the sixth economic power of the world.

### **THE PACIFIC, HALF OF THE WORLD OCEAN: THE NEW CENTER OF INTEREST**

With an area of 181.000.000 km<sup>2</sup> including the surrounding seas, the Pacific represents one-third of the entire Earth's surface and more than the entire land of all the continents (Gifford, 2005, p. 20).

With a larger population than the Atlantic, the Pacific Ocean (Quiet), which covers half of the surface and water volume of the World Ocean and twice the Atlantic, following the development of the shipbuilding industry, which has increased the speed of ships and shortened the time to travel between the US and East Asia, on the 10.000 km, led to the increase of shipping and development of economy of the surrounding countries, overtaking the Atlantic Ocean.

The general of American Foreign Affairs, Zbigniew Brzezinski, argues that the West loses supremacy over the rest of the world, and the real reason is the rise of Asia (Grumaz., 2013, p. 87). The very geopolitical importance of the North Pacific, the West Pacific and the North Indian Ocean, which are gradually beginning to replace the commercial volume and North Atlantic power, are directly influenced by the Asian economic miracle.

#### **The North Pacific**

With the fall of Europe following the two world wars, the US is turning its attention to Japan, the new ally, which is fast moving to transforming the Pacific into the main maritime trade area.

Water trade between the top three economic powers in the world: the US, China and Japan, as well as the economic growth rates recorded on the Pacific Asian shore, have led to organizations that are getting closer, economically, riparian states, such as Japan and Asian Tigers, which have been remarked as the new economic powers in the capitalist system, with accelerated industrialization between 1960 and 1990; ASEAN, which includes South East Asian states; APEC, which includes states across the whole Pacific, such as USA, Japan, Russia and China, with more than 60% of the global economy and 50% of the trade (Humeau et al., 2010; Peptenatu et al., 2005).

#### **World Ocean today**

The ocean waters lie from economically advanced countries and in a demographic impasse, to poor and overpopulated states. And as the seas have been shown to unite, but not to separate, sooner or later, a developed country will begin to work with a developing state with the same access to the sea, sending out investments, technology and finished materials and taking raw materials, labor cheap and immigrants.

This kind of relationship happened between Europe and North America and between the USA and Japan, and now it has been noticed an approach between Japan and China or South Korea, between the USA and the Caribbean

states at the Gulf of Mexico, between Italy and the Balkan states, or between Saudi Arabia and the states around the Red Sea (Gaceu, 2006). The new economic relations between developed countries and developing countries, which support each other economically, come to improve the relations between these countries. Thus, trade and economic interest for seas and oceans that seem to fall, tends to relaunch through the development of new maritime routes that change and increase the geopolitical importance.

Currently, the USA and Canada are developing their ports and cities on the Pacific coast, to the detriment of the Atlantic coast. Brazil enhances the relations with the state of Peru for the access to the Pacific ports, and the European Union gives up on the UK, which is located in the Atlantic, and focuses its attention on the approach and integration of Russia that lies its territory to the Great Ocean.

In the current formula of power distribution, Europe is the most disadvantaged, geopolitically, seeing itself left at the periphery of the world system of powers, and the Atlantic Ocean has begun to be perceived as the periphery of the world. The European recession is a consequence of these changes, and during 2014-2016, the EU falls from the world's first economic power, being surpassed by the USA, and by 2022 China will surpass it as well.

### **LITTLE INDIAN OCEAN: THE DEMOGRAPHIC CENTER OF THE EARTH**

By 2050, the population around the world's oceans will change completely.

If in 1950 the population of Europe represented nearly 60% of the total population around the Atlantic Ocean, by 2050, the mainland African coast will exceed 50% of the population.

In the Pacific Ocean, in 1950, the West Asian coastline had 8 times more population than the American east coastline. Until 2050, this difference will be reduced from 8 times to 4 times. The second change will be within the Asian regions, where the South-East Asia is becoming more populated, while East Asia comprising the great powers, Japan and China, risks losing population.

The Indian Ocean will also be affected by major structural changes. If, in 1950, the Asian coastline exceeded the African coastline population by 6 times, this difference is now only of 4 times, and by 2050, the southern half of Asia will have 3 times more population than the eastern half of Africa.

**Table 2.** Demographic evolution around the world's oceans between 1950 and 2015  
Source: Processed from the worldometers.info; Gaceu, 2007

No.	Name	Population and annual evolution (millions) 1950	2018	2030	2050
1.	Arctic Ocean	117,0 + 2,0	170,0 + 0,1	160,0 - 0,1	155,0 - 0,1
2.	Atlantic Ocean	805,0 + 11,0	1.845,0 + 22,5	2.125,0 + 23,0	2.595,0 + 23,2
3.	Pacific Ocean	908,0 + 18,0	2.250,0 + 13,4	2.360,0 + 6,1	2.355,0 - 3,5
4.	Indian Ocean	760,0 + 14,0	3.060,0 + 46,0	3.580,0 + 42,5	4.400,0 + 32,0
1.1.	Rusia	105,0 + 1,7	144,0 0,0	140,0 - 0,4	132,0 - 0,3
2.1.	Europe (without Rusia)	470,0 + 4,0	600,0 + 1,0	600,0 - 0,3	580,0 - 1,1

2.2.	Atlantic America	213,0 + 4,7	615,0 + 5,4	655,0 + 4,0	695,0 + 1,4
2.3.	Atlantic Africa	122,0 + 2,3	630,0 + 16,0	870,0 + 19,0	1.320,0 + 23,0
3.1.	Pacific America	108,0 + 2,5	336,0 + 3,4	370,0 + 2,9	415,0 + 1,3
3.2.	Pacific East Asia, South-East Asia, Oceania	800,0 + 15,5	1.915,0 + 10,0	1.990,0 + 3,2	1.940,0 - 4,8
3.2.1.	East Asia	730,0 + 13,3	1.650,0 + 6,2	1.680,0 + 0,2	1.586,0 - 6,9
4.1.	Indian South Asia, South-East Asia and South-West Asia	650 + 11,5	2.460,0 + 31,0	2.750,0 + 26,0	3.200,0 + 13,0
4.1.1.	South Asia	500,0 + 8,9	1.880,0 + 23,0	2.130,0 + 18,7	2.380,0 + 8,7
4.2.	Indian Africa	110,0 + 2,5	600,0 + 15,0	830,0 + 16,5	1.200,0 + 19,0

This demographic evolution can bring with it ample migration of the population. The Western Roman Empire was overwhelmed by the pressure of massive migration, and Europeans invaded America, replacing indigenous peoples. There is the possibility for the oceans to become the path of increasing migration from poor countries to developed countries, and the current wave of immigrants arriving in Europe, North America, the Persian Gulf or Japan will become a flood that will force the militarization of borders and the blocking of the maritime routes (Levy, 2010, p. 70-74).

### **The Pacific stagnates: the demographic decline**

In 1950, the population around the Pacific waters exceeded with more than 100 million inhabitants, the population around the Atlantic Ocean or around the Indian Ocean. By 2018, the population around the Indian Ocean is 800 million more numerous than the Pacific Ocean population. But the Pacific Ocean still surpasses the Atlantic Ocean, exceeding it with 400 million inhabitants.

By 2050, with the demographic explosion in Africa, the population around the Atlantic Ocean will exceed the Pacific Ocean population with 100 to 200 million. Also, the population around the Indian Ocean will exceed the Pacific population by 2 billion people. Thus, in just 100 years, the population around the Pacific Ocean gets on the first place, and on the third place in terms of the demographic predominance of the surrounding population.

As in the past, the economic power around the Atlantic has surpassed the power of the Indian Ocean, and the Pacific Ocean has taken over the Atlantic Ocean, always coinciding with the demographic evolution, it is expected that by the end of the 21st century, the Pacific Ocean to represent the third geopolitical region of interest after the Atlantic and the Indian Ocean, being perceived again as the periphery of the world.

### **Revival the Atlantic: South Atlantic**

If in 1950 the most populated states were located in the North Atlantic and in the Mediterranean, by 2050, the population of the southern states will come on the first place, demographically, followed by an economic development and trade increase, as against the states from the North Atlantic.

In order to maintain the power in the North Atlantic, the European Union and NATO have been created, which aimed, among other actions, on the

unification of the Western states, to maintain colonialism in Africa, which was becoming increasingly populated. The idea of African unity, which was first held in 1900, the first Pan-African Conference and firmly reaffirmed in Tunis in 1960, led to the creation of the African Union, which tends to form a genuine economic force able to compete with the united states of the North Atlantic, until 2050 (Woddis, 1965, p. 169-174; Stasac and Stupariu, 2010).

**Table 3.** Comparison of Demographic Evolution, of the northern and southern Atlantic states between the 1950s and 2050s.

Source: Processed from the worldometers.info

State from the North/State from the South	Year: 1950 Population million:	2018	2050
SUA/ Nigeria	158 37	326 195	390 410
Germany/ Brasil	70 60	82 210	82 250
France/ Congo	42 12	65 84	72 200
Canada/ Colombia	14 12	37 49	45 57
Spain/ Egypt	28 20	46 99	46 155

### **The Indian Ocean: half of the world's population**

The Indian Ocean will register the most spectacular demographic evolution over the course of 100 years, between 1950 and 2050. If in 1950, the population around the Indian Ocean was ranked on the third place among the oceans with the largest population, surpassing only the Arctic Ocean, by 2018 it exceeds the other two oceans, too, reaching the first place. With an annual growth of over 40 million inhabitants, the population around the Indian Ocean multiplies in two years with the equivalent of the population owned by Germany, Turkey or Iran, in three years with the equivalent of the population of Japan, or every 8 years, with a demographic growth similar to the USA population. This demographic explosion will continue in the coming decades, the population around the Indian Ocean reaching 4.4 billion people, from the 9.5 billion population predicted across the globe, for the year 2050.

With such a demographic growth, the Indian Ocean enters the global ocean competition, with the greatest chance of becoming the first commercial area and economic power among the four oceans of the planet, becoming the geopolitical center, globally.

It has been demonstrated that a region, the more populated it is, the more difficult it is to subdue it, and that country will not become a colony. China has never been conquered entirely by European powers, India has constantly created problems to the French and then to English people, and the Africans gained their independence only after a demographic explosion (Waddis, 1965).

Even the food problem could be solved through agriculture. In 2000, out of over 1.3 billion workers in agriculture, half of them are around the waters of the Indian Ocean. At this impressive number of farmers on the entire planet, there were only 28 million tractors (Arthus-Bertrand, 2005, p. 123).

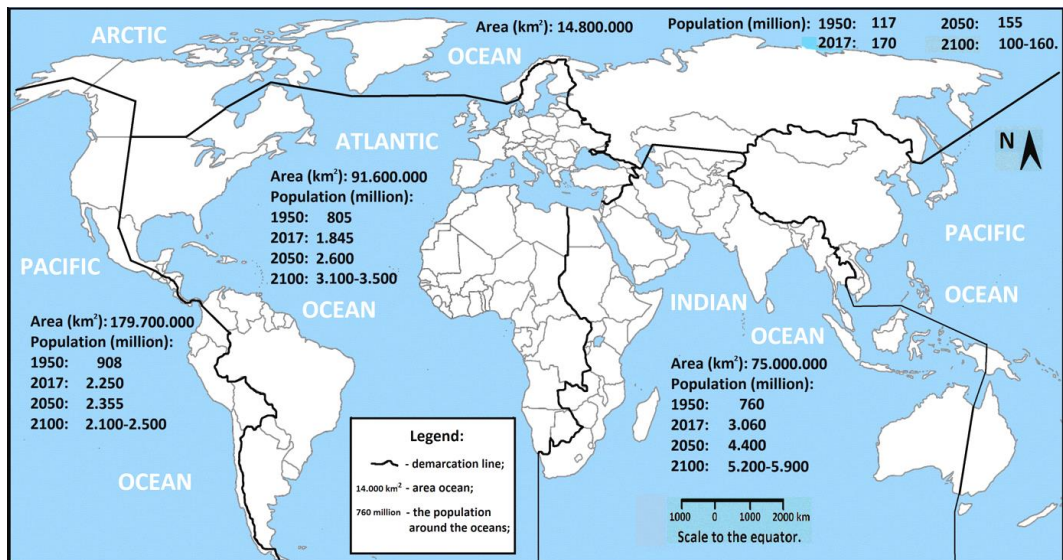
Currently, the Indian Ocean waters comprise the world's second largest state as population, the world's largest democracy, the countries with the highest population growth rate, the poorest countries, but also the most

advanced countries. United Arab Emirates with cities like Dubai, Qatar, or Bahrain, Kuwait or Saudi Arabia are among the most developed countries in the world, and the Persian Gulf energy reserves, with around 60% of world oil reserves, represents the strength in the geopolitics of the ocean, tending to intensify the fight among the great powers for what is believed to be the last large petroleum territory of the Earth (Roberts, 2008).

### YEAR 2100: AMERICA COULD BECOME PERIPHERY

In 2100, the world will be very different from how we know it today. Technological and economic developments can not be anticipated, but one thing is certain, the population of the planet will exceed 10 billion people, maybe 12 billion, and half of the world's population will be around the Indian Ocean.

**Figure 1.** Distribution of the population around the oceans between 1950 and 2100.  
Source: Processed from the worldometers.info



In 1900, the world was ruled by the European capitals, and it was then predicted to be a developed and peaceful Europe. In 1920, Europe was at the end of an endless war that had decimated the continent, the Ottoman, Austro-Hungarian and German empires were disappearing, communism had just emerged in Russia but without a chance of success, and the USA and Japan became the first forces outside the Old Continent. In 1940, Germany recovered its forces and conquered France, and Japan became the great power of Asia (Friedman, 2009, p. 11).

After another 70 years, Germany is a pacifist and very prosperous democracy, France becomes its main economic ally, Japan is a neutral and anti-militarist democracy, and Russia is a proud and independent state (Roberts, 2013, p. 814-815).

Major and unanticipated changes that occur over short periods of time demonstrate that in geopolitics, the margin of error in prospecting the future is very high.

Until 2100, the USA will no longer be the world's center of power and interest, and America will be conceived as the periphery of the world. On the other hand, the Indian Ocean, located in the center of the Old World, will be considered the key to ruling the world. With half of the world's population and having as peripheries the three demographic centers located in East and South-East Asia, Central Africa and Europe, it will lead to the creation of the largest economic market.

By 2100, the North Indian Ocean will become the world's largest maritime route, followed by the East Asia-Southeast Asia, Europe-Mediterranean and the South Atlantic, all of them having in the center the Indian Ocean and the southern coast of Asia, which will most likely become the first economic area of the world and, at the same time, the first commercial center.

Today, the great powers are trying to reach the Pacific Ocean. Until 2100, the world's great powers will only be interested in expanding territories to the Indian Ocean. Russia will try to prolong the Eurasian Union towards Iran, Myanmar will become China's vassal, ASEAN will include states like Japan and Korea, the EU will integrate Israel, North Africa will form an union with Egypt and Sudan, Sub-Saharan Africa will enlarge the African Union including eastern states with coastlines to the Indian Ocean, Brazil will seek the formation of the Portuguese Union with Angola and Mozambique, and the USA and Canada will implement, with the UK, New Zealand and Australia, the much-discussed project of the Anglo-Saxon Union.

### **The South Atlantic, the Mediterranean and the Caribbean - the new important centers**

The Atlantic Ocean is recovering demographically, becoming the second ocean with the largest population to surround it, after the Indian Ocean. The Atlantic will reach the population of the states surrounding the Pacific and will even exceed it with 1 billion people.

The South Atlantic will exceed the North Atlantic population and the Mediterranean is re-launching with the help of the Asian and African states, which tend to overcome the population of the old powers in Europe. The Caribbean Sea contributes to the economy of the USA coast, and the cities Miami, Houston, Dallas, Atlanta or Tampa tend to gain equal decisional power as the centers towards Asia, California, or the centers towards Europe, from the north-east coast of North America.

In a pessimistic scenario over the Atlantic, the European Union will break apart, as a result of economic pressures and the inability to resolve structural crises. African migration will further destabilize Europe, and the US economy will be jeopardized by the Latin American immigration. Latin American countries will go into a demographic decline, and Africa will become the center of instability and wars.

But there is also an optimistic scenario, closer to reality. Thus, the US and the EU will use the flow of immigration economically and, at the same time, new populations will support the economic rapprochement between the North Atlantic and the South Atlantic. Nigeria could become a great economic power, and its population could exceed 700 million to 900 million inhabitants. EU expansion to North African states, new economic agreements between the US and the Caribbean, development of the Union of South America and of the African Union are other possible positive movements in the Atlantic Ocean.



Latin America has significant agricultural fields and food production will also grow in the future. Instead, African states are launching industrial activities, requiring raw materials and agricultural products from Latin America, which will lead to a new massive maritime route of the South Atlantic. Thus, the Atlantic has the chance to become again the main geopolitical centre within the World Ocean.

### **Pacific: The Pacific Union or just Asia**

In the Pacific, the main mega power on which geopolitics depends, is China. There are prognoses showing that China's population will remain stable, or will even grow by 2100, to more than 1.5 billion people. A decline of one billion inhabitants could also be possible, China being demographically overtaken by both India and Nigeria.

Going from the premise that wealth generally unites, such being the case of the EU, NAFTA or OPEC, the two largest powers of the world, China and the US will coexist in the Great Ocean but also the old powers Canada, Japan and Russia, as well as the new powers: Korea, Indonesia, Philippines, Vietnam, Mexico or Colombia. It is difficult to predict if the US and China will maintain economic alliances, attracting the other states, and transforming APEC into an union like the EU, or on the contrary, war will divide the Pacific in the new Iron Curtain, where the two superpowers will confront from the following points of view: military, cultural, economic, secret services or spatial (Pedrero, 2008, p. 55-57).

Generally, military tensions weaken when states become commercially and financially interdependent, but there are plenty of examples of wars that have begun between states that were the closest trading partners (Toffler and Toffler, 1995, p. 243-244).

At the moment, there is an economic and a commercial rapprochement between East Asian Southeast Asia states, to the detriment of the relations with America. If this trend continues, interconnecting even more Asian states, we will have to deal with the strongest union of the world, namely ASEAN in an extended form.

There is another scenario, that food will be the determining factor in the geopolitics of nations. Economic growth and, at the same time, the increased consumption within the emerging powers mostly situated in East, South-East and South Asia, could leave poor African countries without food. If African countries do not regulate their economy and do not prevent the demographic explosion, we will have an entire continent in famine, migration and wars throughout the 21<sup>st</sup> century, and the main maritime routes will be between the continent of America and Asia or Europe, avoiding Africa (Roberts, 2009)

### **Indian Ocean: a favoured ocean**

The Little Ocean could comprise, around its waters, by 2100, more than 50% of the world's total population. Another 4 power centers: Europe, Russia and Central Asia, East Asia and the western half of Africa are indirectly involved in the political and economic life of the ocean, the economic flow between East Asia and Europe or Africa, passing through the Indian Ocean.

At a first glance, India will have a major role in this change. The small state, which occupies only 2% of the surface of the Planet and over 15% of the population, is predicted to have between 1.700 million and 2.200 million inhabitants by the year 2100 (Gifford, 2005, p. 280). India's economic power has

also major chances to overtake the US by 2050 and China until the end of the 21st century. Indonesia, Pakistan, Iran, Saudi Arabia, Tanzania or South Africa could also become great economic powers.

Also, the emergence of new powers in the Indian Ocean through territorial expansions is to be taken into account. The integration of the small state of Israel into the European Union as a measure to increase the Arab population around it, the union of China with the state of Myanmar where both states speak Sino-Tibetan languages, or the transformation of Sub-Saharan Africa into a federation-type union, are possible actions by which mega powers outside the Indian Ocean, to become riparian states of these waters. China is currently launching a mega-project in Pakistan called CPEC (China-Pakistan-Economic-Corridor), with a value that will exceed 80-100 billion US dollars, providing the construction of motorways, railways, seaports and power supplies that will link China to the Indian Ocean.

Indonesia is predicted to have between 300 to 400 million inhabitants by 2100, Bangladesh between 200 and 300 million, Iraq between 130 and 180 million, Tanzania between 300 and 360 million, Kenya between 140 and 190 million, Egypt between 160 and 220 million, and states that do not have direct access to the coastline: Ethiopia between 250 and 350 million and Uganda over 200 million people.

Countries with more than 100 million inhabitants, which will exceed the population of Russia or Japan by 2100, will be everywhere in the Indian Ocean. Thus, countries such as Iran, Yemen, Madagascar, Mozambique, Sudan, South Africa, or even Thailand, Saudi Arabia and Somalia could exceed each, 100 million inhabitants.

The surprise could come from Pakistan. It has 200 million inhabitants at the moment, from a population of 38 million in 1950. For the year 2050 it is estimated to exceed 300 million inhabitants, but until 2100, the prognoses are uncertain, being estimated between 300 and 700 million inhabitants, with real chances to become the Indian Ocean's Nigeria.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

Until 1500, the Mediterranean Sea and the North Indian Ocean dominated the world shipping. Simultaneously, the states around these waters owned most of the world's population.

It was followed by the North Atlantic, and by the Northern Pacific now, which is the world's first commercial, economic and geopolitical axis. Looking at the demographic evolution around the oceans, it is found that every time an ocean held most of the population, it also became a commercial, and then an economic center.

Currently, the population around the Indian Ocean has exceeded the Pacific population, and far from it, there is the population around the Atlantic Ocean.

Future evolution will further mark changes in population distribution, so that if in 1950, the population around the Indian Ocean was lower than the populations around the Pacific and Atlantic Ocean, it has now reached the first place, and by the year 2100, the total population around the Little Ocean is expected to reach 50% of the world's total population.

It is certain that the world's population is gathering around the Indian Ocean, and so is the economy. Here, there will be the most populated states, the greatest powers of the world, and, in the same time, the most circulated

maritime route that will attract both riparian states and external states, such as: Europe, East Asia and Central and Western Africa. China already takes the place of the West in Africa, and cheap raw materials go to Asia using the Indian Ocean route (Lynch, p. 107).

With more than 50% of the world's population by 2100, and sustained growth after that period, the Indian Ocean tends to exceed the commercial volume of other oceans for at least a few centuries..

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