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ISLAND OF THE WORLD MOVING THE WORLD STRATEGIC CENTER FROM HEARTLAND TO THE INDIAN OCEAN

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Abstract: The theory of Heartland and Rimland where it is considered that whoever dominates the center of Eurasia will dominate the World Island and through this the whole world, tends to lose its relevance with the overpopulation of Sub-Saharan Africa and southern Asian half, all concentrated mainly around the new demographic center, economic, commercial and global decision-making for the 21st century, the Indian Ocean.

Key words: population, Rimland, Eurasia, Africa, year 2100

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INTRODUCTION

Rimland is the strip of land and islands between Heartland and the Planetary Ocean, stretching to the west, south and east of Eurasia, circling the large landmass between central-eastern Europe and the Far East, concepts supported by American geopoliticians of British origin Mackinder (Heartland theory) and Dutch origin Spykman (Rimland theory). According to them, Rimland has the world's largest demographic centers and is easily accessible from Heartland, so who will lead the desolate landmass called Heartland, will rule Eurasia and who will rule Eurasia will rule the Island of the World and thus the entire planet (Kaplan, 2015; Dobrescu, 2008; Meinig, 1956).

Heartlandul to Mackinder was designed in 1904 and Rimlandul to Spykman in the year 1942, at a time when Eurasia had about 80% of the world's population. In the meantime, the World Island, which includes Asia and Europe and the continent of Africa, holds and will continue to hold values around 85% of the world's population, only that Europe's demographic center will be replaced by Africa (O'Brien, 2010; Gray, 1977). It held only a quarter of Europe's population in 1900, reaching similar values in 1995, having a double population compared to

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the European population by 2023 and even 7 times more by 2100, when Africa will hold over 40% of the world's population resembles Asia at that time.

Thus it can be considered that Rimlandului theory it becomes less and less functional with the changing demographic poles of the world and Heartlandul which was surrounded by 75% of the world's population in 1900 it will still hold around 50% in 2100, following as the waters of the Indian Ocean south of Heartland to have on the land around them, over 60% of the world's population. The main economic poles of Rimland in the twentieth century were in its temperate areas in Europe and East Asia (Japan and China) as well as the central-south Heartland represented by Russia and the satellite states. In the 21st century, it seems that both the demographic power followed by the economic and natural power and the commercial power descend towards the warmer tropical areas of the south, areas that were subject to the Nordic powers, with serious economic deficiencies, with areas of hunger, incurable diseases and impractical jungle like the picture of sub-Saharan Africa and southern half of Asia at the beginning of the 20th century.

THEORY OF HEARTLAND AND THE RIMLAND, YEAR 1900

In 1900, the population of the World Island had almost 90% of the population of the planet, representing a large land mass composed of: Europe, Asia and Africa, which also had similar proportions in the world economy, concentrated in its temperate areas located in Europe, Central Asia and East Asia, encompassing major demographic, commercial and colonial empires such as: England, France, Russia, Austro-Hungary, Japan, China, Spain, Portugal, Germany, the Ottoman Empire or Italy (Ilieș, 2006; Mășu, 2014; Carvalho and Dughin, 2016). In the tropical area south of the aforementioned region, there was Africa and the southern half of Asia, represented by colonies subject to the temperate north, inhospitable, unfit for economic development and less populated (Herman and Grama, 2018; Millemann, 2008; Harvey, 2004). Africa had just over 100 million inhabitants on a territory three times larger than Europe, the latter having 400 million people and a demographic density 12 times higher. Also, East Asia, made up of China and Japan, all in a temperate zone, had more population than South Asia (India, Pakistan and so on), South East Asia (Indonesia, Philippines, Vietnam, Thailand and so on) and Southwest Asia (Iran, Iraq, Saudi Arabia and so on) together. It is understandable why the theory of the Heartland, which represented the middle of the temperate zone of the north of the World Island, a territory dominated by Russia in the north, England in the south (through its colonies in India, Iran and Tibet), China in the east and the Ottoman Empire in the west, emerged period when the warm waters of the Indian Ocean surrounded shores of low geopolitical value.

But the reality at the beginning of the 20th century seems to be very different from the situation in 2020, when Africa from just 25% of Europe's population reaches it and even doubles it. In the same period, the East Asian states, which exceeded the total population of the South Asian half in the year 1900, are overtaken by the population of the south and are even exceeded by 1.1 billion people, both trends continuing until after 2100. Thus, the main demographic concentration that existed in the northern half of Eurasia at the level of 1900, tends to focus today predominantly around the waters of the Indian Ocean, while there is an increasingly visible trade blockade in Heartland, which forces states interested in trade in the area to move its commercial axes south through the oceanic waters.

Table 1. Comparison of the evolution of the population of Rimland, Heartland and Africa, between 1900 and the estimate for 2100, in millions of inhabitants

Source: Times Books, 2000; Reader,s Digest, 2008; Worldometers, 2019;

Gaceu, 2007; Peptenatu et al, 2005; Muntele, 2010.

No.	Name	1900 Millions of inhabitants	1950	2020	2050	2100
1	WORLD	1.600	2.520	7.800	9.800	10.600-13.000
2	Island of the World	1.450	2.200	6.730	8.550	9.700-12.000
3	Heartland and Rimland	1.300	2.000	5.380	6.100	5.400-7.000
4	Heartland	95	150	340	380	300-400
5	Rimlandul from eastern Chinese-Japanese	470	700	1.680	1.700	1.100-1.500
6	Rimlandul southeastern Indochinese	74	170	670	800	700-1000
7	Rimlandul of south Indian	300	460	1.820	2.250	2.300-2.800
8	Rimlandul from southwestern Arabic-Persian	50	90	320	410	500-700
9	Rimlandul western European	300	440	550	560	480-550
10	New west Rimland (central-east Africa)	50	100	650	1.175	2.100-2400
11	Atlantic Africa (central-western)	60	110	690	1.315	2.250-2.650

GEOGRAPHICAL AND DEMOGRAPHIC PRESENT, YEAR 2020

A frenchman cannot trade with Japan through Russia or China or with India through Pakistan or with Iran through Saudi Arabia, such examples in everything exist throughout the Heartland (Roy, 2001; Ionescu, 2005). In contrast, the waters of the seas and oceans are much safer. With all the conflict between Saudi Arabia and the Yemeni state dominating the Bad-el-Mandeb Strait, connecting the Indian Ocean with the Red Sea, Saudi Arabia can cross these waters between its cities on the Red Sea and those on the Persian Gulf (Marshall, 2019; Gâstescu and Cioacă, 2013; Mazilu, 2008). Also, Pakistan crosses the waters of the Gulf of Mannar from southern India to reach Bangladesh, India crosses the waters of Pakistan to Iran and China crosses the waters of Vietnam or Japan, even though between these states there are tensions and even blocked land borders. Compared to the maritime borders, the terrestrial borders are complicated by causing the Heartland to be functionally blocked, hostile to the climate and geologically, and the states that occupy or adjoin it are in a crisis of space, ideological and religious, leading to inhospitable borders commercial (Marin and Marin, 2008; Huntington, 2018). Therefore, the safest trade routes and with high fluctuation between the 5 mega demographic centers surrounding Heartland, are the warm waters of the Indian Ocean and the straits that link it to the

European Mediterranean and South-East Asia, bringing as a bonus, direct access to the new mega-center in full process of demographic explosion located in the central-southern part of Africa. China has at least 7 maritime routes to the Indian Ocean crossing through Indonesia and Malaysia, a semi-maritime route through the Kra isthmus in southern Thailand and at least two favorable land routes through Myanmar and Pakistan. The same situation is also from the European Union to the Indian Ocean, there are two states with exit to both the Mediterranean and the Red Sea (Egypt and Israel), as well as 5 other routes crossing only two states: Libya-Sudan, Syria-Jordan, Syria-Iraq, Turkey-Iraq, Turkey-Iran. Thus, China can bypass the tense border it has with Russia or religious disputes with Central Asia, reaching Europe through the waters of the Indian Ocean (Navarro, 2011; Burrows, 2016). And India, which is mainly surrounded by inhospitable states, can bypass its border with China for trade with Japan or South Korea, as well as the tense border with Pakistan for its trade to the northwest with Russia and the European Union.

All these blockages that have increased with the economic development and the Asian demographic explosion produced during the 20th century, have shown that the possibility of building high-flow trade axes that cross the Heartland is almost impossible, unstable and absorbs large financial efforts. The entire land mass of Eurasia it is difficult to cross with all the efforts made by the states that compose it in facilitating the practice of commercial transport. These are type blockages:

- geologically made up of: The Himalayas, Tibet Plateau, Tian Shan and Altai Mountains, limiting access between China and India, Pakistan, Afghanistan or Russia;
- climate in northern Eurasia (Siberia) with the predominance of polar climate;
- such as deserts: Gobi (China), Turan (Central Asia), Arab (Saudi Arabia), Lut (Iran) or Thar (Pakistan and India);
- religious such as the line of Islamist interference and: Orthodox Christian between Russian and Islamic civilization (Central Asia, Caucasian states) or Byzantine-Ottoman (between Greece and Turkey); Christian Catholic (Philippines); Hindu (Pakistan-Bangladesh and India); Buddhist (Thailand); Judaism (Israel) and Confucianism (China), as well as the Islamist conflict between Shiites (Iran, Azerbaijan, Iraq, Yemen) and Sunni;
- economic, ideological and historical: Russia - Ukraine, European Union, Japan, China; China - Japan, Taiwan, Vietnam, India, Thailand, Philippines; North Korea - South Korea, Japan; Thailand - Vietnam; Saudi Arabia - United Arab Emirates;

These tensions or natural limits make it difficult to access Heartland and Rimland, but also within them.

A second and increasingly significant and not immediately relevant change when Heartland theory was issued is the descent to the global demographic center from the temperate areas of the north at the equator and from the domination of the population in number of inhabitants around the Pacific and Atlantic Oceans to the population around the Indian Ocean (Diaconescu, 2017; 2018). Thus, the population of Eurasia with access to the Indian Ocean is gaining ground in front of the number of inhabitants from the states with access to the Pacific and Atlantic Oceans, and the African coastline, although not considered as a major demographic region, tends to replace the demographic dominance held by Asia until at the end of the 21st century (Diaconescu et al., 2019). Similar to the situation in Romania, the entire population of the European Union, Russia,

Japan or China is experiencing a worrying downward trend in the number of inhabitants (Stașac, 2009). The rimland as it was designed in 1900 had 75% of the world's population, currently falling to only 65% and probably 50% by 2100. Also within the Rimland, the Pacific Ocean states such as: China, Japan, Korea, Vietnam or the Philippines in the Asia-Pacific and the Atlantic Ocean States that are represented by Europe and a part of the Near East, ie the two neighboring extremes of Heartland they owned 67% of the total population of Rimland in 1900 (50% of the population of the Earth), decreasing to only 54% at present (35% of the population of the Earth) and probably between 37% and 46% by 2100 (18- 23% of the population of the Earth), demonstrating a decrease of the demographic poles from the temperate area towards the hot surfaces that limit the North Indian Ocean.

Table 2. The evolution of the population on different geographical regions of the World Island, in millions of inhabitants and percentages of the world population, between 1900 and an estimate for 2100

Source: Diaconescu, 2016; Worldometers, 2019

No.	Name	1900	2020	2100
1	World (population millions of inhabitants)	100% (1.600)	100% (7.800)	100% (10.600-13.000)
2	The population of Rimland (from World total)	75% (1.200)	64% (5.000)	48-50% (5.100-6.600)
3	The population of Rimland states with an exit to the Pacific and Atlantic oceans (from World and Rimland total)	50% 67% (800)	35% 54% (2.700)	18-23% 37-46% (1.900-3.050)
4	The population of Rimland states with an exit to the Indian ocean (from World and Rimland total)	25% 48% (400)	29% 46% (2.300)	27-30% 54-63% (3.200-3.550)
5	The population of Africa (from World total)	7% (110)	17% (1.340)	41-42% (4.350-5.500)

Currently, there is an obvious economic miracle known to the states close to the Indian Ocean in the southern half of Asia and the eastern half of Africa, with annual growth rates in general of over 4-5%, falling slightly in the more distant states such as Central Asia, Asia South-East, Eastern Europe or central-west Africa where rates average between 2-5% (the only exception is in East Asia where China has 7% annual growth rates similar to those around the Ocean Indian), falling even further in the states further afield, with values of less than 2% annual economic growth as is the case of the states of Western Europe, America or northeastern Asia (Japan). Asia as a whole is experiencing annual economic growth of 5%, Africa of 3% and America and Europe of 2% and 1.5% respectively.

THE INDIAN OCEAN COMES TO THE WORLD GEOSTRATEGIC CENTER, YEAR 2100

The demographic decline recorded in Rimland by which it declines as the dominant demographic belt of the world decreases in its entirety, but separated separately, only its western and eastern parts are declining, the southern part having access to the Indian Ocean is still experiencing a demographic explosion. Further south of Rimland, also on the shores of the Indian Ocean rises vertiginously another demographic pole that comes to complement the South

Asian, being an extension of it. Thus the entire demographic power followed in the near future by an economic and commercial power, descends from the center of Eurasia towards its south, reaching the center of the World Island, being located approximately between South-South-West Asia and the north of the Indian Ocean, possibly even an extension east to the Nile Delta and the Heights of the Ethiopian Plateau and west to Indochina. Thus, it can be considered that whoever dominates the states around the Bay of Bengal, the Persian Gulf and the northern waters of the Indian Ocean, will dominate the entire Island of the World and hence the entire World. Without the geological or climatic impediments that are found in Heartland but also without possible trade blockages, as it is between the different religious, ideological or commercial belonging that impede access between the deserted Heartland and the overcrowded Rimland, the North Indian Ocean seems a safer way of access for all the large demographic centers in the west, south and east of Heartland but also towards central-east Africa, which tends to represent the new global demographic pole, hardly accessible from the high peaks existing in Heartland.

In the 1900s when the term Heartland appeared, the population around it (Rimland) owned 75% of the world's population (its southern half having access to the Indian Ocean with only 25% of the world's total population) while Africa held only 7%. States around the Indian Ocean could not be of particular interest to geopolitics, accounting for only 32% of the world's population, while Europe and East Asia (China, Japan, Korea) held 50% of the world's population, also representing the main economic and political poles, the headquarters of the great empires that dominated the world at that time. In contrast, by 2100 the two extremes will only hold between 18 and 23% of the world population, while the southern half of Asia will reach 27-30% of the world population, and Africa at 41-42% representing in the world total 70% of the population from only 32% as they were in 1900.

It is foreseeable that by 2100, states with claims to world economic dominance will not be able to reach superpowers without territorial or at least commercial and / or military domination in the Indian Ocean. In addition to the future Indian superpower that will dominate the waters of the Indian Ocean and will most likely become the world's first power, co-exist with it and other world superpowers such as: China through Burma (a possible union could be formed, holding note that the two states have Buddhist religion and languages that belong to the large Sino-Tibetan family); The European Union through Israel, which it is most likely to co-opt; the western half of Africa will have access through the eastern half states most likely to form the African Union or various other smaller unions; Russia will have access through Iran and the US or Japan most likely through a Southeast Asian state (possibly the ASEAN Union) or directly through India.

It is uncertain what the global political scene will look like at the end of the 21st century, but we know for sure that the heavily populated regions tend to attract wealth and export culture and emigrants, dominating less populated areas over time, and the most populated regions in the world they have two clear directions: from the temperate area to the warmer areas of the equator and from the shores of the Pacific and Atlantic oceans, to the shores of the Indian Ocean as a whole regions with a warm climate. Also, we know for sure after the developments of the last 12 decades, that regardless of the obstacles that have occurred over time such as the great world wars or the formation of the

communist bloc, trade has grown steadily and the main form of trade on a planetary scale it is naval transport (which currently accounts for 90% of all world trade) and will continue to dominate, to the detriment of land transport too restrictive.

CONCLUSIONS

The evolution of the world economy is constantly changing, migrating from one territory to another over several centuries, accompanying with a slight delay, the movement of the large demographic areas. If Europe dominated the world economy in 1900, in 1950 it seems that North America with the dominant US power plays this role, and in 2000 it will easily surrender to East Asia (Japan, China). By 2050 probably the southern half of Asia (India, Indonesia, Vietnam, the Philippines, Pakistan, Iran, Turkey, Saudi Arabia, etc.) will be the world economic center followed by 2100 sub-Saharan Africa (Tanzania, Ethiopia, Nigeria, Congo DR., South Africa, Kenya, Angola, Mozambique etc). Thus, every man who lives more than 7-8 decades, finds that as he gets older, the geography: economic, demographic, political or commercial that he has been taught in graduate schools, tends to become erroneous in the new planetary reality.

One of these major changes occurs during this time, and the demographic, economic, political and commercial primacy that existed in the 1900s, 1950s and 2000s when the world power was in turn held by Europe, the United States-Canada and Japan-China, all located in the northern hemisphere, in its temperate area known as geopolitics as the triad of world power, it is increasingly moving to the new global demographic centers located in the tropical climate area of southern half of Asia, followed by sub-Saharan Africa.

If in 1900, East Asia (China, Japan) had 470 million people, followed by Central-Western Europe and South Asia (India) with 300 million every, by 2100 East and West Rimland together reach the one more likely 1.8 billion people (East Asia increases from 0.47 to 1.3 billion people and central-western Europe from 0.3 to 0.5 billion) while South Rimland (India, Pakistan, Bangladesh) grow from 0.3 billion inhabitants in 1900 to 2.5 billion, well above China, Japan and Europe at one place. Also, the sides of the Rimland descend in demographic power from the temperate zone to the tropical area, so in the west, in year 1900 Central-Western Europe dominates with 300 million inhabitants being 6 times more population than in the South-West Rimland (Turkey, Iran, Iraq, Syria, Saudi Arabia, Yemen, etc., which had only 50 million people, and by 2100 both would have 500 million inhabitants, and on the eastern side, East Rimland (China, Japan) more than 6 times more population with the 470 million people, than South-East Rimland (Indonesia, Philippines, Vietnam, Thailand, Myanmar, Malaysia, etc.) which had only 74 million people in 1900, in the year 2100 each has 1.0 billion inhabitants. For this picture to be complete, in addition to the demographic advance and, most likely, followed by a devastating and economical advance of the southern Rimland with access to the Indian Ocean and located in the tropical area, to the detriment of the northern Rimland located in the temperate zone, it is completed by the new demographic bomb of the 21st century, the continent of Africa growing from only 110-120 million inhabitants in 1900, to probably over 5.0 billion inhabitants by 2100, with an increase of 50 times, gravitating as power economic in tandem with the southern half of Asia, around the waters of the Indian Ocean.

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Abstract: The low security level in Ukraine forms the latest and still permanent conflictual situation which results the country's territorial disputes in the international level. NATO intended to exclude Russia from the main world leader countries' range so the EU's, and in the same time the NATO's, intention to get closer to Ukraine, seemed a threat for the Russian Federation. The Russian Federation, in order to obtain their position between the major world leader counties, still exercises pressure on the Black Sea area, which activities constitute the abuse of energy and military power as well as the support of the Post-Soviet, Black-Sea region countries separatists. In conclusion the NATO as well as the Russian Federation needs to make steps towards each other, because it is true that Russia can exercise a leader role in the Black Sea region which affects the whole world's market economy and also the EU. The article contains a comprehensive description of the events of annexation of the Crimean peninsula by the Russian Federation, and the local, regional and global geopolitical changes caused by this movement..

Key words: Crimean Peninsula, international relations, Russian Federation, EU, Frozen conflicts

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INTRODUCTION

The frequent major changes that have been observed in the last decade not only at regional level, but also at global level, have managed to cause a repositioning of the main political forces at the international stage level, the effects of which can be noted especially in terms of global geo-security, which is characterized in the last period by an unprecedented complexity and risk of instability.

This article examines the construction of 'geopolitical spaces' in Russian foreign policy since Vladimir Putin became President in 2000. It analyzes the way in which the three principal 'geopolitical spaces' in Russian foreign policy –

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Eurasia, the Euro-Atlantic and the Asia-Pacific – are defined by the political leadership in Moscow (Clover, 1999). In a second step, this article analyzes how this traditional geopolitical imagination changed in reaction to the events in Ukraine starting in late 2013, and with the implementation of the Eurasian (Economic) Union. It is argued that the crisis in Ukraine and the subsequent deterioration of relations between Russia and the West left a decisive imprint on the way in which the geopolitical imagination of Russia's leaders evolved (Ambrosio and Vandrovec, 2013).

Based on a critical geopolitical analysis, suggesting that territory, space and geographies are being actively (re)formulated by those in power, this article analyzes how policy-makers define and articulate the importance of a particular geographical region for their foreign policy. At the center of this article is an analysis of Russian foreign policy discourse allowing us to depict the principal geopolitical regions with which Russia interacts as well as their respective importance for Moscow.

CRITICAL GEOPOLITICS AND FOREIGN POLICY

Following the many transformations that the global and the regional security environment has undergone in the recent years,¹ the international community has begun to become increasingly concerned not only with global security, but also with identifying various solutions of maximum efficiency dedicated to the consolidation and maintenance of political, economic, and geostrategic stability, especially in the areas that specialists have flagged as real potential focal points for manifesting conflicts.

This is, in fact, the main reason why the most important political leaders of the world are constantly interested in identifying and implicitly implementing not only optimal, but also viable solutions, mainly dedicated to considerably reducing the various conflict situations (regardless of their nature).² At the same time, the aim is to reduce and eliminate the potential causes that can, in a certain context, trigger various conflicts, with unintended effects.

At present, the whole world, and especially the European continent is in a particularly hectic period, characterized by a multitude of challenges determined by the changes observed in the zonal, regional and national security environments, but especially by the new reconfigurations observed by the international political scene. In this particular context, the Black Sea area has become a real target in the great processes that are in progress or only anticipated at the moment.

This is also the reason why a permanent evaluation of the regional policies carried out by the main statal and suprastatal actors is required, in parallel with the constant analysis and evaluation of the vulnerabilities, dangers, risks and even the threats that target it.

This evaluation involves analyzing a complex of indices, respectively specific indicators of zonal and regional security and stability, of which it is worth mentioning the degree of stability of the internal policy carried out by the states directly involved, the variety of problems and challenges identified on the economic level, the allocation and distribution of resources, as well as their use, access and control to the main energy resources, the stage of the reforms signaled

¹ <https://fas.org/sgp/crs/natsec/R43838.pdf>

² <http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/rwss/docs/2001/15%20Armed%20Conflict.pdf>

at the level of the various military organizations, as well as the collaborations and agreements that are concluded at regional level and not only.

The special instability on the international scene, which has been noticed especially in recent years (manifesting not only at regional / zonal level, but especially at global level), and which has been mainly generated by the increasing number of reactions, challenges, phenomena, or processes that are quite difficult to predict, has led to an exponential development of the potential scenarios dedicated to the triggering causes, and respectively their subsequent effects.

Most of the major geopolitical events were reported especially in the proximity of the Black Sea area. This region is positioned in direct inter-dependant relation with the trend of the evolution of the international security environment. And most of these geopolitical events were determined by the complex process of advancing the Euro-Atlantic border towards the area dedicated to Central Asia, in the context of the many indecisions that were reported at the level of several institutions that are responsible for border delimitation activities on extended level, so as to observe the inclusion of all the states that set out to become an integral part of the newly delimited Euro-Atlantic space.

THE FOUNDATIONS OF RUSSIAN FOREIGN POLICY

This study is grounded in the tradition of practical geopolitics, which focuses on the political elite, and thus omits a range of other actors that equally influence Russia's geopolitical imagination. There is already a wide variety of scholarship focusing for instance on the writings of prominent academics (Tsygankov, 2003) or the examination of geopolitical perceptions of ordinary Russians and popular ideas about Russia's place in the world (O'Loughlin et al., 2006).

In the Black Sea area major changes were noted at the beginning of the ninth decade of the previous century,³ the collapse of the communist bloc generating multiple effects not only at the level of the political scene, but also at the level of the military field, and of the economic domain. As a result of the disintegration of the USSR,⁴ the number of the Black Sea coastal states increased (it reached six), and two of the new communist states, Georgia and Ukraine, succeeded in owning ports, sea bases, but also their own fleets.

In parallel, the numerous processes related to the transition from the socialist economy to the market economy, paired with numerous political changes, caused numerous major changes in the region, the political transformations subsequently causing many incommensurable effects⁵ both at the level economics, as well as socially. Thus, while Ukraine has made numerous efforts to gain some influence in the navigable control of the region, Turkey has opted to enlarge, modernize and secure its fleet, the known fact being that it is naval forces that give the dominant role in the balance of power of the states in the Black Sea region (Vlad et al., 2010).

In addition, Ukraine has tried to diminish the control of our country at the mouths of the Danube, by building the water canal dedicated to maritime vessels on Chilia, thus trying to maximize the special advantage of the access to the area, both from an economic point of view, but also strategically and politically. This is because, due to the numerous economic interests determined by the identification

³ http://www.epc.eu/documents/uploads/pub_1363_the_democratic_transformation_of_the_balkans.pdf

⁴ <http://www.usislam.org/pdf/collapse-of-the-soviet-union.pdf>

⁵ http://www.clingendael.nl/sites/default/files/20060800_cdsp_occ_leitenberg.pdf

in Central Asia and the Caucasus of impressive natural gas and oil reserves, the Black Sea region has become a true geostrategic stake for many countries of the world (Maior and Konoplyov, 2011).

And capitalizing on the position held by the region (the transit area between Central Asia and Europe, the Middle East and the South East of the Mediterranean), as well as the immense commercial potential it represents, have made the area a real attraction for Western powers (United States, some states of the European Union, Russia).⁶ Both the management of the Black Sea region and its control constitute a real challenge for the states of the world, all being primarily concerned with commercial interests and subsequently with security interests.⁷

In the category of factors that significantly influence the interest for the Black Sea region, we note the special geographical positioning (respectively at the intersection of areas of vital importance in the geostrategic and geopolitical domain - Eastern, Central and Southern European area), access to the ocean for states such as Ukraine, Bulgaria, Romania and the trans-Caucasian states, the positioning on the route of the main power line, as well as on the transport routes of the carburants coming from the Caspian and Central-Asian areas, the numerous special natural resources, etc.⁸

Under these conditions, more and more states are showing evident concerns for the redefinition of the influence and power factors in the area, that is recognized by the great state powers for their huge energy potential, as well as for the multiple economic opportunities they present. In recent years there has been a focus of attention on the Black Sea area, the most important stake being the Caspian oil, which presents interest not only for the Russian Federation, but also the United States and some states of the European Union.

Regarded by most states as a connecting bridge, the Black Sea area continues to present great interest to the great powers of the world for the special energy resources, and especially for the important trade routes it holds that facilitate trade between the European and Asian continents, as well as continental exchanges between the North and the South, including the link between the Black Sea and the Baltic Sea.

The multiple economic interests manifested in recent years in the Black Sea area following the discovery of important oil and natural gas reserves in the Caucasus and in the central area of the Asian continent have transformed it into a special geo-strategic stake for the great states of the world (Chifu, 2013). Also, as a result of taking advantage of its position in the area, namely that of continental and regional transit, the Black Sea area has come to position itself at the top of the interests of the states of the world, its management, and the possibilities of control over it representing the real challenge. of contemporary society, especially in the context of recent security and economic interests (King, 2004).

The numerous geopolitical and geostrategic changes in Eastern Europe do not seem to be resolved yet, despite the fact that these processes were started in the early 1990s, shortly after the fall of the communist power in the Eastern European area (Dughin, 2011). After the dismantling of the communist regimes and subsequently the collapse of the Soviet colossus, the U.S.S.R., the Russian Federation seems by no means ready to give up its numerous

⁶ http://www.epc.eu/documents/uploads/pub_1363_the_democratic_transformation_of_the_balkans.pdf

⁷ http://ejes.uaic.ro/articles/EJES2014_0501_VLA.pdf

⁸ http://www.afahc.ro/ro/revista/Nr_1_2012/Articol_Lazarescu.pdf

hegemonic claims within the space dedicated to the Commonwealth of Independent States (Dunlop, 1995).

Despite the many assurances and promises made over time, not even the main Western European leaders have shown themselves willing, at least until now, to offer the full political, economic, social and military support to the states in this part of the European continent, in order to accelerate the democratization process, which is still incomplete (Buzan, 2000). These issues become all the more incomprehensible since, at least formally, some states in the aforementioned area are members of the North Atlantic Alliance, but also of the European Union.

Among all, one of the most notable is the so-called "Ukrainian spring", an unprecedented political crisis, which has led to many effects and consequences for all the great states of Europe, but also for the US, which are still manifesting up to the present day. The complex analysis of the various evolutions that have been recorded over the last years in the main areas of Ukraine (especially the eastern and western areas) reveals that a certain territorial and political type of division can be identified at state level, but also other divisions considered politically, culturally, socially and religiously (Walker, 2015). As a result of these complex divisions, the problems in the area have aggravated, starting to manifest themselves mainly after the fall of communism, the dismantling of the former U.S.S.R. colossus, as well as after the act of Ukraine's declaration of independence on August 24, 1991 (Ingram, 2001).

THE IMPACT OF THE UKRAINE CRISIS

Ukraine is considered by many political analysts to be the triggering factor for the failure of the reform process initiated in the former U.S.S.R., proclaiming its independence (by the Verkhovna Rada) and subsequently underpinning the launch of the C.I.S. project, that is, the Commonwealth of Independent States. After declaring its independence, the vast majority of the population believed that this would represent the idea of a national state. However, history has shown that, despite the special prospects, unforeseen situations can occur frequently, situations which over time have led to a dramatic decrease in the standard of living among the Ukrainian population, which has also lost its initial nationalistic euphoria.

Both historically and geopolitically, because of its borders, Ukraine has been perceived by specialists as a particularly fragile state, the main problem being generated by the lack of elements of national unity. Looking strictly from a geopolitical point of view, the state of instability in the Ukrainian territory can entail a potential danger of the disintegration of the state, the main threats coming from within. These threats can be generated by the following factors:

- the repercussions of the global economic crisis in 2007;
- the current political situation;
- the various differences of opinion between the main groups of the political scene;
- the numerous conflicts that occur spontaneously in the various regions of the Ukrainian territory.

As for the main areas of Ukraine, the western part of it is represented by Ukrainian nationalists, who have already expressed their intention for full independence from the Russian capital. In addition, the aim is to be oriented towards Western Europe, in parallel with the integration within the various Euro-Atlantic structures. At the opposite pole of these options there are the Russian-speakers from the eastern and southern part of Ukraine (especially

those from the Donetsk basin and the Crimean Peninsula), who have expressed their desire to start and develop various cooperative relations with the Russian Federation. In addition, an integration of Ukraine within the various economic, political and security structures within the Community of Independent States (C.I.S.) is desired.

According to analysts, these disagreements between the population consisting exclusively of Ukrainians and the population in various regions of the state can threaten quite seriously both the independence of Ukraine and its integrity. In addition, the numerous regional tensions have over time transformed into quite insistent demands for autonomy, the most vehement of these coming from the area of Russian speakers in Crimea and in the eastern part of the Ukrainian territory.

Due to unprecedented political fragmentation, Ukraine has been artificially divided into two parts (western and eastern), each trying to identify the best solution to survive economically by various means and methods (Menon and Rumer, 2015).

Crimea has always been Ukraine's main problem, because of its special strategic position within the southern borders of the Russian Federation and of the CIS, thus the pro-Russian secessionist movement of the peninsula severely affected the territorial integrity of the Ukrainian state, in addition to the close economic, military and cultural links that exist between Crimea and the Russian Federation.

It is well known that the Crimean Peninsula represented a Russian (historical) territory, which was transferred to the Ukrainian state during 1954 through the interventions of the former ruler of that time, Nikita Khrushchev. This explains why the secession of the peninsula became a real one, generating a true conflict within the region, with effects that were reflected especially on the economic potential, which has entered a downward trend.

The crisis triggered in the Crimean Peninsula in early 2014, was signaled after the departure of President Viktor Yanukovich from power, which was caused in particular by the numerous anti-government protests in 2013-2014.

The factor that underpinned this process was represented by the rescission of the law regarding the languages that had regional status, among which were the various languages used in the Ukrainian state, languages that were eliminated from the official use.

With regard to this unprecedented crisis in the recent history of the European continent, several so-called groups could be observed, as follows:

- various Russian-speaking groups - they did not agree with the new political changes imposed by Kiev, calling for Russia's Crimean Peninsula to join;
- various groups of Ukrainians and Tatars from the Crimean Peninsula - gave full support to the so-called "Euromaidan" movement.

On February 23, 2014, the Verkhovna Rada of the Ukrainian state decided to rescind the law regarding the bases of state policy in the complex field of linguistics. This law had given the Russian language the status of regional language in almost half of the Ukrainian administrative regions (13 out of 27) where members of various ethnic communities accounted for over 10% of the total population.

On exactly the same day, the Russian Federation decided to mobilize numerous rapid intervention forces at the border area with Ukraine and in Crimea and after another two days pro-Russian militants rallied in front of the new

Parliament building of the newly created autonomous republic in Simferopol to call for a national referendum and implicitly to reject central power in Kiev.

On February 24, 2014, several armed persons from the pro-Russian group occupied both the Parliament and Government headquarters in the Crimean Peninsula, where the Russian flags were flown. And on the night of February 27/28, 2014, many armed persons from the Russian-speaking group occupied the airports of the Crimean Peninsula.

In early March, Sergei Aksionov, the new prime minister of the peninsula, asked the Russian Federation, through the well-known president Vladimir Putin, to provide him with the necessary assistance to ensure peace and stability in the territory, in order to take over control over its security (Trenin, 2014). Also, the prime minister said that all authorities had the obligation to submit to all his orders, otherwise they have the option of resignation.

The first to react was that the US through President Barack Obama, who warned Russia of the implications, consequences and risks of a possible armed intervention in the Crimean Peninsula and in the eastern part of Ukraine. On the same day he received the request from the Prime Minister of the Crimean Peninsula, Russian leader Vladimir Putin in his turn requested permission from the Upper Chamber of the Russian Parliament to use armed forces in the Ukrainian territory, permission that was granted to him without any reservations.

Vladimir Putin motivated his request by invoking the so-called extraordinary situation that was in progress in the Ukrainian territory, a situation that would endanger the lives of the people of the Russian Federation. In addition, Putin also discussed the security of the troops he had already deployed on the borders of Ukraine and in Crimea, asking for permission to act in force to help normalize the political and social status of Crimea.

In parallel with the steps taken by Russian leader Vladimir Putin, the members of the Supreme Council of the newly founded Autonomous Republic of Crimea voted on March 6, 2014 to organize a national referendum to establish the status of the region, and also to officially exit the Ukrainian state structure and affiliate themselves to the Russian Federation.

Moreover, after five days, the Crimean Members of Parliament adopted a declaration of independence from Ukraine. In their turn, the Lower Chamber of the Parliament of the Russian Federation, the Duma, adopted a so-called declaration of support for the people of the peninsula, with the promise that it will consider ensuring the security of all the inhabitants of Crimea, regardless of ethnic origin, religion or language. The Russian leader Vladimir Putin could not refrain from comparing his country's intervention in the Crimean Peninsula with the action taken in Kosovo by the western states, stating however that armed intervention was not used in the Crimean situation.

THE IMPACT OF THE OCCUPATION OF THE CRIMEAN PENINSULA

Considering the national security context, but also the regional one, the problem of the Crimean Peninsula can have different valences, respectively political, military, economic, but also ethnic valences.

On a strictly political level, the conflict in Crimea is limited to an open confrontation between the numerous pro-Russian groups and the pro-Ukrainian category of the Ukrainian population. Supported by Russian armed forces, pro-Russian groups managed to establish their headquarters in Sevastopol, the main objective of pro-Ukrainian groups consisting in maintaining territorial integrity,

absolute inviolability of state borders, as well as maintaining the status of the Republic of Crimea as an integral part Ukrainian territory.

As for the Ukrainian-Tatar alliance, it remains a rather fragile one, mainly because of the historical reminiscences, when deportation of the Tatars did not represent a priority for the Ukrainian nationalists, since they were not at all interested in the Tatars' wish for self-determination. In the current context, the situation of the Crimean Peninsula is proving to be quite complicated, especially considering the many economic problems that the Ukrainian state is facing, but also the total lack of viable economic reforms with any chance of success.

Lately, there has been a continuous deterioration in the standard of living in the Crimean Peninsula, which has led to many dissatisfactions from the vast majority of the population, dissatisfaction directed mainly towards the government, but also towards the central administration. In addition, the pro-Russian secessionist movement has begun to attract more and more followers, especially because of the economic domination manifested by Moscow.

To these we can add the ethnicity of the population in the area, as well as the exploitation of its demographic situation by various political groups that have a direct and immediate interest in achieving personal goals. According to the 2001 census, in Crimea the vast majority of the population is composed of Russians (almost 60%), while 77% of the total population of the peninsula declared their mother tongue Russian.

Russia, under the leadership of Vladimir Putin, continues to believe that it has a strategic right in relation to the Crimea region, especially in maintaining its presence within its borders, which is why the armed forces available to it can be a real danger. In addition, Ukraine is facing an unprecedented economic decline in the absence of transitional reforms towards a real market economy, a decline characterized by the decrease in the volume of industrial production, but also a strong increase of inflation.

Under these conditions, Ukraine became included in the list of states that failed to successfully implement the various economic recovery programs after the collapse of the East-Soviet bloc, a failure not due to a lack of democracy, but mainly to the fact that its government is still based on the remnants of Soviet rules, which have a severe impact on economic recovery.

The special geopolitical crisis in Ukraine continues to be the focus of many international organizations and institutions, such as NATO, UNO, EU, USA, OSCE, but also of the Russian Federation. As far as to the policy of the western states towards Ukraine is regarded, a peaceful political settlement of the signalled disputes is provisioned, while maintaining good Russian-Ukrainian neighborhood relations, in parallel with the permanent control of the international bodies on the nuclear weapons within the territory of Ukraine (Morgenthau, 2007).

All procedures of the United Nations regarding the prevention and management of the Ukrainian political crisis, which are provided in the art. 34 of the ONU Charter, have been carried out by taking no time in establishing operational relationships between the various bodies empowered to address political issues and the United Nations alert agencies. In this way, the ideal monitoring of the crisis was achieved, in parallel with the design and use of all the tools specially dedicated to crises of the kind reported in Ukraine (Sakwa, 2015).

Considering the legal instruments at its disposal, the UN can in due course take all the necessary measures in case of an escalation of the Ukrainian geopolitical crisis, as provided in the United Nations Charter. Moreover, according

to article 40 of the Charter of the United Nations, it is explicitly stated that in order to prevent the worsening of a conflict situation, the Security Council may request all the parties involved to comply with any temporary measures that are considered necessary or desired.

In this regard, the General Assembly of the UNO passed a resolution recognizing the inviolability of Ukrainian territorial integrity, a resolution which was voted with 100 votes "for" and 11 votes "against", the negative votes being cast by states such as Russia, Belarus, Armenia, North Korea, Cuba, Bolivia, Syria, Sudan, Venezuela. It should also be noted that 58 states, including China, abstained from the vote.

Thus, it can be stated with certainty that the United Nations has a special role in managing within reasonable limits the geopolitical crisis that characterizes Ukraine, this being achieved not only through the use of decision-making and mandate procedures, but also through various devices of crisis prevention and the methods related to their management, devices and procedures elaborated at complex level, within the international security system.

In its turn, OSCE is directly interested in ensuring political and military stability in Ukraine, which translates by eliminating various motivations for potential armed conflicts, as well as by retaining various military structures in place for cases when the use of force might become necessary to resolve this geopolitical crisis.

In fact, many observers sent by this organization to the Ukrainian territory have encountered serious difficulties from the local security corps or have been even detained and arrested, being thus often prevented from doing their job. In addition, OSCE actively campaigned for the promotion of openness and total transparency in the official discussions between the Russian and Ukrainian authorities, the main purpose aimed in resolving this geopolitical crisis being the negotiation with all the important decision-makers in order to identify a peaceful resolution of the conflict.

Being an important security instrument based on cooperation, OSCE is constantly considering the provision of various mechanisms for agreement and negotiation that will allow Ukraine to go through this unprecedented situation both a geopolitical and a geostrategical point of view, thus trying to avoid the degeneration of the crisis in a full-blown regional conflict. The situation of Ukraine is also viewed with great interest by the leaders of the European Union, which has, among other things, the mandate to prevent conflicts and manage crises.

CONCLUSION

The events in Ukraine, which unfolded throughout the year 2014 and are still ongoing, as well as their global repercussions, had an impact on Russian geopolitical thinking. From the point of view of the Russian leadership, the Ukraine crisis demonstrated that Moscow cannot be part of the EAR in its current form. The sense of rejection and the failed attempts at integration were too heavy a burden. Russia's leaders consider their country to be one of the main powers in a multipolar international system and refuse to be pushed outside of this system. After a preliminary analysis of the implications of the Ukraine crisis, it can be concluded that Russia's geopolitical vision experienced a considerable shift. Before the Ukraine crisis, Russia considered itself to be a "full member" of the three geopolitical spaces Eurasia, Euro-Atlantic and Asia-Pacific. The Ukraine crisis brought to light that the traditional and decades-long rivalry with the US is still

simmering and the relationship between the US and Russia is in deadlock (Brzezinski, 2000). Russia's membership in the Euro-Atlantic space thus more and more resembled a farce.

Russia, in an analogous fashion to the German approach in the 1920-30s, is banking on the guilt complex of many Western capitals. There is, in fact, some ambivalence about NATO expansion, less so about EU enlargement, and if so, the remorse is more directed toward the southward extension of the Eurozone (Samarin, 2010). The ambivalence, or guilt complex, is twofold. First, the expansion of NATO to Central Europe is seen as having brought Europe closer to Russia, thus provoking Moscow that considered that region as its sphere of influence (Simion, 2009). It was an unnecessary "victory lap" after the miraculous 1989-1991 years. Second, now that the region is in, it may also be indefensible, in particular the Baltic states. In brief, the sentiment in some capitals of Europe is that NATO enlargement was a mistake and the best way to atone for it is by seeking a new settlement with Russia. So far, the new settlement negotiated with Russia includes Ukraine, until now only a potential member of the EU: Crimea is lost for now, and Eastern Ukraine is unlikely to be under control of Kiev anytime soon. The question is whether there will be a new order renegotiated with Russia that incorporates existing NATO and EU members.

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THE ECONOMIC CRISES HAVE REPLACED THE WAR BETWEEN THE MEGA WORLD POWERS

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Abstract: The rise of a new economic power brings with it the extension of influence on the globe and the status of equal with the old powers, but for this, the old ones must give up some of their own interests. These global geopolitical changes were made in the past by wars, being replaced nowadays by economic crises.

Key words: century asian, west, bank loans, speculate

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INTRODUCTION

The economic and financial influence of the world has been found for over a century in two global regions, namely Europe (last 500 years) and North America (last 100 years). In the last half century, after a long period of regression and the global economic pole of East Asia reappears. However, three world mega-centers are far beyond the capacity to support the Earth, the less productive regions, lacking their own dominant financial institutions and with dependence on the North Atlantic economic nucleus, being hit by the economic crises that bring them back decades ago, canceling speculation and economy based on bank loans. This being the role of the Asian crisis of 1997, which has hit economic "tigers" and "dragons": Japan, South Korea, Philippines, Thailand, Indonesia and so on, ie states whose economy has been booming with overestimations, speculation and loan provided by US banks (the International Monetary Fund established in 1945 and the World Bank in 1944, both based in the US capital, Washington), in a policy of stopping the expansion of communist influence, measures canceled after 1990.

But the next two economic crises seem to bypass Asia, these states becoming in time the "workshop of the world", building on a healthy economy without over-speculating or bank loans and building on their after crisis of 2008-2012, the own „IMF and World Bank" Asian in the presence of banks:

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Asian Investment and Infrastructure Bank (AIIB) established between 2013 and 2016 with headquarters in Beijing in China (to which the US has sharply opposed being dissatisfied when old allies such as Australia or the United Kingdom over Germany, France, Italy or the Netherlands, became members, after followed by 2017 to include countries such as: Canada, Argentina or Belgium) and the New Development Bank (NDB) formed by the BRICs (Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa). between 2014-2015, based in China, Shanghai (Goh, 2016; Mazilu, 2008; King, 2016).

Both the crisis of 2008-2012 and the ongoing crisis of 2020 -, Predicted by many years but aggravated by the infestation of the population with a new pandemic called coronavirus, very contagious (with rates of mortality lower or equal with the local influenza, what happens every winter season, but with draconian measures to isolate the population that will hasten the death of a large number of people in different stages of other diseases, due to lack of access to water, food and medical care), they seem to economically attacks especially the powers lacking in their own banking systems that regulate the exchange rates in their favor (Southern and Eastern Europe such as: Italy, Spain, Romania and so on) but not the hard core of Europe (France, Germany, Great Britain, Benelux countries). These protected states will survive economically in the next decade, with the help of the specialized workforce to leave the southern and eastern states and to take the path of northwestern Europe, as well as filling the economic and commercial gap left vacant after hundreds of thousands of companies went bankrupt, from Europe sacrificed. From the hard core of Europe, there are states that are not affected at present, even though most tourists, the largest ports and airports are concentrated here, states that have not been affected by the fall of the banking system since the crisis of 2008-2012, even though they have all the major European banks, countries that do not struggle with the global warming that they promote with such fervor in the southern and eastern states and that trade non-stop with countries such as: Russia, China, Iran or Algeria, although they limit the trade of the other states to these one-party countries.

In the current geopolitical picture, the question is whether the Earth economy will continue in the same direction, so that in the next two world crises that will most likely take place around 2030 and 2040, the European economic nucleus will also decline, following as in the following economic crises in around the 2050s, 2060s and 2070s the dollar was extinguished (when the US is likely to be overtaken by the Indian economy), and the financial, military and technological megacapacity of the United States is far outpaced by the new power concentrations in Asia, by the end of the 21st century, the crises to hit East Asia (China, Korea and Japan already after many decades of demographic decline and population aging) when over 60% of the world's population will be concentrated in the southern half of Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa, surrounding the world new epicenter, of the Indian Ocean (Diaconescu, 2020; Diaconescu et al., 2019).

READING. WHY ECONOMIC CRISES ARE ENCOURAGED AND THE FINANCIAL BOOM NON-PRODUCTION BASED?

Bank Loans

To understand what a bank loan economy means, we need to remember the situation of Eastern European states before the 2008 crisis, in which many

businessmen with loans helped create villas and prosperity neighborhoods until the day when the bank refused to grant loans, then the economic crisis began. Theoretical situation can be as follows: in a community, no family earns enough and does not have the ability to build an upstairs house in the next 10-15 years. An entrepreneurial person obtains a bank loan with monthly installments that extend over the next 30-40 years, even if the age of the businessman is already over 30-40 years. With the money he builds two houses that he sells for a double amount, to two families who do not even own the money, but use a bank loan each for 30-35 years each. With this money, the businessman builds another 3 houses, the building materials or the workers becoming more greedy because "the profits from the sale of the houses are generated largely by the their work". The trend appears in the community and the number of those who do not produce enough money but want a house bought with borrowed money increases, and the following houses will be sold at a price of 4-5 times higher than the production price, during which time they fall and interest in quality, buyers being pleased to take one of the few homes for sale. All these transactions do not imply the possession of certain specializations or abilities, being a rather permissive business. Our man still builds another 10-13 houses, along with him appearing other new builders with money borrowed from the bank, who want to follow his example, also increasing the number of people interested in buying one of the new houses, all with bank loans. Workers are becoming increasingly sought and increasing the asking price for the work performed, becoming more and more little serious in the perspective of overburdening, and appear the food stores, for building materials, tools and tools, car workshops, private schools and hospitals, taxi companies and so on, all the features opulence settles fast until a day when banks stop lending and the economy returns to its previous status. Nobody builds anymore, nobody buys even at of a quarter at the low prince, small businesses don't go anymore, people run out of jobs and bank rates become unbearable to pay. The bank begins foreclosure by becoming the new owner of the houses, selling further to recover its money, which is the story of many of the numerous neighborhoods of villas that appeared on the outskirts of the Eastern European cities between 2000 and September 15, 2008, when the banks stopped lending, when it occurs the beginning of the economic crisis.

Speculate

Firms appear, develop and regress, when they either take vital measures to avoid failure and change strategy, or they are bought by other companies or go bankrupt. But in addition to bank loans that artificially extend the existence of a company, there is also speculation, in which the economic company promises more than it can offer, based on lies. One of the hundreds of thousands of examples in the western world is the Bre-x business, whereby a bankrupt Canadian company, with borrowed money, earns the rights to exploit possible gold deposits on the Borneo island of Indonesia. By powdering the earth samples with gold before they are sent to laboratories, the company speculates that a huge gold mountain of a volcano has fallen into the interior, claiming that possible gold reserves are worth between \$ 25 and \$ 50 billion, damaging the large mass of businessmen who are in a hurry to buy shares in the wonderful company, with over 3 billion US dollars. Thus, th was dying company increased its value by 100,000% in just three years, until in 1997 it announced its bankruptcy (Fortune, 2010, p. 112-119). Cases of bankrupt companies that

resort to such speculative methods to multiply their unmerited profit, are found in abundance throughout the western world, adding to them many more other undiscovered scams.

MONEY MADE WITHOUT A REAL PRODUCTION BASE

In the world, the sum of the fictitious money is 3 times greater than the real money, and the number of those who make money playing the stock market or other activities in which they practically do not produce anything is constantly increasing. Thus, the same company with the same number of employees, production and work base, can value on the stock exchange and 50-200% more only based on a statement made but also decrease by 20-50% also based on an inappropriate word said by one of the chiefs.

Another situation of false imitation of success and unmerited enrichment lies in the money of life insurance and goods, there are more and more cases in the western world when people unable to succeed through honest work, destroy their own car, set fire to the company or home or they kill the race horses, to collect the money from the insurance, there are countless cases when people have resorted even to the crime, sometimes degenerating into the business of their life, through which they lived their life in luxury and wealth only by killing the people they previously insured. , as the cases: Aurore Martin and Peter Schmitt, Issac Aguigui, Mark Edward Lundy, Karl Karlsen, Uloma Curry-Walker et al., besides many other cases that have not been discovered.

These do not seem to be situations worth dealing with in a work of geopolitics and economics. But these are cases that in their time raised the economy of the countries from which they came, being presented as models of success of progress, being non-productive people, unable to help them raise the real production, but who had and ran exorbitant amounts of money, amounts that, over time, the banks covered with banknotes out of the market and with a favorable exchange rate that unjustifiably raised the financial market. These amounts are not allowed to business people even if they work and produce large quantities of goods, as long as they are in countries with weak currencies and lacking their own mega-banks to run the exchange rate in their favor, such as countries in: Asia , Latin America, Africa or Eastern Europe.

FORECAST OF THE FOLLOWING ECONOMIC CRISES AND WHAT CHANGES GEOPOLITICS ARE FOLLOWED

The rise of a new global mega-region leads to the weakening of an already existing but less productive one. The new space of power wants to be part of the main decisions, a recognized influence and a part of the regions in the spheres of control of the already existing powers, from which they come into conflict with them, the old powers wanting to maintain their supremacy. In history, whenever a new world economic power has appeared, there have been preceded by wars between them and the old powers.

Currently, centuries-old centers of world power are concentrated in Europe and the US, and new areas of progress and wealth accumulation in industrialized Asian states. In order to delay the surrender of power, the western states artificially maintain their economic status with the help of the massive loans and financing they make in their own economy, maintaining productions mainly with the help of subsidies, without having a real and competent productive support. These actions extend over periods of about 10 years, after which economic crises

decline production to real values similar to the power existing a decade ago. The fluctuation of the speculative economy and bank financed, resembles the small dams built on the erosive rivers by their clogging, in which the water is artificially maintained at a level of stagnation even though the relief of the valley goes down, after which a cascade follows to return to the real altitude level. Why these the erosion dams are rarer, the cascades are higher, causing strong water drops. Like them, the dams that keep the water at the floating level are reflected in the economy through the bank loans that delays the decline of an less productive market, and the cascades through which the water of the river returns to the level of the river represent in the financial environment means the economic crises, of what they are rarer, from which they become more severe.

The most affected states are those that do not have their own mega-banks to give their favorable exchange rate, the production base has been replaced by the recreational, speculative, green, natural economy and so on, where there has been no price on the real production, and do governments have no authority over their own countries, located on the outskirts of the western world, these being the states of Latin America and southern and eastern Europe, affected by the economic crisis of 2008-2012, the current crisis of 2020-? and probably the next global crisis to take place around 2030. These declines will announce the narrowing of the western core and will be severely affected by North-West Europe (Germany, France, Great Britain, Holland and so on) to the following economic crises in around 2030, 2040 and 2050 (years when the European Union will be economically overtaken by India and 200% by China, by nominal GDP), followed by crises in the 2060s and 2070s (maybe 2050s) when the US will suffer after its economic overcoming by the new powers, similar to the European Union, to end the Europeanization and Americanization of the planet for the next many decades or centuries, fulfilling the prediction of the geopolitics of the last 6-7 decades, that the current 21st century will be the Century Asian.

Table 1. The economic evolution of the world between 1980 and 2060, in trillions of dollars (Gross Domestic Product nominal)

(Source: author estimates and data processed by: Peptenatu et al, 2005; Ayres, 2017; Khanna, 2019; Reilly, 2011)

Super powers	1980 (Trillion US dollars)	1990	2000	2018	Estimare 2030	Estimare 2060
United States of America	2,700	5,700	10,000	20,000	26,000-33,000	50,000-70,000
Russia	1,200 (U.R.S.S)	2,700 (U.R.S.S)	0,300	1,700	2,500-3,000	5,000-7,000
European Union	3,000 UE-9 state	6,400 UE-12	8,500 UE-15	19,000 UE-28	23,000-30,000	40,000-60,000
Japan	1,000	3,000	5,000	5,000	6,000-7,000	9,000-13,000
China	0,180	0,400	1,200	14,000	28,000-35,000	100,000-150,000
India	0,180	0,300	0,500	3,000	7,000-10,000	40,000-90,000
World	11,000	22,000	33,000	87,000	140,000-170,000	320,000-530,000

If we talk about the sum of money at the parity of purchase (PPP GDP), that is, the real economy, China already exceeds the US or European Union's power by 40%, and India by 230% Germany's power. When it comes to nominal GDP, ie the amount resulting from converting the money from these countries into US dollars (depending on the currency quotations set by the Western-owned financial system that benefits the western states), China will reach the US by 2026, and India will surpassed Germany after 2024 (Frankopan, 2018; Maçães, 2018; McGregor, 2017). Analyzing the global economic situation of North Atlantic power compared to Asia + Russia, we find a clear economic superiority in favor of Europe and the

USA in the past, the ratio between them and the new powers being (in trillions of US dollars) in the: 1980s 5,7 to 2.5 trillion, from 1990 to 12.1 to 6.4 trillion, and from 2000 to 18.5 to 7.0 trillion, when the main powers of Asia plus Russia held only 38% of the sea western power. During this period, many of the states of Asia were after only 2-3 decades of independence, without their own banking systems and with a currency national world quoted at lower rates compared to the US dollar, British pound, German mark, French franc or Italian pound (Herman and Grama, 2018; Kennedy, 2017; Stuart-Fox, 2003).

By 2018, the East is recovering substantially in its competition with the West, the nominal GDP ratio in favor of the European Union and the US being 39.0 to 23.7 trillion US dollars. With healthy economic output and its own AIIB and NDB financial systems set up over the last decade, which is in direct competition with Western IMF and World Bank banks already existing for 7 decades, the new economic powers hope for a bright future in which difference between them and the West will decrease until it is reversed in their favor. In 2030 a difference between North-Atlantic and Asian powers of 49-63 to 43-55 trillion US dollars is foreseen when the balance will tend to equalize, and for 2060 a ratio of 90-130 to 154-260 trillion US dollars US, when it expects the 3 powers from Asia plus Russia to overtake their old rivals US and European Union, by over 80%.

WHAT TO DO?

The United States emphasized the army and the position of world leader, and the European Union on the rule of law and the fight against global warming (Mody, 2018). These global mega-centers, after several centuries of permanent industrialization, felt that the time had come to give up the production capacities they left to the attribution of the states of Asia, while the western countries with the help of the world banking system that they dominate him as well as the economic speculator, they thought that they would hold the world primacy for a long time. Considering that "work is no longer for you", Europeans and Americans focused on spending ever larger amounts of unpaid money, discouraging investment in production. These powers no longer want constructions of: energy centers, highways, schools, hospitals, research centers or the production of finished products, nor do they come with sound investments in the partner states, and only defense and armament procurement policies, greening, increasing rights and funding to institutions that define the "rule of law" or the implementation of strategic partnerships.

The faster the awareness, the further the collapse will be delayed or even avoided. But in the current situation, the Asian states have seized after the 2008-2012 crisis more and more of the pro-European countries (Turkey, Russia, Greece) and pro-US (Brazil, Argentina, Persian Gulf states), and after the current crisis in 2020-?, Countries from the Mediterranean (Italy, Spain) and the Caribbean (Costa Rica, Nicaragua, Venezuela) will be Asianization. While the US calls for 2% of GDP for defense by increasingly selling arms to NATO partner states, and the European Union implements a a prosecutor of attorney at European level and the Green Deal project which will close the last European production bases, all for the protection of nature and wild animals, Asia is aiding the hurricane-hit states of Central America or coronavirus from South and Eastern Europe, emphasizing the urgent needs of the inhabitants of these territories on the outskirts of global mega-centers. With each future crisis it seems that the European and North American economic nucleus will shrink, leaving room for planetary Asianization and the new era of the 21st century, which will be the Century of Asia.

CONCLUSIONS

It was when the people of the Asian states worked hard to produce goods for the West but struggled in poverty because they did not have their own banking systems, while Westerners planned the enrichment without work, to cover the strong currencies and financial systems developed in their states, tends to disappear. Asia became the workshop of the world doing the hard work and the European Union, the United Kingdom and the United States became powers concerned with: defense, global primacy, global warming and the rule of law, covering their expenses with the help of strong currencies and the currency exchange rate which dictates with the help of the big world banking systems that they own. After the establishment of its banks, after the economic crisis 2008-2012, Asia gives more and more value to the real economy it has developed, leaving less room for maneuver, the speculative economy created with the help of loans, which has developed in the old world powers, these being increasingly hit by the economic crises that will bring them to the real financial situation.

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ETHNICITY AND RELIGION IN THE CARPATHIAN MOUNTAIN SPACE, CASE STUDY: MINING CENTERS IN THE BANAT MOUNTAINS

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Abstract: In this study we pursued an analysis on the nature of continuity of the ethnic and religious structure of five mining centers in the Banat Mountains. The five centers are: Reşiţa, Oraviţa, Bocşa, Dognecea and Anina, and the analyzed time period is 1880-2011. The elements that influenced the ethnic and religious structure were represented by the colonization periods in this region, starting from the second half of the 19th century, which continued until the first part of the 20th century. The study was based on statistical data obtained from the specialized literature and from the National Institute of Statistics website. These data were then processed in the form of graphs and tables. Ethnic and religious continuity has been preserved throughout the analyzed period, ethnicities and confessions from 1880 being found in 2011. The numbers in 2011 were smaller than in 1880, but enough for continuity to be maintained.

Key words: ethnicity, religion, Banat Mountains, mining centers

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INTRODUCTION

The aim of the study is to reflect on the ethnic and religious structure of five major mining centers in Banat Mountains. We also intend to carry out an analysis of ethnic and religious continuity from 1880 to 2011. Starting with the second half of the 19th century, especially after the entry of the Banat Mountains area into the Austro-Hungarian possession (1867), the latter colonized here skilled labor from different regions of the empire. With the infusion of new colonists, demographic changes in the ethnic and religious structure appeared.

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After the Great Union of 1918, the two demographic structures targeted by our study began to fluctuate. However, the fluctuations were not so important, a fact proven by maintaining an ethnic and confessional continuity until 2011. After 1918, ethnicities and denominations began to decline numerically, but not entirely, continuing to exist until the beginning of the 21st century. The five mining centers in the Banat Mountains are: Reșița, Oravița, Bocșa, Anina and Dognecea.

In general, the structure by ethnicity and religion has been a topic of interest for researchers (geographers, historians). Moreover, ethnicity and religion were the main topics of a study that addressed the two demographic structures on Crișana and Maramures regions, starting from the end of the 19th century and during the 20th century (Ilieș, 1998). This study was followed by two other papers, this time focusing on the Banat region (Crețan, 1999) and on the Transylvania geographic area (Bodocan, 2001), the time period analyzed covering the end of the 19th century and the entire twentieth century. Baroiu et al. (2005) conducted a very successful study on the religious dynamics of Transylvania between 1930-2002, while Stașac (2005) identified some ethnic and confessional particularities of the demographic component in the Crișurilor Plain' rural area between 1930-2002. Another important study on ethnicity and religion in Transylvania was carried out by Bocșan et al. (1994), the team of researchers providing historical evidence on ethnicity and religion in this area in the 13th-19th centuries. Ethnic coexistence was addressed in a study on the Secașelor Land, an area in southern Transylvania (Străuțiu, 2012). Another new study analyzed the ethnicity and religion in Harghita, Covasna and Mureș counties between 2008-2014 (Tofan, 2015). A similar paper was conducted by Lung (2019), who analyzed the ethnic and religious continuity and cyclicity in the Petroșani Depression for the period 1850-2011. Gosz (2012) analyzed the religious diversity of the demographic component of the Pomeranian Voivodeship in 2008.

METHODOLOGY

Statistical data from the 1880, 1900, 1930 and 2011 censuses were used to analyze demographic evolution, but especially the ethnic and religious structure of the population. The necessary statistical data were obtained from the specialized literature (Rotariu et al., 1997, 1999, 2011) and from the National Institute of Statistics website and other sources. These data has been processed in Microsoft Excel 2013, which generated graphs and tables for each ethnic and confessional structure from each census.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The demographic changes resulting from the colonization stages carried out by Habsburgs, but especially by Austro-Hungarians, are visible in the ethnic and religious structures of the population.

Demographic evolution of the five mining centers

From 1880 to 1900, the demographic evolution of the five administrative-units (Oravița, Dognecea, Bocșa, Reșița, Anina) was increasing. The most significant population growth was in Reșița, from 9,365 people to 14,935 people in just 20 years, which means a 59% percentage increase. Between 1930 and 2011 the Reșița population had a striking increase of 189%. The second in this hierarchy, Anina registered an increase of 48% between 1880-1900, but in the 1930 census the population decreased by 26%, this trend continuing until 2011.

Smaller population increase occurred in Bocșa (15%), Dognecea (6%), and Oravița (5%, the lowest recorded value). At the level of all five mining centers in the Banat Mountains, the population increase was 33% during the period 1880-1900.

In the first three decades of the 20th century, the population of Reșița increased by 69%, followed by Oravița with an increase of 64%. Bocșa town experienced a slightly increase compared to the other two mentioned above, by only 2%. Dognecea was depopulated by 6%, and Anina recorded the highest demographic decrease rate of 26%. The good organization of mining in Anina during the Austro-Hungarian period led to a demographic increase from 1880 until the beginning of the 20th century, but the World War I turmoil and the beginning and perpetuation of industrial reforms led to the persistent demographic decline in this town (Oprean, 2008). Population decrease was evident throughout the 20th century until the last census conducted in 2011. In a similar situation is Dognecea, which has recorded the largest decrease in the entire period considered. In the first 30 years of the twentieth century, the population decreased by 6%, but from 1930 to 2011, this demographic decline became more evident, reaching 39%. Between 1930-2011, Reșița was the most intensely populated, with an increase of 189%, in the second place being Bocșa with 108%. In the same time period, at the level of all administrative units, the population increase was 91%, and from 1880 to 2011, the dynamic component of the five units increased by 215% (table 1).

Numerical increases were due to the infusion of foreign workers brought to the mining areas around the five major mining centres.

Table 1. Demographic evolution of the five mining centres in the Banat Mountains between 1880-2011

(Source: data processed after the Rotariu et al., 1997; Rotariu et al., 1999; Rotariu et al., 2011, National Institute of Statistics; Ene and Popa, 2008)

Administrative unit	1880 Census	1900 Census	%	1930 Census	%	2011 Census	%
Dognecea	3.306	3.525	+6	3.308	-6	2.009	-39
Oravița	6.502	6.856	+5	11.248	+64	11.382	+1
Bocșa	6.426	7.428	+15	7.599	+2	15.842	+108
Anina	9.239	13.723	+48	10.080	-26	7.485	-25
Reșița	9.365	14.935	+59	25.307	+69	73.282	+189
Total	34.838	46.467	+33	57.542	+23	110.000	+91

Ethnic and confessional structure at the 1880 census

The ethnic structure at the 1880 census, recorded at the level of the five mining centers, highlights the dominance of the German ethnic groups (47%), followed by the Romanian ethnic groups with 38%. Other colonists were represented by Slovaks, with 8% and Hungarians with 3%. Lower weight had Croats / Serbs, respectively Ruthenians, which numbered only 41 people, their share in the total population being less than 1% (figure 1). In 1880, the ethnic structure was dominated by Germans ethnics in Anina and Reșița. Thus, the number of Germans from Anina and Reșița was 4,957 persons (69%) and 4,839 persons (54%) respectively. In Anina, the second ethnicity after the Germans was

the Slovak one, which numbered 1,720 people (24%), while Romanians represented only the third ethnicity in the unit (4%).

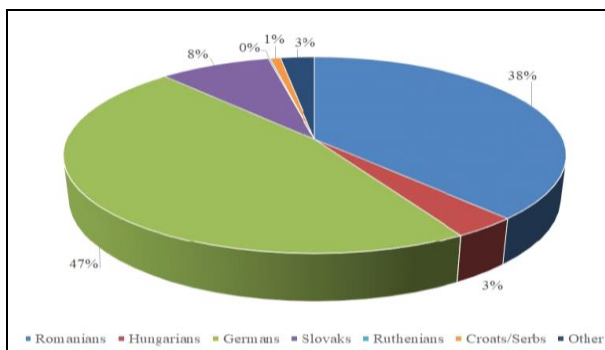


Figure 1. The ethnic structure of the five mining centers in the Banat Mountains in 1880 (Source: data processed after the Rotariu et al., 1997)

The majority confession of 1880 was the Roman Catholic one, with a weight of 60%. Roman Catholics dominated the confessional structure in three administrative units. Their highest numbers were in Anina (8,522), Reșița (6,569) and Oravița (2,960). This high proportion is supported by the German population, to which other ethnic groups (Hungarians, Romanians) also joined. A certainty that ethnic Romanians have identified themselves as Roman Catholics, is given by the fact that the number of Romanians was higher than the number of followers who declared themselves Orthodox. Similar case was the Slovaks and Hungarians who identified themselves as Roman Catholics. The second confession is the Orthodox one, which represents 34% of the total population, followed to a long distance by the Greek Catholic confession with only 3%. The Orthodox dominated only in Bocșa, the ethnic structure being modeled after the confessional one. In Dognecea, the share of Orthodox and Roman Catholics had close values. Moreover, in Dognecea the structure on religions was the most homogeneous, being registered followers for only three religions: Orthodox, Roman Catholic and Reformed.

Jews and Evangelicals had the lowest share of 1% and 2%, respectively. Of the six confessions, the Reformed one had only 200 followers, which confirms a weight of less than 1% (figure 2).

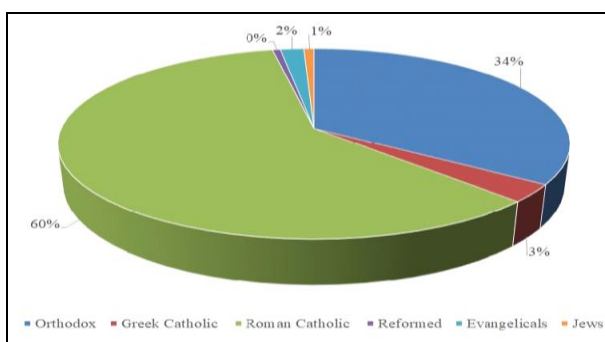


Figure 2. The confessional structure in the five mining centres in the Banat Mountains in 1880 (Source: data processed after the Rotariu et al., 1997)

Ethnic and confessional structure at the 1900 census

At the end of the 19th century, the ethnic structure of the five mining centers have changed compared to 1880. At the end of the 19th century and beginning of the 20th century, in the studied area, the Germans had an ethnic majority with 52%, followed by Romanians with 33%. In the 20 years, the ethnic structure has changed visibly, with two ethnic groups having increased their share and others that have diminished it. The number of Germans increased by 5 percentage points compared to 1880, from 47% to 52%, which made the German ethnic majority. The Hungarian population was also increasing by 4 percentage points, from 3% to 7%. Worth noting is the share of Romanians who decreased from 38% to 33%, but this decrease was due to the infusion of new settlers. The most significant decrease was registered by ethnic Slovaks, who seem to have reached 4% in 1900 (figure 3). In the five cities, during the period 1880-1900, the Slovak population was the only one that decreased numerically from 2,651 to 1,867, representing a decrease of 29%. The Slovak population began to migrate to their places of origin. The Romanian population was also marginalized from certain points of view, the Germans and Hungarians being brought in as a skilled labor force, and the Romanians losing their jobs in favor of the newcomers. The most disproportionate ethnic structure was in Anina, where the German population represented 66% of the total population, increasing numerically in the 20 years by 83%, from 4,957 to 9,105 people. Following the German ethnic groups, the most numerous were the Czecho-Moravians and Poles: at the 1900 census no less than 1,882 persons belonging to the three nationalities, were registered (14%). The population of settlements with Polish and Czecho-Moravians resulted in the migration of the Slovak population, which decreased by 29%. In Dognecea, there was no confirmed Slovak ethnicity in 1900. If in 1880 there were only 244 Romanians in Anina, in 1900 their number increased by 320%, to 1,026 people. Another ethnic group that thrived in all the localities was the Hungarian one, the largest share being in Reșița with 9%, which means an increase of 171% compared to 1880.

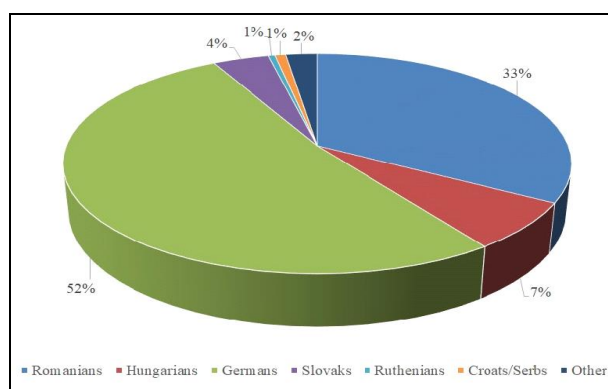


Figure 3. The ethnic structure of the five mining centers in the Banat Mountains in 1900
(Source: data processed after the Rotariu et al., 1999)

The confessional structure in 1900 was influenced by the new population contributions made by Austria-Hungary. All confessions recorded higher numerical values in 1900 compared to 1880. The confessional majority, 62%, is owned by Roman Catholics; Orthodox are in second place with 31%, and the rest

of the confessions have low values. At the level of the five localities, the highest numerical values were recorded by Roman Catholics, the number of followers increasing from 20,777 in 1880 to 28,932 in 1900. This means a significant increase of 39%. The number of Orthodox has increased from 11,948 to 14,265, which is 19%. Regarding the Reformed religion, in the 20 years, the number of its followers increased by 69%, being the highest increase recorded by all confessions in this period. The Unitarians had only 13 followers, their share being less than 1%, but increasing compared to 1880 when there was only one follower. At the local level, the dominance of Roman Catholic denominations in Reșița, Anina and Oravița is maintained. The largest increase in the number of Roman Catholics was recorded in Reșița, from 6,569 to 10,533, during the 20-year period, which means an increase of 60%, being the largest one within this confession. In Anina, Roman Catholics increased in number from 8,522 to 12,105, or 42%. In Oravița, the numerical values were somewhat lower, their increase being 9%. The Orthodox dominate the confessional structure in Dognecea and Bocșa, their increases being 8% and 9% respectively. As for the Greek Catholics, there were some dysfunctions in Anina, so that their number decreased by 15%, while in the other cities their number increased. The highest increase of Greek Catholics was recorded in Reșița, with 142% between 1880-1900. In Anina and Resita, the number of Evangelicals decreased by 4% and 3% respectively. The number of Jews has increased steadily in the 20 years, many of them being interested in trade. In the case of Anina, the number of Jews increased from 6 to 54 persons. The largest percentage increase of the Jewish population was in Reșița, of 206%. Jews avoided Dognecea, where 0 people have been registered in 1880 and one person 20 years later. In the Jews' preferences, were Anina and Reșița mining centers, where the biggest increases were registered, being the favorable places for the commercial activities. The most under-represented confession in the Banat Mountains mining centers was the Unitarian one, which increased in number of followers by 13 people compared to 1880. Only 14 people in the 20-year period declared themselves Unitarians, which puts the Unitarian confession on the last position between the six religions (figure 4).

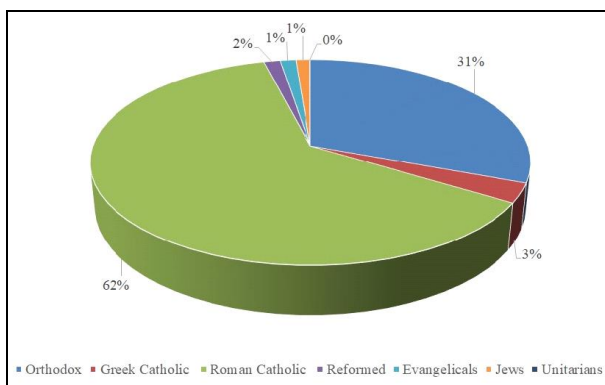


Figure 4. The confessional structure in the five mining centres in the Banat Mountains in 1900
(Source: data processed after the Rotariu et al., 1999)

Ethnic and confessional structure at the 1930 census

In the first three decades of the twentieth century, only the Romanian and German ethnic groups increased their number; in 1930, at the level of all mining

centers, there were 27,503 Romanians (increasing from 1900 by 87%) and 24,355 Germans (increasing from 1900 by 5%). At the level of the five mining centers, the Romanians represented 48%, followed by the Germans, with 43%. Hungarians were the third ethnicity with a share of 6%. At the 1930 census, two ethnic groups are noted, which until this census were not taken into account. Unfortunately, the dualist censuses do not fully reflect the ethnic and religious reality. In 1900, all those who identified themselves as Jews were included among the Hungarian population. Basically, the mosaic community was recorded, almost exclusively as Hungarian (Porumb-Ghiurco, 2018). There is a possibility that both Jews and Gypsies from the Austro-Hungarian censuses have declared themselves Hungarians to escape certain possible repression against them. The Gypsy population has existed in the mining centers area since the eighteenth century (Achim, 1998). At the first census conducted by the Romanian authorities after 1918, 689 Gypsy people and 33 Jews were identified. In Reșița and Anina the population of German ethnicity dominated, followed by the Romanian one; they are the only two municipalities in which the majority were owned by another ethnic group, to the detriment of the Romanians. The ethnic Gypsies were present in three localities, registering the highest number in Reșița (428 people). Their number was significantly lower in Oravița and especially in Bocșa, where there were 185 and 76 people respectively. The territorial distribution of the Jews is identical to that of the Gypsies, being present in three municipalities, with the maximum number in Reșița.

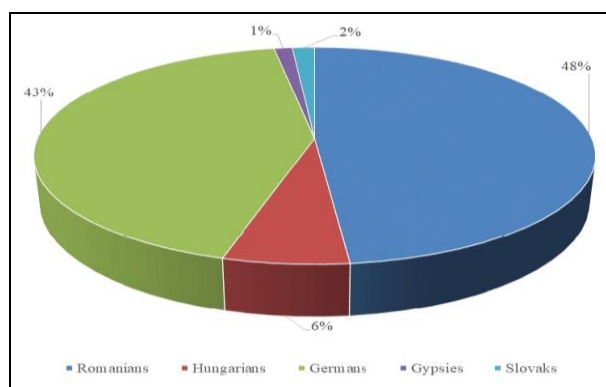


Figure 5. The ethnic structure of the five mining centers in the Banat Mountains in 1930
(Source: data processed after the Rotariu et al., 2011)

In 1930, the confessional structure was more balanced than ever, Roman Catholics representing 47% of the total population, and Orthodox 46%. They were the only two confessions that had such high weights, and the supremacy of the Roman Catholics was coming to an end. The continuity of the Roman-Catholic confession, dominant in the 19th century, especially in the second half of the century, began to crumble after 1918. The withdrawal of the Austro-Hungarians and the entry of the Banat mining area under the Romanian authority brought about significant changes from the ethno-confessional point of view. In only 30 years, the share of Roman Catholics decreased by 15 percentage points, and that of the Orthodox increased by 15 percentage points (figure 6). A new religion appeared in 1930, including Baptists, but they do not exceed 1%. The distribution of the Baptists in the five mining centers is more or less

homogeneous, their number being 384 persons. The largest number of Baptists was recorded at Oravița, 146 people. On the opposite side, the minimum number was registered in Bocșa, where only 11 Baptists lived.

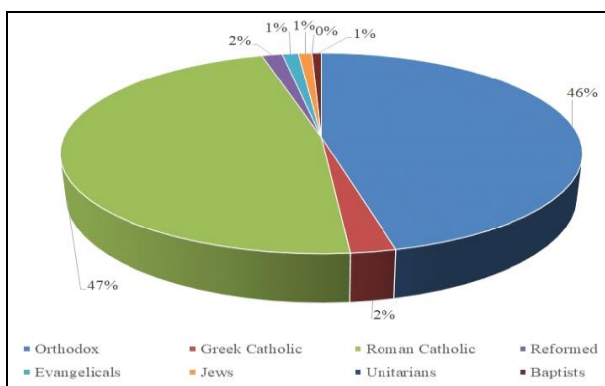


Figure 6. The confessional structure in the five mining centres in the Banat Mountains in 1930
(Source: data processed after the Rotariu et al., 2011)

Ethnic and confessional structure at the 2011 census

The ethnic structure of 2011 keeps traces of the continuity of ethnicities that have existed since 1880. The Romanian population is dominant, being present in a proportion of 93%, remaining the majority ethnicity for each of the five centers. The ethnic Gypsies experienced a considerable increase, becoming the second ethnic group in the five centers, after the Romanian one. The largest group of Rromi is in Reșița, 1,043 people and the less numerous in Dognecea, only 3 people. The Hungarian population registered a decrease by 43% compared to 1930, in 2011 being 2,024 Hungarians. In Reșița, where the highest number of Hungarians was recorded in 1930, their number decreased by 32% by 2011.

Table 2. Ethnic structure of the five mining centers in the Banat Mountains in 2011
(Source: data processed after the National Institute of Statistics)

Ethnicities	Reșița	%	Anina	%	Bocșa	%	Oravița	%	Dognecea	%	Total
Romanians	59,832	92,33	6,030	88,35	13,059	92,31	9,613	94,66	1,795	95,53	90,329
Hungarians	1,553	2,40	99	1,45	285	2,01	81	0,80	6	0,32	2,024
Gypsies	1,043	1,61	204	2,99	534	3,77	268	2,64	3	0,16	2,052
Ukrainians	231	0,36	16	0,23	24	0,17	12	0,12	-	-	283
Germans	1,255	1,94	423	6,20	166	1,17	96	0,95	68	3,62	2,008
Turks	7	0,01	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	7
Russians-Lipovans	7	0,01	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	7
Serbs	344	0,53	22	0,32	33	0,23	74	0,73	-	-	473
Slovaks	59	0,09	-	-	29	0,20	-	-	-	-	88
Bulgarians	13	0,02	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	13
Croats	292	0,45	8	0,12	7	0,05	3	0,03	7	0,37	317
Greeks	3	0,00	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3
Italians	12	0,02	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	12
Jews	23	0,04	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	23
Czech	74	0,11	23	0,34	7	0,05	8	0,08	-	-	112
Poles	4	0,01	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4
Chinese	3	0,00	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3
Csango	4	0,01	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4
Other	45	0,07	-	-	3	0,02	-	-	-	-	48

The Germans, who in 1930 were the second ethnic group after the Romanian one, reduced their number by 91%, from 24,355 people to only 2,008. From these data, it can be seen that the German population massively migrated

after 1930. The Slovak population was present in Reșița and Bocșa, totaling 88 people, well below the population of 1930, when there were 845. In Anina, in 1930 there were 440 Slovaks, and in 2011 there was no one of this ethnicity. After the mining industry restructuring in the 1990s, Slovaks, like the Germans, migrated to the places where they were colonized from. At the 2011 census, ethnic diversity is higher compared to 1930, with new ethnicities being registered as: Turks, Bulgarians, Chinese, Greeks (table 2) (Vlăsceanu and Ianoș, 1998; Ghinea, 2000; Erdeli and Cucu, 2007).

After 1989, the confessional structure was much diversified, due to the legal framework that allowed the inclusion of new religions in the census. Most of them represent less than 1%, but an exception can be identified: this is the case of the Pentecostal confession, which grew rapidly in a short time, in 2011 representing 4%. Confessional continuity has been preserved for over 100 years, a fact proven by the existence of religions from the second half of the 19th century until 2011.

Table 3. The confessional structure of the five mining centers in the Banat Mountains in 2011
(Source: data processed after the National Institute of Statistics)

Denominations	Reșița	%	Anina	%	Bocșa	%	Oravița	%	Dognecea	%	Total
Orthodox	56.009	86,65	5.223	75,76	10.972	77,95	8.946	88,27	1.429	76,29	82.579
Greek Catholic	543	0,84	9	0,13	112	0,80	111	1,10	-	-	775
Roman Catholic	3.967	6,14	867	12,58	695	4,94	407	4,02	113	6,03	6.049
Reformed	594	0,92	35	0,51	75	0,53	33	0,33	-	-	737
Evangelicals	52	0,08	28	0,41	20	0,14	-	-	-	-	100
Jews	23	0,04	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	23
Unitarians	3	0,00	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3
Baptists	1.211	1,87	258	3,74	729	5,18	224	2,21	137	7,31	2.559
Pentecostals	1.480	2,29	401	5,82	1.360	9,66	285	2,81	194	10,36	3.720
Adventists	154	0,24	17	0,25	38	0,27	52	0,51	-	-	261
Muslim	17	0,03	-	-	-	-	3	0,03	-	-	20
Jehovah	125	0,19	-	-	6	0,04	19	0,19	-	-	150
Christian After Gospel	45	0,07	27	0,39	23	0,16	12	0,12	-	-	107
Christian of Rite Old	54	0,08	-	-	-	-	7	0,07	-	-	61
Orthodox Serbian	94	0,15	5	0,07	15	0,11	14	0,14	-	-	128
Evangelical of confession Augustana	21	0,03	8	0,12	4	0,03	-	-	-	-	33
Evangelist Lutherana	23	0,04	5	0,07	4	0,03	-	-	-	-	32
Atheists	98	0,15	8	0,12	6	0,04	11	0,11	-	-	123
Other	126	0,19	3	0,04	17	0,12	11	0,11	-	-	157

We refer to at least two major confessions (Orthodox and Roman Catholic) that dominated and prevailed in the mining areas of the Banat Mountains. After 1930, the confessional structure changed according to the ethnic structure, the dominant confession becoming the Orthodox one. In the post-war period, part of the colonized population began to migrate to their places of origin, leading to a confessional dysfunction. The major dysfunctions characterized the Roman Catholic and Greek-Catholic religion. The weight of the former was only 6% in 2011, while in 1880 it had a share of 60%, in 1900 62%, and in 1930 47%. For a

long time, Roman Catholics dominated the mining centers in the Banat Mountains, but the Austro-Hungarian withdrawal would lead to a decline in their numbers. The Orthodox confession was in the shadow of the Roman Catholic one until 1930, when the numerical decline of Roman Catholics and the ascension of the Orthodox began. In 2011, the Orthodox dominated the Banat Mountains mining area, representing 85%. In addition to the two major religions, the continuity of other religions that had lower weights (Greek-Catholic, Reformed, Evangelical, Unitarian, Mosaic or Jewish) should be remembered (table 3) (Vișan and Martin, 2014; Popescu, 2003; Bârsan, 1978; Ilinca, 2009).

CONCLUSIONS

The religions and ethnicities highlighted in the 1880 census are also found in 2011. They maintained their continuity from the end of the 19th century to the first part of the 21st century. By 2011, different ethnicities and confessions had decreased compared to 1880-1900, but had not completely disappeared. The numerical decline was due to the periods of political instability and restructuring in the mining industry that led to the return of the colonized population to the place of origin. The departure of the colonized population began especially after the Great Union of 1918, when the Banat Mountains area, including the mining fields, came into the possession of the Romanian authorities. A certain part of the population has adapted well to the new living environment, which has led to the coexistence of several ethnic groups and confessions.

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RARE METALS AND POLITICS

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Abstract: Rare earth elements are a collection of 17 elements, which include lanthanides and scandals. They are used to make many devices – from electronics to the defense industry. Currently, China is the largest producer of these raw materials, although deposits of these elements are also found in other countries, e.g. United States of America or Japan. Although the name suggests otherwise, metal deposits are abundant in the world. The problem is their extraction and concentration of individual minerals, resulting from the chemical structure.

Key words: rare earth elements, rare earth metals, ores, resources, demand

* * * * *

INTRODUCTION

Rare earth metals, also known as REE (rare earth elements), are a group of 17 elements, which include lanthanides and scandals. This group includes elements with atomic numbers from 57 to 71 (15 lanthanides: La – Lanthanum, Ce – Cerium, Pr – Praseodymium, Nd – Neodymium, Pm – Promethium, Sm – Samarium, Eu – Europium, Gd – Gadolinium, Tb – Terbium, Dy – Dysprosium, Ho – Holmium, Er – Erbium, Tm – Thulium, Yb – Ytterbium, Lu – Lutetium) and 21 and 39 atomic scandals (Sc – Scandium, Y – Yttrium), which have similar chemical properties (figure 1) (Hedrick, 1997).

These elements belong to the group of rock-loving elements – they concentrate mainly in the Earth's crust. They are also incompatible, which means that during the transformation of rocks or crystallization of magma they accumulate in the liquid phase – the alloy. This feature decreases with the ionic radius from cerium to lutetium.

REE are characterized by high chemical activity. This results in occurrence in natural conditions only in the form of salts – carbonates, phosphates, silicates or oxides, occurring in associations with other metals (Castor and Hedrick, 2006).

Contrary to popular judgment and name, these elements do not occur in nature rare. The problem is their distribution and concentration. This is due to their atomic structure and geochemical properties. Elements with even atomic

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numbers are more common on Earth than those with odd atomic numbers. Similarly, lighter rare earth elements (LREE) have a larger ion radius, which translates into less frequent substitution with other elements. They also show a greater tendency to occur in mineral phases than the heavier rare earth elements – HREE (occurring from Gd to Lu) (table 1).

Periodic Table of the Elements

1																	2				
1 H Hydrogen 1.008																	2 He Helium 4.003				
3 Li Lithium 6.941	4 Be Beryllium 9.012															5 B Boron 10.811	6 C Carbon 12.011	7 N Nitrogen 14.007	8 O Oxygen 15.999	9 F Fluorine 18.998	10 Ne Neon 20.180
11 Na Sodium 22.990	12 Mg Magnesium 24.305															13 Al Aluminum 26.982	14 Si Silicon 28.086	15 P Phosphorus 30.974	16 S Sulfur 32.06	17 Cl Chlorine 35.453	18 Ar Argon 39.948
19 K Potassium 39.098	20 Ca Calcium 40.078	21 Sc Scandium 44.956	22 Ti Titanium 47.88	23 V Vanadium 50.942	24 Cr Chromium 51.996	25 Mn Manganese 54.938	26 Fe Iron 55.933	27 Co Cobalt 58.933	28 Ni Nickel 58.693	29 Cu Copper 63.546	30 Zn Zinc 65.39	31 Ga Gallium 69.723	32 Ge Germanium 72.61	33 As Arsenic 74.922	34 Se Selenium 78.09	35 Br Bromine 79.904	36 Kr Krypton 84.80				
37 Rb Rubidium 84.468	38 Sr Strontium 87.62	39 Y Yttrium 88.906	40 Zr Zirconium 91.224	41 Nb Niobium 92.906	42 Mo Molybdenum 95.94	43 Tc Technetium 98.907	44 Ru Ruthenium 101.07	45 Rh Rhodium 102.906	46 Pd Palladium 106.42	47 Ag Silver 107.868	48 Cd Cadmium 112.411	49 In Indium 114.818	50 Sn Tin 118.71	51 Sb Antimony 121.760	52 Te Tellurium 127.6	53 I Iodine 126.904	54 Xe Xenon 131.29				
55 Cs Cesium 132.905	56 Ba Barium 137.327	57-71 Lanthanides	72 Hf Hafnium 178.49	73 Ta Tantalum 180.948	74 W Tungsten 183.85	75 Re Rhenium 186.207	76 Os Osmium 190.23	77 Ir Iridium 192.22	78 Pt Platinum 195.08	79 Au Gold 196.967	80 Hg Mercury 200.59	81 Tl Thallium 204.383	82 Pb Lead 207.2	83 Bi Bismuth 208.980	84 Po Polonium [209]	85 At Astatine [210]	86 Rn Radon [222]				
87 Fr Francium 223.020	88 Ra Radium 226.025	89-103 Actinides	104 Rf Rutherfordium [261]	105 Db Dubnium [262]	106 Sg Seaborgium [266]	107 Bh Bohrium [264]	108 Hs Hassium [269]	109 Mt Meitnerium [268]	110 Ds Darmstadtium [269]	111 Rg Roentgenium [272]	112 Cn Copernicium [277]	113 Uut Ununtrium [278]	114 Fl Flerovium [289]	115 Uup Ununpentium [288]	116 Lv Livermorium [293]	117 Uus Ununseptium [294]	118 Uuo Ununoctium [294]				
57 La Lanthanum 138.906	58 Ce Cerium 140.115	59 Pr Praseodymium 140.908	60 Nd Neodymium 144.24	61 Pm Promethium 144.913	62 Sm Samarium 150.36	63 Eu Europium 151.964	64 Gd Gadolinium 157.25	65 Tb Terbium 158.925	66 Dy Dysprosium 162.50	67 Ho Holmium 164.930	68 Er Erbium 167.26	69 Tm Thulium 168.934	70 Yb Ytterbium 173.04	71 Lu Lutetium 174.967							
89 Ac Actinium 227.028	90 Th Thorium 232.038	91 Pa Protactinium 231.036	92 U Uranium 238.029	93 Np Neptunium 237.048	94 Pu Plutonium 244.064	95 Am Americium 243.061	96 Cm Curium 247.070	97 Bk Berkelium 247.070	98 Cf Californium 251.080	99 Es Einsteinium [254]	100 Fm Fermium 257.095	101 Md Mendelevium 258.1	102 No Nobelium 259.101	103 Lr Lawrencium [262]							

Figure 1. Periodic Table of elements ¹

Table 1. Light and Heavy rare earth elements
(Source: UNCTAD Secretariat from the British Geological Survey)

Atomic number	Name	Symbol	LREE / HREE
57	Lanthanum	La	LREE
58	Cerium	Ce	LREE
59	Praseodymium	Pr	LREE
60	Neodymium	Nd	LREE
61	Promethium	Pm	LREE
62	Samarium	Sm	LREE
63	Europium	Eu	LREE
64	Gadolinium	Gd	LREE
65	Terbium	Tb	HREE
66	Dysprosium	Dy	HREE
67	Holmium	Ho	HREE
68	Erbium	Er	HREE
69	Thulium	Tm	HREE
70	Ytterbium	Yb	HREE
71	Lutetium	Lu	HREE
39	Yttrium	Y	
21	Scandium	Sc	

¹ <https://sciencenotes.org/printable-periodic-table-chart/>

The characteristic features of rare earth metals include: high dispersion, no occurrence in pure metallic form, the rarity of creating own minerals visible to the human eye (Porowski and Kaczor-Kurzawa, 2016).

PRESENCE IN THE WORLD

There are more than 250 REE minerals known in the world, but only some of them are important for industry. In table 2 the most important of them are presented. They are most often found in the lithosphere in the form of fluorocarbonates, phosphates and silicates.

Table 2. Main minerals containing REE

Source: Ln – lanthanides group, REO – rare earth oxides (Zhang et al., 2016)

Mineral	Chemical formula	Content of REO (%)
Bastnaesite	LnCO_3F	74,8
Monazite	$(\text{Ln,Th})\text{PO}_4$	65,1
Xenotime	YPO_4	62,0
Fluocerite	$(\text{Ce,Ln})\text{F}_3$	83,4
Parisite	$\text{CaLn}_2(\text{CO}_3)_3\text{F}_2$	60,3
Fergusonite	YNbO_4	39,9
Gadolinite	$\text{Y}_2\text{FeBe}_2\text{Si}_2\text{O}_{10}$	48,3
Aeschynite	$(\text{Y,Ca,Fe})(\text{Ti,Nb})_2(\text{O,OH})_6$	24,6
Euxenite	$(\text{Y,Ca,Ce})(\text{Nb,Ta,Ti})_2\text{O}_6$	24,3
Synchysite	$\text{Ca}(\text{Y,Ce})(\text{CO}_3)_2\text{F}$	49,6
Samarskite	$(\text{Y,Fe,U})(\text{Nb,Ta})_5\text{O}_4$	24,3
Polycrase	$(\text{Y,Ca,Ce,U,Th})(\text{Ti,Nb,Ta})_2\text{O}_6$	19,5
Loparite	$(\text{Ce,NaCa})_2(\text{Ti,Nb})_2\text{O}_6$	29,8

The content of rare earths in the lithosphere is very diverse and depends mainly on the type of rock and its origin. The content of REE is generally in the range of 0,1 to 100 mg / kg. For example, in riolites and granites, there is a higher concentration of these metals than in basalt. Likewise, clays and shales contain more REE than limestone and sandstone. In addition, LREE content in rock ores is generally greater than HREE. In table 3 the number of rare earths is given (Porowski and Kaczor-Kurzawa, 2016).

Table 3. Abundance of REE in in the Earth's crust in parts per million

(Source: Moran-Palacios et al., 2019)

Element	Kleber and Love (1963)	Ryan (1968)	Jackson and Christiansen (1993)	Wedepohl (1995)	Sabot and Maestro (1995)	McGill (1997)	Lide (1997)	Earth Crust (ppm)
Sc	10	-	-	16	10	5-10	22	
Y	28	-	29	24	28	28-70	33	
La	18	18,3	29	30	18	5-18	39	30
Ce	46	46,1	70	60	46	20-46	66,5	60
Pr	5,5	5,53	9	6,7	5,5	3,5-5,5	9,2	6,7
Nd	24	23,9	37	27	24	12-24	41,5	27
Sm	6,5	6,47	8	5,3	6,5	4,5-6,4	7,05	5,3
Eu	0,5	1,06	1,3	1,3	0,5	0,14-1,1	2	1,3
Gd	6,4	6,36	8	4	6,4	14,5-6,4	6	4
Tb	0,9	0,91	2,5	0,7	0,9	0,7-1	1,2	0,7
Dy	5	4,47	5	3,8	5	4,5-7,5	5,2	3,8
Ho	1,2	1,15	1,7	0,8	1,2	0,7-1,2	1,3	0,8
Er	4	2,47	3,3	2,1	4	2,5-6,5	3,5	2,1
Tm	0,4	0,2	0,27	0,3	0,4	0,1-1	0,52	0,3
Yb	2,7	2,66	0,33	2	2,7	2,7-8	3,2	2
Lu	0,8	0,75	0,8	0,7	0,8	0,8-1,7	0,8	0,7

About 67% of the world's resources occur in three regions: China, which has 31% of the resources of various types – bastnaesite (Sichuan and Inner Mongolia), laterite clays (Jiangxi) and monacite black beach sands. In Russia, there is 21% of the world's stocks of shovel, while in the USA – 15%, mainly bastnaesite and monacite. Australia also has small ore deposits – 6% (monocytite crumb deposits), and Canada and India 1% each (Smakowski et al., 2015).

Other sources of rare earth metals are xenotime ores, found in Malaysia and Thailand, phosphorites, apatites, eudialite and waste of uranium solutions, located in Kazakhstan and Russia (Smakowski et al., 2015).

Data on the volume of global rare earths resources vary quite significantly. According to Smakowski et al., they amount to 88 million tons of Ln_2O_3 . In turn, Całus-Moszek and Białicka (2012) estimate them at about 110 million tons.

PRODUCTION

Rare earths are usually obtained from three types of ores: bastnaesite (USA, China), monacite (China, USA, Australia, Brazil, India, Malaysia, Sri Lanka and Thailand) and laterite. The first stage in the production of rare earths is the extraction of ore using standard mining methods. The ore was mined for gravel. It continues to crumble until small fractions of rock are obtained. Further, the crushed ore is placed in a tank, where individual metals attach to the bubbles of admitted air in the filtration process. Rare earths are obtained by using various chemicals. The process is used until pure elements are obtained in the form of oxides (Hurst, 2010).

The demand for rare earths is constantly increasing. In 1950 it was about 100 tons / year. In 1990 it increased to 40,000 tons per year. In 2000 it amounted to around 80,000 tonnes and now - over 200,000 tonnes (Wyluda, 2016).²

Prior to 1965, the demand for rare earths was relatively low. At that time, most of the world's supplies were produced from crumb deposits in India and Brazil. In the 1950s, South Africa became a leading producer of monazite deposits containing rare earths. At that time, the Mountain Pass Mine in California produced small amounts of rare earth oxides from Precambrian carbonate.³

The demand for rare earths first exploded in the mid-1960s, when the first color televisions went on sale. Europium was a necessary raw material to produce color images (figure 2).

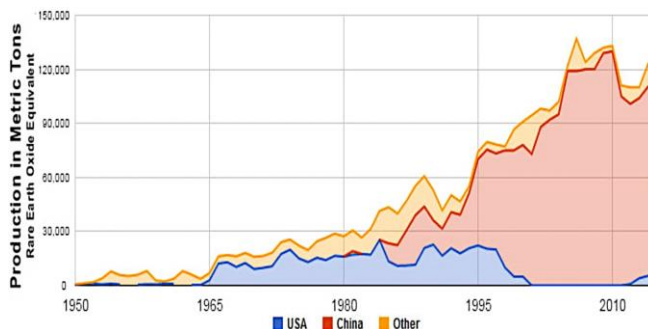


Figure 2. Production of rare earth elements
(Source: chemical-materials.elsevier.com)

² <https://www.edukacjagieldowa.pl/2016/09/cenniejsze-niz-zloto-diamenty-metale-ziem-rzadkich/>

³ <https://poltimes.pl/metale-ziem-rzadkich-strategiczne-surowce-w-rekach-chin/>

At the Mountain Pass Mine, production of europium from bastnaesite began, which contained about 0,1% of europium. As a result, the Mountain Pass Mine has become the largest producer of rare earths in the world, and the United States has become a leading producer (Lifton, 2010).

In the early 1980s, China began producing significant amounts of rare earth oxides. They became a world leader in the early 1990s. In the 1990s and early 2000, China successively strengthened its importance in the world economy of rare earth oxides. Prices of Chinese rare earths were so low that Mountain Pass Mine and many others around the world were unable to compete and stopped functioning (Hurst, 2010).

At the same time, global demand has risen sharply because rare earths have been used in the production of safety, aviation and automotive components, industry and consumer electronics (figure 3).

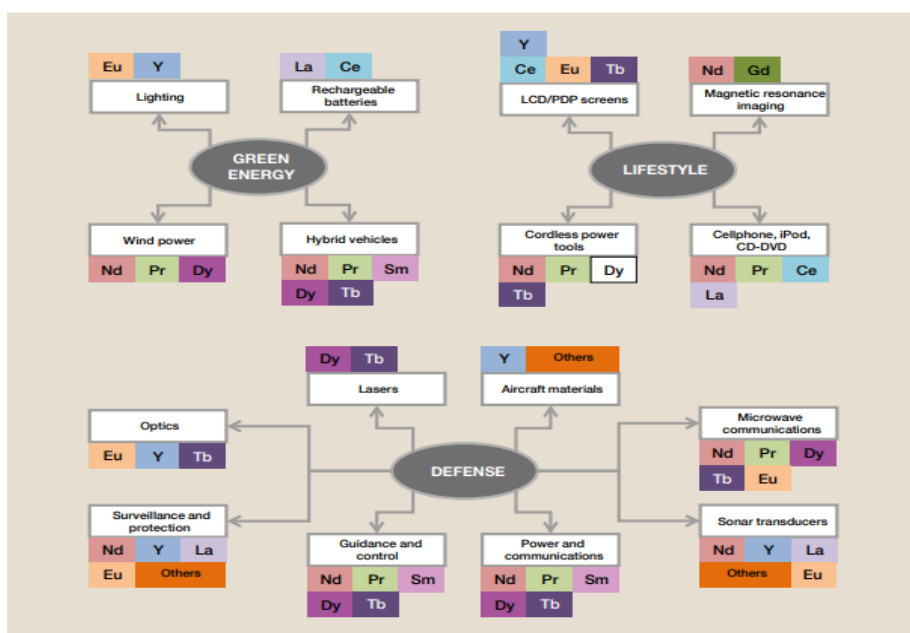


Figure 3. Sectors using REE

(Source: UNCTAD Secretariat from Great Western Minerals Group Ltd)

China has used its dominance and began to restrict exports and made the rare earth oxides prices reached the highest level ever (figure 4) (Morrison et al., 2012).⁴ China's Rare Earth Industry and Export Regime: Economic and Trade Implications for the United States. Congressional Research Service).

Apart from being the world's largest producer of rare earths, China is also the largest consumer (figure 5). China uses REE primarily to produce electronic products for domestic and foreign markets. Japan and the United States are the next largest consumers of the elements. To protect the added value of their manufacturing sector, China is reluctant to sell rare earths.⁵

⁴ <http://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/row/R42510.pdf>

⁵ <https://independenttrader.pl/metale-ziem-rzadkich-marginalizowane-aktywo.html>

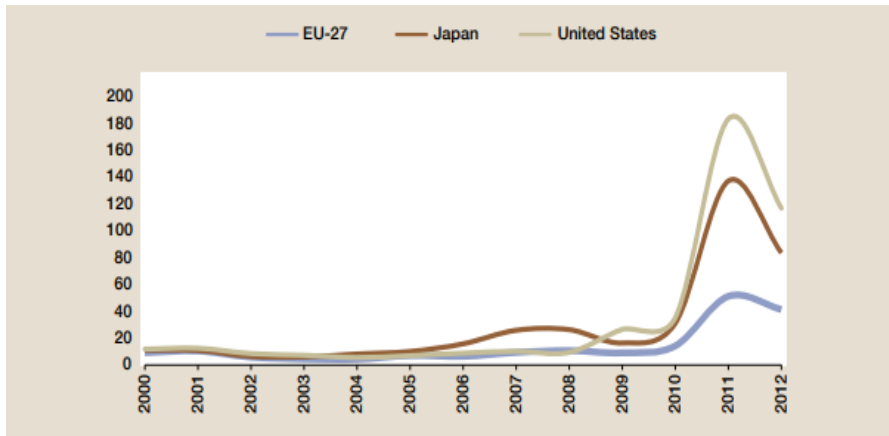


Figure 4. Changes of unit value of rare earth imports in 2000-2012 (US\$ per kilo)
(Source: UNCTAD Secretariat from UN COMTRADE (HS 1212: 280530))

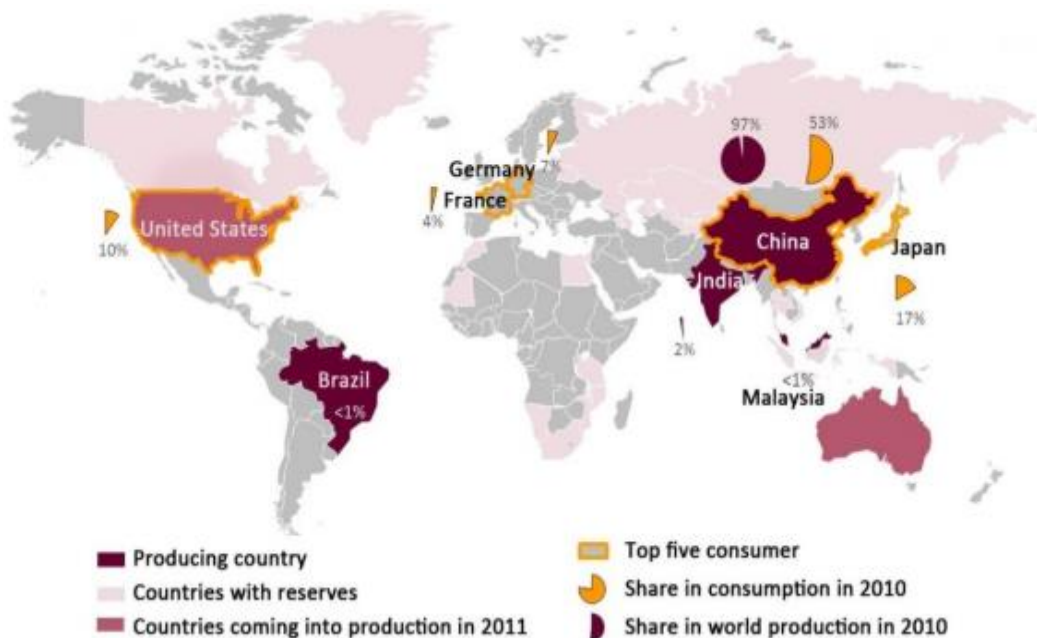


Figure 5. Map of global producers and consumers of REE ⁶

The climax of Chinese domination could have occurred in 2010, when China oversaw around 95% of world production of rare earth metals. This was a stimulus for mining companies in the United States, Australia, Canada and other countries that began to reassess old prospects for rare earths and seek new ones. High prices led manufacturers to take three steps (Pourmand et al., 2012):

- looking for ways to reduce the amount of rare earths used to make each of their products;
- looking for alternative materials that replace rare earths;
- develop variant products that do not need rare earths.

⁶ <https://ecowasterecycling.wordpress.com/>

Chinese companies buy rare earths in other countries. In 2009, the China Non-Ferrous Metal Mining Company acquired the majority of shares in the Australian company Lynas Corporation, which has one of the highest rare earths production outside China. They also bought the Baluba Mine in Zambia (Kelly, 2009).

In 2011, Australian Mines began producing rare earth oxides. In 2012 and 2013, they were covering around 2–3% of global demand. In 2012, the Mountain Pass Mine returned to production, and in the United States in 2013, about 4% of the world's rare earths was produced. Manufacturing in Brazil, Malaysia, Russia, Thailand and Vietnam remained stable or increased (Zamecki, 2011).

Recently, the United States Geological Survey has identified significant resources outside China. Although China is dominant in the production of rare earth metals, they merely superintend about 36% of global resources. This gives other countries the chance to become important manufacturers, when China doesn't want to sell rare earth metals below production costs.^{7 8}

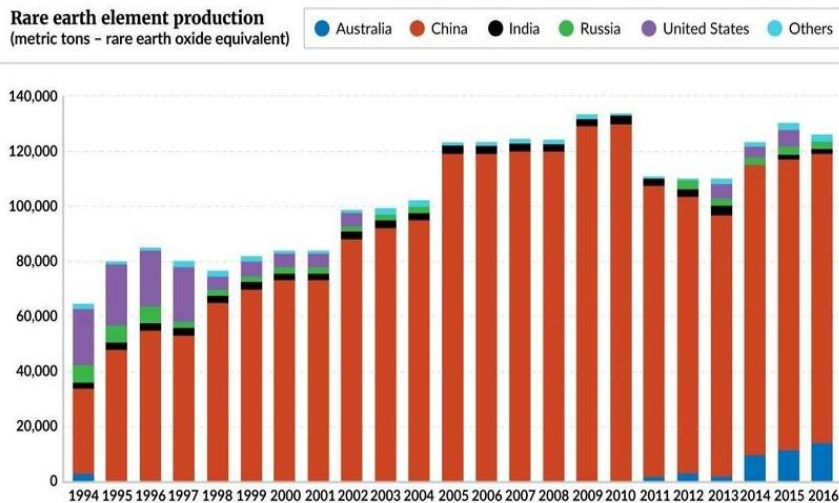


Figure 6. Production of REE by country in 1994-2016
(Source: European Commission/Transport&Environment 2017)⁹

The figure 6 shows the dominance of China in the production of rare earths in the years 1994-2016. The United States was an important manufacturer until the 1990s, but cheap materials being sold by China forced the withdrawal of mines in the United States and other countries. Because China has reduced exports and prices have risen sharply in 2009 and 2010, Australian and US mines have started operating again. The Chinese government explained that this was done to guarantee the supply of rare earths for domestic production and for environmental reasons. This change generated by China has caused panic, and some rare earth prices have risen significantly. Furthermore, Japan, the United States and the European Union filed to the World Trade Organization about China's restrictive trade policies of rare earth elements (Kalantzakos, 2017).

⁷ <http://www.marketwatch.com/story/molycorp-strikes-rare-earth-elements-in-california-2011-10-04>

⁸ <http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052970204612504576609413994133684.html>

⁹ www.GISreportsonline.com

CURRENT SITUATION

The demand for rare earths is higher than supply. Due to the ever-increasing demand, it is not known whether producers will be able to increase production before stocks run out. According to OECD forecasts, the demand for rare earths in 2060 is expected to increase to 19 Gt/year.¹⁰

By introducing export restrictions (including hindering the export of elements from the country), China has strengthened its position in the world. The government explains these restrictions by increasing internal consumption and protecting the environment. Through previous state policy - a prosperous mining industry, low labor costs, a lack of environmental standards and unlicensed mining and processing, China has led to a monopoly on mining.

Although Japan has discovered large deposits of rare earths, it is not known whether the balance of power will change. According to the forecasts, 1 km² metals from Japanese deposits could satisfy 20% of the current demand of the raw material. However, mining is a problem. The deposits are located at the bottom of the Pacific Ocean at a depth of 3500 to 6000 m. Until the Japanese start exploiting the deposits, China will continue to use the current situation to exert pressure and negotiate commercial transactions (Błoński, 2011).

Currently in the United States, in California, it operates one ore mine rare earth metals. Mined rocks, however, are sent for processing to China, which is subject to a 25% duty. As a result, China covers 80% of the US demand for rare earths. Suspending supplies would pose a real threat to the US economy. Without them, it is impossible to produce computers, military equipment or electric / hybrid cars. The real threat of the trade war on the Washington-Beijing line was exacerbated last year by cutting off the Chinese group Huawei from American technology.^{11 12 13}

CONCLUSION

Currently, rare earth metals are gaining significant significance for economic development, in addition to oil and natural gas. Without their use, many inventions of modern technologies would look completely different, and others would not exist at all. Rare earth metals are a key component of advanced military and civilian devices, as well as a key element in the use of green technologies such as wind turbines and hybrid cars. 97 percent of rare earths are currently produced in China. However, the growing global demand as well as Chinese export restrictions raise concerns of international corporations as to maintaining supply continuity. Situations are additionally hindered by China's increasing domestic demand.

Global governments, scientists and industry looking for new solutions-extraction, recycling or substitution, but for now it is not enough. Newly discovered deposits are not able to cover the growing demand of the world. For now, China's conditions should be accepted, but alternatives should be sought out.

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¹⁰ <https://www.spidersweb.pl/2019/07/zapotrzebowanie-na-metale-ziem-rzadkich-elektronika-gornictwo-kosmiczne.html>

¹¹ <https://klubjagiellonski.pl/2019/08/14/metale-ziem-rzadkich-oczko-w-glowie-chinskiej-republiki-ludowej/#>

¹² <https://forsal.pl/artykuly/1414979,metale-ziem-rzadkich-nowym-orezem-w-walce-chin-z-usa.html>

¹³ <https://www.wnp.pl/tech/chca-zaspokoic-zapotrzebowanie-na-metale-ziem-rzadkich,346568.html>

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