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C O N T E N T S

AFRICAN HEARTLAND GEOPOLITICS OF THE FUTURE IN THE SUB-SAHARAN REGION

Luca DIACONESCU, Loredana DRAGOMIR
(10.30892/rrgp.231101-342) 1

ETHNIC AND RELIGIOUS DISPARITIES IN THE APUSENII SĂLAJULUI FROM COMMUNISM TO CAPITALISM

Mădălin-Sebastian LUNG
(10.30892/rrgp.231102-345) 10

POPULATIONS AS DETERMINANT OF LATVIA'S SECURITY

Jan A. WENDT
(10.30892/rrgp.231103-349) 22

CHINDIA THE TITANS' CHANGE HAS COME

Luca DIACONESCU, Mirela Elena MAZILU
(10.30892/rrgp.231104-347) 29

CHANGES IN THE POPULATION STRUCTURE OF SLATINA CITY BETWEEN YEARS 1990-2000

Florentina MANOLEA CÎRJAN
(10.30892/rrgp.231105-346) 47

* * * * *

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CROSSREF

AFRICAN HEARTLAND GEOPOLITICS OF THE FUTURE IN THE SUB-SAHARAN REGION

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Abstract: Sub-Saharan Africa is still considered a land semi-isolated from the rest of the world, without many natural harbors or navigable rivers, or inland islands and seas, with 16 states that do not have access to the sea and D.R. Congo with limited access that is difficult to achieve. All these states that can be considered the Heartland of Africa, have now reached a total population exceeding the US population, will exceed the population of continent Europe by 2050 and will have a population similar to the continents of America and Europe taken together by 2100.

Key words: no access to the ocean, isolated, interdependence, regionalization, population explosion

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INTRODUCTION

North or Mediterranean Africa is an open world, with a white, Roman and Christian population at first and later Islamized and Arabized, close to Europe and the Middle East and inclined to trade since ancient times.

South of it, beneath the Sahara desert, a separate world lived in isolation, with its own empires but few economic and cultural ties to the north. Now, this part of the world is overpopulated under the burden of borders drawn during colonialism and which left 16 states without access to the sea (and D.R. Congo with a very limited exit), but with a growing population, forcing the 49 states each counts in total Sub-Saharan Africa, to attach driven by circumstances. These states isolated by sea routes have an area similar to all other states in the world without access to the sea, but with a population 50% more numerous and in an explosive population growth.

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This will probably be the main element of Africa's geopolitics that will make it different from the rest of the continents, becoming the surest reason for analysis with increasing interest. However, in addition to the large number of landlocked states experiencing an uncontrollable population explosion, the first geo-demographic elements that will shape African geopolitics will include the influence of foreign states, such as the European Union, the United States and the United Kingdom, China, maybe India, Russia or Brazil but also Islamist states, mainly northern Arabs, with the third predominant geopolitical element being the regionalization of sub-Saharan Africa, focusing on cultural, demographic, spiritual or material.

Through these trajectories on which the cultural region of Sub-Saharan Africa (also called Black Africa) was launched, the tendency is to resemble in relation to Europe, being spread by isolated states of seas and oceans similar to Central Europe, but extended territorially and demographically to dimensions equivalent to the southern half of Asia, copying the model of the Heartland and the Rimland, on a slightly smaller territory, much more isolated but almost as populated (Sawandji, 2018; Meinig, 1956; Ferrara, 2017).

DEMOGRAPHY AND ISOLATIONISM

Sub-Saharan African states have an area of 24 million km², with a total of 49 states, of which 16 are without access to the sea, representing a third of the total area (Kaplan, 2015; Guillermo, 2015; Hugon, 2015).

The region is in a population explosion clearly superior to other continents worldwide, representing only 5% of the world's population in 1900, 13% in 2020 and will increase to 38% in 2100 (Diaconescu et al., 2019; Lopes, 2006). From just 80 million in 1900 (continental Europe 430, America 150, Asia 950), it has grown almost 15 times to 1,160 million today (while in Europe it has almost doubled to 0.7 times and reached 700 million, America has increased 6 times to 950 million and Asia has grown almost 4 times to 4,600 million).

Sub-Saharan Africa is expected to grow by another 3.5 billion by 2100, reaching a population of between 3.9 and 4.8 billion (Europe will have between 0.6 and 0.7 billion, America 1.1-1.3 billion and Asia 4.2-5.3 billion). During this time, the population of the 16 landlocked states plus D.R. Congo has grown from just 26 million in 1900 (52 million for landlocked countries worldwide, excluding African states) to 428 million today, more than 16 times (245 million for other countries have increased only 5 times) and will reach 862 million in 2050 (306 million for the other states) and between 1,400 and over 2,000 million in 2100 (between 280 and 401 million inhabitants for countries outside Africa). Thus the population of landlocked states in the African Heartland was only half of the population of other landlocked states in 1900, reaching a population almost twice as large and probably four to six times more numerous in the year 2100.

Compared to the continent's population, the African Heartland had less than 17% of America's population and only 6% of Europe's population in 1900, growing to a larger population than the United States and the Philippines today, reaching 41% of America's population and 58 % of Europe's population. Also over 30 years is expected to have 71% of the population of the entire continent of America and 120% of the population of the entire continent of Europe, and by 2100 will be between 117% and 156% of the population of America and between 236% and 293% of Europe's population.

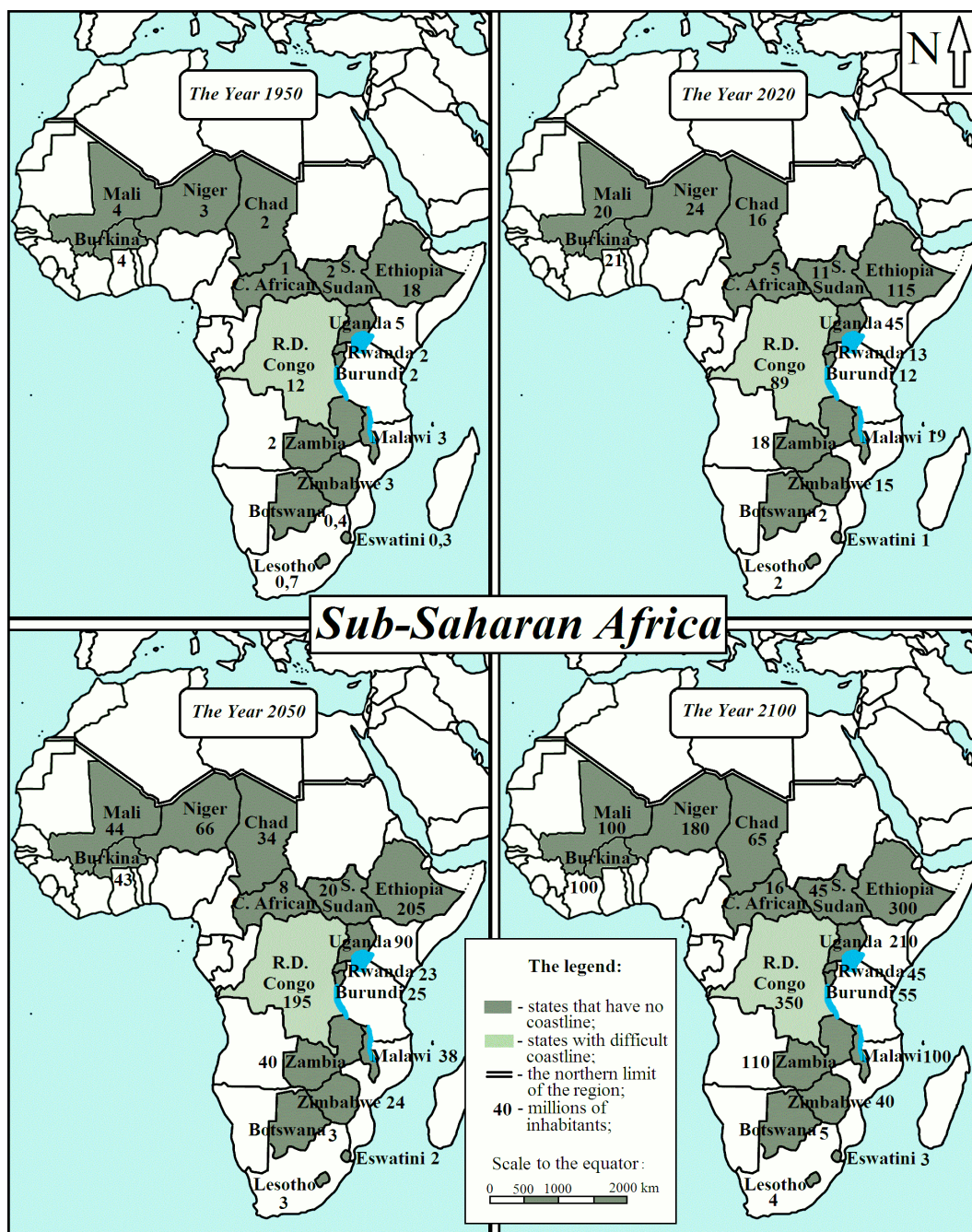


Figure 1. The evolution of the population of African states without access to the planet's ocean, between 1950 and estimated until 2100

Source: data processed after: Neguț, 2011; Diaconescu, 2017; Maesto, 2019; Worldometers, 2020

In other words, to understand the magnitude of this demographic phenomenon with atrocious geopolitical consequences, if in 1900 the report was of a resident of the current African states without access to the sea plus D.R.

Congo to 23 inhabitants of the continents of Europe and America, so far the ratio has decreased to one African inhabitant to 4 American and European inhabitants, and by 2100 the ratio will be 1 to 1. These African states so isolated already have a demographics as much as the entire population of states such as: Russia, Japan and Brazil taken together or as much as the entire European Union (excluding the United Kingdom).

All these changes give a development model within internal relations similar to Europe and Central Asia but much more extensive and a demographic potential similar to the Asian continent. Also, the states of the eastern half of sub-Saharan Africa already use the territory of the states of the western half for access to the Atlantic Ocean through which trade with Europe and America takes place, and conversely, the states of the eastern half represent the gateway to trade with Asia, there is a globalization at the local level such as United Europe (Mazilu, 2008; Diaconescu, 2018). This will force an African interdependence and an opening of borders most likely similar to the states that currently form the European Union, but with a population 3-4 times larger, creating the African civilizational economic boom, a concept difficult to predict at the level of 1900 when Sub-Saharan Africa was only a colony of European powers and considered in some places a possible part of Western civilization, providing for the replacement of the black population, unrepresentative, with the white population that was ten times more numerous worldwide.

The landlocked African states together have a similar area: the USA, China or mainland Europe. To give us an idea of the future situation of these states without access to the sea, we have at hand the current geopolitical relations in the land mass between Germany and Switzerland in the west and Mongolia in the east, a land that stretches over about 20 million km² known to geopoliticians as Heartland. The continental powers and economies of this perimeter prove a tiring interdependence, forcing states to depend on each other until they reach ocean waters, routes that are paved by straits most often led by rival states, or access to icy seas.

With quite a few exceptions, many of the states of this land mass have some access to the seas and oceans. The Mediterranean Sea, the Black Sea, the Baltic Sea or the Persian Gulf are inland seas from which you exit to the Planetary Ocean only through straits and canals. In addition, the North Sea or the Arctic Ocean can be considered semi-isolated, and the frost that affects shipping a few months a year is another risk factor that accentuates the isolationist character. All the great powers or newly developed economies that with access to these seas, have always fought or strategies to facilitate their access to the Planetary Ocean, but still remained continental powers: Germany, Italy, Poland, Ukraine, Turkey, Finland, Iraq or Russia. The few states left without access at all to these seas and bays, are often crossed by navigable rivers such as: Hungary, Slovakia, Serbia or Austria crossed by Danube, Czech Republic of Elba, Belarus of the Dnieper, Switzerland of the Rhine or the Central Asian states with access to the Caspian Lake, but it also has the possibility of naval transport through the Volga River and its connections through canals that connect it to the Black Sea, the White Sea and the Gulf of Finland. Only a few exceptions, such as: Macedonia, Kosovo, Armenia, Uzbekistan, Afghanistan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan or Mongolia, which have a population of less than 100 million, have no access to any sea or navigable river, so the 600 millions of Heartlanders feel less of this inconvenience, but still that's how politics has guided them over the centuries, making them continental economies. Even in this picture of bearable isolation, it is still considered the world's largest geopolitical prison. But

the states of Africa without access to the sea are restricted to only 11 million km², without being crossed by navigable rivers with access to the Planetary Ocean, this African Heartland being downright severe, and can be considered to have already overcome the pole of global isolationism of the Eurasian Heartland.

Table 1. States without access to the sea. Area and population between the years 1900 and 2100 on various categories

Source: data processed after: Marin and Marin, 2008; Neguț, 2011; Mășu, 2014; Worldometers, 2020

No.	Country	Area km ²	Population 1900 1950 (millions of inhabitants)	2020	Estimated years: 2050 2100
1	Mali	1.240.000	1 4	20	44 80-130
2	Burkina Faso	274.000	1 4	21	43 80-130
3	Niger	1.267.000	1 3	24	66 140-210
4	Chad	1.284.000	1 2	16	34 50-80
5	Central African Republic	622.000	0,3 1	5	8 13-20
6	South Sudanul	619.000	0,5 2	11	20 40-50
7	Ethiopia	1.127.000	5 18	115	205 260-360
8	Uganda	236.000	2 5	45	90 170-250
9	Rwanda	26.000	1 2	13	23 40-50
10	Burundi	27.000	1 2	12	25 45-65
11	Zambia	752.000	1 2	18	40 80-130
12	Malawi	118.000	1 3	19	38 80-120
13	Zimbabwe	390.000	1 3	15	24 32-45
14	Botswana	600.000	0,1 0,4	2	3 4-6
15	Lesotho	30.000	0,2 0,7	2	3 3-4
16	Eswatini (Swaziland)	17.000	0,1 0,3	1	2 2-3
-	Total	8.630.000	17 52	339	668 1.119-1.653
17	D.R. Congo	2.345.000	9 12	89	195 300-400
-	Total + R.D. Congo	10.975.000	26 64	428	863 1.419- 2.053
	Continent Europe	10.180.000	430 550	740	720 600-700
	Continent America	42.550.000	150 340	1.030	1.215 1.100- 1.300
	World countries without access to seas and oceans (except African countries): Bolivia, Paraguay, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary, Serbia, Macedonia, Belarus, Armenia, Austria, Switzerland, Moldova, Azerbaijan, Afghanistan, Nepal, Laos, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, Mongolia, Bhutan and so on.	8.950.000	52 100	245	306 280-401

The lack of importance of the subject in the past was given by three main factors: African states being poor in recent centuries, now starting to rise economically; they were part of the colonies of European powers being united by continuous territories to the ocean; the population of these states in the past centuries has been downright negligible. But now that the economy is growing by 3% a year, after the colonial withdrawal 16 states have been completely deprived of naval access to the oceans and their population has risen to a number similar to the current population of the US and Germany together, it becomes a topic geopolitics that will rise as each decade passes (Marshall, 2019; Melinescu, 2018; Huntington, 2018; Woddis, 1965).

This change, which will last throughout the 21st century, proves the desperation of the African Heartland states to establish friendly relations with the African Rimland, des-isolating the hundreds of millions of its inhabitants who do not have access to the cheapest and most extensive way of trade. All this population of almost one billion inhabitants in 2050 and two billion in 2100 being blocked to the north by the growing Sahara desert, and to the south by the Kalahari desert, while the African Rimland which will in turn enter a space crisis, will reach 1.5 billion people in 2050 and will probably have 2.7 billion by 2100, being unable to manage its own territory.

In addition to these shortcomings, other states experience conflicts within them, between the coast and the interior of the country, such as: Angola, Nigeria (Northern Nigeria), Kenya, Tanzania (Zanzibar and the Islamized coast), Sudan (Darfur), D.R. Congo (Katanga), thus the number of states without access to the sea could increase reaching another 300-600 million Africans to be trapped inside isolated states (Favari, 2014; Roberts, 2009). It is difficult to even imagine that today the population of a state like the USA will live in states without access to the sea, but let's think in 2050 that all of Europe or in 2100 all of China or India or the continents of Europe and America together to be just states without access to the sea.

REGIONALIZATION NUCLEI

Africa is most often divided into two separate cultural and relational regions, one consisting of two southern thirds known as Sub-Saharan Africa and one located north of the vast mass of Saharan desert (as large as Europe, China or the USA) composed of Egypt and the Maghreb, isolated from the south, which was always involved in the cultural, economic and imperial life of the Mediterranean and the Middle and Near East, being in turn empires with their own status as the Phoenicians (Carthage) and the Egyptians, then part of the Christian Roman Empire, to be part of the Arab and Ottoman Empire that Islamized and Arabized them, after their fragmentation into European colonies, and now being culturally influenced by their membership in various Arab or Islamist structures and economically influenced by the European Union, characterizing through tourism, hydrocarbon exports and with a cessation of the population explosion since the period 2000-2010, being entirely a distinct region and total different from the south of the continent, also having the optical difference of being populated by the white race.

The southern part occupying two thirds of the continent is divided into no less than 49 states, generally artificial and not respecting the boundaries of ethnicities, tribes or religions, with borders drawn by agreements signed in the capitals of European empires such as: Paris, London, Lisbon, Berlin or Rome

(Bessis, 2004; Nguyen, 2017; Herman and Grama, 2018). Currently, the various world powers are trying to take over part of the influence of this region, for the division of Africa into spheres of influence fighting: EU, USA, Brazil, China, Russia, India or Saudi Arabia (Favari, 2014; Carmody, 2013). Except for the current external influence, sub-Saharan Africa could be divided into four nuclei, with a rather different perception of the world and history, which gathers around them all the other countries in this part of the world. The special history makes the 4 regions to reject each other, being one of the obstacles for the creation of a unionist structure at continental level. Although there are some common elements such as the population that is distinguished by the trait of the Negro race, the region being wetter, generally dominated by jungles and savannas, except Ethiopia all were European colonies, little urbanized, little developed due to colonization in the seventeenth and nineteenth centuries, but in a demographic explosion that gives hope to become, not too many decades later, the economic-demographic copy of today's Asia in the world, but on a much more compact territory, rather related to land routes to the detriment of river routes and even maritime.

The 4 distinct Africans could be defined as follows:

- Demographic or Nigerian Africa plus the New African World (Congo);
- West-globalized or southern Africa;
- Spiritual or Ethiopian (and Nubian) Africa;
- Insular or Asian Africa.

Demographic Africa has, together with the states in its sphere of influence, almost half of the population of Sub-Saharan Africa. This is the main territory that provided slaves for plantations in America and is still economically linked to Europe and the United States. Among the dominant landscapes is the strip of the coast of Guinea between Senegal and Cameroon, an old agricultural and fishing area, well urbanized and developed compared to the rest of Africa, being attached to European values and still having the majority Christian religion. To the north of this is the Sahel, between the modernized coast and the Sahara desert, a conflict zone of contact between Christianity and Islam, with a growing water deficit and which is likely to be the region of famine and emigration center in future, here being some of the largest African empires until the arrival of the Europeans (Mali Empire, Songhai, Bornu). To the southeast is the Congo River Basin, which represents the African jungle and is beginning to easily anthropize, being a kind of New World in Africa, where the main occupations are the exploitation of raw materials, starting with a slight inclination towards plantations and culture of exotic plants, being an increasingly Christianized region. Civilized and globalized Africa is located in the south of the continent, here there are states with a high standard of living and more and more modern cities, where the exploitation of raw materials but also fishing, tourism or agriculture rise in some places to Western standards, Christianized early and which revolves around the state of South Africa. These are for Africa a kind of Argentina, Uruguay and Chile for South America, or what Japan represented for Asia in the past centuries, and the discoveries of copper, lead, zinc, etc. from Zambia and oil from Angola expand further and further north this territory, being able to include in the future the province of Katanga in D.R. Congo.

Spiritual Africa represents the remnants of the Nile Valley civilization that stretched from Egypt, passed through Nubia, and reached the sources of the Blue Nile where Abyssinia (Ethiopia) was located. With the advance of the Arab Empire in the north, Egypt and Nubia (now Sudan) were Islamized and Arabized, pushing

the African sacred civilization further and further south, which now stretches from Ethiopia to Kenya and further into Tanzania and Malawi. Savannah area, with almost sufficient rainfall, this Christian region inside the continent (Orthodox in Ethiopia) and slightly Islamized on the coast (Eritrea, Somalia, Zanzibar) has always been in a struggle to drive away invading civilizations, stopping Islamization here Africa and Ethiopia is the only state on this continent that has not been colonized by Europeans. Increasingly developed and with larger and more modern cities, it flirts with the economic extension of East, Southeast and South Asia, being in counterweight with most of Africa that has accepted Arabization, Europeanization and Americanization. Non-African or Asian Africa, Madagascar is an island that seems to have been brought by the waves of the Indian Ocean near the Malaysian archipelago with which it shares the same type of landscape and the same race of people, its inhabitants having descendants of immigrants who came here for millennia from present Indonesia and Malaysia (Gâștescu and Cioacă, 2013).

Looking at these differences, it is clear to us why the giant of Africa (Nigeria) will not be led by spiritual Africa (Ethiopia), West Africa (South Africa) or Asian Africa (Madagascar), the four regions with centers in: Lagos, Johannesburg, Addis Ababa and Antananarivo rejecting each other.

CONCLUSIONS

The world's major economic powers are generally open to foreign trade, which is 90% dominated by sea and river routes. There are few countries in the world that have managed to develop without access to the Planetary Ocean, including: Switzerland, Luxembourg, Austria, the Czech Republic, Hungary or Kazakhstan, but their population is small and they often have access to navigable river routes or are close to the coast. For the great demographic powers, the limited or extended access to the coast gave them the economic, maritime or continental character. Russia, China or Germany with access to the inland or frozen seas have become continental powers, having serious problems in their foreign trade, and the struggle to own land corridors or archipelago with unhindered access to the Planetary Ocean has defined their foreign policy throughout history. Instead: Japan, the United Kingdom, Spain, Portugal, the USA or Indonesia enjoy free shipping routes that have defined them as maritime powers.

Although Africa has 33 continental states with access to seas and oceans, they still behaved similarly to states with access to inland seas such as: Finland, Poland, Ukraine, Turkey, Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Venezuela and so on, due to the lack of navigable rivers that carry ships inside the continent as well as due to the lack of natural ports. But in addition to these states that resemble the Eurasian Rimland, being increasingly populated countries and in a fierce space crisis, there are also 16 states with no access to the ocean at all and D.R. Congo with reduced access, a number that could increase by the appearance other states such as: Darfur, Northern Nigeria, Katanga and so on.

These 17 states will have a population of both mainland Europe and Russia together by 2050, some being densely populated (Malawi, Rwanda, Burundi, Uganda, Ethiopia) or with acute water shortages such as the Sahel states (Mali, Burkina Faso, Niger, Chad), probably becoming a pole of famine and epidemics and a major source of emigration. Their main geopolitical goal (similar to the states of the Eurasian Heartland) will be to own commercial corridors to the coast. The result of this demographic explosion will create, either the largest

land mass in civil and intra-state warfare, or in a more optimistic framework, the plan of an increasingly territorially united Africa will be launched, in which wetter areas and cities of on the coast with access to development will receive tens or hundreds of millions of immigrants from within the isolated continent, underdeveloped and hit by drought.

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ETHNIC AND RELIGIOUS DISPARITIES IN THE APUSENII SĂLAJULUI FROM COMMUNISM TO CAPITALISM

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Abstract: The aim of this study was to achieve an evolutionary-temporal analysis of demographic evolution, ethnic and confessional structure in Apusenii Sălajului. The period subjected to the study begins with the abdication of King Mihai I and the establishment of communism in Romania in the year 1948. The two demographic structures have undergone significant influences from the regime, contributing decisively to their modification. Unfortunately, the confessional structure had the most to suffer because of the atheism promoted by the communists. In Apusenii Sălajului there is an important confessional diversity due to several ethnicities that populate the mountain space. The most destructive confessional community in the Apusenii Sălajului was the Greek Catholic. In the year 1948, the regime banned this confession, with the population constrained to convert to the Orthodox confessional. Priests who did not obey, were arrested and convicted, many dying in prisons, as was the case of bishops. Because of these repression, the population passed to the Orthodox confession. All confessions were compelled to pass to the Orthodox cult, being the only cult accepted by the regime. Five censuses were used to carry out the study, from 1941, 1956, 1977, 1992 and 2011. The census of 1956 and 1977 are those of the Communist period that did not record the confession. Thus, in order to be able to analyze and observe the significant changes we used the data from the census in the year 1941.

Key words: disparities, ethnicity, confession, communism, capitalism

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INTRODUCTION

The Apusenii Sălajului is the north-eastern part of the Apuseni Mountains (figure 1), with five administrative-territorial units in their composition (Cizer, Halmăşd, Plopiş, Săg, Valcău de Jos), comprising a total of 21 localities. It is the only subregion between the six of the Apuseni Mountains that owns no city, only rural administrative units (rural area).

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The five administrative units form a genuine traditional rural area where multiethnic and religious values have continuously strengthened under the influence of a diverse range of factors (socio-economic, historical-cultural, administrative-policy). These factors can be referred to as generational factors of risk, through which we can understand the essence of processes or phenomena, which contribute to the occurrence of one or another type of risk and which determines its character (Romanov and Butuhanov, 2001 quoted by Surd et al., 2007, p. 11).

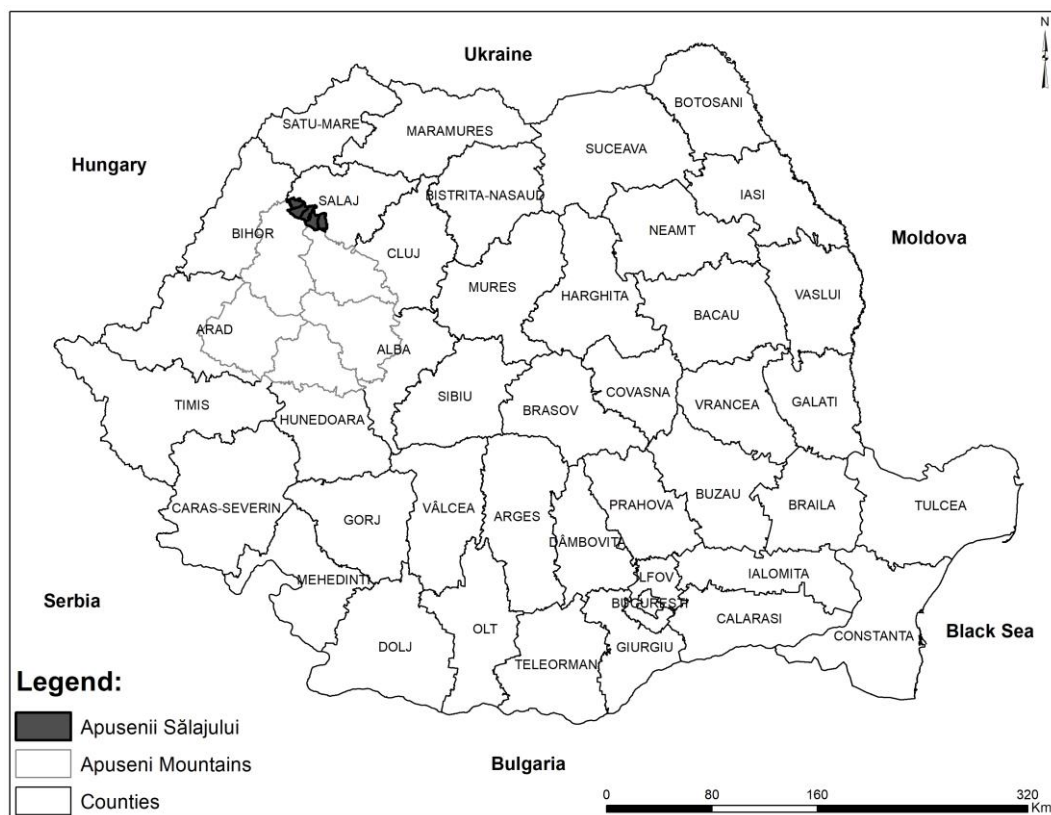


Figure 1. Geographic localization of the Apusenii Sălajului

Through this study we wanted to conduct an analysis of the demographic evolution in the Apusenii Sălajului, the only subregion of the Apuseni Mountains consisting entirely of rural space. However, the two main objectives focused on studying the ethnic and confessional structure. After the establishment of communism, there were important changes in the two structures of the Apusenii Sălajului. The confession was marginalised by the socialists, and the churches were outlawed, except for the Orthodox Church. The confessional and ethnic disparities were pronounced because in this part of the Apusenilor, there was an ethnical-confessional diversity. At one place lived, Romanians, Hungarians, Slovaks, Gypsy, these ethnicities belonging to several confessions such as: Orthodox, Greek Catholic, Roman Catholic, Reformed. The regime wished to form a single, Orthodox confession, to which the believers of the other religious denominations would be converted. In particular, the repressures were on the

Roman Church, the priests and believers who were not obeunled were arrested and convicted. During the study we see that territorial disparities have been closely linked to the confessional and ethnic structure, favouring demographic decreases and migration of the population. Unfortunately, the dysfunctions produced in the period 1948-1989, retained continuity after the end of communism. Thus, at the census of the year 2011, the ethnic-confessional framework of the Apusenii Sălajului was radically changed.

The research of demographic evolution, but especially of the two structures, was the subject of analysis for researchers from both Romania and other countries (Clark, 2002; Kamusella, 2004; Mukharyamov, 2004; Akturk, 2007; Gumenai, 2008; Herman, 2009; Ghiță, 2011; Macháček, 2011; Truzzi and Bassanezi, 2013; Scarpim, 2014; Tofan, 2014; Majo, 2015; Matlovič et al., 2015; Shemshurenko et al., 2016; Simoni and Dagnino, 2016; Darulová et al., 2018; Zekanovic and Gnjado, 2018; Gostyusheva and Dolzhikov, 2019; Lung, 2019a, b; Ilieș et al., 2020; Lung and Mureșan, 2020). The studies were addressed from different perspectives, because both ethnicity and confession are an important support of human understanding and living. If the two structures are harmonising, then a geographic space can thrive continuously, reaching a high level of development. Also, merging the elements of the two demographic structures can lead to a multiculturalism, capable of creating urban or rural development models. However, structures and multiculturalism can be directly influenced by the political factor that can have positive or negative benefits, as was the case from the Apusenii Sălajului during the etatist period.

DATA SOURCE AND METHODOLOGY

For the drafting of this article, we used the statistical data from five population and housing censuses. The first census used was the year 1941, in order to see the major changes in the confessional structure. Unfortunately, the confession was not included in the census of 1956, nor in the year 1977, being the census of the communist period. For this reason we have chosen to use for confession the census of the year 1941 (Rotariu et al., 2002). The next useful new census was the one in the year 1956 (Central Statistical Directorate, 1961), which was also a first census of the population after the socialist regime was established in the country's leadership. The third, was the census of the year 1977 (Directorate-General for Statistics, 1980), which followed the Decree No. 770 of 1 October 1966 prohibiting the interruption of pregnancy. The fourth census used was the year 1992 (County Department of Statistics Sălaj, 1994), being the first demographic census after the end of communism, and the last useful new census was the one in 2011 (National Institute of Statistics, NIS).

In a first step the statistical data was introduced into the Microsoft Excel2013 program, where they were processed and then generated several tables. The data was then entered in the ArcMap 10.3 attribute table, with a series of maps with study-specific demographic indicators. Geographic Information Systems have also been used to generate a map of the geographical position of the mountainous region studied. In order to achieve the best possible timeline of the demographic aspects contained in the work, the great help was the specialty bibliography. Through it, we were able to extract interesting information on the evolution of ethnics and confessions in the region, from communism (ethatism) to capitalism (democracy). However, the information about confessions was quite restricted because of the atheistic policy of the communist regime.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

A cycle of territorial disparities in the demographic component of the Apusenii Sălajului began with the abdication of King Mihai I and the establishment of the communist regime in Romania. The setting of the monarchy in Romania began on November 12, 1947, when the king and the mother Queen went to London to witness the marriage of Princess Elisabeth, Dej and Groza hoping that he would not return (Quinlan, 1977, p. 157). The king and his mother returned on December 21st, and nine days later the communists acted, calling on the king in Bucharest, where they presented his declaration of abdication. The refusal of the monarch to sign, was attacked by Groza by threatening the onset of the civil war, which put the king in the face of signing. The signing of abdication ended the Romanian monarchy, and on 30 December 1947 the People's Republic of Romanian was proclaimed. Communism lasted from 1948 to Revolution in the year 1989 (Deletant, 2001, p. 72).

The traditional countryside of the Apusenii Sălajului has contributed to the systematic intensification of demographic decline in the communist period, especially as a result of law No. 58/1974 referring to the systematization of the territory and localities. The imposition of conditions for spatial planning and the distribution of the built heritage has been negatively sighted on the population of the Apusenii Sălajului. Even though in the socialist period the decree on the prohibition of abortion was in force, through the law of systematization, the rural area of party entered a process of depopulation. This depopulation was the result produced by the law of systematization of localities, whereby rural localities were constricted to develop to the level of cities, or were to be destroyed. However, the demographic decreases recorded in the period 1956-1977 were not so significant because the law had only entered into force for three years in 1974. Its effects were felt in the period 1977-1992 when the values of population decreases were raised.

Table 1. Demographic evolution in the Apusenii Sălajului

(Source: own processing after population census of 21 February 1956: Population demographic Structure: number and territorial distribution of population, marital status, nationality, mother tongue, training level, families, Central Directorate of Statistics, Bucharest, 1961; Population and Housing census of 5 January 1977, Directorate-General for Statistics, Bucharest, 1980; Population census and inhabitants of 7 January 1992: Sălaj County: General results, County Department of Statistics Sălaj, Zalău, 1994; Population and Housing Census of 2011, National Institute of Statistics, Bucharest)

Years	1956	1977	%	1992	%	2011	%
Number	21.373	19.484	-8.83	16.009	-17.83	12.775	-20.20

The largest demographic decrease in the period 1956-1977 was recorded in the Săg, which was 12.21%, followed by Halmășd by 10.13%. From 1977 to the first capitalist census, the decline exploded, with the highest decrease rate of 27.99% in the Cizer. Three other territorial units recorded decreases between 10 and 20% (Plopiș 19.24%, Halmășd 17.05%, Săg 14.68%). The lowest rate of decrease was in the Valcău de Jos (9.18%), but compative with the previous period the percentage value is almost double in 1992. The transitional period from communism to capitalism meant the continuity of the depopulation of the Apusenii Sălajului, so from 1992 to 2011, three units (Valcău de Jos 20.78%, Plopiș 19.43%, Halmășd 17.08%) recorded higher demographic loss values than in the previous period. It should be noted that in the Cizer the decrease rate decreased greatly compared with

the previous temporal gauge, from 27.99% to 19.80%, and the Sâg decreased slightly more sensitive from 14.68% to 13.83% (table 1).

These demographic losses are closely linked to the evolution of the ethnic structure and the confessional structure.

Changes in the ethnic structure of administrative-territorial units in the Apusenii Sălajului

The 12.21% decrease in the Cizer between 1956-1977 was due to the numerical decline of ethnic Romanians by 11.63%. Similar situation was in Halmășd, where the flock of Romanians decreased by 14.29%, and the slovak with 35.60%. The largest Slovak community in the Apusenii Sălajului was positioned in the administrative territory of Plopiș. The share of the Slovak community in the ethnic structure of the commune was 32% and Romanians of 68%. However, during this period both ethnicities suffered losses, with the Romanian community losing 9.58% of the actual, and the Slovak community 10.73%. At the level of the villages of the Plopiș territorial unit, 90.79% of Slovak citizens were inhabitants of the village of Făgetu, forming a well-rooted Slovak demographic pole in the space of the Apusenii Sălajului. In Valcău de Jos there lived the largest Hungarian community in the Apusenii Sălajului, which from 1956 to 1977 lost 38.04% of the actual. At the same time, in addition to diminishing the Hungarian community, the demographic decline in this spread was also caused by a decrease in the Romanians ' population by 4.87%.

In the period 1977-1992, the demographics in the Apusenii Sălajului have seen considerable decreases, ethnic structures in administrative units having to face major dysfunctions. In the case of Cizer, the Romanian demographic component lost 30.70% of the actual, and the most destructed Romanian community was in the village of Pria, where Romanians fell by 47.10%. The migration of the population in Plopiș coincided with the recording of a decrease of 16.36% in the Slovak community and Romanians by 20.53%. The most depopulated Romanian community in the Plopiș administrative unit was registered at the Iaz village level, with a decrease of 47.92%. Similar case was recorded in the Sâg, where the Romanian population decreased by 23.03% and the Slovak community lost 6.61% of the actual. The most depopulated village in the commune of Sâg, was Mal, losing from 1977-1992, 32.08% of Romanian citizens. The high rate of population decline in Halmășd was primarily due to the decrease of ethnic Romanians by 15.58%, and secondly by the numerical decrease of the Gypsy by 38.31%. The largest Gypsy community was in the village of Cerișa, which also recorded the greatest loss of 88.57% at the level of the administrative unit. In Valcău de Jos, the Hungarian community and Romanian contributed to doubling the percentage of population decline at administrative level, compared to the 1956-1977. At the communal level, the Romanian community depopulated by 10.84% and the Hungarian by 26.90%. The Hungarians were positioned in the Valcău de Jos, the community destructing by 28.82%.

After the end of the ethatism in the year 1989, in the geographical space of the Apusenii Sălajului, two cases were recorded in which the demographic decline diminished from the period 1977-1992. In both the Cizer and the Sâg, this decrease was due to the proliferation of the ethnic Gypsy. If, in the 1956 census, no person of Gypsy ethnicity was recorded in the Cizer, the census in the year 2011, there was a gypsy community consisting of 252 people. The most fulminant evolution of ethnic Gypsy was recorded in the territory of the Sâg, where 679

people were reviewed at the census in the year 2011, increasing from 1992 with 84.01%. We have found that, from the first demographic census following the decree prohibiting abortion and until the second census of the 21st century, the gypsy ethnicity had the most rapid pace of prosperity in the Apusenii Sălajului, continuously increasing its flocks in each administrative unit. The Valcău de Jos faced the most acute demographic decline, reaching from 9.18% in 1992, to 20.78% in 2011, due to a decrease in the Romanian population by 30.30% and Hungarians by 34.40% respectively. However, if the two ethnicities recorded significant losses, the Gypsy ethnicity had an excessive increase of 108.45% (table 2).

Table 2. Numerical evolution of ethnics in Apusenii Sălajului

(Source: own processing after population census of 21 February 1956: Population demographic Structure: number and territorial distribution of population, marital status, nationality, mother tongue, training level, families, Central Directorate of Statistics, Bucharest, 1961; Population and Housing census of 5 January 1977, Directorate-General for Statistics, Bucharest, 1980; Population census and inhabitants of 7 January 1992: Sălaj County: General results, County Department of Statistics Sălaj, Zalău, 1994; Population and Housing Census of 2011, National Institute of Statistics, Bucharest)

Ethnicities	1956	1977	%	1992	%	2011	%
Romanians	19.487	17.449	-10,45	13.810	-20,85	9.918	-28,18
Slovaks	1.559	1.395	-10,51	1.180	-15,41	898	-23,89
Gypsies	30	456	1.420	880	92,98	1.870	112,5
Hungarians	297	184	-38,04	139	-24,45	89	-35,97

The Romanian ethnic element had a broader demographic base, with a more vigorous biological character, and the majority in the ethnic structure at regional level (Apusenii Sălajului) and at local level (administrative-territorial unit) (Edroiu and Pușcaș, 1995, p. 21). We note from table 3 that local ethnic structures in the 1956 census were dominated by Romanians, except for the Plopiș where Slovaks were still in high numbers. The most representative Romanian habitat was Cizer, where there was a bi-ethnic structure consisting of Romanians and Hungarians, the latter having a flock of only four people. Looking comparatively, table 3 highlights the continuity of the Romanian element in the Apusenii Sălajului, but with increasing protuberances of the Gypsy communities. It is the only ethnicity in the Apusenii Sălajului that prospered throughout the period studied, increasing its regional population from 30 people to the census of 1956, to 1.870 individuals at the census in 2011 (an excessive percentage increase of 6.133%).

The Romanian population of the Apusenii Sălajului fell by 49.10% from 1956 to 2011, as proof of the action of the regime to disintegrate the rural area. By more or less legal measures, the population had to migrate to other administrative units, others left the country. Even though the rural area was not destroyed as the communist regime wanted, after its end in 1989, Romanians continued to migrate due to lack of jobs and low levels of life.

Since the years 1960 of the 20th century, a part of the Slovak population positioned in the geographical areas of the Apusenii Sălajului began to migrate to the region of Arad (Banat). These migratory processes were based on economic reasons, with Slovaks repositioning themselves in the geographic space of some administrative units where the Slovak element was already much better strengthened, Butin, Vucova and Nădlac (Ștefanko, 2004, p. 19). After the establishment of communism, mountainous settlements in the Apusenii Sălajului

did not enter the sphere of influence of collectivization, being kept private household. However, the collectivization blanket did not escape the farmland from the fields of hydrographic courses, resulting in a decrease in the life level of the anthropogenic component. The corroboration of agricultural land collectivization actions with the opening up of some enterprises for the male workforce led to the closing of a binary management system in Slovak villages. Thus, women were dealing with cattle growth and the work of the land, and men were trained in the activities of factories. The industrialisation of urban centres and the loss of jobs in settlements inhabited by Slovaks, coincided with a new phase of demographic migration. The Slovak rural exodus was carried out in two directions. Some of them migrated and settled in the industrial centres in the immediate proximity to the Aleşd, Voivozi, Oradea, and another party migrated to agrarian localities such as Aştileu, Urvind, Tileagd (Ştefanko, 2004, p. 23). The beginnings of democracy have led to the systematic reduction of jobs in businesses, and the only way to survival of the Slovaks in the Apusenii Sălajului remained the work of the land. Subsistence farming caused by the precarity of the edaphic coating has boosted the emigration of the young population to other regions of the country or abroad. The migration of young people has resulted in a considerable increase in the average age among the Slovak population, thus becoming acute the viability of the school institutions with the Slovak language from Apusenii Sălajului (Ştefanko, 2004, p. 79).

Table 3. Ethnic evolution of the population of the Apusenii Sălajului at the local level (Source: own processing after population census of 21 February 1956: Population demographic Structure: number and territorial distribution of population, marital status, nationality, mother tongue, training level, families, Central Directorate of Statistics, Bucharest, 1961; Population and Housing Census of 2011, National Institute of Statistics, Bucharest)

	Years/Percentage	Romanians	Hungarians	Gypsies	Slovaks
Cizer	1956	4214	4	0	0
	2011	1905	0	252	0
	%	-54.79	-100.00	*	0
Halmăşd	1956	3707	3	28	132
	2011	1904	7	361	30
	%	-48.64	133.33	1189.29	-77.27
Plopiş	1956	2754	6	1	1314
	2011	1417	0	159	770
	%	-48.55	-100.00	**	-41.40
Săg	1956	4953	8	1	113
	2011	2411	0	679	98
	%	-51.32	-100.00	**	-13.27
Valcău de Jos	1956	3859	276	0	0
	2011	2281	82	419	0
	%	-40.89	-70.29	*	0

*- we can't calculate the percentage

** - percentage increase is very high

The socialist authorities set up a programme in the year 1977, attempting to extend control of the Gypsy minority. This program was never made public, and its implementation was done locally, so the police could constrain the Gypsy who practiced their traditional trades to return to the factories of the country. However, some of the Gypsy took advantage of the weaknesses of the system, providing goods that only they were able to ensure (Pons, 1999, p. 35). The continuing ascent of the Gypsy population from the Apusenii Sălajului, was due to the social aid system which specifically targeted families with a precarious material situation. A number of medical services were offered free of charge, and pro-natalist policy led to a decrease in mortality among women of Gypsy ethnicity (Pons, 1999, p. 39). The significant increase in the Gypsy community from the Apusenii Sălajului from 1956 to 1977, can be put on account of ambiguities during the year 1956 census. There is a likelihood that some may have declared belonging to the ethnicity Romanian, and in the 1977 census they really recognized their membership of the Gypsy ethnicity, which led to the demographic explosion in this range. This hypothesis is all the more credible, the socialist censuses were made on the basis of declarations and not on the basis of social surveys, clearly identifying ethnic affiliation (Costachie et al., 2011, p. 143). This probable error is reinforced by the Amza (1996 quoted by Stoenescu, 2015, p. 429) claiming that most of the Gypsy people lived in rural areas in Gypsy villages or hamlet attached to villages where the ethnic Romanian or Hungarian ethnicity, on this occasion many declaring themselves either Romanians or Hungarians. At the demographic census of the year 1977, the Gypsy ethnicity constituted the third minority in the geographical space of the Apusenii Sălajului, following Romanians and Slovaks (Pons, 1999, p. 46). The projects on helping Gypsy communities continued in capitalism, which resulted in their numerical ascent between 1992-2011 and 112.5% at the level Apusenii Sălajului.

The migration of Hungarians from the Apusenii Sălajului began after the communist regime was established, but an important migratory wave took place in the years 1980 of the 20th century, a demographic phenomenon that was intensely perpetuated and after the end of socialism (Edroiu and Pușcaș, 1995, p. 21). The geographic distribution of the Hungarians from the Apusenii Sălajului was homogenous, with the largest local community being at the Valcău de Jos, which continued its existence throughout the period studied, but with decreasing numerals from a census to another. From 1956 to 1992, local Hungarian communities also existed in the rest of the municipalities, but numerically did not pass 10 people.

Changes in the confessional structure of the administrative-territorial units in Apusenii Sălajului

The confessional structure is the demographic indicator with the deepest changes caused by the political factor, so at the census during the socialist period, the confession was not recorded (Boțan, 2010, p. 361).

The Greek Catholic cult suffered the most abundant persecutions during the period studied, but especially during communism, established in the year 1948 and lasted until 1989. As mentioned by us Boțan (2010), the demographic censuses during this period did not record the confessions of the inhabitants. In this way, in order to highlight the religious mutations in the Apusenii Sălajului, we took into account the statistical data provided by the census in the year

1941. This is the last census of the population, before the establishment of the communist regime, a regime that has propagated atheism successively.

In the year 1941, Greek Catholics were the most numerous confessional in the analyzed territory, with a regional flock of 17.762 people. In their wake were Roman Catholics with 4.180 people, and in the third place were Reformations with 261 people. The Orthodox confession had only 38 people in the Apusenii Sălajului, but these hierarchs had a lot to change after the year 1948. The Greek-Catholic cult dominates in four administrative units of privileges except for the Plopiș where they actually higher had Roman Catholics (table 4).

Table 4. Confessional evolution of the population of the Apusenii Sălajului at the local level
(Source: own processing after Rotariu et al., 2002; Population and Housing Census of 2011, National Institute of Statistics, Bucharest)

	Years/Percentage	Orthodox	Roman Catholic	Greek Catholic	Reformed	Pentecostal
Cizer	1941	13	29	4018	10	0
	2011	2005	0	64	0	67
	%	**	-100.00	-98.41	-100.00	*
Halmășd	1941	8	681	3409	8	0
	2011	2165	32	101	0	5
	%	**	-95.30	-97.04	-100.00	*
Plopiș	1941	2	2908	2471	8	0
	2011	1263	771	274	0	28
	%	**	-73.49	-88.91	-100.00	*
Săg	1941	8	316	4440	16	0
	2011	2417	102	72		443
	%	**	-67.72	-98.38	-100.00	*
Valcău de Jos	1941	7	246	3424	219	0
	2011	2379	4	79	69	198
	%	**	-98.37	-97.69	-68.49	*

*- we can't calculate the percentage

** - percentage increase is very high

The Greek Catholic Church was banned by Decree 358/1.XII.1948 (Moisin, 1998, p. 7). Until then, between 1 October and 1 December 1948, over 600 priests of the Greek Catholic cult were arrested because of the refusal to move to the Orthodox confession. Those who hid were caught and convicted, many dying in prisons and labor camps (Moisin, 1998, pp. 4-5). The arrests specifically targeted the Greek Catholic bishops: Ioan Suciu, Alexandru Rusu, Valeriu Traian Frențiu, Ioan Bălan, Tit Liviu Chinezu, Vasile Aftenie and Bishop Cardinal Iuliu Hossu (Moisin, 1998, pp. 5-6). With these devastation of the Greek Catholic cult, the population of this religious cult was constrained to convert to the Orthodox cult. This was achieved in a very large proportion, so that in the 2011 census, the confessional structure in the Apusenii Sălajului

was dominated by the Orthodox. Compared to the 1941 census, the regional population of the Greek Catholics decreased by 89.84%, and the herd of the orthodox population increased from 38 people to 12.488 people (table 5).

Violence against Greek Catholics took place in the first five years after the fall of communism, but with lower intensity. Thus, the confrontations were contained in a letter of a Greek Catholic believer in the village of Fizeș, the commune Săg (Moisin, 1995, p. 594) in which fierce discussions between Orthodox and Greek Catholic priests are reported, even on a day of great celebration for both denominations. Following these extensive religious mutations, at the first census that followed communism, the Orthodox confession clearly dominates the confessional structure at regional level, but also the confessional structures at local level. Also, in the ranks of the Orthodox confession, a part of the Roman Catholics, whose regional effectively decreased by 71.38%. The Reformed confession lost 60.91% of the regional community, the followers of this religious cult being ethnic Hungarians, a party preferring to migrate to get rid of repression. However, we must mention that after the end of communism, conditions have been created for the formation of new confessions, which have gathered more and more people. One of the most prolific new cults was the Pentecostal that from 1992 to 2011 rose by 2.017%, attracting believers from Orthodox, Roman Catholic and Greek Catholic confessions.

CONCLUSIONS

The period studied was one with many demographic changes in the Apusenii Sălajului. Demographic evolution has been continuously dynamic, leading to more or greater numerical decreases from one census to another. The demographic component was continuously dynamic both during the communist period and in the capitalist period. The migration of the population during the socialist period was largely caused by authorities, who wanted to destructuate the rural area. The Apusenii Sălajului are entirely rural space, the communist laws on systematization of the rural environment causing demographic failures. The most important territorial disparities were caused in the confessional structure. The confessional diversity in the Apusenii Sălajului was considerably narrowed in the socialist period. The prohibition of the Roman Church contributed to the migration of ethnicities, or to the conversion of the remaining to the Orthodox cult. If at the time of the establishment of communism, in the Apusenii Sălajului there was a large Greek-Catholic regional community, at the end of the regime this cult almost no longer exists. Moreover, in the local plan, the Greek Catholics dominated the confessional structures in four administrative units, and the Roman Catholics in a territorial unit. The Slovak community of Roman Catholic confession has migrated largely from the Apusenii Sălajului to escape the repercussions. We can say that the ethnic and confessional structure in the Apusenii Sălajului was in close interaction during the period studied, and the action of the communist regime on them led to the emergence of ethnic-confessional disparities.

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POPULATIONS AS DETERMINANT OF LATVIA'S SECURITY

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Abstract: The conducted analysis aims to indicate the real threat of the depopulation process to Latvia's national security. The aim of the analysis is to examine the pace of changes, to indicate their main determinants and potential effects. The research hypothesis assumes that in the absence of an immediate, radical change in the demographic and social policy of the state, the population of Latvia will decrease to the level of approx. 1 million in the next 40-45 years. The conducted research shows a constantly decreasing natural increase and a high, negative level of migration. The carried out extrapolation of the population number confirms the hypothesis put forward in the study. The slight effect of the measures taken so far by the Latvian government to counter the depopulation process does not allow us to put an end to the optimistic scenarios of changes in demographic processes. An additional problem of the country's security is the issue of, above all, the Russian ethnic minority and the almost 10% share of non-citizens among the country's inhabitants.

Key words: demography, Latvia, population, population decline, security

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INTRODUCTION

The issue of ensuring security is one of the fundamental needs of every person and society. It is the need for security that forces most creatures to gather, form a group, community, and cooperate. It has been known since prehistoric times that a family / lineage / tribe or nation has a better chance of survival than a single person or a small social group. Nowadays, the category of security is understood very broadly, it refers both to the internal situation of states (national security), as well as from cyber-security to its cosmic conditions in terms of international security (Bógdał-Brzezińska, 2020a; 2020b). Numerous works show the importance of the economy and the country's defense for ensuring security. The fundamental issues for security have become the changing realities of life, techniques, scientific discoveries, changes in political constellations, influence and changes in the geopolitical position, new media, fake news pointing to new spheres (Bógdał-Brzezińska and Wendt, 2020) from which we may face a threat

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(Belza, 2011). After the end of the period of postmodernity, with the returning role and meaning of the concept of the nation, researchers put more and more emphasis on the narrow concept of security. Narrowed by the adoption / restoration of the concept of the nation and functioning in the literature as national security (Bąk, 2010).

In the literature on the subject, you can find numerous works with varying degrees of precision addressing the issue of security (Korzeniowski, 2016), its definition (Stańczyk, 1996), essence (Lutostański, 2017), the theory of threats (Lubieński and Drózd, 2020), the spatial approach to the phenomenon (Wendt, 2008), its sources, types and classification (Ciekanowski, 2010). On the basis of the latter, social security should be distinguished, which includes issues related to national heritage, education for security, media, social assistance, social security and demography (Gierszewski, 2018, p. 31).

The latter seems particularly interesting in the context of contemporary demographic processes in Europe and in the world. These processes, in the context of threats to security, have already been the subject of numerous studies, which indicate, *inter alia*, the problem of the aging of the population on the example of Japan (Warchoń, 2015), the issues of differentiation of population growth in ethnic terms in Israel (Toft, 2012), the problem of security threats due to the demographic processes taking place in EU countries (Sofer, 2008) or the demographical problems and national security of Poland (Durasiewicz, 2015; Lewicka, 2016). Various research approaches and the importance attached to individual factors characterizing demographic processes deserve a separate study (Baranowski, 2017). In this paper, the starting point is the analysis of M. Łakomy, who indicates the importance of the country's population for its security on the example of Poland (Łakomy, 2016), in order to generalize this issue at the European level (Łakomy, 2017a), concluding its significance for the power of the state (Łakomy, 2017b).

The case of depopulation and the related demographic problems of Poland is a good example in this case, as are the introduced and largely ineffective methods of preventing the progressive decline in the population of Poland. However, more interesting, due to the pace of changes and their consequences for national security, is the issue of Latvia's demographic problems. The Republic of Latvia proclaimed independence in 1918. After a short period of independence, it was incorporated into the Soviet Union (1940), and regained independence after its collapse in 1991. This year, the country's population reached 2,685,000, systematically decreasing to the level of 1,868 thousand in 2021 (Population of Latvia, 2021).

If we take into account the decrease in the number of inhabitants by 30.4% over the last 30 years, from the point of view of national security, as defined in the works of M. Łakomy (2016; 2017a, 2017b), it seems fully justified to undertake research on the demographics of Latvia. The aim of the analysis is to examine the pace of changes, to indicate their main determinants and potential effects. The research hypothesis assumes that in the absence of an immediate, radical change in the demographic and social policy of the state, the population of Latvia will decrease to the level of approx. 1 million in the next 40-45 years.

MATERIAL, METHODS AND LIMITATION OF RESEARCH

The analysis of demographic changes used statistical data characterizing the population of Latvia on the basis of the Latvian statistical year, collected literature on the subject, as well as statistical data and demographic forecasts from the

Internet portals "Worldometer", "World Population Review", "Eurostat" and "The World Fact Book". The research used statistical methods with the use of simple extrapolation of the population number. In the literature on the methodology of demographic research, we can find several more detailed approaches, such as adaptive forecasting methods (Sojka, 2016), however, T. Wilson and F. Rove indicate that the analyzed methods of studying demographic changes are characterized by a low error difference compared to extrapolation forecasts (Wilson and Rove, 2011). The statistical analysis was supplemented by small-scale works with the use of text analysis and reports on changes in the population of Latvia.

At this point, it is necessary to point out the limitations of the simple extrapolation method used and the entire analysis. In demographic research, it should take into account at least the dimensions including the natural increase rate and factors characterizing the migration processes (Szydlowski et al., 2018; Wendt et al., 2018). In the case of the conducted analysis, a simplification was adopted, focusing on indicators describing only the total dimension of these two processes, without their detailed analysis. This simplification allows for a clear indication of the emerging trend and the result of the extrapolation performed. They can be treated as an introduction to the development of a detailed analysis of demographic changes in Latvia, but such a holistic study goes far beyond the accepted research framework. Another limitation of the proposed research is the lack of a detailed analysis of economic and social issues influencing demographic processes. The multifaceted approach to this issue also goes far beyond the adopted research objective and is not a necessary condition for the verification of the presented hypothesis.

The last limitation of this analysis is the nationality issues, which are very important in the case of Latvia. They are important because national minorities in Latvia constitute, according to various sources, almost 37.5%. Latvians are 62.5%, while, for example, Russians living in Latvia are 24.7% (Latvian data) (Demography 2020, 2020). However, according to the CIA World Fact Book, Latvians are slightly less, 62.2%, and Russians are 25.2% (World Fact Book, 2021). The remaining almost 13% of Latvia's inhabitants belong to the Belarusian, Ukrainian, Lithuanian and Polish ethnos, respectively. What is significant, the official Latvian language in Latvia is spoken by only 56.3% of the inhabitants, while Russian as much as 33.8% (World Fact Book, 2021). From the point of view of citizenship, in 2021 Latvian citizenship was held by 86% of the country's population. As many as 10% of the country's inhabitants have the status of a non-citizen, 2% have the citizenship of the Russian Federation, and the rest have citizenship of other countries (Demography 2020, 2020, p. 12). Such a small share of the indigenous Latvian population is another factor that threatens the national security of the country.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The demographic changes after Latvia regained independence document a steady decline in the population. From 2.67 million (1990) to 1.91 million (2020). Such a significant decrease in the population by 28% in the analyzed period (Figure 1) poses a threat not only to national security, but with the initial data values for the absolute number of population, it may even threaten the biological existence of the Latvian ethnos. It seems obvious, but due to the importance of the issue, it should be emphasized that reducing the population by more than $\frac{1}{4}$ of the population is always a threat to its security. However, it is one thing for a

population decline to decline for a population of several million, and another for a population of two and a half million, with more than 35% of non-Latvian ethnic minorities among them. In 2020. the population of Latvia was 1,908,000, but the Latvians and Liwons, i.e. the indigenous inhabitants of the country, are only around 62.5%, which is 1,193,000. This is not geographic determinism or social Darwinism, but a simple observation based on statistics.

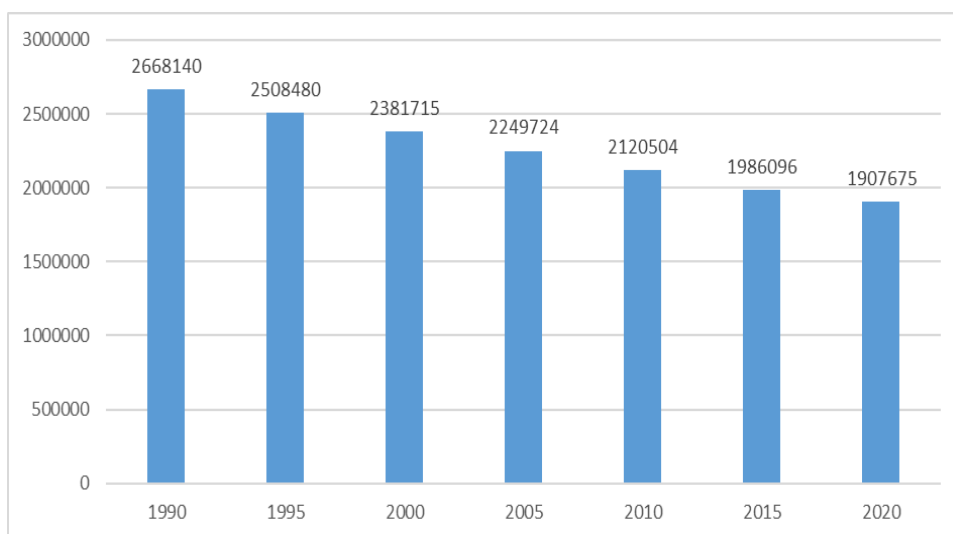


Figure 1. Decline in the population of Latvia in 1990-2020

(Source: Demography 2020. Collection of statistics (2020). Central Statistical Bureau of Latvia, Riga, p. 6 and Eurostat)

As can be concluded from the literature on the subject, the main reasons for such a significant decrease in the number of people are the decreasing natural increase, the aging of the population and the high negative migration level (Heleniak, 2006). Since the beginning of the nineties, the population of Latvia has been showing a downward trend and all forecasts confirm its maintenance (Republic of Latvia, 2018). Since regaining independence, Latvia has lost over 25% of its population, of which about 60% is caused by emigration from the country. In conjunction with the negative natural increase, the quoted report indicates that the country's population will decrease to 1.5 million in 2050. An additional threat to social security is the increasing average age of the population and the growing pension dependency ratio. In the years 1990-2015, the average age increased from 35 to 43 years, and in 2050 growth is expected to 46 years. The retirement dependency ratio is also changing rapidly. The proportion of the population aged 65+ to the population aged 15-64 was 18%, and in 2050 it was to be 48% (Republic of Latvia, 2018, p. 16). Already in 2030. every fourth inhabitant of Latvia will be over 65 years of age (Auers and Gubins, 2017).

According to the World Population Review portal, the population of Latvia as of April 20, 2021 was 1,869,074 people. This statistical portal indicates that 53 children are born daily in the country, 76 people die, which already gives a negative birth rate of -23 people. If we add after the same source that net migration is negative and amounts to 29 people a day, we get a daily decrease in the population of Latvia estimated at 52 people, which means almost 18,980

people per year. Simple mathematical operations show that statistically speaking, the number of inhabitants of the country decreases by one person every 28 minutes. Importantly, the data provided by the portal correspond to a large extent with the data from the country's statistical year (table 1) and the estimated UN data. The high emigration additionally contributed to the decreasing number of births and the increasing deaths. As a result of the economic recession of 2008-2012, a relatively large number of young people decided to leave the country and seek better living conditions abroad. The economic policy pursued by the Latvian government has led to a decline in wages, an increase in unemployment and a reduction in domestic investment. Which strengthened the migration trends, strong after Latvia's accession to the EU and the opening of labor markets, the so-called countries of the "old EU" to migrants from the new member states. Estimates indicate the number of migrants per 200,000. people until 2011 (Kajaks, 2013).

Table 1. Changes in population growth and migration in Latvia in 1990-2019

(Data source: Own study based on Demography 2020. Collection of statistics (2020). Central Statistical Bureau of Latvia, Riga; Worldometers; World Population Review)

Year	Natural increase			Migration			Total balance
	Births	Deaths	Balance	Immigration	Emigration	Balance	
1990*	37918	34812	3106	14684	29729	-15045	-11939
1995	21595	32777	-11182	2799	16512	-13713	-24895
2000	20302	32205	-11903	6483	22911	-16428	-28331
2005	21879	32777	-10898	6691	17643	-10952	-21850
2010	19781	30040	-10259	4011	39651	-35640	-45899
2015	21979	28478	-6499	9479	20119	-10640	-17139
2019	18786	27719	-8933	11223	14583	-3360	-12293

*1991 for migration.

Given the current pace of population decline and the net migration, although declining, but still having a negative value, it should be expected that the current trend of population decline may weaken, but will still continue. Taking into account that the statistical number of children per one woman of childbearing age in Latvia is only 1.27, which by no means ensures the stabilization of the population number and clearly indicates its decline. Research carried out by Latvian demographers shows that the reaction of the Latvian government is weak or even absent to prevent the real danger (Tsaurkubule, 2017). Apart from mostly declarative programs, no real actions have been taken to create attractive conditions for young, educated people, some of whom eventually migrate from the country. Changes in education, including an increasing number of people with higher education, will also favor lower fertility and migration rather than stay in the country and increase the fertility rate.

A simple extrapolation, based on the assumption of the stability of the current trend, allows to estimate that with the population decline rate by 18,980 per year and the starting point in April 2021 the population of Latvia (1,869,000) will decrease to about 1 million in less than 46 years, i.e. in 2067. However, it should be borne in mind that the rate of decline of the decreasing population may increase for obvious biological reasons. From a demographic perspective, a decreasing number of children will have an impact on a declining number of births with a persistent or increasing number of deaths of older people. The given value correlates well with the results of the research by Z. Tsaurkubule (2017),

who forecasts a decrease in the population of Latvia by half from the level of 1,986,000. to the level of 1 million in 40 years, that is already in 2057 (Tsaurskubule, 2017, p. 163), which confirms the thesis about the increase in the rate of decline of the population of Latvia along with its decline.

CONCLUSION

To sum up, the undertaken analysis of demographic changes made it possible to study the pace of population processes taking place in Latvia. The downward trend is definitely permanent, the decrease in the number of people in the analyzed period reaches over 30%, from approx. 2.7 million (1990) to 1.9 million (2020) and 1.867 million in April 2021. The main factors influencing the decline in the population number are the constant negative natural increase and the very high, negative level of the net migration.

The ongoing changes already have a negative impact on the country's economy, and their continuation will lead to a threat to both economic (workforce) and social security (the pension dependency ratio) and may actually threaten the existence of the Latvian nation in the perspective of the end of this century. The research hypothesis has been positively verified. With a high degree of probability, confirmed by the results of other studies cited and analyzed in this study, the population of Latvia, in the absence of real actions by the Latvian government, will decrease to the level of 1 million in the next 40-45 years.

The last conclusion does not result directly from the conducted analysis, but it is a logical consequence resulting from the collected data and the limitations of the research indicated in the study. Assuming that Latvians constitute only 63% of the country's population, their number will drop to around 630,000. in about 40-45 years. Which is another threat to national security that deserves a separate analysis.

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CHINDIA THE TITANS' CHANGE HAS COME

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Abstract: Indian and Chinese civilizations have economically dominated the world for 15 centuries, when they are overtaken by: Europe, America, Russia, the Arab states, Brazil, Mexico or Japan, shamefully entering a shadow cone that stretched 3-4 centuries. Towards the end of the twentieth century they begin to matter again, and during the twenty-first century it seems that they will replace the European Union and the United States, dividing the planet into two major spheres of influence, avoiding regionalization on religious or civilizational criteria or the multipolar world predicted by some geopolitics, so China will represent the continuity of the planned and agile economy of the USSR, but with a high dose of determination found locally in the Japanese and Koreans, while India will be the 3rd West after the end of world domination by Western Europe and the USA, based on democracy, parliament, federalism and the individual economy but also characteristics specific to the states of the planetary geopolitical south.

Key words: Asia centuri, China and India, great civilizations, competition, world mega-powers

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INTRODUCTION

After 1500, European economic powers developed more and more by seizing colonies or semi-colonies around the globe, directly owning about 90% of the Earth's territory (considering the Tsarist and Ottoman empires as semi-European powers), even if their population reached to only 19% of the world's population in 1500, 21% in 1700 and 28% in 1900, when they reach the peak that triggers the two great world wars. Slowly, as the United States gains independence following European success, Russia (USSR) is also gaining power, but also small territorially or sparsely populated countries such as: Japan, Canada, Mexico or Australia that are becoming economic giants, and rising oil prices, trade, finance, basement resources or key strategic positions other global actors between regional powers or

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in the top of the world's economies such as: Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, Venezuela, Argentina, South Africa, Iran, Turkey, Switzerland, Norway, Singapore, Thailand, Taiwan or South Korea. During this time, Chindia (India and China) which hold continental territories and generally over 33% of the world's population (40% in 1900), seem to no longer matter, getting worse and worse, being colonies, semi-colonies, facing with natural disasters, famines, economic isolation and the most severe dictatorships, their citizens being in a continuous battle against each other when they know endless civil wars. The historical explanations for such an anomaly are difficult to give, there are so many lacking, isolated, mountainous states, also at war, with populations that did not even exceed the population of cities in the top 5 urban areas of China or India, all these having miraculous economic successes. Similar to the comparison between the piranha and the whale, small, very economically aggressive states were tirelessly attacking the financial market to round out profits while the world's heavyweights, India and China, seemed to not wake up.

But the miracle of China finally appears at the end of the 20th century, and the monetary bank created by it: the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB), established between 2013 and 2016 based in Beijing, has already co-opted Western European states, recognizing his superiority after so many centuries (McGregor, 2017; Khanna, 2019). India in turn, starting more clumsy, attracts itself in competition with China: the USA, Great Britain, Australia and Japan, which will become their submissive masters in no more than two or four decades (Ayres, 2017). The BRICs set up in 2009 together with: Russia, Brazil and South Africa represented the first concrete step of world enlargement, and the current Himalayan conflict that attracted on the side China: Europe, Russia and Pakistan, and from India: Japan, USA, Australia and Vietnam was the start of the 21st century competition to replace the old US and European powers with the new powers China and India, which will divide their Earth, with the 36% of the world's population today, into two large spheres of economic and military influence.

GREAT CIVILIZATIONS, GREAT COLONIES

India with the Indus Valley and China with the Yellow River Valley were among the first three planetary mega-civilizations along with the Fertile Crescent (Nile, Mesopotamia and Levant), more than 4,000 years ago. In India, the 4,500-year-old cities of Mohenjo Daro and 5,000-year-old Harappa dictated the shape of the world's first great cities, and China had the world's first border 2,500 years ago when construction began on the Great Wall of China. Later, after 200 BC, it seems that the Silk Road that connected Europe to China became the main land axis of the world and the rise of ancient Greece was possible apparently with teachings from India. When the Arab Empire rose in the Middle East after 600 and in the North Africa after 700, it blocked access to the great powers of Genoa and Venice, which cut their status as European leaders due to the Indian spice trade, and after 1300 The Ottoman was a new stop.

Once this route was blocked, it forced Europeans to find alternative routes, the search for sea routes to India being the reason why Spain and Portugal, later followed by the Netherlands, France and Great Britain, left Europe, laying the foundations of European empires. It was the sea routes to India and the liberation of the land route between the Mediterranean and India through the English conquest of the Arabs and Persians that made possible the colonization of the whole of India, which became the English crown and the

main conquest for the whole of Europe. Even though it represents just over 3% of the world's surface area and 16% of the English Empire, the Indian Subcontinent had 78% of its population in 1900, with 300 million people out of 385 totaling the empire, making England the largest power from world that far exceeded the French Empire.

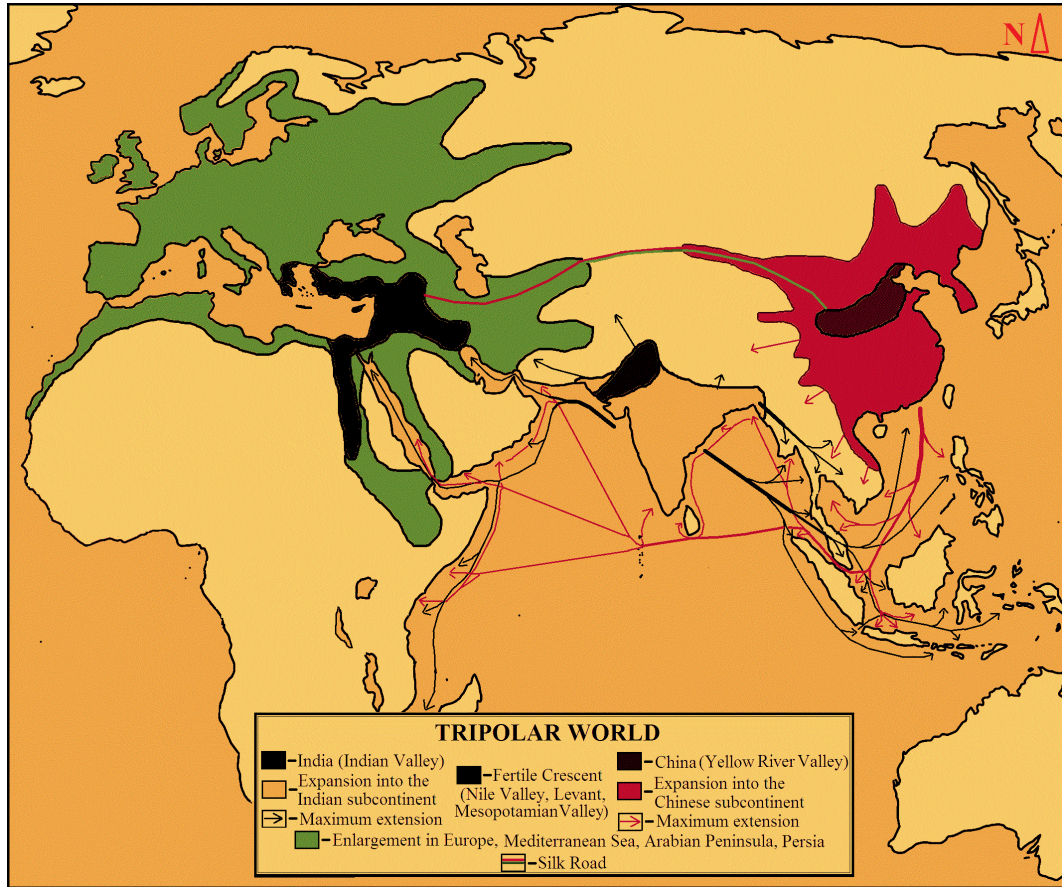


Figure 1. The tripolar division of the known world, between civilizations: Fertile Crescent, India and China, between 3000 BC and 500 AD

Sources: processed by: Attili, 2016; Mășu, 2014

Also, the existence of the Himalayan mountains that blocked land access to China, but also the development of the Russian Empire that stretched south to the Silk Road, made Europeans only semi-colonize China in the absence of direct access to it, even if weapons with the help of which they became masters were due to gunpowder, the orientation of navigation on the seas and oceans was done with the help of the compass, and maps and writing were printed on paper, all of which appeared in China and sent on the Silk Road to Europe, with several centuries ago (Hobson, 2004; Marshall, 2019; Kaplan, 2015).

And under these conditions, in 1700 all of India and China were the dominant world powers to the detriment of all Western European empires taken together. After the conquest of India by the British, it was not until 1800 and 1850 that Western Europe surpassed India and China economically, and the United

States surpassed the two around 1900, not only because of the economic rise of the last two, and because India and China were declining economic. Western Europe begins the conquest of India after 1498 and ends after 1700, but after a sudden economic growth they reach the beginning of the Second World War to finally hold 25% of the world's economic power (similar to India before 1700, and over 32% of China's world economic power in 1820 before its decline, Western Europe only managed to equalize in 1900, and the United States has never had so much power). We could consider that it was the decline of India and China that led to the economic rise of Europe and later of the USA, making room for the two new economic poles.

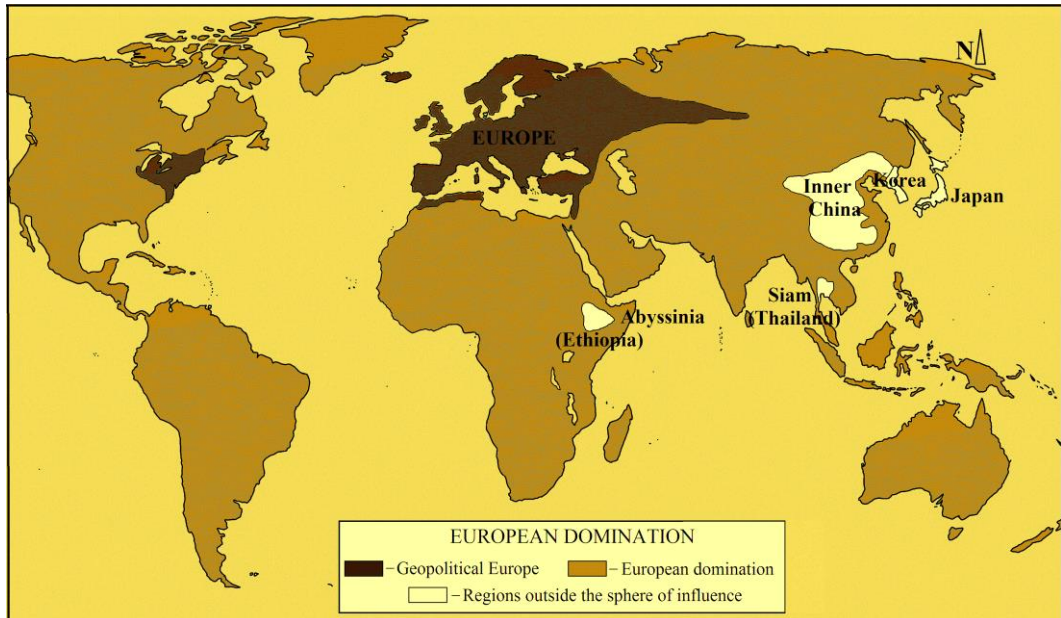


Figure 2. The unipolar world dominated by Europe, between 1800 and 1940

Sources: processed by: Baten, 2016; Roberts, 2013; Herman and Grama, 2018; Parthasarathi, 2011

GEOGRAPHY AFTER INDEPENDENCE

The Indian subcontinent gained independence from the British Empire in 1947, owning a productive agricultural area, with 2.1 million km² of arable land (double the European Union of only 1 million km²) and extensive access to the ocean being economically advantageous, but its total appearance in the southern half of the planet's land did not offer great economic chances, and only former European colonies with serious economic problems had access to the Indian Ocean (Ianoş and Iacob, 1989; Găstescu et al., 2004). Also, the presence of the Himalayan mountains in the north, the jungle in Myanmar and the desert occupied by Muslim populations in the west have forced it to be a maritime power par excellence. Its entire territory of 5 million km² has been divided, leaving India with only 3.2 million km² (1.7 million km² of arable land, being the first in the world), the rest being torn from its territory on the surface of which they have appeared: Nepal and Bhutan (Buddhist India), the islands of Sri Lanka and Maldives which represented a kind of: Malta, Gibraltar, Hong Kong or Singapore for the English (this being island India) and Pakistan (i.e. Islamist India), which

included East Pakistan (present-day Bangladesh) and West Pakistan (present-day Pakistan), which practically occupies the ancient Indian civilization of the Indus Valley, with Hindu India taking its history. This marginal territory, composed of 6 states surrounding Hindu India, comprises 38% of the entire territory of the Indian Subcontinent and 25% of its population, with over 440 million people (owned by: USA, UK and Canada combined), being the second largest economic, national, historical and geopolitical disaster in India (after the conquest of the territory by the British and its transformation into a colony, after 1700).

Instead, China, which has become communist, loses few territories that would rightfully belong to it, consisting of: Macao (Portuguese), Hong Kong (English) and Taiwan (pro-Japanese and American), instead taking over Manchuria (a semi-Chinese territory, similar to Pakistan for India), Inner Mongolia (remaining independent of just over half of Mongolia's legal territory, with its current capital at Ulan Bator), Tibet (previously administered by British-based Indians) and Uyghur or East Turkestan (part of the current Central Asian states and linguistically related to Turkey) (Popa, 2004; Goh, 2016; Navarro, 2011; Stuart-Fox, 2003; Roy, 2001). Thus, the Chinese territory of 3.2 million km² (similar to India) which comprises over 85% of the country's population, has another 6 million km², growing China today to continental dimensions where almost 60% of the area has a questionable Chinese origin. Arable land by 0.9 million km² (lower than in India and ranked 4th in the world after: India, USA and Russia and equal to the European Union) is restricted on the coast (plus 0.2 million km² finds the 60% of the rest of the territory) in the east, which along with natural impediments in the west such as the Himalayas and the Gobi Desert, frozen Siberia in the north and the southern jungle of the Indochina Peninsula, should make China a maritime power. But the expansion of enemy states along the coast near its coasts (Taiwan, Japan and Vietnam, eventually becoming US allies), limits China and forces it to be a continental power. This explains the current affinities between China and: Russia, Pakistan, Myanmar or Kazakhstan, being in a similar situation to: Germany, Russia, Italy or Turkey, being able to choose whether to become a land or sea power, both options being drastically limiting.

ABOLITION CIVILIZATIONS AND RETURN FROM THE LAST ONE CENTURY

India became a colony of European powers, ruling over some of its territories: Portugal, the Netherlands and France, eventually the British conquering the entire territory and erasing from the face of the earth a millennial state (similar to the disappearance of ancient Greece after Persian, Roman and eventually Ottoman invasions, or how millennial Egypt disappeared under the rule of the Arabs, Ottomans and English). Instead, China was a semi-colony and its entire exit to the world market was directed from the outside, somewhat resembling Persia, ruled in the north by the Russians and in the south by the British.

After the two great world conflagrations of the early twentieth century, when European empires soaked in power massacred each other, India finally gained independence, but civil wars and the division of the country did not give it any chance to develop, remaining an area of famine for many years (until independence, under the British mandate more than 60 million people died of starvation, following a rapid decline in this cause among the dead, after independence, another more than 4 million lost in the war Indian-Pakistani and Bangladesh independence) (Roberts, 2009; Huntington, 2018). China, which in turn became independent under the communist regime, experienced some of the

worst political decisions in history, through the Great Leap Forward measures, in which 40 million people died of starvation.

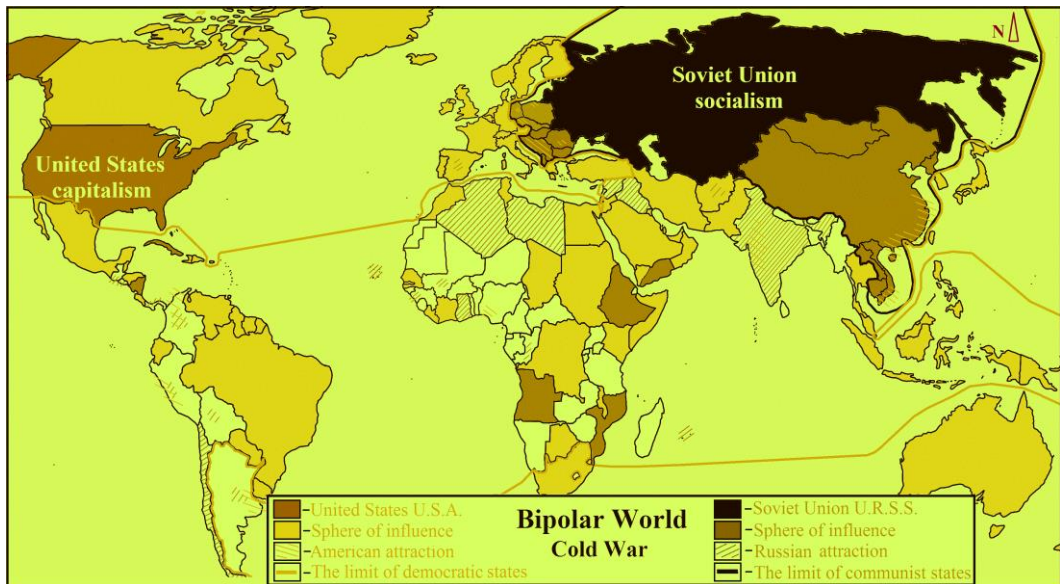


Figure 3. The Bipolar World and the Cold War. The spheres of attraction of the USA and the USSR, between 1945 and 1990

Sources: processed by: Ilieș, 2006; Gray, 1977; Săgeată, 2008; Grumaz, 2013; Toffler & Toffler, 1995

US investment in allies from the vicinity of China to curb the spread of communism, he set an example and financial strength by accumulating wealth and technology in countries such as Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Thailand and Singapore, being a lesson in economics easily accessible to the Chinese people, and the US-China economic rapprochement of 1970, in which the United States sought to break the communist bloc created by the USSR, actually led to the beginning of China's economic growth, being the third great step towards Asian world domination, all created by the West (after the Second World War, that ended the dominant power of Europe on Earth and after the US decision to invest and bring technology to Japan and Asian tigers). Also, the establishment of the O.P.E.C. with the support of the USSR that led to the provocation of the hydrocarbon crisis in the western world, and billions of petrodollars quickly invaded and developed the oil-exporting states of the Persian Gulf, brought a lesson of economy and financial power in the vicinity of India, which along with the former English colonies the same as and she: Singapore, Australia and South Africa (which are part of the Commonwealth, under British rule, then a still strong world organization), created the economic booms in the Indian Ocean.

The economic decline of the USSR, which began in 1980 and ended with its dismemberment and the created world, a decade later, gives China a chance to accelerate. It is beginning to replace the former global power pole previously held by Russia. Until then, China had an economic power equal to India of 180,000 US dollars nominal GDP, but with a population of 300 million people more numerous, which means that only 40 years ago, India and China were economically equal, and a India was living much better, from this moment starting a slight

competition that accelerates after the year 2000, and by 2020 China has been reached demographic meanwhile by India, manages to be 5 times stronger economically, everything being achieved only in the last 4 decades, and especially in the last two (Frank, 1998; Kennedy, 2017). China's unique opportunity has not been passed on to its southern neighbor, as India is surrounded by poor countries and far from the world's major economic centers.

After the unexpected gain received by China in the 1970s (economic rapprochement with the United States) and 1990 (the decline of the USSR and satellite states) due world changes, the year 1997 and the onset of the economic crisis kneeling Asian economic dragons and tigers, crisis what he directed in the face of small states from East and Southeast Asia to the demographic-civilizational colossus that had been waiting for its chance for over 3-4 centuries. With the decline of communism, the role of the states in the "sanitary cordon" created by the West around the USSR and China was useless, and the money withdrawn by investors, especially Americans, took the path of Eastern Europe and China, in to the detriment of already developed countries, where wages had risen too much and their products competed in the Western market for domestic finished products. As some of these states, with all their financial strength and access to technology, have turned their attention to China more quickly, they have overcome the crisis more easily (see South Korea, Taiwan, Singapore), while Japan with its historical pride remained attached to the West, without recovering economically for the next two and a half decades. Also, the territorial return of the rich colonies of Macao and Hong Kong to China led, in addition to the first major China-Asia-Pacific economic ties, to the creation of the debut of the most dynamic world center called East and Southeast Asia.

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: Ayres, 2017; Khanna, 2019; Reilly, 2011; Findlay and O'Rourke, 2009; Pomeranz, 2009

	1980 (Trillion US dollars)	1990	2000	2018	Estimate 2030	Estimate 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

India, less fortunate during this period, it was increasingly outdated economic of China, the nominal GDP ratio between the two ranging from US \$ 180 billion each in 1980 to \$ 400 billion in China and 300 billion in India in 1990, and China will overtake India in 2000 when it reaches 1,200 billions compared to US \$

500 billion as much as the Indian economy did, a decade in which the Chinese economy tripled (Allen, 2011; Lynch, 2009).

At the level of 2000, it debuted economically in the 21st century still in low places, China being on the 6th place after the USA, Japan, Germany, Great Britain and France and similar to Italy (which had less than 5% of its population), while India it ranks only 13th in the world and is surpassed by: Canada, Brazil, Mexico, Spain and South Korea, being almost equal to Australia which had less than 2% of its population. The small country of Japan had reached an economic output that exceeded 3 times the economic power of Chindiei (China and India), and all 11 cumulatively states that economically exceeded India (except China) had the same population as its own (www.mtholyoke.edu; King, 2016).

The economic decline that strikes in 1997: Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, Thailand, the Philippines, Indonesia or Vietnam, make China seem much stronger, while the events of September 11, 2001 in New York trigger the NATO war in the Persian Gulf and its proximity (Afghanistan, Iraq, economic problems in: Iran, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and Syria) that bring India to the forefront of the Indian Ocean states, being after gaining independence and the demographic decline of the Western world, the third biggest opportunity for the giant south. Russia's economic difficulties in the first decade after the break-up of the USSR, along with the economic downturn in East and South-East Asia and the wars in the OPEC states after 11 September 2001, which had become the most developed states in the areas in addition to those in the Persian Gulf, and Algeria and Libya in North Africa, Gabon and Nigeria in Central Africa or Venezuela on the South American continent, all this comes with the onset of the 1998-2002 economic crisis that affected South America (Argentina declining economically by almost 30%, followed by a long period of stagnation).

All this time, the annual economic growth of 4-8% in India and 9-14% in China, along with the decline of most emerging countries, have made the two demographic megalodons - the center of the global economic boom, creating the term "Chindia" coined by Indian MP Jairam Ramesh, which described the great magnet of planetary wealth (Ramesh and Talboot, 2006).

In the new decade of Asian prosperity, the two countries become the rulers of the continent on which is, by 2010 China's economy will reach 6 trillion US dollars nominal GDP (gaining momentum in Western markets even with the help of globalization supported by rich states) and exceeds Japan on the continent becomes the second world power after the US, while India with 1.7 trillion US dollars rises to 9th place in the world, becoming the third power on the continent. In 2009, India and China set up the first joint project called the BRICs, bringing together Russia, Brazil and South Africa (received in 2010) into the world's most dynamic economic alliance, being tacit an understanding of the new emerging world powers to gain status in front of his old rivals coagulated around the North Atlantic center (USA and European Union). The crisis that began in 2008 affected the near periphery of the Western world, bringing great economic losses especially to Europe (except Poland and Slovakia, all states declining economically) which has been struggling for decades with demographic decline and population aging, the European Union after this episode one step to split. The struggle to get Greece out of the crisis and the problems registered in the east (Romania, Hungary, Bulgaria) and south (Italy, Spain, Portugal) of the union, led to its economic outrunning for the first time by the USA, in the following years. In general, the states that did not register an economic decline were in Asia and its economic extension worldwide, throughout Africa and

South America (Brazil, Peru), decreasing in states involved in Western economic life at that time: Europe, USA, Russia, Japan, Argentina or the United Arab Emirates.

After the end of the economic crisis, also India and China with average economic growth that recorded annual values of over 7% between 2013 and 2019, leading the top of the great powers, while Mexico grew by only 2.4%, USA, UK, Canada or Spain by 2%, Germany by 1.7%, France and Japan by 1.2%, Russia by 0.4% and Brazil had economic decline. The financial crisis that has destabilized the West and boosted the Asian economy has given a new impetus to China, which is now five times stronger than India, reaching 14.1 trillion US dollars in nominal GDP, being closer to surpassing the USA (which has 21.4 trillion, but with a slow economic growth), and India has grown to 2.9 trillion, surpassing in the years 2018-2019 Great Britain or France holding 2.8 and 2.7 trillion respectively.

When it comes to the power of money held (GDP at Purchasing Power Parity), China with 27.3 trillion dollars already surpasses the US with 21.4 trillion, and India is the 3rd largest world power with 10.5 trillion, over Japan by 5.7 trillion or Germany by 4.4 trillion, but lower than the EU with a PPP GDP of US \$ 18.3 trillion. Basically, Chindia already has a real financial power (GDP PPP) of 39.7 trillion at the beginning of 2020, perfectly equal to the North Atlantic power, following that at the end of the economic crisis that appeared at the end of 2019 and accentuated by the new global epidemic (COVID -19) which will probably have a maximum time of 24 months, after which the two Asian powers will surpass the economy of the old world center of force by the real economic value.

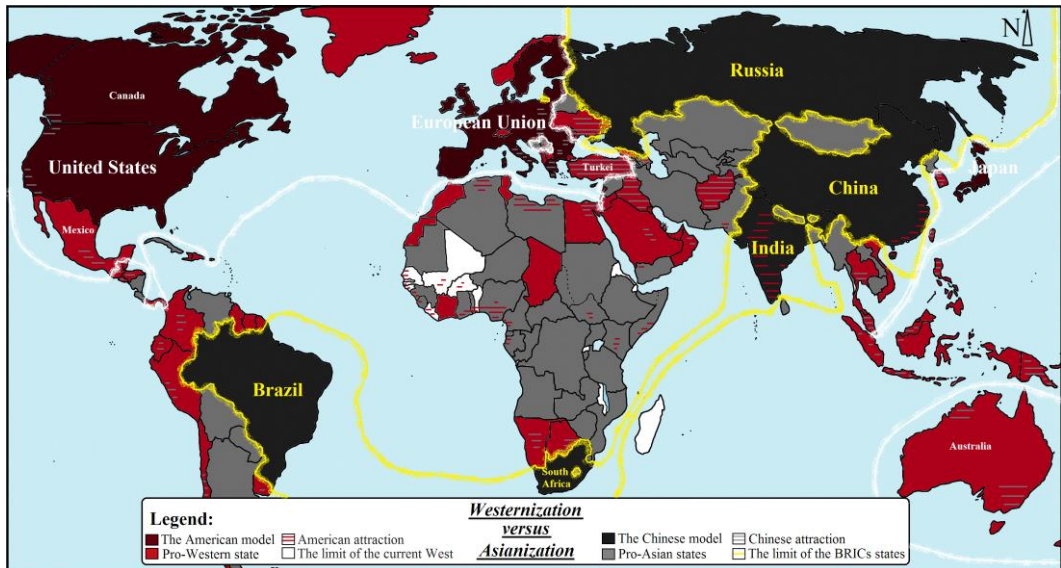


Figure 4. Westernization (US-led) versus Asianization (China-dominated) at the dawn of the 21st century, between 2005-2030

Sources: author's assessments and data processed after: Carmody, 2013; Maesto, 2019; Favari, 2014; Sawandji, 2018; Zakaria, 2009; Vlad et al., 2010; Suci et al., 2010; Carvalho and Dughin, 2016; Ionescu, 2005

PRESENT AND NEW BEGINNINGS. PREPARING FOR THE 21ST CENTURY

China's economic advance over India is colossal, even though both countries have the same population. But in recent years, India has also entered into increasingly fierce competition with other world economic powers. If we exclude

from the economic and geographical statistics: USA, China and the European Union, India dominates most of the basic rankings, far ahead: Japan, Russia, Brazil or Indonesia. If we exclude only China, India seems compared to the USA and the EU, which represented China compared to them in 2005. A light list of the most important world productions, highlights the Chinese colossus but also the momentum taken by India in several sectors. China will own as many km of highways (149,000 km in 2019, compared to 16,000 km in 2000) as the USA (96,000 km) and the European Union (84,000 km) together. Of the top 10 seaports in the world by tonnage of goods, China owns 7 of them while the European Union owns the port of Rotterdam, and for the next 10, 7 are also from China, appearing the first port for the US. Of the top 10 airports in the world after passenger traffic, China has two seats with airports: Beijing ranks second with 100 million passengers and Shanghai ranks 6th with 76 million, while the United States occupies four positions, Japan one position, the Sea Britain one position, France one position and the United Arab Emirates another place, with the next ten positions, the USA, China and the European Union occupying two places each, and India appears for the first time in this ranking with Delhi airport with 68 million passengers, ranking 17th. Worldwide electricity production in 2019 amounted to 27,600 TWh. Of these, China (10,800 TWh from just 1,300 TWh in 2000) produces as much as the US (5,900 TWh), India (2,500 TWh) and Russia (1,100 TWh) together and three times as much as the European Union (3,400 TWh) (Neguț et al., 2009, 75-92; Canrong, 2020). China produces 2.5 billion metric tons of cement per year out of a global total of 4.2 billion metric tons (600 million metric tons in 2000, out of a total of 1.6 billion metric tons worldwide), which means more than half of world production and eight times more than India's production (320 million metric tons) which ranks second or 28 times the US production (89 million metric tons) which ranks fourth in the world in cement production, which Vietnam ranks third with 95 million metric tons, while European Union production fell from 267 million metric tons in 2006 to 10% of world production, to less than 130 metric tons million tons (Anton and Peneș, 2008, 61).

Also, China's steel production of 996 million metric tons in 2019, exceeds half of world production, followed by far the powers: the European Union with 150 million tons, India with 111 million tons, Japan with 99 million tons, The United States with 88 million tons and Russia with 71 million tons, China consuming more cement and steel in any three years after 2010, compared to the consumption of the United States throughout the twentieth century. Car production of 92 million units for 2019 is also dominated by China, which produced 26 million, and India manufactured 4.5 million, while the European Union and the United States had production of 17, 8 and 11 million respectively, followed by: Japan with 9.7 million, South Korea and Mexico with 4.0 million each, Brazil with 3 million and Thailand, Canada and Russia with about 2 million each (Neguț et al., 2009, 103-112, 139-144; Ramge et al., 2018).

Oil consumption is still dominated by the US, which consumes 19.4 million barrels per day in 2019, and the European Union by 15 million barrels, followed by China with 14 and India with 5.2 million. In contrast, China and India dominate the coal consumption market with 4,320 and 967 mega tons, ie 62% of world production, followed by the USA and the European Union with 720 Mt. every. Owning the most extensive and productive agricultural land on Earth, China and India lead to the gross value of agricultural production at 2019 prices, with 1,200,000.0 and 365,000.0 million US dollars, respectively, followed by the

European Union with 350,000.0 and the USA with 230,000.0, being followed: Brazil with 167,000.0, Indonesia 135,000.0, Japan 91,000.0, Russia and Turkey with 70,000.0 million US dollars each, while for cereal production, China and India occupies the first and third place with 620 and 310 million tons respectively, the USA and the European Union being on the second and fourth places with 460 million and 300 million tons each, the world heavyweights being followed at a distance by: Russia with 130 million, Brazil 120 million, Indonesia 110 million and Argentina, Ukraine or Canada with 76, 60 and 56 million tonnes respectively (Neguț et al., 2009, p. 211-215; Roberts, 2008).

China's rapid economic evolution finds few comparisons in history, and can be likened to the evolution of Hitler's Germany before World War II, or the evolution of Japan's economy in the second half of the twentieth century. China has become a trade alternative for anti-Western states similar to the USSR in the past, with more and more countries holding more than 50% of the trade value with this superpower. In 2019, among the largest trading powers in terms of export value, China is at the top with 2.6 trillion US dollars, followed by the United States with 2.5 trillion, the European Union 2.3 trillion (7.6 trillion if we add exports between the states of the Union) and Japan by 0.9 trillion, the other powers being far behind: South Korea 0.6, Canada, India, Mexico or Russia by 0.5 trillion each) (Maçães, 2018; Burrows, 2016; Dobrescu, 2016).

From these statistics we understand the value of great power gained by China in the last two decades, but also the spectacular growth of India, which is lacking in most rankings ten or twenty years ago. The two banks created with the major influence of China (Asian Investment Infrastructure Bank AIIB established between 2013 and 2016 based in Beijing and the New Development Bank NDB formed by the BRICs between 2014-2015, based in Shanghai) (Goh, 2016; King, 2016) with an increasing influence on European states, but also the management of the current epidemiological crisis of coronavirus as a result of which China (along with Russia which is its right hand in Eastern Europe), massive investments in recent years and the implementation of the axis "Silks Road" make it an ally that promises to pull the Old Continent out of the lethargy that has held it in place for two decades. The glow for India, in coalition with Japan, Australia and the United States, is already beginning to be expected, with investment expected to make its way to its economy. Thus the economically weak states put their hope in investments coming from China, and those in control of the economic situation go alone to India, this opening resembling the year 1970, when China was taken from its ally USSR, so India is drawn from anti-Western coalition BRICs. In fact, these days the foundations are being laid for the future colossal Indian power and the global economic split into two major blocs, both led from Asia.

China assigns its "Inland Pacific Lake" in which the US-India coalition strategically hung by: Japan, Vietnam and maybe Russia in the future, will try hard to head to India, while India assigns its "Indian Inland Lake" in which China may, along with the European Union and clinging to: Pakistan, Bangladesh, Iran and Sri Lanka try to curb Indian influence in these waters (as Cuba or Nicaragua near the US go relational to China and Taiwan or Vietnam near China go to the US).

Continuing the current global economic trajectory, in which Asia will accumulate more and more wealth throughout the 21st century, the Chinese economy is expected to come in first place (GDP Nomina) equaling the powers of the US and the European Union together, around 2055, and India could ranks

second, slightly ahead of the EU and equal to the US, while the end of this century it is possible to classify this ancient Asian power in first place in the world, surpassing China with its population getting older.

THE ASIAN CENTURY. ASSIGNMENTS OF CHANCES

Each of the two ancient world civilizations, China and India, currently account for 18% of the world's population, followed by the United States with 4.2%, Indonesia with 3.5% and Pakistan, Brazil and Nigeria with 2.7% each. That is, the next 5 states fail to gather the same population as one of the two world demographic powers, compared to India, this trend is found and in the next 3 decades. There are a multitude of elements that give economic priority to one or the other power for the century that has just begun, except for the dramatic case when, under the burden of ethnic (especially India) or economic (China) differences within these countries, it will lead to dismemberment, in the territories smaller and less compatible globally, being among the few unforeseen situations that will make them not represent major world forces in the future.

Among the main economic and demographic advantages of China could be considered: the economic advance over India, which it has exceeded 5 times; a working-age population, in which the population explosion no longer exists, reducing the risk of further overpopulation; this country with a large number of companies in the world, specializing in workers, hardworking and very determined; the majority of the population in the eastern area being from the inn and Taoist religion population with slight tendencies towards Christianity. But the disadvantages are also commensurate; the Chinese economy being a planned and majority one with the involvement of the state, having a certain rejection on the western market that treats it suspiciously; the cessation of population growth sets a bleak future in which the population will age and shrink rapidly (China will have 400-600 million fewer people by 2100, when it will be overtaken by Nigeria); population of the provinces surrounding central China: Heilongjiang, Jilin and Liaoning (populated by Manchurians), Inner Mongolia (populated by Mongols), Xinjiang (populated by Uighur Turks), Tibet and Qinghai (populated by Tibetans) or Yunnan and southern Guizhou (populated by with various ethnic minorities) tend to depend on seeking external allies; the difference in development between the economically advanced coast and the interior of the country make this colossus a centrifugal internal power.

Among the economic and demographic advantages of India are: healthy growing Indian power with individual capitalist accent; being a fairly prosperous power and an oasis of democracy and stability compared to the states that have access to the Indian Ocean; the largest democracy in the world with increasingly visible affinities of Western economies towards it, identifying to some extent with it; with a young and growing population; increasingly specialized workforce with Western aid; knowledge of English and Hindi which is the most widespread but also languages such as: Urdu, Punjab or Bengali which are also spoken in neighboring Pakistan and Bangladesh, while Tamil is also spoken in Sri Lanka, in this sense having a certain brotherhood linguistics fraternity with the surrounding states, while the Hindu religion is considered calming by promoting nonviolence. Disadvantages include: lack of rules in the economy and the permanent risk of bankruptcy for companies; areas of poverty with densities of over 1000 km² accumulated in the underdeveloped interior of the Ganges Plain; continuous population growth; the multitude of ethnic groups easily manipulated from the

outside to move towards territorial independence and the ravages of the Indo-Islamist war present in most parts of the country.

Among the geographical advantages, both states have sufficient water resources with areas of excess but also deficit, easily adjustable by anthropogenic interventions, but China has a temperate climate (which has proven in past centuries to be a priority for development, in this climate there are: USA and Canada, Europe and Russia or Japan, and in the south: Argentina, South Australia or South Africa) but affected by hurricanes in the east (similar to Florida, Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana or Texas in the USA) and in the north reaches the Siberian frost, while India has a tropical climate (being the new similar world development site: Thailand, Singapore, Malaysia, Hong Kong area, Florida area, Texas or California in the USA, Brazil, Panama, Israel, Kuwait, United Arab Emirates or Canary Islands Spanish) being attached in value to the population between the parallels of 300 latitude. It turned out that the products, technology, way of life and manifestation of people copied themselves horizontally (along the parallels), with a trend that occupied the temperate zone, representing the old developed world of which China is part and a trend at the equator, which is beginning to grow economically and demographically, of which India is a part.

The relief limits anthropogenic China to the eastern half, paved with jungles, mountains, desert and frozen land (somewhat similar to US or Russian land), while India has 50% more arable land, occupying almost the entire country (similar to the territory of the European Union, where most of it is humanized). Regarding the natural maritime capacity, although China has the advantage of going out to waters with high commercial activity, close to: Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, Singapore, Thailand, Russia and so on, being on the developed route to the USA, precisely this proximity to the great naval powers and the islands surrounding the coast are held captive by external forces, preventing it from becoming a full maritime power (the situation persists following a possible absorption into Taiwan's own territory). Instead, India is like a triangle (or even a rhombus) in which two parts are bathed by the waters of the Indian Ocean and one north crossed by the navigable river Ganges with access to its own territory to the ocean (through the Hooghly arm that detaches from the Ganges and passes through the city of Calcutta before reaching the ocean, thus bypassing the state of Bangladesh).

Perhaps India's greatest maritime advantage and one of the major changes in recent decades is that the population around the Indian Ocean, which was less numerous than the population around the Pacific and Atlantic Oceans in 1950 (760, 908 and respectively 805 million people), has grown to 3,160 million today (surpassing the estimated population around the Pacific at 2,280 million and the Atlantic by 1,920 million), continuing this trend when the population around the Indian Ocean will hold over 40% of the world's population in 2050 with 4,400 million inhabitants (2,350 million around the Pacific and 2,600 around the Atlantic) and 50% of the world's population by 2100, with an estimate of between 5,200 and 5,900 million (between 2,100 and 2,500 million around the Pacific and between 3,100 and 3,500 millions around the Atlantic) (Worldometers, 2020; Diaconescu, 2018). Thus, around these waters is expected the largest world trade and the most dynamic area, practically being considered that who will dominate the waters of the Indian Ocean will dominate the Island of the World (Asia, Africa and Europe) and hence the entire planet, being an increasing trade between China, Japan and South-East Asia on the one hand and Europe, the Middle East and

Africa on the other, this trade passing through the proximity or territory of India (O'Brien, 2010; Diaconescu, 2020).

Seen from the outside, China is seen as a power based on foreign investment and an alternative to the Western market, being a formidable ally against American interests. But through economic expansion and the territorial threat to neighboring states, it has upset the great powers, including: Japan with its islands of Nansei (Ryukyu), the United States with Asia-Pacific alliances, Russia with Siberia (This being populated by tribes related to the population China, while two eastern thirds, increasingly economically attracted to China, have a smaller population than any of the top 20 Chinese urban areas, on an area as large as the US), Vietnam, the Philippines, Malaysia and Indonesia with the islands of Paracel and Spratly from the East China Sea, with an oil-rich subsoil, waters essential to fishing and focused on trade routes vital to the area, which are invaded by China and claimed by other states. Precisely because of this attitude, which has been detected since the European invasion, China has been called the "Roman Empire of Asia", while India, philosophically, with its white, Hindu population, a forbiddance against planetary Islamization, with English and democracy is considered "Asia's Greece", broadly perceived as the future part of the Western world.

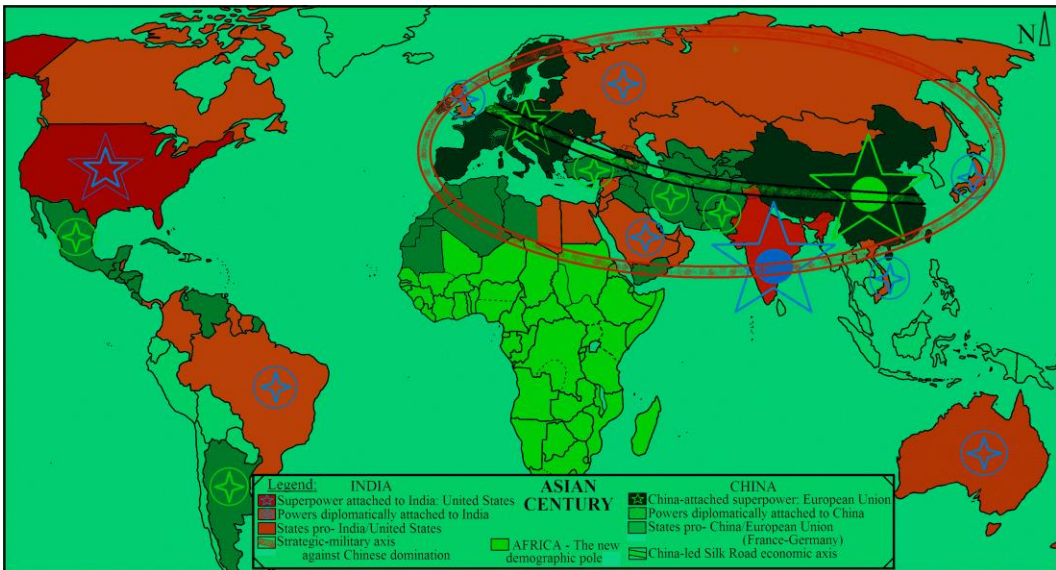


Figure 5. The Asian century between 2040 and 2100. Hegemonic division between India and China, towards the end of the 21st century

Sources: author's predictions and inspiration after the works: Frankopan, 2018; Basten et al., 2013; Lutz, 2008; Lutz & Samir, 2010; Meinig, 1956; Guillermo, 2015; Hugon, 2015

For the next decades, the European Union is expecting foreign investment that will most likely come from China, while the US and the UK export investments expected by India. Japan, Russia and Vietnam are economically attached to China, but in territorial conflict with it, bringing their investments more and more to India. Australia and Brazil export raw materials to China, but after Chinese economic takeover, try to become more independent by moving to India.

Mexico is looking for allies in China, Spain and so on, to protect its Spanish-speaking emigrants from the US, where southern states such as: California, Arizona, New Mexico, Texas or Florida that once belonged to Spain or Mexico, will be repopulated mostly with Hispanics (Friedman, 2009). Saudi Arabia, populated by Indians and developed with American technology, remains an ally of the United States and India, but Iran in conflict with it allies with China or Germany in the European Union. Pakistan, in its endless wars with India, expects military aid and Chinese investment, and Turkey is blocked to head south where it meets the US allies and Israeli allies and in the north Russian influence, will move to the Iran-Pakistan-China axis to the east, and in the west it is trying to attach itself to Germany where 5 million Turks live (even if it will maintain its conflicts with Greece and Bulgaria), supporting the Silk Road that will connect China and the European Union on a land route. Egypt will enter into a diplomatic conflict with Turkey for dominating the Arab world but also representing the interests of Arab Islamists in Europe, Turkey remaining the advocate of the non-Arab Islamist population (Turks, Bosnians, Kosovis, Albanians and so on).

Argentina, after the financial conflict with the USA that caused its crisis in 2002 and the territorial conflict with Great Britain for the Falkland Islands (Malvinas), is heading to China and France, Italy or Spain (European Union), but remains friends with Brazil. It is not clear which path Korea will take, which will probably unify, nor will Southeast Asia. Africa, economically and diplomatically allied with Europe in the past, with the US in recent decades and increasingly with China today, will try an attitude of neutrality or even self-assertion (it seems that the burden of Chinese debt is increasingly difficult to pay, unfinished projects or upset for Chinese projects developed in their enemy states, all this will lead Sub-Saharan Africa slightly to India after 2035).

Both India and China need raw materials, fighting on the same sparsely populated and resource-rich territories such as Russia, Australia, African states, Arab states, Latin America and so on, so it is not clear how they will share the riches of the planet. But we know for sure that they will become colossal raw material importing powers, with their economic development, and the old powers such as the: USA, the European Union, Japan, Russia, Great Britain and so on, will fight various new actors. India and China: to reduce their global economy and influence, to develop on an equal footing with each other while maintaining the balance of power, to pit them against each other by destroying each, to take advantage of the investments they export, the growing workforce specialized, of the import market of finished products or raw materials or of investments in the markets of these new world actors. The extent of these actions of the old powers over the new ones is very difficult to decide.

The Himalayas (Tibet), the Indochina Peninsula and the Malaysian archipelago will be the geopolitical confluence dotted with sudden conflicts and buffer states, while Sub-Saharan Africa with its huge population until then (between 2070 and 2100 is expected to have a projected population between 2.5 and 4 billion people, so how many: India, China, the European Union and the USA together), being the new realm of foreign investment (as was China between 1970 and 2030 or India between 2000 and 2060). India with the help of the: USA, Japan, Vietnam, Russia, Great Britain and the Arab states developed from the Persian Gulf gathered in the Gulf Cooperation Council, will rely on the maritime encirclement on the outside of Rimland, while China with the help of the Silk Road that will cross : Pakistan, Iran, Turkey and the European Union, will unite

the three oceans: Pacific, Indian and Atlantic, crossing the interior of the Heartland. Although Russia remains an economic ally with Germany and China, the infiltration of the Chinese population into sparsely populated Siberia and Beijing's support for the Russian-conquered Tibetan-Mongol-Chinese peoples in the past centuries will make Russia a tacit ally of India and perhaps Japan and the enlargement of the European Union to Eastern Europe, an expansion orchestrated by Berlin, will lead to a strategic rapprochement between Russia and Great Britain or the USA, avoiding the emergence of a great power in Central and Eastern Europe, which would be hostile to them.

CONCLUSIONS

Chindia has owned for over 10 centuries, over 33% of the world's population, and along with: Japan, Korea, Vietnam, Indonesia, Philippines, Pakistan, Bangladesh and in general Southeast Asia expanded, is the world's demographic center with 52% of the Earth's population on only 12% of its land area (Only Southeast Asia has a population almost as much as Europe, and Japan with Pakistan and Bangladesh have as much as the entire population of North America). And their historical value is just as overwhelming, here being the great Indian and Chinese civilizations that formed the basis of the civilized world. Like so many cases throughout history, the fact that they deserved a privileged position at the table of the great world economic powers did not mean that they received this place, without work, strategy, national will and a drop of chance, the two world demographic megalodons they became colonies, faced long wars and famine in the most severe ways, dying at least 60-80 million malnourished people in the twentieth century alone. But their total independence after 1950 and the wars between Europeans that left gaps in world influence gave the two a chance to assert themselves. The tiring cold war between the USSR and the communist bloc states on the one hand and the US with its allies on the other, but also the subsequent accusations of the European Union and Japan on the US of world economic domination, or China's accusation of total hegemony of the communist world to the USSR, they created gaps, leaving the chance of the most bizarre rapprochements, when the USSR came closer economically to India and the USA to China, even if they were part of different ideological worlds.

The economic crises that have affected the major regions of the world, have given even more chances to assert themselves to the two Asian actors, and the demographic decline more pronounced in: USA, Japan, Russia, Brazil or the European Union (between 2000 and 2020 the population increased by 1.8 billion people, while in Europe the population stagnated at 0.7 billion), affecting all developed or second world countries, this decline leading to investments towards the over 1.30 billion workforce as far as Chindia is concerned, out of 3.40 billion workers worldwide (the European Union has only 0.24 billion, the US 0.16 billion, Russia or Japan being far behind by 0.07 and 0.06 billion respectively). Russia-US, Japan-US or EU-US economic conflicts have become irrelevant, with China winning all, and the current US-China conflict over the next two decades will bring India to victory.

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CHANGES IN THE POPULATION STRUCTURE OF SLATINA CITY BETWEEN YEARS 1990-2000

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Abstract: The article is a contribution to the geographical study of the Slatina city in order to elucidate the impact of the economic and social transformations of 1990 – 2002 interval had on the evolution of its demographic phenomena, but also on understanding its socio-economic profile. The research methodology consisted of a comparative analysis of the numerical values provided by the Olt Regional Directorate of Statistics. The measured parameters were: the numerical evolution and its causes, the structure by sexes and age groups, the structure of the active population, the ethnic structure, and according to the practiced religion. The results of the analysis show an evolution developed on the background of the existing one at national level, having as causes: a tendency of numerical decrease determined by the decrease in the birth rate, the opening of European borders, simultaneously with a decline of the national economy, rising unemployment and travel abroad for searching of a job. The article highlights two important conclusions: the economic transformations show the existing reality in the social and economic field, their impact on the socio-economic profile of the Slatina city; the same transformations have taken place at the national level, on the background of the same causes.

Key words: geographical, analysis, information, study, results, evolution, profile

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INTRODUCTION

During my activity as a geography teacher, I also carried out: an economic-geographical study, in the work "The tourist potential of the relief and its capitalization in the Șureanu Mountains", a physical-geographical study -

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"Geographical study of the Motru river basin", and also a collection of "Recreational geography" exercises for middle school students.

The specialized literature gives priority to the analysis of the dynamic elements of the geographical phenomena, of great importance in research, including in the social and economic fields (Stupariu et al., 2016; Lung and Gligor, 2018; Filimon et al., 2019; Herman et al., 2020; Ilieș et al., 2020; Wendt, 2021).

In *The Changing Distribution of World Population*, Joseph Chamie (New York), a former director of the United Nations Population Division, on December 2019, shows that the momentous global changes in humanity's geographic distribution pose serious social, economic, political and environmental challenges and disquieting implications for the future.

In *Principes de géographie humaine*, Chapitre VI- Caractère géographique du progrès, page 211, Paul Vidal de la Blache said, referring to the geographical character of population progress, there is in these facts a distribution to which the purely geographical causes cannot be foreign.

My article aims at an analysis of the data that explains the logical relationships between statistical information and the population dynamics of Slatina. In his book, *Éléments de géographie humaine*, Claval P. saw the city as "an organization of space that aims to promote the development of social relations and maximize them." Therefore, the investigated problem is important for knowing the social reality, the changes in the population structure of the city of Slatina between the targeted years, outlining and understanding its socio-economic profile.

The research methodology consists of a comparative analysis of the data provided by the Olt Regional Directorate of Statistics, regarding: the population of the city at the censuses from 1992 and 2002, by age groups and sexes; the number of employees each year, from 1991-2000; the number of inhabitants according to the criterion of the mother tongue and an ethnic structure of the population; number of inhabitants according to the religion practiced; illustrative table of the evolution of birth and mortality; external migration of inhabitants.

The methodology is based on the comparative analysis of numerical values, which elucidates the changes in the population structure of Slatina between 1992 and 2002. The structure of the paper includes the key paragraphs of the study, respectively: the numerical evolution of the population, the structure by sex and age groups, the structure of the active population, the ethnic structure, and according to the criterion of the religion practiced.

Each subchapter offers, as results: the tendencies of numerical increase or decrease, the determining factors, the framing in the existing situation at the national level; a population structure by age groups and sexes illustrated by the comparative analysis of the age pyramids for 1992 and 2002; the ethnic structure of the population and the value of the share held by each ethnic group; a downward trajectory of the structure of the active population and an analysis of the determining factors; a picture of the population structure according to the criterion of the religion practiced.

DATA ANALYSIS AND RESEARCH RESULTS

Population problems are, in essence, problems of social and economic development, influenced by socio-economic factors. "Contemporary development reveals that between the evolution of the population in all its demographic

aspects, and economic development, there is an indissoluble link, externalized by permanent mutual conditioning" (Velcea and Cucu, 1983, p. 159).

In other words, economic processes, mainly the increase of the production of material goods, therefore, of the standard of living, as well as the increase of the degree of culture of the population are phenomena characteristic of its development. At the same time, the integration of the local and regional labor force and the aspects of territorial mobility are phenomena with an impact on the development of the population, of its demographic evolution; the demographic behavior of families is directly proportional to the aspects of economic and socio-cultural life. The demographic indicators, respectively, the birth rate and the mortality, register an evolution in correlation with these aspects.

Without proposing a very detailed approach to the relationship between population evolution and economic and social development, the study will analyze the data provided by the Regional Directorate of Statistics Olt, trying to outline existing determinants at the local and regional levels.

ANALYSIS OF CHANGES IN THE POPULATION STRUCTURE OF SLATINA BETWEEN 1990-2002

The structure of the population, defined as its mode of the organization from an economic, social, and cultural point of view, is analyzed as a structure by sex and age groups, by religions practiced, by ethnicities and mother tongue, by economic activities.

NUMERICAL EVOLUTION OF THE POPULATION

The numerical increase of the population is appreciated primarily according to the basic index deduced from the ratios between births and mortality (Cucu, 1981, p. 73). As can be seen from the analysis of the table below, in the interval studied, more precisely starting with the 1992 census, when the population of Slatina registered 85,168 inhabitants, it had a tendency of numerical decrease, registering after 10 years, at the census of the year 2002, 78,815 inhabitants, ie a decrease of 6,353 persons in the interval between the two censuses.

The analysis of the numerical value shows that until 2011, when the population registered 70,293 inhabitants, the numerical decrease continued, being with 8,522 inhabitants less than in 2002 and with 14,875 compared to 1992.

Table 1. Evolution of the city's population between 1992-2002-2011
Data provided by the Olt Regional Directorate of Statistics

Town	Years		
Slatina	1.992	2.002	2.011
Total number of inhabitants	85.168	78.815	70.293

In 1992, the population of Slatina experienced a substantial increase compared to previous years, explained by the economic factor, respectively, the large number of industrial enterprises that appeared during the communist period, which attracted an active population from rural areas: Aluminum Factory (current ALRO), Aluminum Processing Company (former ALROM), Pipe Factory (now ARTROM), Electrocarbon, Bearings Factory and Food Equipment Factory (UTALIM).

The same evolution is observed at the national level. If in 1990 the population of Romania was over 23 million inhabitants, at the 1992 census there was already a decrease to 22.8, and in 2000, of about 21 million. The numerical decline continued, due to the opening of the borders of European countries simultaneously with a period of decline in the national economy and rising unemployment, which allowed and provoked free movement abroad in search of a job; the decrease of the quality of life and the birth rate were also important factors of the numerical decrease of the population of Slatina, an existing phenomenon, moreover, at the national level.

At the 1992 census, the population of Slatina was 85,168 inhabitants, of which 42,202 were male and 42,966 were female. The figures indicate the existence of a young population, between 5 and 24 years old, with a numerical value of 33,897 inhabitants, which represents over 39% of the total. The value is more obvious if we make a comparison with the population included in the age category of 60-69 years, of only 4,172 inhabitants and which represents a percentage of only 4.89% of the total number. At the same census, the number of children between 0 and 4 years was 6,773, representing a percentage of 7.95%.

An analysis compared to the data provided by the next census, from 2002, when the city of Slatina registered 78,815 inhabitants, a population of 3,280 children between 0 and 4 years and 3,090 inhabitants between 60 and 69 years, shows a numerical decrease of the population with 6,353 inhabitants; a decrease in the number of children between 0 and 4 years, by 50%; a decrease in the number of the population included in the age category of 60-69 years which represents 3.92% of the total.

The numerical decrease of the population and the number of children between 0 and 4 years, by 50% were due to the decrease of the birth rate between 1990-2002, as follows: in 1990, the birth rate registered a value of 1,261, higher than in the following years; 1064 in 1991; 862 in 1994; 910 in 1998; 811 in 2000, 718 in 2001; 725 in 2002.

In the same period, mortality remains between 378 and 500 deaths per year, which reflects a positive natural increase, which could translate into a numerical increase in population. Unfortunately, this situation of the natural movement of the population (birth rate, mortality, and natural increase) overlaps, over time, with the closure or reduction of the operating capacity of some valuable industrial enterprises, which included a large number of the active population of the city of Slatina, following the decision of the post-December governments; the reduction in the number of jobs has led to a decrease in living standards, an external migratory movement in search of a job, a temporary or permanent departure from the city of a number of people, a visible reduction in the birth rate and, consequently, a decrease in the total population. The same situation was registered at the national level, after 1990, when the population started to decrease gradually.

On the list of the 1,256 national enterprises disbanded or which have reduced their working capacity, there are also enterprises from the city of Slatina that included most of its active population: Industrial Factory for non-ferrous and rare materials - its own activity; Aluminum Processing Company - Alprom; Coal Products Company - Electrocarbon; Food Equipment Company; "Textila" enterprise; Vine and Wine Enterprise; Meat Industrialization Enterprise; Milling, Bakery and Flour Products Enterprise.

External migratory movement

The reduction in the number of jobs, as a result of the abolition of industrial enterprises, has led to a decrease in living standards, an increase in unemployment, and, implicitly, an external migratory movement in search of a job. Slatina experienced a temporary and permanent migration of some families, in order to find a job in another European country. The data provided by the Olt Regional Directorate of Statistics illustrate the number of families in the category of permanent emigrants in the studied interval, more precisely between 1994 -2002.

Table 2. External migration

Town	Years								
Slatina	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002
	17	33	19	65	58	41	68	33	8

If we add to these values a significant number of people who have gone abroad illegally, without an employment contract, for *undeclared work*, the number of unemployed families who have moved to rural areas, and a significant reduction in the birth rate, then we have a clear image of the factors that caused the numerical decrease of the population of Slatina in this interval.

POPULATION STRUCTURE BY SEX AND AGE GROUPS

The structure of the population by age groups illustrates the numerical value of the population groups and, within them, the male and female populations. The structure of the population by sex and age groups is conditioned by the natural dynamics of the population (birth rate, mortality, natural increase) and by the migratory one. It helps to know the potential of labor resources and future economic and social development.

Table 4. Population structure by age groups and sexes

Total population, by groups and sexes					Age Groups (Years)				
T	M	F	Between 0 - 4: T/M/F	Between 5-14: T/M/F	Between 15-24: T/M/F	Between 25-39: T/M/F	Between 40-59 T/M/F	Between 60-69: T/M/F	Over 70: T/M/F
85.168	42.202	42.966	6.774 3.486 3.288	18.817 9.592 9.225	15.070 6.904 8.166	24.678 11.916 12.762	15.655 8.483 7.172	2.616 1.234 1.382	1.558 587 971

Table 5. Population structure by age groups and sexes

Total population, by groups and sexes			Age Groups (Years)		
T	M	F	Between 0 – 19	Between 20 -59	Over 60
85.168	42.202	42.966	T: 33.931 M:16.977 F: 16.954	T: 47.423 M:23.404 F: 24.019	T: 4.174 M:1.821 F: 2.353

Statistics usually use 5-year intervals, but also intervals of 0-14 years, 15-59 years, and 60 years and over, to analyze and know the potential of labor resources and the situation of the employed population. For the analysis of the young population, the intervals of 0-19 years, of the adult of 20-59 years, of the elderly of 60 years and over are usually used. The tables below, drawn up according to the data provided by the Olt Regional Directorate of Statistics,

illustrates the structure of the population of Slatina municipality registered through the censuses from 1992 and 2002, by age groups and sexes.

The situation illustrated by the 1992 census.

Table 6. Situation illustrated by the 2002 census

Total population			Age Groups (Years)						
T	M	F	0 - 4 T/M/F	5-14: T/M/F	15-24 ani: T/M/F	25-39 ani: T/M/F	40-59 ani: T/M/F	60-69 T/M/F	Over 70: T/M/F
78. 815	38.442	40.373	3280 1683 1597	11.1 97 5.694 5.503	15 273 7.645 7.628	20.837 9.494 11.343	23.135 11.698 11.437	3.090 1.419 1.671	2.046 809 1.237

Table 7. Situation illustrated by the 2002 census

Total population by sex			Age Groups		
T	M	F	between 0 – 19	between 20 -59	Over 60
78. 815	38.442	40.373	T: 23.212 M:11.792 F: 11.420	T: 61.887 M:24.422 F: 37.465	T: 5.154 M: 2.246 F: 2.908

Analysis of the situation at the 1992 census

The processing and analysis of the data from tables 4, 5 highlight the following aspects:

- the number of inhabitants between 0 and 24 years was 40,661, representing 47.74% of the total population.
- between 25 and 59 years old, the city of Slatina registered 40,333 people, which represents a percentage of 47.35%. These two values indicate the existence of more than 90% of a young and adult population.
- the elderly population represents only about 4,174 inhabitants, respectively, 4.90% of the total population.

Table 4, based on age intervals that allow the analysis of the young, adult, and elderly population, highlights:

- a young population (between 0 and 19 years old) of 33,931 inhabitants, representing 39.84% of the total;
- the dominance of the adult population (between 20 and 59 years old), numbering 47,423, ie 55.68% of the total;
- an elderly population (over 60 years old) of 4,174, holding 4.90%.

Situation recorded during the 2002 census

Taking into account the same age groups, it can be observed:

- the existence of 29,750 inhabitants between 0 and 24 years old, ie 37.74%;
- 43,972 inhabitants between 25 and 59 years old, ie 55.79%;
- 5,154 persons belonging to the interval of over 60 years, in the proportion of 6.53%.

Table 7, made on the basis of age ranges that allow the analysis of the young, adult, and elderly population, shows:

- a young population (between 0 and 19 years old) of 23,212 people, representing 29.45% of the total number;
- a dominance of the adult population (between 20 and 59 years old) of 61,887, representing 78.52% of the total;

- an elderly population (over 60 years old) of only 5,154 inhabitants, respectively 6.53%.

A comparative analysis between the existing data from the two censuses, from 1992 and 2002, processed in the above tables, can draw conclusions on the changes suffered by the structure of the population by age groups, which will better illustrate the notions of young, adult and elderly population, but also aspects regarding its evolution (rejuvenation, maturation, aging), as follows:

- decrease in the number and share of the population between 0 and 4 years, from 6,774 people and a percentage of 7.95% in 1992 to 3280 people and a percentage of 4.16% in 2002; the change of these values occurs in the conditions of the decrease of the birth rate, from 1261 to 725 live births;

- a decrease in the number of young people (0 -19 years), from 39.84% in 1992 to 29.45% in 2002, amid a significant decrease in the total number of the population with 6,353 inhabitants and the birth rate, of in 1261 to 725 live births;

- an increase and a numerical dominance of the adult population, at both censuses, of 55.68% of the total in 1992, to 78.52% in 2002; the high percentage existing in 2002 occurs against the background of a decrease of the total population by 6,353, but supported by the existence of a higher number of young population (0 -19 years) at the beginning of the interval (1992), of 33,931 compared to 23,212 in 2002;

- the increase of the percentage of the elderly population (over 60 years old) from 4.90% of the total to 6.53%, simultaneously with the decrease of the birth rate;

- comparing with the existing situation at the national level, it can be seen that the city of Slatina experienced the same general situation: a decreasing trend of the share of the young population at the same time with an upward trend of the share of the elderly population and an increase of adult population. translated into a gradual phenomenon of demographic aging.

Calculation of the demographic type of the city of Slatina

The ratio between the population over 60 years old and the one up to 20 years old, gives us the image of the demographic type, as follows: a ratio with values below 0.50, shows *a young demographic type*; a ratio between 0.51 and 0.70, illustrates *a moderate demographic type*; a ratio between 0.71 and 0.90 highlights *a matured demographic type*; a ratio exceeding 0.90 shows *an aging demographic* (Iordache, 2009, p. 98).

Thus, at the level of 1992, the ratio between the population over 60 years old (4,174 inhabitants) and the one under 20 years old (33,931) was 0.12, specific to a *young demographic type*.

In 2002, the ratio between the number of the population over 60 years old (5,154 inhabitants) and the one under 20 years old (23,212) was 0.22, also specific to a *young demographic type*.

Population structure by sex

This structural category refers to the distribution of the population by the two sexes, male and female. It is assessed by the share of the total population and by the ratio between the two values of the male and female population. It is closely related to natural dynamics (the number of born male or female) and population migration.

At the national level, the population has experienced a slight increase in numbers among women since 1930, explained by a higher value of male

mortality and a higher share at birth. There are, however, differences by age groups.

Regarding the city of Slatina, the phenomenon can be easily illustrated by the *Age Pyramids* corresponding to the years of analysis 1992 and 2002, (figures 1 and 2).

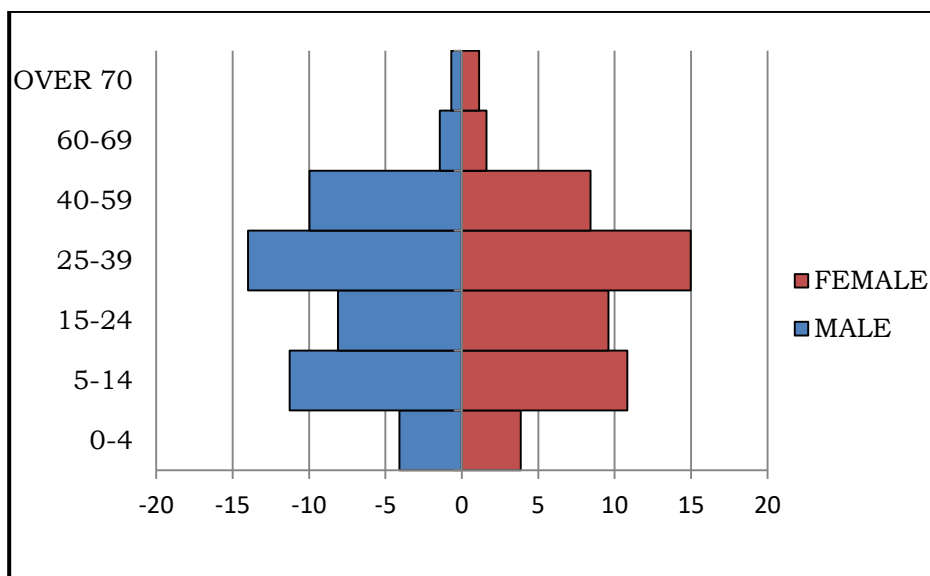


Figure 1. Age Pyramid, 1992

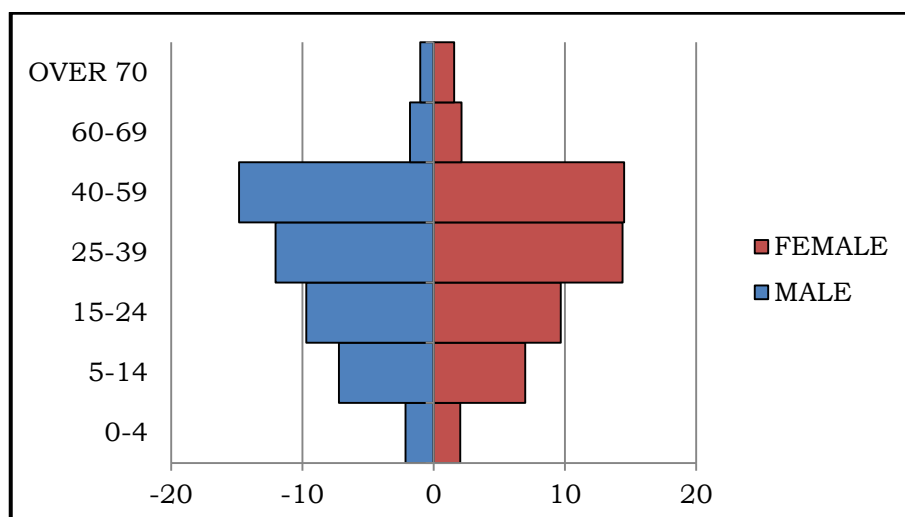


Figure 2. Age Pyramid, 2002

In the analysis of the population by sex, there are differentiations at the level of age groups, as follows:

- regarding 1992, the Age Pyramid (figure 1) and tables 4, 5, in the age category 15-24, ie among the young population, there is a domination of the

female population, with 1262 people compared to the male population. The same dominance is observed in the age category of 25-39 years, with 846 people. These differences say that the city of Slatina had the capacity to provide female labor, especially for the light and food industry. In the other age categories, the ratio between the female and the male population seems balanced, even a decrease in the number of the female population.

- regarding the year 2002, the data included in the Age Pyramid (figure 2) and tables 6, 7 indicate the dominance of the female population in the age category 25 -39 years, where there was a difference of 1849 people. Also, among people over 60, it is observed that the number of the female population exceeds that of the male population, but this category, mostly belonging to the inactive population, does not introduce important economic aspects for the economy of Slatina.

THE STRUCTURE OF THE ACTIVE POPULATION

According to this socio-economic indicator, which expresses the distribution of the population by economic activities, two branches are known: active population and inactive population. The active population knows the employed active population and the active unemployed population; the latter may be job-seeking population. The inactive population is the one that does not carry out an economic-social activity, examples: pupils, students, pensioners, persons in state maintenance.

Regarding the years 1991-2000, the active population of the city of Slatina followed a downward path from 52,502 to 31,701 people, even to 30,945 in 2002 (table 8).

Table 8. Average number of employees

Town	YEARS											
Slatina	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002
-	52502	46563	45541	43637	44655	42025	40549	36192	32001	31701	34556	30945

While in 1992, the employed population of Slatina represented 52.87% of the total, in 2002, it recorded only 39.26%. The causes that led to this situation were: a period of decline and destruction of the city's economy but also nationally, layoffs caused by the abolition of major industrial enterprises in the city, privatizations, early retirement, all visible after the revolution of December 1989. The same downward trajectory of the active population was registered at the national level.

THE ETHNIC STRUCTURE OF THE POPULATION

In the analysis of this category, the number of the population of Romanians, Roma, and a structure of the population according to the spoken mother tongue was taken into account.

Thus, in 1992, out of the total population of 85,168 inhabitants, the Romanian population was 84,541, holding the largest share of 99.27%, followed by the Roma population of 452 inhabitants - 0.54% and a number of 111 inhabitants of Hungarian ethnicity representing 0.13%. With a share of only 0.06%, there are populations of other ethnicities: Germans, Ukrainians, Serbs, Russians, Jews.

In 2002, out of a total of 78,815 people, the ethnic structure was illustrated by the same predominance of the Romanian population, of 77,918

inhabitants, respectively 98.86%, followed by the Roma population in a number of 761 and a share of 0.96%, 56 of Hungarians holding 0.07%. With a share of only 0.11%, there are populations of other ethnicities, especially Germans, Turks, and Italians, settled in the city for business.

THE STRUCTURE OF THE POPULATION ACCORDING TO THE CRITERION OF THE PRACTICED RELIGION

In 1992, out of the total population of 85,168 inhabitants, the Orthodox religious cult held 99.26%, followed by the Roman Catholic and Greek Catholic worship of only 0.26%. With a small share, there are populations of various religions: Adventist, Baptist, Evangelical, Reformed, Muslim, etc. There were also 43 atheists.

The year 2002 stands out with a share of 98.86% of the population of Orthodox religion, followed by the Roman Catholic and Greek Catholic worship of 0.33%. Compared to 1992, there is a slight increase in the population of the Muslim, Adventist, and Baptist religions.

CONCLUSIONS

The results obtained through a comparative analysis can serve to understand the existing reality in the social and economic field in the city of Slatina, the impact that the economic transformations had the socio-economic profile of the city.

The study will be followed by two other articles on the same topic, on the city of Slatina in the following intervals, respectively, 2000 -2010, 2010 -2020, which can provide a broad picture of changes in the population structure from December 1990 to the present.

The results highlighted by the article can be used by practitioners to study and understand the natural development potential and socio-economic profile of Slatina, as a model in the analysis of other regions and to understand the existing context at the national level.

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C O N T E N T S

AFRICAN HEARTLAND GEOPOLITICS OF THE FUTURE IN THE SUB-SAHARAN REGION

Luca DIACONESCU, Loredana DRAGOMIR
 (10.30892/rrgp.231101-342) 1

ETHNIC AND RELIGIOUS DISPARITIES IN THE APUSENII SĂLAJULUI FROM COMMUNISM TO CAPITALISM

Mădălin-Sebastian LUNG
 (10.30892/rrgp.231102-345) 10

POPULATIONS AS DETERMINANT OF LATVIA'S SECURITY

Jan A. WENDT
 (10.30892/rrgp.231103-349) 22

CHINDIA THE TITANS' CHANGE HAS COME

Luca DIACONESCU, Mirela Elena MAZILU
 (10.30892/rrgp.231104-347) 29

CHANGES IN THE POPULATION STRUCTURE OF SLATINA CITY BETWEEN YEARS 1990-2000

Florentina MANOLEA CÎRJAN
 (10.30892/rrgp.231105-346) 47

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