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Faculty of Geography
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DOCTORAL THESIS
THE INFLUENCE OF THE DEMOGRAPHIC FACTOR IN THE
GEOPOLITICAL RELATIONS. CASE STUDY: ROMANIA

THESIS SUMMARY

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CLUJ- NAPOCA
2017

“ACKNOWLEDGMENT

This thesis has been financially supported within the project entitled „**SOCERT. Knowledge society, dynamism through research**”, contract number POSDRU/159/1.5/S/132406. This project is co-financed by European Social Fund through Sectoral Operational Programme for Human Resources Development 2007-2013. **Investing in people!**”

This thesis has received financial support from the Government of Romania, through the scholarship granted by The Ministry of Education and Scientific Research, between 2011-2013. Beginning with 2014, the research was financially supported by the European Union, through Sectoral Operational Programme for Human Resources, within the „**SOCERT. Knowledge society, dynamism through research**”.

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SUMMARY

Title: *The influence of demographic factor in the geopolitical relations. Case study: Romania*

Keywords: *geopolitical power, demographic factor, demographic transition, Romania, demographic crisis, vulnerability.*

INTRODUCTION

The PhD thesis entitled “The influence of demographic factor in the geopolitical relations. Case study: Romania” is based on a pragmatic necessity of research generated by the major current global demographic transformations. These are under the spectre of demographic transition, and their magnitude may generate geopolitical effects. For the particular case of Romania, as an interdependent part of the international realities, these changes transformed demography, after 1989, from a traditional factor of geopolitical power into a vulnerability. The academia warn of the existence of a latent demographic crisis.

Basically, this is one of the main motivations for choosing this specific research subject, represented by the demography-geopolitics nexus, to which the following are added: the reality and importance of global, regional and national demographic transformations (underlined by the demographic transition phenomenon); the constant influence and relevance of the demographic factors in the geopolitical equation throughout history; the generosity of the research field and the fact that this specific research area is relatively little exploited as a main topic within geopolitical research, both internationally and nationally. On the other hand, we may add to the reasoning behind choosing this theme of research the personal particular interest for phenomena and processes with interdisciplinary valence (such as geopolitical ones) and for major issues which imply the population at societal level, especially the ones related to the specific case of our country (Romania).

Therefore, moving from theory to the applicative side and from the international to the national level, the thesis aims (through its three parts consisting of six chapters) the following: 1) to identify a theoretical framework for the demography-geopolitics nexus by analyzing the international and national theoretical approaches in the geopolitical science, using an evolutionary perspective (from the classic period to contemporaneity); 2) to highlight the main demographic transformations of the transition phenomenon which can have an impact at international geopolitical level; 3) to analyze the specific case of Romania after 1989, based on the meaning which the demographic factor had throughout the history for the Romanian people and then using two levels of analysis (one which is internal and evolutionary – national – and one which is

comparative at interstate level - taking into consideration the regions of geopolitical interest for Romania).

In order to achieve these objectives, the current scientific approach is based on a triangulation consisting of observation and critical analysis of the literature, adding the analysis of relevant statistic data.

The originality of the thesis is shown by means of: the structural complexity which it aims; the selection of literature being analyzed - relying on international and national, classic and contemporary bibliography; the combination of scientific methods being used (analysis of official documents and statistic data, analysis of literature, analysis of specific relevant indicators – the mix of indicators used), and last but not least the desire to add novelty to this topic by updating and focusing the analysis on Romania's specific case. This subject has been so far very little approached from such a perspective.

The results obtained from the research may serve as a contribution to completing the literature, but also for understanding the complexity of the demography-geopolitics nexus and its implications for the specific case of Romania.

It is essential to highlight the fact that the current paper does not aim to approach the subject exhaustively. Therefore, limitations of the research should be considered - most of all those related to the novelty of the phenomena analyzed, but also to their polyvalence, then those related to the complexity of the geopolitical equation, from which the current research extracted only the demographic factor of power for analysis. On the other hand, the limitations of the present research are imposed by the difficulty of making reliable predictions about population itself, which highly depend on complex societal transformations, these having most of the times implications which are difficult to anticipate on the long term.

Thus, this research offers a frame and a complex foundation for possible further deepening and updating research in the field.

FIRST PART. INTRODUCTORY ASPECTS OF THE RESEARCH

The first part consists of a single chapter, which establishes the conceptual, operational and methodological framework of the research, aiming to draw the guidelines for the next two parts of the doctoral thesis.

CHAPTER I. THE CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK OF THE RESEARCH

The main objective of this chapter is to establish the motivational, operational and conceptual framework of the doctoral thesis, by using an explicative analysis of concepts, phenomena and core approaches which lay at the foundation of this research. In pursuit of this objective, the chapter is structured in four leading subchapters.

The first three parts contain the motivation for choosing this theme, the purpose and objectives of the research and the methodology used to achieve them. The most substantial section of this chapter is dedicated to the notional delimitation of two major concepts from which the research starts. That is, because their nature is less convergent and more lax in the literature and thus require an explanation of the international controversies and divergences and then a clarification of the personal approach towards “geopolitics” and “demographic transition” throughout the current research.

Regarding the two fundamental concepts, in the present chapter a research has been undertaken in order to remove any source of controversy or speculative approach concerning these concepts.

Therefore, from the perspective of the first concept, “geopolitics”, we refer to it in the terms established by the international community for geopolitics as a science. The way it emerged and that fact that in its beginning period the theoretical endeavors served for a current reprobated practice (the case of Hitler’s Germany) has led to the perpetuation of a statutory controversy for geopolitics in contemporaneity. This has determined us to pursue an analysis of the contextual history of this science’s emergence and evolution, in order to highlight the fact that, by using the term “geopolitics” throughout the research, we will dissociate ourselves from any deterministic and exculpatory element. The concept will be approached by means of its scientific valence, emphasizing the positive dimensions of the knowledge it can generate for the present days. As we previously stated, we will follow the international community’s view, which considers geopolitics as a science whose main role is to explain the world’s configuration at a certain moment in time. Also, the fact that it is regarded a science bordering other sciences (such as history, economy, political sciences, military sciences, demography, sociology, etc.) and it has sub-disciplines which are interdisciplinary objects (geoeconomy, geohistory, geodemography, etc.) underlines, even from this stage, the importance and the indissoluble character of the demography-geopolitics nexus. Regarding this nexus, nevertheless taking into consideration the fact that, throughout history, complex issues have generated the need for complex analysis, to which geopolitics have served as a framework (besides, the most important theoretical demarches in geopolitics appeared

in crucial historical moments), the current major and without precedent demographic evolutions stress the necessity of intensifying researches in this specific field, namely in the demography-geopolitics area. This is in order to explain current evolutions, but also to identify possible scenarios.

For the second concept, the notional delimitations are focused especially on those most relevant typologies of demographic transition identified in the literature which emphasize those major demographic transformations of interest for the current and future geopolitical realities. Therefore, we identified for types of transitions: 1) the first transition, which was initiated by Warren Thompson and Frank Notestein and whose most prominent representative is likely to be Jean Claude Chesnais, has at its core the changes in birth rates and mortality. These changes impact the numerical dimension of population (first by explosive population growths and then by a gradual decline of this rhythm of growth). The most important worldwide transformation which occurred within this type of transition are: population growth, stagnation and population decline; 2) the second transition, initiated by Dirk J. van de Kaa, refers to the revolution occurred in the lifestyle and sexual behaviour and fertility determination, which can lead to values of fertility under the stability level (the level of generation replacement). The second transition impacts mostly the gender structural qualitative dimension of population, with direct demographic effects. It may contribute to generating the third type of transition, respectively the one stated by David Coleman. This refers to a demographic balance obtained through migration, which can be regarded as a solution for those states confronted with a deficit of population; 3) the third demographic transition was initiated by David Coleman and has as core dimension the migration dynamics, with potential effects on the ethnic structural dimension of population; 4) the fourth relevant model we considered is the one developed by Malmberg Bo and Lena Sommestad, in which the demographic transition is regarded from the perspective of changes occurred at the level of the population age structure, thus in the age structural dimension of population. This model focused on four typologies of states. Certainly, throughout this subchapter, one may observe that demographic transition approaches are multiple, but that it is these four models, which are also highlighted by John F. May (he reduced them at three: the numerical dimension, the age structural one and the migration dimension) that are essential in order to emphasize the most important demographic transformations with possible impact at geopolitical level. This brings into focus the main three evolutions of the present days, in their numerical, structural (age and gender) and migrational dimensions.

The reality and magnitude of these developments generate an imperative and actual necessity of focusing the research endeavors in the direction of the major demographic

transformations and their possible geopolitical impacts. This is starting from the international dimension, then taking into consideration their regional particularities and then framing in this context the specific case of Romania. The next five chapters, structured in two parts, are dedicated to this purpose (the second part approaches the international level and the third part is dedicated for the case of Romania). Each of these parts start from theoretical consideration (through analyses of schools of thought and their way of approaching the demography-geopolitics nexus) and then heading to the current and prospective demographic realities, insisting on those trends with possible geopolitical impact.

THE SECOND PART: THE INTERNATIONAL DIMENSION

The second part has as main objective to outline the nature of the demography-geopolitics relation in its international dimension, from theory to the applicative valence, by analyzing the literature and a set of relevant specific indicators. In order to fulfil this goal, the second part comprises two chapters: the second and the third chapters. The second analysis this relation within the geopolitical theoretical approaches specific to the most relevant and important geopolitical schools of thought, from classics to contemporaneity. The third one takes into account the applicative nature of this relation, by studying the most important international demographic transformations for geopolitics and by structuring some possible implications of these transformations at international geopolitical level.

CHAPTER II. THE DEMOGRAPHY IN THE INTERNATIONAL GEOPOLITICAL ANALYSIS

The second chapter of the present thesis aims, in the first place, to demonstrate the indissoluble connection between demography and geopolitics, since the period of emergence of the first geopolitical conceptualisation demarches up to contemporaneity and, in the second place, to observe the way demography is being used within geopolitical analysis, in order to establish a methodological framework for the current research, which is to be correlated with the realities and current affairs specific to the international academia and its evolution.

Therefore, one may observe, through the analysis made in the first part of this chapter, that demography is one of the very important factors of the classic geopolitical equation of power. Having the determinist approaches specific to the German space as a starting point, with centrality in the space-population binomial, demography is present mostly in theories such as those

regarding the territorial expansion, the idea of space colonization or the concept of “living space” / “vital space”. The German school of thought has the most prominent theoretical approaches with centrality in the demography-geopolitics relation. However, this nexus can be also found in the approaches specific to the French and Anglo-American schools of thought, even though it does not have such a centrality like in the case of the German one. From the French perspective, the geopolitics of possibilism emerges, being less tributary to determinism, where the human factor shapes the territory. Besides, we identified here a geopolitical scenario in which the decline of Europe is also based on demographic factors (see A. Demangeon). Regarding the Anglo-American school, even though it is more anchored in the geographical perspective, demography is still present in the global equation of power and in the one specific to the emergence on the global arena. These kinds of approaches are integrated within the theories of global power (the Heartland Theory - H.J Mackinder; the theory of sea power - A.T. Mahan; The Rimland Theory - N. Spykman), even though they are not central, but rather complementary. On the other hand, within the Anglo-American school, we identified a series of criteria which in the opinion of the theoreticians can determine the geopolitical status/geopolitical power of a state (A.T. Mahan – 6 criteria; N. Spykman – 10 criteria). Therefore, in the classic period, the number, the structural elements (ethnic composition, age) and the migration dynamics are the most important demographic aspects, to which the qualitative one related to population may be added, such as: the organization of population, population cohesion, national spirit (identity and mentality), the mental progress, national attachment, etc. The research reflects that demography is likely to be analyzed mostly alongside economic and military factors, geography being an actor of history for this period.

In contemporaneity, even though the geopolitical power equation has a higher degree of complexity than before and geography becomes from an actor of history a frame of geopolitical actions or their stake, demography continues to have a great importance within the equation of power. This fact is observable even since the demarches of defining the current geopolitics at international level, then through concepts, ideas and scenarios which have centrality in the demography-geopolitics relation: 1) at the level of the Western-European school, demography is one of the variables within the equation of power identified through positions like: theoretical delimitations of the most important demographic factors in geopolitics (eg: the 11 factors of G. Csurgai), the pattern of approaching demographic data and their limitations (F. Encel), the presence of demography integrated within one of the seven capacities of a state which form the innovative concept “meta-geopolitics” (N. Al-Rodhan), the pragmatic approaches regarding the possible influence of the major demographic transformations (in the numerical dimension,

structural by age, structural by gender and in the migration dynamics) at geopolitical level. 2) at the level of the Russian school, the applicative character of the approaches prevails, where the main issues are the current demographic evolution as a factor of risk for Russia, but also the identification of possible solutions and proposing measures to mitigate those risks – the model of Russian nationalism (A. Dughin); 3) regarding the American school, this focuses mainly on the pragmatic character and less on the theoretical aspects, this being the space in which the most important international volumes had appeared, which address specifically the relation between demography and geopolitics and which discuss the problematic of geopolitical implications of the major demographic transformations: „Population Decline and the Remaking of Great Power Politics” (Eds. S. Yoshihara and D. A. Sylva), „The Graying of the Great Powers: Demography and Geopolitics in the 21st Century” (R. Jackson, Neil Howe) and „Long-Term Global Demographic Trends: Reshaping the Geopolitical Landscape” (published under the protection of the US Intelligence Agency). However, at theoretical level, there are several approaches which emphasize population as a factor of the power equation (see F. P. Sempa, but also F. Fukuyama and Z. Brzezinski, even though to a lesser extent). From the applicative perspective, the most relevant examples are the scenarios developed by R. Jackson and Neil Howe, but also the ones of G. Friedman or S. Yoshihara and D. A. Sylva or those of the US Intelligence Agency. Also from applicative perspective, R. Jackson and Neil Howe suggest a series of measures which can help states to manage the prospective challenges which demographic evolutions will cause. Likewise, regarding the demography-geopolitics relation, the theory elaborated by S.P. Huntington, respectively “The Clash of Civilizations” also comprises demographic elements. Therefore, following the analyses made in the second part of the second chapter, we can assert that the majority of the demographic indicators of the classic period are relevant in actuality, noting that other ones may also be added. This is due to the evolution of the geopolitical science complexity, but also to the current global evolutions, including here the major demographic transformations. From the perspective of the contemporary period, the most important demographic indicators for geopolitics are: the total fertility rate, birth and death rates, age structure, generational distribution, the gender ratio, population density, the population distribution/geographical positioning, urbanization, internal and external migration dynamics, evolution of the ethnical structure , diaspora, changes of population caused by anthropic (war, genocide, ethnic cleansing) or natural (calamities, natural disasters, epidemics, etc.) occurrences. Similar to the classic period, but today perhaps to a higher extent, the demographic indicators are integrated in the population power factor, which includes besides the quantitative elements (the demographic ones) also the qualitative ones, these taking the form of indicators regarding: the organization of population,

health, education/training level, identity, attitudes, social cohesion, national unity, the degree of social peace. Nowadays a particular importance is given to the quality of human resource, besides its effectiveness.

On the other hand, for the current stage, by the research undertaken in the second part of this chapter, the following aspects are to be taken into consideration in order to integrate the demographic coordinate into a geopolitical analysis: 1) demography is part of a very complex equation of power, which comprises geographical, historical, strategic, military, economic, political, diplomatic, sociological, etc. factors, being relevant only if it is integrated within an evolutionary and comparative study, at internal level (between the ethnic groups of a state), and then regionally and globally. 2) it must also be taken into account that accurate predictions with a high degree of probability are difficult to make due to the fact that demographic data are hard to obtain in a very precise manner, but also because the effects of changes in mentalities and in social and life styles cannot be assessed exactly; we may add to all these the potential of demographic data manipulations for political and geopolitical purposes; another aspect is that demography must be considered a variable of geopolitical power and not a constant of it.

Thus, from F. Ratzel, K. E. Haushofer, A. Demangeon to A. T. Mahan, J. H. Mackinder or N. J. Spykeman, and then to representatives of the contemporary period among whom we can name S. Huntington, Y. Lacoste, F. Encel, F. P. Sempa, Z. Brzezinski, G. Friedman, A. Dughin, G. Csurgai, F. Fukuyama, N. Al-Rodhan and others, the quantitative and qualitative aspects of population are a constant coordinate of the geopolitical pulsar. In the context of the current evolutions, the most important aspects regard the numerical dimension of population, the structural one (age, gender, ethnicity) and the migration dynamics of population (internal and external ones). These have a correspondent within the theories of demographic transition emphasized in the previous chapter, the first chapter.

Hence, in the evolution of the international geopolitical approaches, demography has been, is and most probably will continue to be one of the most important factors of power. As we could observe, the current international academia regards outlining the guidelines of how to approach the demography-geopolitics nexus, stresses the most important current and prospective demographic transformation with potential geopolitical impacts (which overlap the dimensions referred to in the first chapter, when analyzing the concept of “demographic transition”).

The international dimension of the demography-geopolitics relation, which in the first instance was analyzed from the perspective of the relevant geopolitical theories (from classic to contemporary) in the present chapter, is reinforced by the applicative part in the following chapter, the third one of the thesis.

CHAPTER III. THE INTERNATIONAL DIMENSION OF THE DEMOGRAPHIC TRANSITION. POTENTIAL GEOPOLITICAL IMPLICATIONS

The main objective of this chapter is to identify the applicative side of the demography-geopolitics relation in accordance with the most important aspects imposed by the demographic transition, by means of analyzing the literature and some specific statistic indicators, in order to emphasize the historical, present and prospective relevant elements. In order to fulfil this objective, this chapter was structured in four subchapters, according to the most important dimensions of the demographic transition: the numerical dimension, the structural - by age dimension, the structural – by gender dimension, the migration dynamics dimension. The analysis of these dimensions demonstrates the fact that demographic evolution in conjunction with other geopolitical evolutions and positionings can make a state a center of regional power or even global power, or on the contrary - a source of internal and even external instability (regional, or even global, depending of the gravity of the transformations).

During this chapter some particular demographic phenomena have been analyzed, taking into account the regional specificities. These have potential to attract security and geopolitical implication for the international arena such as: 1) in the numerical dimension: the decline of population and its explosive growth; 2) in the age structural dimension: population aging and the youth bulge phenomenon; 3) in the gender structural dimension: implications of the gender equality phenomenon, but also the unbalanced gender ratio; 4) in the migration dynamics dimension: the changes in the ethnical structure as a result of demographic balancing migration . These analyses offer a panoramic view on the demographic transition phenomenon, but, on the other hand, they draw some of their most important potential geopolitical implications.

Following the analysis of relevant indicators in the four dimensions and also analyzing the literature, the most important possible geopolitical implications of the transformation imposed by the demographic transition have been presented both within each particular dimension and within a global scenario at the end of the chapter. These implications can be broadly structured in three typologies: 1) security implications (besides security being the primary geopolitical objective of any state); 2) implications at the level of power balance; 3) possible geopolitical implications drift from demographic transformations implications at economic, politic, military levels.

Regarding the first category, the one of the security implications, two phenomena at opposite poles can be specifically mentioned: a) the explosive growth of population/ the youth bulge and b) the population vacuum and the depopulation risk. The explosive growth of

population and the existence of a youth bulge might have an influence on the degree of state fragility; in extreme cases of this phenomena, especially in the case of youth bulges, if these are not efficiently assimilated at the society level (labour market, social systems), they can contribute to the existence of a State conflictuality (the Arab Spring case can serve as an example in this regard). On the other hand, the explosive population growth has generated, over time, the fear of overpopulation of the Earth (see theories like Malthusianism and Neomalthusianism), and especially starting with the middle of the XX century, important geopolitical actors have intervened by international financing and promoting population programs in order to counteract this phenomenon, as an evidence that demographic evolutions are very important for the geopolitical actors at a global level. The global population growth will ameliorate its rithm more and more by 2100, but the challenges related to youth bulges will be a long term reality at least until the half of the 21st century. Regarding the population vacuum, the trends show a potential balancing through migration, Europe's case being a good example in thi respect. Therefore, some demographic challenges and economic ones related to the implications of the population decline and aging can be balanced to a certain extent by immigration – nevertheless, not without the emergence of other challenges in the dimension of security. These challenges are imposed mostly by the emergence of multiculturalism, which, for the states with strong cultural traditions and a recent history marked by a high degree of ethnic homogeneity, represents an issue with no current optimal solution, despite the last decades being marked by policies which address this phenomenon. Furthermore, from the security perspective, multiculturalism can amplify to some intrastate interethnic tensions, especially where the cultural background of immigrants is much different from the one of the host state. Likewise, multiculturalism, boosted by migration, can generate the import of insecurity by amplifying the terrorist manifestations risk. Therefore, taking into account the two phenomena (youth bulge and balancing the population vacuum by migration), there are states of the world for which the tense situations are most likely to continue during the 21st century. Other states, which have been in the last decades in the posture of internal and external guarantors of security may face the emergence of some internal security issues currently without precedent.

From the power balance perspective, the specific regional demographic evolutions can contribute to the transfer of the geopolitical tranditional pole (especially the one specific to 19th-20th century) from Atlantic to Pacific. Thus, demographic developments will bring substantial contribution to the maintaining, decline and the emergence of geopolitical actors at global and regional level. Population vacuums can create new opportunities for other emergent actors.

Regarding the possible geopolitical implications derivated from demographic transformation consequences at economic, political, military, etc. level, the behaviour of some states may change mostly due to the following types of phenomena: a) population aging will most probably generate economic challenges (social security and budgetary system), possible changes in the political attitudes (an aged electorate may be more risk-averse) and military ones (the military budget can be reduced due to the expenditures generated by population aging), such as the so called "geriatric peace" (M. L. Haas), manifested through the trend of actors to diminish their international force, through low appetency for engaging in war and through more active engaging in peacekeeping and humanitarian actions; b) the imbalance of the gender ratio resulted from some population policy (eg: one-child policy) may lead to the engagement of some states (the ones with a seminifivative excess of male population) in the so called "military adventures" as Valerie Hudson considers (even though these may only be speculative approaches for the moment) or, in the opposite case, for the increasing implication of women at societal level, by their economic and political empowerment - possible changes of state priorities, due to women being more prone at political level to support those projects related to healthcare, economic development, environment protection, and being often more willing to reduce military expenditure instead. (R. Al-Rodhan). On the other hand, contemporary feminism, specific also to the gender structural dimension, brings to the spotlight a paradox, highlighted by P. McDonald, which has direct demographic implications such as reinforcing negative demographic evolutions for those societies which will not know how to balance the gender equity within the institutions based on the individual with the one existent in the family based ones.

Thus, upon analysis made in this chapter, we can state that we are aligning to the most current and relevant scenarios developed regarding the specific research field of the demography-geopolitics nexus, like those of Tony Horn, R. Jackson and N. Howe, Francis P. Semple, Nayef al-Rodhan, ML Hass or the US Intelligence Agency, which broadly converge to the same direction. Globally, following the analyzed major demographic trends, the most important geopolitical consequences of demographic transition could be:

- It is expected that we witness a decrease in influence of the traditionally nineteenth and twentieth centuries poles geopolitically, such as Europe, Japan, Russia - mainly due to population decline/growth rate well below those of the emerging powers and its breakpoints and due to aging (by the pressure to be exerted on social systems, but also the important role of young people for economic and societal developments), and due to associated phenomena such as migration dynamics. Europe and Japan are likely to focus their efforts to reconfigure their budgets in order

to meet the internal challenges brought by demographic aging phenomena and multiculturalism - due to immigration- and also to decrease considerably their appetite for involvement in international belligerent actions. Russia, on the other hand, will face severe imbalances which have the potential of impacting its ability to act as a global geopolitical actor. The current keen demographic crisis (population decline and aging) raises the issue of population vacuums, considering its vast territory. Its proximity to an emerging power (which will be facing population growth), China, suggests a possibility of filling these vacuums to the geopolitical advantage of the latter. The domestic and regional challenges will most likely divert Russian attention and forces towards the regional level, while lowering the extent of its international involvement. Still, Russia is expected to dominate the international arena alongside the US for another decade or two.

- Within the developed world, US influence is expected to grow as the one of its allies falls. Besides, it is one of the few great powers which will not be facing population decline, with fertility rates still above replacement and with a culture promoting values that favour demographic growth (the paradigm shift that occurred in 1984 in Mexico), even though the challenge of an aging population is expected to bring about a reconfiguration of domestic policy and the rethinking of its international commitments. In the context of the possible fall in influence of US allies in the developed world, it might secure alliances with emerging powers. The geopolitical pole shift from the Atlantic to the Pacific is a trend that is already beginning to show.

- Demographic transitions, marked especially by the existence of large youth populations whose potential has been left unfulfilled by their societies (employment; access to healthcare & education systems that they deem equitable from a development standpoint) will constitute raw spots: on one hand, the risk of civil collapse or the rise of neo-authoritarianism in North Africa, the Middle East, Southeastern Asia, countries belonging to the former Soviet sphere of influence such as China, Iran, Pakistan (some of these possessing nuclear weapons), on the other hand the instability that will carry on in most of Sub-Saharan Africa and in some Muslim-majority countries.

- The possible aggravation of local intrastate conflicts within the developed as well as the developing world, foreshadowed by increased urban ethnic polarization, through a heightened risk of ethnic and religious conflicts sparking, constituting a security threat.

■ An amplified risk of manifestations of terrorism, to which an important contribution has been played by the globalisation of communication & transportation networks, but also by the intensification of the dynamics of migration.

Thus, the 21st century, in its understanding as a time of unprecedented demographic transitions in the recent history of humanity (in scale and scope), will certainly bring about geopolitical & security repercussions, and as for Romania particularly, as our case study in this matter, this chapter offers a contextual framework for its own demographic shifts, especially from the perspective of a state viewed as an interdependent part of global and regional demographic and geopolitical realities.

PART III – THE NATIONAL DIMENSION

Part III is homologous to Part II (the international dimension of the relationship between demographics and politics), insofar as it shifts its focus upon the national dimension. This part endeavours to highlight the nature of the relationship between demographics and politics in the national dimension, from theory to application, by means of a literature review and relevant indicators. Towards this purpose, there are 3 chapters (IV, V, and VI) and 2 appendices included. Similarly to Part II, the first chapter (ch. IV) concerns the analysis of this relationship through the lens of Romanian schools of geopolitical theories, from classic to contemporary ones. That which differs structurally from part II, which concerns the international dimension, is the fact that this theoretical chapter is followed by two others which study aspects of the demographic transition with their possible geopolitical implications, rather than just one chapter. This owes itself to the fact that, at a state level, for demographic data to yield potentially useful geopolitical information, this data must be analyzed from two perspectives: (1) the internal evolution within that particular space, for the purpose of determining whether the demographic power factor has increased / stagnated / diminished for that state, but also for identifying possible domestic challenges/opportunities and the existence (or lack thereof) of possible domestic geopolitical conflicts; (2) comparatively on an international, regional, or global level, in order to obtain information regarding the influence of demographics over state power in relation to other geopolitically relevant states from the viewpoint of the state at hand, either regionally or globally. Thus, chapter V concerns the internal development dimension, while chapter VI concerns that of comparative analysis on an international/regional level. Also, another dissimilarity from part

II is represented by the two appendices: a) the first draws a line after the two chapters that concern the analysis of the demographics-geopolitics relationship through the lens of international (ch. II) and Romanian (ch. IV) geopolitical schools of thought, towards the establishment of a conceptual and methodological framework for this relationship; b) the second appendix can be found at the end of the doctoral thesis, past the last chapter (ch. VI) and seeks, starting from the vulnerabilities noted for Romania from a demographic perspective (ch. V and VI) and from the existence of possible geopolitical implications of the demographic transition on an international level (ch. III), to highlight several possible geopolitical consequences of the demographic transition for Romania.

CHAPTER IV. THE ROMANIAN GEOPOLITICAL APPROACH OF DEMOGRAPHICS

Chapter IV aims to identify the nature of the connection between demographics and geopolitics, on a national level, through the analysis of classic and contemporary geopolitical thought. Essentially this constitutes a preamble for the case study of Romania, complementing the theoretical framework with the approaches specific to Romania. While the preceding theoretical chapter — chapter II of the thesis — aimed to prove the inextricable link between demographics and geopolitics, from classic times to the present day, in the global dimension, the chapter at hand was meant to be a similar endeavour, though focused upon the national dimension. This was achieved for the purpose of establishing a conceptual and methodological framework of the relationship between demographics and geopolitics that is grounded in the realities and current developments of international as well as national academia. The results of the research found in the chapter at hand have been gathered through literature reviews, particularly of those geopolitical works with the status of authoritative treaties in the field.

The first part of this chapter considers the approaches of demographics in the classic period of geopolitical thought. Within them there can be noticed consensus stances, as well as divergent views regarding certain points, although the listing of demographics among the factors that influence state power was ubiquitous in the approaches of the forerunner of Romanian geopolitics, S. Mehedinți, and in those of the founders of the field of geopolitics, I. Conea and A. Golopenția. The classic Romanian school contains elements of international influence – particularly regarding theoretical aspects – as well as elements specific to itself, owing themselves primarily to the nature of Romanian realities (the historical fight for the survival and unity of the people), a fact which also manifests at the level of the demographics-

geopolitics connection. For instance, even though for S. Mehedinți the population-territory binome can be identified in relationship to the approaches of the German school, he disavows the expansionist apologetics specific to it. Also regarding S. Mehedinți, the relationship of demographics to geopolitics is best highlighted by ideas such as the conditions of the state's existence (which also contain elements of a demographic nature), by the set of questions meant for analyzing the state of the population which, in this work, we have named "the matrix of determination of the state of a population", and the axiom of demographics which concerns the waxing and waning of the power of a state according to the evolution of its population, which correlates the power of a state with the size of its population. Furthermore, even though between I. Conea and A. Golopenția there are differences in the way they relate to geopolitics, demographics represents a power factor for both, being a tangential approach for the former, whereas in the case of the latter one can state that it represents a core approach. In the case of I. Conea this relationship, albeit approached tangentially, is evident primarily in the case of the equation of power, where he introduces the notion of pressure in the relationships between states (particularly neighboring ones) and secondarily on the level of the smoothness of geopolitical relationships — the harmony found within the structure of a state (also founded on demographic-ethnic elements). A. Golopenția has the most poignant endeavours theoretically as well as in application, and considering the timing of the historical challenges faced by Romania (the dramatic territorial losses suffered in 1940) that coincided with the beginning of his endeavours of laying the theoretical foundations of the new science, as well as upholding the cause of national unity, this relationship ascends to a central status in his work. For A. Golopenția the role of demographics can be inferred from the very definition of the new science, to which he attributes an interdisciplinary nature, demographics being one of its main coordinates, and further other elements can be found in ideas such as the methodology of geopolitical analyses, which also presupposes analyses of the population (the role of „demology”), and on the other hand the role of demographic research which can serve the function of a method for determining the relationship of minorities to the state. Another idea based on the centrality of the demographics-geopolitics connection is that of states, nations and forms without essence, referring to state-like entities which lack an underlying ethnic component. For the Romanian school, the connection between demographics and geopolitics in the classic period has been developed from two directions: (1) its presence in theoretical groundwork; (2) its applicability to the current affairs of those times in Romania. From an applied perspective, the Romanian school focused upon the particular case of Romania, and thus we find especially in the works of S. Mehedinți and A. Golopenția themes

and ideas such as: the geopolitics of the nation and the nation-state (S. Mehedinți), the historical geopolitical position of Romania (S. Mehedinți, A. Golopenția), the unity of the Romanian people and the demographic factor (S. Mehedinți, I. Conea, A. Golopenția). The most commonly approached demographic elements of the classic period have been the numerical aspect of the population and the structural-ethnic and confessional one, keeping in mind the fact that when a power factor such as population is analyzed, aside from demographic elements one has to consider qualitative measures as well, regarding the educational, social, and cultural status of the population. Also, the twofold nature of geopolitically relevant demographic analyses – within a state and between states – emerges as early as the classic period, particularly through the undertakings of A. Golopenția. From an applied perspective, classic theories essentially emphasize the importance of such analyses in particular for the Romanian space, due to the specific challenges it faced during those times, which after all had historical importance.

The second part of this chapter analyses the chief concerns regarding demographics and geopolitics within contemporary thought. We could thus ascertain that, although geopolitics is broadening its range of approaches and defining a new status for itself, demographics remains just as relevant as in the classic period, ever since the concept of geopolitics has been defined. Thus, prominent names of Romanian geopolitical academia give consideration to demographics, from the very definition of geopolitics. On the other hand, among the theoretical background of the equation of power one can encounter the demographic factor (S. Neguț, V. Simileanu, D. Frăsineanu, P. Dobrescu, etc.). The academic literature even indicates the innovative development of this concept, expressed mathematically through the power equation as conceived by V. Simileanu. Furthermore, demographics also makes an appearance within key geopolitical concepts such as: (1) geopolitical positioning; (2) geopolitical density: population density as a possible element of geopolitical density; (3) models based, among others, on demographic data; (4) borders and “the border squabble” (S. Tămaș) / border conflicts (S. Neguț); (5) conflictuality – the intensification of ethnic conflicts as a feature of current affairs (S. Neguț, M. Șimandan, S. Tămaș, etc.). From an applied perspective there are to be found in the academic literature not only analyses which encompass some major demographic phenomena on an international scale, but also analyses which focus on the case of Romania (especially from a historical perspective). Regarding global issues, following a literature review the following demographic aspects, in brief, have been identified: the demographic boom, the population distribution and its evolution, the structural-ethnic dimension, the issue of migration, but also the aging of the population (P. Dobrescu, V. Simileanu, D. Frăsineanu.). In most cases,

there are relatively few mentions of the consequences of these phenomena in their geopolitical complexity. In regard to the issues that concern Romania, the approaches are rather retrospective than prospective; perhaps one of the most poignant approaches can be found in the work of P. Dobrescu, which calls attention to the concept of “obsession with population”, as a geopolitical advantage of this space. On the other hand, from the perspective of geopolitical threats regarding the relationship between demographics and geopolitics, S. Tămaş calls upon the concept of “internal geopolitics” to underline the continuity of some historical internal geopolitical challenges of an irredentist nature for Romania, from the perspective of ethnic minorities, in particular the Hungarian one.

The analysis of this second part of the chapter draws a parallel with the international dimension, through the fact that most demographic indicators with geopolitical relevance of the classic period are currently the most important. Here can be mentioned the ones that belong to the numerical, structural aspect (ethnic structure, age groups) and the ones specific to the dynamics of migration. The endeavours towards theorization rely as well on novel elements specific to current approaches (the original contribution of each author), as on updates to certain elements of the classic Romanian school (e.g. the demographic axiom of S. Mehedinți, the interdisciplinarity of A. Golopenția, etc.). Thus, in the post-1989 Romanian geopolitical school demographics is a very important power factor along with the economic, military, political etc. ones, not excluding the qualitative aspect of the population. Also, the majority of these endeavours take into account the twofold nature of the population: (1) as a power factor / geopolitical resource; (2) as a subject of geopolitical action / as a source of geopolitical processes and phenomena (e.g. in the approaches of S. Tămaş, D. Frăsineanu). Essentially, the importance of analyses of internal evolution and international comparison is conserved from the classic period. The demographic analysis has geopolitical relevance only within a comparative context between states or in its intra-state dimension, and here the applicative themes of the experts consulted regarded current global developments (most in intimate connection to those of current international relevance, as one could notice through comparison with the analysis of present international geopolitical approaches from ch. II), as well as the national historical developments within the Romanian space.

Thus, from S. Mehedinți, I. Conea, A. Golopenția, until the representatives of the present age, among which are D. Frăsineanu, S. Tămaş, P. Dobrescu, V. Simileanu, S. Neguț, C. Hlihor or D. Bușe and others, the demographic aspects are a coordinate of the geopolitical pulsar. Just as in the case of the international dimension, at the level of the Romanian vision the most important aspects concern the dimension of population size, structure (age, gender, ethnicity) and the

migration dynamics of the population (internal and external), dimensions consistent with those who loom large in the current demographic shift (ch. I).

We conclude the topic of the evolution of national geopolitical approaches, as in the case of the international approaches, through stating that demographics was, is, and will most likely remain a very important power factor. Demographic evolutions, together with other geopolitical developments and positioning, can turn a state into a hub of regional or even global power, or on the contrary, can act as a source of internal or even external instability – regional or even global (depending on severity) or can uphold the geopolitical interests of a state that isn't posed to act as a great regional or global power from a geopolitical standpoint, as was the case of Romania, regarding its objective of national survival as highlighted by the Romanian theoretical approaches. This is the reason why, even though the demographics-geopolitics link does not often constitute the topic of a theoretical endeavour of its own, it is still forever present within the Romanian geopolitical school (particularly owing to its historical importance), the approaches being in some aspects similar to the international ones (from the point of view of dimensions, of the twofold role as power factor / process source, of the within-state and between-states mode of reference). Consequently, the findings we achieved following the theoretical chapters (II and IV), but also certain considerations of the actual reality (found within chapter III) offer us a solid scientific foundation for the development of our own model of relating to the link between demographics and geopolitics, model which will be used as a template for the approach of geopolitically relevant demographic analyses specific to the case study of Romania. Consequently, a few ideas are structured within the first appendix that follows, with the purpose of outlining this template.

APPENDIX 1: THE DEMOGRAPHICS-GEOPOLITICS RELATIONSHIP. THE CONCEPTUAL AND METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK

Following the two chapters that have analyzed the demographics-geopolitics relationship from the perspective of geopolitical theories from classic to contemporary, in the international (ch.II) and Romanian (ch. IV) dimensions, but also following the outline of the most important demographic transformations with possible geopolitical consequences, this appendix aims to provide a conceptual and methodological framework for this relationship.

The most important aspects can be systemized thus:

- 1) Currently, certain approaches specific to the classic period are still of relevance (e.g. the demographic axiom of S. Mehedinți, the matrix for determining the status of a state, certain methodological considerations mostly regarding interdisciplinarity).

2) Demographics must not be approached in a deterministic fashion or support the geopolitical theories based on racism, xenophobia, or aggression.

3) This must contribute to the positive role of analyses through the knowledge it can generate.

4) The geopolitical role of demographics is evidenced by: a) the transdisciplinary nature of geopolitics; b) its status as an integral part of human geography; c) its status as an integral part of a subdiscipline of geopolitics: geodemographics.

5) Demographic data can yield information of possible geopolitical importance if: a) it is part of a complex analysis that also takes into consideration other power factors (economic, military, cultural, etc.); b) they are part of a much more wide-encompassing power factor, which is „the population”, that also involves qualitative aspects (quantitative – demographic – plus qualitative); c) the data is analyzed from two perspectives: internal evolution (within a state) and through comparison at an international or regional level (between states).

6) The most important aspects with geopolitical relevance of demographics are: the population size, the spatial distribution of the population, the structural ethnic distribution, the structural age distribution, the structural gender distribution, the dynamics of migration to and from the population.

7) The relationship between demographics and geopolitics has two main functions: a) to evaluate the factor of demographic power or vulnerability; b) as an instrument of identification of the relationship between minorities and the state.

8) The existence of some bottlenecks: a) the difficulty of making accurate demographic predictions in the long term; b) data manipulation.

Thus, currently there is a strong need for theoretical stances towards the relationship between demographics and geopolitics, considering their importance from the perspective of a theoretical framework on which applied analyses can be founded. Especially today, when the great demographic transitions on a global, regional, and state level (as one could notice from the theoretical approaches of chapter I, the academic concerns and pursuits, internationally – chapter II – and nationally – chapter IV, the analysis of these concrete transformations found in chapter III) – that also concern the specific case of our country – require such endeavours. Thus, a case study focused upon Romania calls into attention those great demographic shifts of the present age which can have geopolitical consequences, relating to the theoretical framework outlined in this part and keeping in mind two perspectives: internal evolution (chapter V) and inter-state and inter-regional comparison (chapter VI) and considering the

relevant dimensions, particularly from a historical perspective, from this space, and then the current demographic transition with its particular regional and national manners of display.

CHAPTER V. THE SIGNIFICANCE OF DEMOGRAPHICS FOR ROMANIA. FROM POWER FACTOR TO VULNERABILITY

Chapter V aims to underline the transformation of demographics from a traditional power factor into a factor of vulnerability following 1989 in Romania, and to highlight the possible demographic weaknesses in geopolitically relevant dimensions, from an analysis of internal evolution. For this purpose the current chapter is structured in three parts.

The first part concerns the highlighting of the demographic factor as a historical power factor for the Romanian people, but also for other agents interested in this space. The historical perspective, which marked the start of this chapter, offers an extensive argument for the fact that, within this space, which today belongs to Romania, the key to the geopolitical equation has been from the dawn of time the population and its numbers, constituting its geopolitical advantage. In this area, the extremely important role played by the demographic factor in the framework of this equation is perhaps much greater than other power factors, which is why we can encounter here the concept of „obsession with population” (P. Dobrescu according to S. Mehedinti), as it was encouraged by the local geopolitical context. 1) For the specific case of the Romanian people, as a native population, demographics acted as a power factor particularly through its natural evolution and has supported its most important historical geopolitical objectives: its survival as a people in a space that has been strongly subject to the challenges of invaders and of the migrations of other peoples, and the objective of national unity in a space located at the intersection of the great powers of those times. From the perspective of its nature, for the native population, this relied particularly on the force of its natural numerical evolution, a unique case, at least in the recent history of Romania, of intervention upon the demographic factor being found during the Communist era, when, in a first stage, a remodelling of society was attempted through the elimination of certain categories of the population (hence the imprisonments and deportations of this era), while in the next stage this was attempted through a pro-natalist policy believed by some academic voices positively abusive. However, for the most part we can claim that demographics for the Romanian people has acted as a power factor due to its natural evolution, which allowed it to have continuity and majority within this territory and thus supported its survival as a people as well as its later consolidation into a state. 2) In the case of other agents with geopolitical interests in this territory (particularly for those who left a strong legacy that continues into the

present day), the demographic power factor has been exploited particularly in an artificial manner for its maximization, exemplified by colonization attempts ever since Antiquity that have been conducted on this territory (colonization by the Romans) and then in the age of migrations (colonization by the Magyars, along with Saxons and Székelys). However, the native factor proved to be a strong one, managing to leave a population of Daco-Romans, not simply Romans, on these lands in the wake of Latinization, while following the age of migrations one could talk of compact masses of Romanian population in Transylvania and of the ideal of national unification. Other examples, much more recently, of exploitation of the demographic power factor on this territory by agents with geopolitical interests, can be found in the geopolitically unfavourable period for Romania that took place between 1940-1944, when in particular Hungary and Russia took concrete action towards the purpose of the diminishing of the native ethnic element (through deportations and exile) so as to meet geopolitical objectives. This stage again proved the force of demographics as a power factor for the Romanian people, so that, despite all these measures undertaken by Hungary and Russia, Romanians never stopped constituting a majority and thus the aim to reunify Romania had strong support owing to the demographic structure. This is why demographic trends in Romania can contribute significantly to the formulation of its position in geopolitically relevant contexts.

The second part constitutes the largest share of this chapter and concerns the analysis of demographic evolutions post-1989 with a negative character, of weakness, and the analysis of the prospective demographic situation. Thus, if from a historical perspective we have noted that demographics may have been the most important factor in the geopolitical equation, currently, the analysis of the post-1989 situation reveals the great transformation of demographics from power factor to weakness. The highlighting of this vulnerability has been structured, for the most part, around the three relevant dimensions for the demographic transition (underlined particularly in chapters I and III), respectively the numeric, structural, and migrational dimensions, adding a traditionally relevant dimension: the structural-ethnic one. The particularities of Romania as a state impose the following structural differentiations on the level of the dimensions of analysis: 1) the need to add the structural-ethnic dimension into consideration (owing to its historical importance) and 2) that of splitting the dimension of migrational dynamics into those of immigration and emigration, which have been treated in separate dimensions, due to the following fact: the analysis of immigration aimed primarily to find whether it can pose great challenges to the ethnic structure of Romania, and as such was included within the structural-ethnic dimension, and emigration, considering the scale of the

phenomenon, has been analyzed under the umbrella of migrational dynamics, standing out as a dominant phenomenon of migration dynamics for Romania, considering the ratio of immigration to emigration. As such, the post-1989 demographic realities, with their associated trends, have been analyzed according to the following dimensions: 1) the numeric dimension, 2) the age structure dimension, 3) the gender structure dimension, 4) the ethnic structure dimension, 5) the migration dynamics dimension. Following the analysis realised in these 5 dimensions we can state that the most important evolutions that have transformed demographics from a geopolitical strength to a weakness are:

- The numeric dimension: the severe decline of the population, the prospective character of depopulation. From the standpoint of internal evolution, from 1989 to the present day, Romania has lost a quarter of its population and according to a majority of sources it is bound to lose another quarter until 2050, and what is worst is that international sources (the U.N.) warn that it might lose over 37% of its population until 2100. This fact makes perfect sense, if we consider an essential geopolitical indicator, that is, the total birth rate; during the past decade, Romania registered a value of 1.3 births per woman, much lower than the replacement birth rate of 2.1. This situation is unprecedented in modern Romanian history, as at least since the 19th century the tendency has been one of population growth. Another aspect of the numerical dimension, although it does not affect solely this dimension, is the extremely high rate of abortions. For about 50 years, in Romania, more children have been avorted than there were people in the country according to the 2011 census. And this is just what the official data shows, from which the abortions performed illegally during the Communist regime, as well as those performed post-1989 within the private healthcare system. The population fall is also accelerated by the phenomenon of large-scale circular emigration as well as permanent emigration, which will very probably continue into the next decade at least, as a consequence of socioeconomic inequality within Europe.

- The gender structure dimension. The fact that Romania shows a balanced ratio of men to women does not directly imply a weakness, on the contrary. However, if we consider the concept of gender equality in relation to the family, the latter of which had a very clear role as the basic unit of the Romanian people, the fact is that in the present our country can be found in a position typical to the paradox of contemporary feminism (P. McDonald, mentioned in ch. III), which is posed to affect the family unit, but also to accelerate the demographic decline, through the possible direct impact over natality which occurs as a result of the attempt of the Romanian woman to divide herself between two roles (the respective demands

of career and family). In the present, these roles may come to compete with one another, and become very difficult to balance: the professional role – the aspirations of personal development and the family role, as wife and mother. These developments, from the standpoint of internal evolution, are unprecedented in the history of Romania and are intimately connected to the complex transformations brought by the demographic transition, but also with those of society on the whole, especially in regard to mentalities and lifestyle.

■ The ethnic structure dimension. As a result of the data subject to analysis in this chapter, post-1989 at least to the present day there have been no significant transformations at the level of the ethnic structure that could result in possible geopolitical implications. However, despite that, to which we add the mention that Romania is a highly homogeneous country, from the perspective of the ethnic structure dimension, three aspects stand out that pose a potential weakness in the present and in the future: 1) the issue of the ongoing political tension with the representatives of the Hungarian minority; 2) the trends indicating a possible significant population growth of ethnic Roma; 3) the perspective of immigration as an alternative to a long-term population vacuum that would follow the decline and aging of the population. 1) Regarding the first issue, it has underlying historical causes, dating from the 9th century, but it demands an adequate management particularly since, post-1989, the political tensions which focus on the issue of territorial autonomy have been prominent in the political affairs of our country. The Conflict Barometer (Heidelberg Institute) identifies Romania as being among the European states that harbour a conflict on their territory (even though the intensity is marked as the least severe: 1, meaning *dispute*), and the current Head of the Romanian Information Service (Eduard-Raul Hellvig) identifies this issue as one of the main security problems of Romania. Even though from the perspective of the demographic evolution of this national minority there has been no risk factor noticed (as this population features a decline rate comparable to that of Romania), this issue can be viewed as a threat to the status of Romania as proclaimed in the Constitution and might come to generate sources of instability. 2) On the other hand, the Roma minority, although showing no signs of irredentist attitudes, might become a source of vulnerability because of its demographic trends, if this minority continues to show significant growth. If currently it constitutes 3% of the official population of the country, but is estimated to be as high as 7-8% in reality, if by 2050 it doubles (presuming no improvement of the decline of the native population), this might result in profound transformations upon the ethnic structure of the country. The impact is unpredictable at a geopolitical level, considering that, in the present, the wealth of policy aimed at the integration of this minority has not yet yielded notable results. 3) The third

potential issue, that of immigration, is not currently posed to significantly modify the ethnic structure (as is happening in Western European countries), instead resulting only in security challenges through the phenomenon of organized crime, boosted especially by illegal immigration. Still, some academic voices believe that in the long term Romania might follow the European trend, considering the demographic and employment imbalances, its status as a member of the European Union, and its tendency of economic growth. Whether these predictions will become reality, two facts will be of great geopolitical relevance: the nature of the impact at the level of ethnic structure and the origin of the immigrants. What is certain is that, in the long term, the predicted population vacuum, along with the aging of the population with its strong socioeconomic implications, very likely will require to be filled. The demographic shift which generated such vacuums, for example in the case of Western European states or of Russia, led to the tendency of their filling through the third type of transition, manifested as migrational dynamics. The questions which arise from this perspective for the case of Romania are: Will Romania follow the template set by Western Europe before it? If so, what sort of population will this vacuum get filled with? What impact will this possible change have at a geopolitical level? From the perspective of internal evolution the first issue has historical precedent, but the other two remain at the level of predictions, although in fact very difficult to anticipate precisely if and how will they become reality, and manifest a character of extreme novelty for the case of our country, which raises their vulnerability potential even higher.

- Migration dynamics: mass emigration. From this perspective, Romanian modern history has already witnessed significant waves of emigration, as early as the 19th century; after all, from the perspective of the ratio of immigration to emigration our country has mostly been on the side of emigration. However, that which makes this post-1989 phenomenon unique and a potential vulnerability is in particular the demographic context in which it occurs, its scale, and the vulnerable groups which it creates, in the long term, within Romanian society. Thus, if we consider the demographic context, we ought to highlight the fact that the masses emigrating out of Romania constitute an active population, which is all the more worrisome given that our country does not face an excess of population – on the contrary, its population having declined by a quarter from 1989 to the most recent census (2011), and being expected to withstand even more notable losses with near-certainty at least until 2050. Therefore, mass emigration signals the inability of the Romanian labour market to absorb a decreasing active population (hence an imbalance which shows that our economic development lacks a well-defined and thought out strategy). On the other hand, it is posed to

contribute to the worsening of the existing demographic crisis (the acceleration of demographic decline and of the aging of the population) through the fact that the phenomenon is predicted to continue in the same manner for at least 10-15 years (considering the socioeconomic disparities between Romania and the rest of the European states). From the perspective of the dimension of emigration dynamics, two aspects have proven relevant: the permanent, respectively the circular nature of emigration. 1) Concerning the permanent nature of emigration, it has a direct demographic impact, but also an indirect societal impact through the associated phenomenon of brain drain. From this perspective, the fact that Romania has been losing each year since 1989 notable experts from all fields, as well as young professionals, contributes to the development disparities between Romanian society and European ones. The link between economic development and young, highly specialized human resources is intensely studied by scientists globally. In the long term, at least two groups of emigrants require special attention: a) the young, whom studies show as highly interested in emigrating, and b) a vital socio-professional category for any society, namely medical doctors, which emigrate each year from Romania in numbers high enough to produce a healthcare system crisis, for at least two reasons: each year, more professionals exit the healthcare system than enter it (a fact to which emigration contributes substantially alongside retirement), and the fact that Romania has one of the lowest medical coverage in Europe, which essentially adds to the deficit of personnel in a system that was already facing a significant scarcity of human resources. Another issue concerning the emigration of doctors is the fact that their migration tends to have a permanent character, and through the process of family reunification outside the country it constitutes another contribution to the decline and aging of the population. 2) The aspect of circular migration draws attention to vulnerable groups in particular. It is true that, in the medium term, circular migration improves the economic well-being of some levels of society, which couldn't have been otherwise supported by the state, but also that of the national economy as a whole, remittances constituting an important part of the Romanian economy. However, in the long term this positive effect of economic emigration, at least in the manner in which it is occurring now (through the way remittances are used), cannot contribute to a sustainable development of the Romanian economy. Notwithstanding the positive effects, actual and potential, that circular emigration has in the long term, we must give special consideration to the drawbacks it presents. The reason for this is the fact that the scale of the phenomenon (10-15% of the population) reverberates in the scale of the vulnerable groups affected, and here, from the perspective of the distant time horizon involved and that of geopolitical relevance we're particularly

interested in the situation of families and especially of children which participate directly or indirectly to this phenomenon. At the level of families, circular emigration contributes to their dissolution in the case of established families, but also to the postponement of its establishment in the case of young people who are yet to create a familial arrangement of their own. These two situations have direct demographic effects, including on a societal level if we include families in the analysis, which have historically rested at the core of Romanian society. In what concerns the case of children, throughout our research we have observed three categories: children who were left at home after one or both of their parents emigrated, children born outside the territory of the country and children who await the reunification of the family abroad. In the first case, all the data and studies we considered indicated the fact that many of the children whose parents emigrated show visible signs of psychological and emotional repercussions, as well as school performance issues. On the other hand, severe psycho-emotional problems are also displayed by children (either born abroad or brought along by their parents at some point in the country of destination) who, following their parents' decision to return home, had to re-integrate into Romanian society. All of these children, comprising a statistically significant population, will constitute the active human resource of the future and for that reason it is very important to ensure their harmonious development, which seems to be hampered to an unknown extent by the experience of their parents' emigration. What is for certain is that a large number of children are dealing with depression, impaired school performance, manifestations of deviant behaviour, etc., hence the need to raise the issue of their evolution. Therefore, post-1989 emigration is posed to add new modes of manifestation to the demographic crisis.

The last part, the third of this chapter, endeavours to offer a perspective over the manner in which the state relates to the vulnerabilities that have been identified, since, by taking a reactive rather than proactive stance, state action might lead to the attainment of the demographic trends predicted by experts, signifying an aggravation of the existing latent demographic crisis that Romania finds itself in. On the other hand, this could also mean an increase in the risk of manifestation of certain problems that have been directly or indirectly caused by demographic trends. Thus, another weak spot is represented by the manner in which the state relates to these extremely pertinent and visible issues that have been analyzed throughout this chapter. Out of the ones that have been analyzed in brief in the last subchapter, we subscribe to the position of I. Mărginean, who believes the attitude of the state to be reactive rather than proactive. We cannot claim that there have been no measures or strategies deployed towards the improvement of certain demographic issues (such as policies for the

encouragement of motherhood particularly for employed women, or the current strategy regarding active aging – whose manner of implementation remains to be seen), but these are not sufficient and, at least until now, even though aggravating demographic trends are defined as vulnerabilities at levels as high as the National Security and Defense Strategies (2007, 2010, 2015), we still cannot assert that there is anything near a long-term strategic approach dedicated to their mitigation. This is proved by the deepening of the analyzed phenomena, from 1989 to the present day: the fact that over this period the total birth rate has remained at a nearly constant rate of 1.3 (so that population decline is getting worse by the year); population aging is going to constitute an impending reality in this situation, being in direct connection to the question of natality; the abortion rate is worrisome with no improvement in sight; circular emigration continues to generate effects which the state cannot counteract for now (perhaps the starkest example is that of children which, after returning home, failed in their attempts of readjustment; their numbers are in the thousands and continue to increase each year); the phenomena of permanent emigration and especially brain drain have shown an intensification in their flows particularly since 2007, while professionals continue to aspire towards, and even to succeed in leaving the country each year (in the case of medical doctors, over 2000 per year), without any mitigation of the phenomena in sight; from the angle of ethnicity, even though existing legislative regulations provide an adequate framework, there are three types of vulnerabilities and it remains to be seen in what way Romania will manage them.

Following the analyses structured in the three main parts (the historical perspective, the perspective of post-1989 developments, the attitude of the state towards current and future demographic challenges) and four dimensions (numerical, structural by age, gender, and ethnicity, migration dynamics), we conclude by asserting that the present situation of Romania manifests evolutions without precedent in its history as a state, which have transformed demographics from a power factor in one that poses the risk of becoming a vulnerability. This raises the question which underlies the research endeavour of the last chapter, which will complete the analysis of this situation: how does Romania compare to the states which comprise the regions with geopolitical relevance for it, from the perspective of the most important demographic indicators brought into attention by the demographic transition?

CHAPTER VI. THE COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE ROMANIAN DEMOGRAPHIC EVOLUTION IN CONTEXTS OF REGIONAL GEOPOLITICAL RELEVANCE

Chapter V has the main goal of ascertaining the relative positioning of Romania, from the perspective of demographic vulnerabilities, to the situation of states belonging to geopolitically relevant regional contexts, through a comparative interstate and regional analysis, with the following provisions: the three fundamental dimensions included were the numerical aspect (reflected through the total birth rate, decline, abortion rate and emigration), the age structure (median age and the elders' degree of dependence upon caretakers) and the ethnic structure (the degree of homogeneity, inter-ethnic conflict, immigration), while migration dynamics have been included within the numerical dimension – in the case of emigration – and the ethnic structure dimension – in the case of immigration. As such, the chapter on hand includes a comparison of the situation of Romania, from the point of view of the mentioned dimensions, to that of EU states, the Black Sea Region (BSR), former Eastern Bloc states (out of which we will consider separately the subset of states that are currently NATO member states), neighbouring states, but also the average of these regions through the angle of indicators that concern the three dimensions. These five regions have been chosen with the consideration that Romania poses a relevance to certain regions from a geopolitical perspective and some regions are, in turn, geopolitically relevant to Romania. The criteria according to which we selected the aforementioned regions are: 1) the present positioning of Romania on the regional and global geopolitical chessboard (as a member state of the EU and of NATO); 2) its historical regional geopolitical positioning: a) its former membership into a regional geopolitical bloc (the one within the Russian sphere of influence, through the former USSR and its buffer and satellite states), which influenced further similar developments of its states, particularly in the socio-economic dimension; b) historical geopolitical realities, which highlight certain permanent regions for which Romania constituted a geopolitical agent and in which other geopolitical agents acted upon and influenced the geopolitical situation of Romania (immediately adjacent states and the Black Sea Region).

The chapter is organised in four parts, which contain the three aforementioned dimensions of the demographic analysis (numerical aspect, age structure, ethnic structure), and alongside these an exposition upon the existence of certain disparities particularly between Western and Eastern Europe from a demographic perspective.

Thus, the first part of this chapter calls into attention the existence of two different typologies of demographic evolution within Europe, a Western and an Eastern one, founded on a

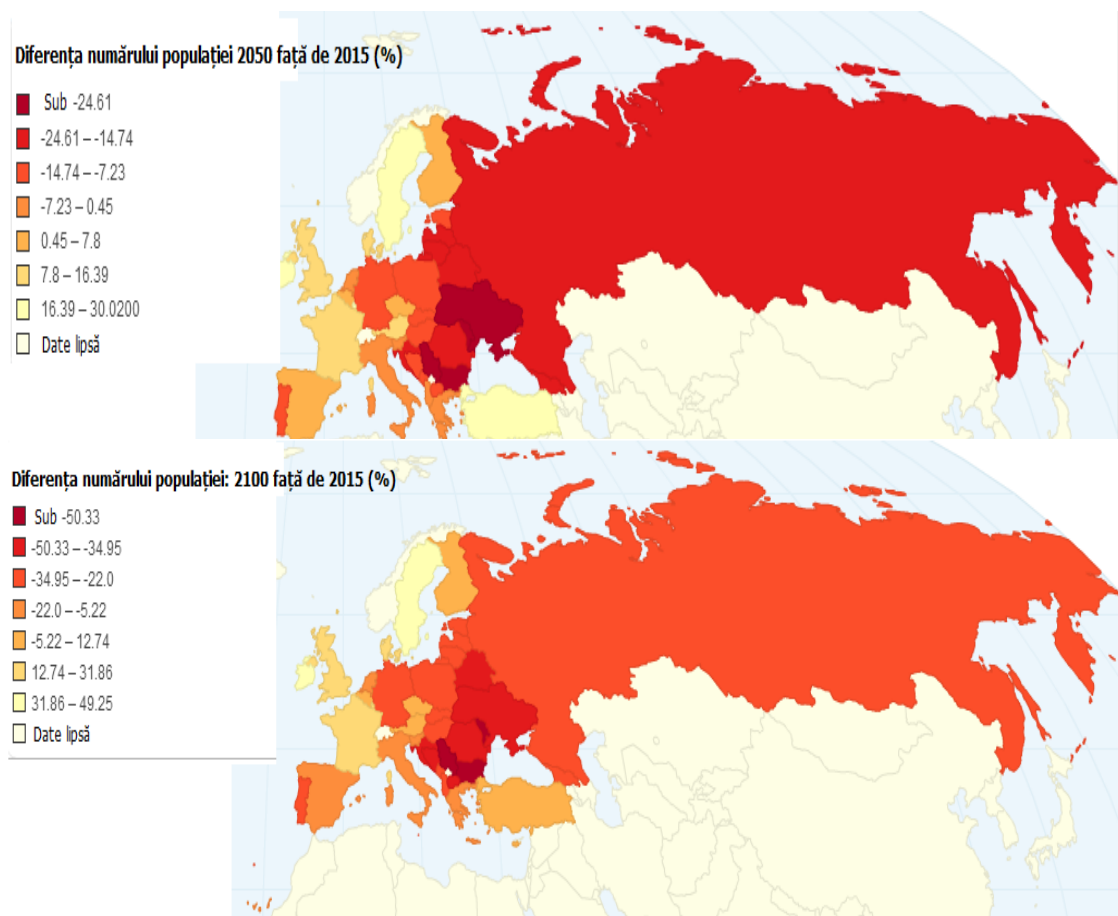
complex causal model provided by Tomáš Sobotka. This constitutes a starting point for the comparative analysis of Romania to the states of the five regions established as being of geopolitical relevance, our country exemplifying the Eastern pattern. Even though from state to state there are nuances that make a difference in their regional demographic positioning, broadly the model under analysis is underlied by two types of evolutions that divide former Communist states from Western states starting after 1990: 1) the post-1990 socioeconomic crisis; 2) the complex political, social, and cultural transformations that have accompanied the process of molding the institutional structure of post-Communist societies into one resembling that of Western European states. Thus, Tomáš Sobotka puts forward a causal model based on a combination of two types of explanations: the causes based on the post-1990 economic hardships (reversible), and cultural and identitarian transformations (irreversible). As such, the Tomáš Sobotka model explains societal evolutions differently in the Communist and post-Communist eras, which results in the coexistence of the two different demographic models within Europe. This occurs even though Europe, considered at the level of global demographic transformations generated by the transition, represents a *sui generis* typology. These intra-European differences could evolve according to either of two types of scenarios: 1) their uniformisation; 2) the maintenance or intensification of the disparities (Felix Koschin).

The next three parts contain the three dimensions of the comparative analysis. Throughout them, Romania's demographic situation is compared to that of the states which comprise the five regions, but also with the average of these regions according to different indicators in the three dimensions: numerical, age structure, ethnic structure. Following the analyses found in these three parts (corresponding to the three dimensions) we can assert that, to the demographic weak spots identified from the perspective of internal evolution (the fact that Romania is facing the most dramatic demographic evolutions of its modern history), its positioning as a state, remarkably fragile in comparison to its geopolitically relevant regions, is added. Thus, Romania has one of the most unfavourable demographic evolutions of its region, as it results from the comparative analysis performed throughout this chapter. The most important findings can be summarised and organised as such:

- The numerical dimension – population decline. Between 1990 and 2010 Romania has been among the states (out of the regions included in the analysis) that witnessed the greatest population decline, in line with the general trend specific to the region of the former Eastern Bloc, with the mention that not all of the states within the analyzed regions have witnessed a decline. As previously observed, there have also been states that had a mild population growth, particularly EU states of Western Europe. In the long term, considering the trends predicted to continue until

2050 and 2100, Romania is surpassed from the perspective of the scale of the decline only by Bulgaria, Serbia, Ukraine and Moldova, while in Western Europe there are states that are predicted to show population growth until 2100 (Austria, Belgium, Denmark, France, Ireland, Luxembourg, Sweden, the UK), albeit mild compared to other regions elsewhere on the globe (e.g. Africa, the Middle East). By comparing the percent values of Romanian population decline to the average of the decline found in relevant regions it was found that the value was higher than the average of these regions, with the exception of neighboring states, where along with Hungary it is in a better position, although there are significant differences between the situation of Hungary and that of Romania. Thus, Romania would lose nearly half of its population by 2100, its situation being one of the most severe within the EU, also numbering among the most dramatic evolutions at the level of former Eastern Bloc states, as well as NATO member states and the Black Sea Region, its situation being more favourable only by comparison with neighbouring states.

Population change between 2015-2100 for the states in the region of geopolitical interest for Romania



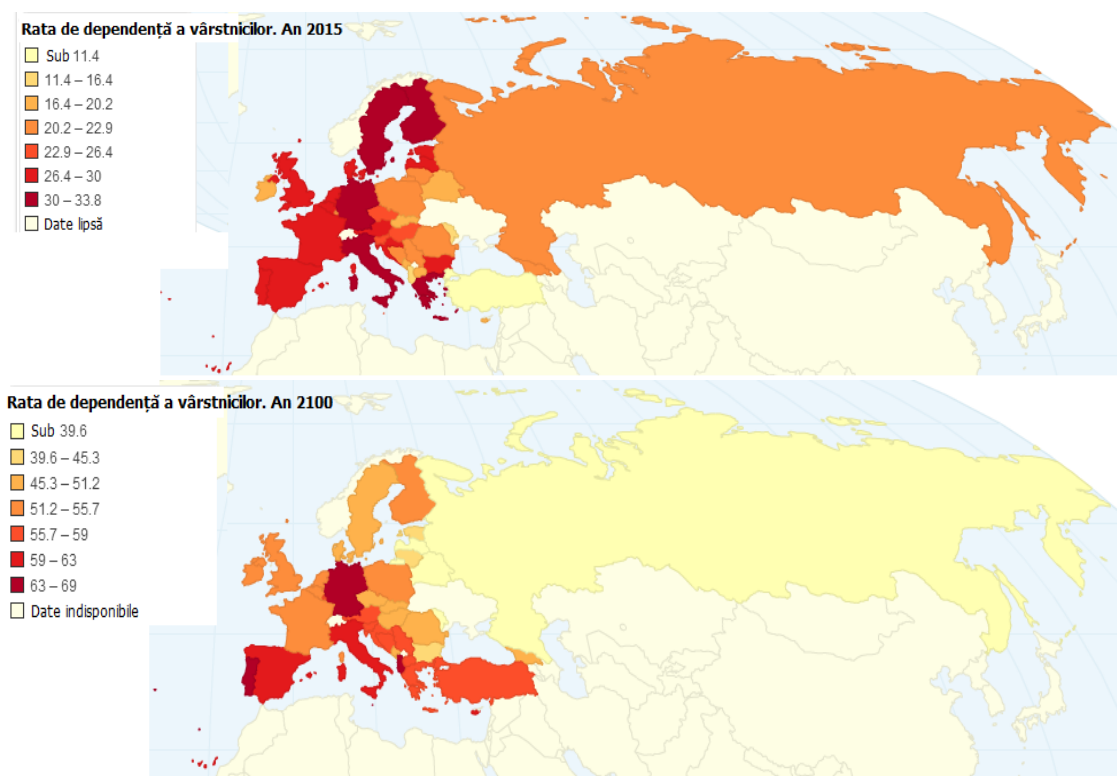
■ Regarding the abortion rate, as an issue with direct impact upon demographics, if from the perspective of internal evolution we have noticed that, after a long period during which these practices had been forbidden, their liberalisation led to a worrisome (at the very least) situation on a national scale post-1989; from a comparative perspective, Romania is in one of the gravest situations with respect to the relevant regions. Essentially, its position is among the most dramatic not just within the EU, but also among former Eastern Bloc states, the most unfavourable position among regional NATO member states, surpassing its neighboring states. The only average value (that is included in the „abortion rate” indicator) compared to which Romanian values are relatively smaller is the Black Sea Region, whereas by comparison to its respective states it is only surpassed by Estonia, Georgia, Ukraine, and Russia. From the perspective of the demographic impact of abortion, Romania again has one of the most severe situations not just on a regional level, but also globally. Therefore, amongst the worst regional situations alongside states such as Russia, Ukraine, Bulgaria, and Hungary, Romania is also found.

■ Concerning emigration, if from the perspective of internal evolution it represents a novel element through its mass character in the context of unprecedented demographic vulnerabilities, through a comparative angle Romania faces mass emigration, considering that other states that are part of the relevant regions, particularly Western European ones, are listed among the main destinations for immigrants and witness a slight population growth. Romania is among the leading „migrant exporter” countries on a European level, considering that we are not in the case of a population excess, but of a deficit. This fact aggravates the decline of the population and contributes to the acceleration of its aging (as the active segment of the population emigrates), generating a potential vulnerability with regard to the quality of its human resources: we recall two phenomena – the brain drain (particularly the emigration of highly educated young professionals and of doctors) and the issue of the children of emigrants (those who have stayed home, those who are pending family reunification abroad and those born abroad). On a regional level we noticed that Romania has the most severe evolution out of EU member states; if Western countries represent destinations for emigrants whether they feature mild growth, stagnation, or decline of the population, Eastern countries have in common their patterns of population decline and emigration. Among them, Romania takes the lead. On the level of other relevant zones, recall that Turkey has a similar evolution of emigration to EU, but also a population excess that forms the reason why it affords this pattern of evolution, whereas from the perspective of neighbouring countries Hungary has a

favourable situation: with an estimated deficit somewhat smaller than that of Romania, it manages to be among the countries that constitute destinations for migrants, whereas Romania showcases the reverse dynamic and in the most severe way possible. Thus, our country conforms to the trends specific for particular states of the former Eastern Bloc, such as Bulgaria, Poland, Croatia, Lithuania or Latvia.

■ The age structure: population aging. UN data shows that from this perspective Romania follows the European trend, although it is slightly below average in this respect. As a former Eastern Bloc NATO member state, Romania is listed among the states with somewhat more favourable values. Among the Black Sea Region, it can be found in the middle of the ranking. Among its neighbours, alongside Bulgaria it is expected to show one of the worst evolutions until 2050. Even though from this perspective it fares better than the European and regional average (from UN data, 2013, for 2050 and 2100, although other EUROSTAT and Reuters data list Romania along Latvia, Poland, Bulgaria, Slovakia as states with the highest rates of elder dependence upon caretakers for 2060), this fact does not mean that it is going to have fewer difficulties generated by this evolution, since Romania, unlike Western states, is currently facing budgetary issues, including the issue of the welfare of dependents (elders and children), while its GDP is among the lowest in Europe. Thus, with a double rate of elder dependence in 2050, compared to now, most certainly Romania is going to face not just vulnerabilities, but even economic and societal risks and implications of great complexity.

Old-age dependency ratio of Romania in comparison with the states of the geopolitical relevant regions



■ The ethnic structure. Even though from the perspective of ethnic homogeneity, Romania is among the EU states, former Eastern Bloc NATO member states, and Black Sea Region states with a high degree thereof, among neighboring countries being surpassed only by Hungary, and even though from the standpoint of internal evolution, so far, we haven't seen considerable change within its ethnic structure, our country is listed among the EU states that harbour an ethnic conflict on its territory (which is centered upon the Hungarian minority), albeit classified as low-intensity (dispute), which has been underway since 1989, according to the Conflict Barometer of the Heidelberg Institute. On the level of the Eastern Bloc it enters more favourable dynamics, some of the states of this region being involved in conflicts of greater or even alarming intensity: Ukraine, Georgia, Serbia. Regarding its relation to neighboring states, Romania is in a somewhat less favourable situation than Hungary or Bulgaria, although in comparison to the rest of its neighbours it has a more stable situation. Another emerging issue focuses on the Roma minority, and the fact that Romania currently hosts one of the largest Roma communities out of the states from relevant regions, which could grow significantly enough to beget considerable societal vulnerabilities, considering that Romania is currently facing difficulties in their integration, its percent now being less than what is estimated for 2050. Also from the perspective of ethnic structure, the migration dynamics are also to be under close observation, even though as it stands their evolution does not appear to lead to a transformation of the ethnic structure, as it is otherwise already happening for the most highly developed Western European states. From this perspective, at least for now former Eastern Bloc states show favourable patterns.

The degree of ethnic homogeneity and the existence of ethnic conflicts



Therefore, the fact that, from a comparative perspective, Romania features (and is estimated to continue to feature) one of the sharpest dynamics in the dimensions subject to analysis (numerical decline, population aging correlated with the state capacity to offer support, mass emigration despite a declining population, the presence of ethnic conflict upon its territory, as well as other possible evolutions indicating vulnerability on the level of the ethnic structure – the Roma minority and possibly the adherence to the European patterns of immigration), cause Romania to have one of the most disadvantageous positions from a demographic standpoint among current regional affairs with geopolitical relevance for our country: the EU, former Eastern Bloc states, the Eastern European NATO member states, the Black Sea Region, and neighbouring states. In the long term, considering the importance of demographics as a power factor especially within this space, all of these demographic evolutions in the analyzed dimensions throughout these last two chapters, from an internal as well as comparative perspective, have the potential to transform into a factor of geopolitical vulnerability. As we could notice, on an international scale experts predict considerable repercussions of the major demographic transformations associated with the transition, therefore all the more so, extrapolating for the case of a territory for which the demographic factor has been perhaps of prime relevance, one could expect unpredictable dynamics, albeit with likely geopolitical effects.

APPENDIX 2: THE POTENTIAL GEOPOLITICAL IMPACT OF THE DEMOGRAPHIC CRISIS FOR ROMANIA

The analyses performed in chapters V and VI aimed to highlight the demographic transformation, post-1989, of Romania, from a traditional power factor to one of vulnerability, from a historical perspective of internal dynamics as well as from a comparative perspective, in relation to the states that belong to geopolitically relevant regions. Although the geopolitical impact of these demographic transformations must take into consideration, throughout the analysis, other power factors and feature a non-deterministic approach, the magnitude of the transformations brought by the demographic transition of Romania (particularly in the four relevant dimensions: 1. numerical, through the phenomenon of population decline; 2. structurally by age, through population aging; 3. structurally by gender, particularly through the impact of the P. MacDonald paradox; 4. migration dynamics, through the demographic and societal impact of mass emigration and through the possibility of immigration for the purpose of balancing out the population decline, which could impact the country through the challenges of multiculturalism) highlights a few of the possible

geopolitical consequences. These are tightly connected to the international theories of the impact of major global demographic change on a geopolitical level (the scenarios and consequences formulated for this purpose in chapter III) and to the fact that, for this space, the population has been a key historical geopolitical advantage. Therefore, the possible geopolitical consequences of the demographic transformations of Romania, actual and prospective, found within this last appendix of the thesis, could be summarised as follows:

- Romania as part of regional realities. The projected population decline and aging call into attention the risk of depopulation which could contribute to the geopolitical decline of Europe, represented geopolitically in the form of the European Union, and implicitly to the lowering of its international participation. Therefore it might be necessary to strengthen the strategic Atlantic bond.

- The internal consequences of depopulation. From this perspective, the beginning of depopulation generates the formation of a population vacuum. This can be demographically balanced through immigration. Considering the precedent of certain European states, if these dynamics are to become a reality for Romania as well, they could pose challenges concerning multiculturalism and implicitly security. On the other hand, the different evolution of ethnic groups within the same national territory could also destabilise, in the long term, the homogeneous character of the population, bringing its own contribution to multiculturalism-related issues and to the idea of internal geopolitics, which could constitute a geopolitical opportunity for other agents.

- Population aging could have domestic as well as foreign policy consequences for Romania. First of all, externally, this could contribute to the lowering of its regional geopolitical presence in relevant contexts. From a domestic perspective the prospective economic impact (the welfare system and the national budget, possible economic stagnation as a consequence of the fact that young people, who are leaving the country, are associated with the entrepreneurial and creative source of a society), political impact (cartels and protectionism, anti-immigration populism, an elderly electorate which could result in much more conservative and risk-averse policies), military impact (possible military budget cuts, the shrinking of the armed forces, aversion to war), geopolitical impact (externally: the need to strengthen strategic alliances; domestically: the challenges brought by multiculturalism through the need to import active population) could have considerable influences upon the geopolitical behaviour of Romania.

■ The impact of migration dynamics. From this perspective we take into account the potential future impact of mass emigration: through its contribution to the decline and aging of the population, and then the contribution to the breaking up of family bonds as a fundamental unit of society, the negative impact upon the future youth of the country (the case of the children of emigrants) and the possible negative impact upon the development of society through brain drain. From the standpoint of immigration, the possible issue of population vacuum can have an impact particularly on the level of the ethnic structure, drawing attention upon the issues relating to the internal geopolitics of ethnic groups, but also security issues through the amplification of the dangers posed by organised crime and terrorism.

Therefore, the profound present and future demographic transformations on global, regional, and national levels can cause a considerable change in the geopolitical configuration of the 21st century, and as for the case study of Romania these transformations are all the more important seeing as the population has been its historical geopolitical advantage.

CONCLUSIONS

The scientific endeavour of the analysis of the influence of the demographic factor in geopolitical relations, having Romania as a case study, has proceeded from three major aspects: 1) the existence on a global level of unprecedented demographic transformations imposed by the demographic shift; 2) demographics as a historical factor in geopolitical power equations; 3) the key moments of emergence and intensification of geopolitical theoretical and applied research.

Thus, following a literature review and the analysis of relevant indicators, structured throughout the three parts in six chapters, the most important conclusions to draw could be as follows:

■ The demographics-geopolitics relationship has an inextricable character, from classic theories to contemporary ones;

■ Even though at the level of some classic and contemporary approaches, the endeavours in the direction of this connection are more poignant than others (taking the case of the German school – for the classic period and some contemporary authors such as: G. Csurgai, A. Dugin, F.P. Sempa, N. Al-Rodhan, R. Jackson, N. Howe, and from a national standpoint – for the classic period S. Mehedinți and A. Golopenția, and in the contemporary era

making an appearance within the foremost geopolitical treatises) these constitute a part of the population power factor, which acts within the framework of a complex equation of power;

- Depending on the positive/negative directions of evolution, demographics can be a factor of power or of vulnerability;

- On a global scale, we are witnessing unprecedented demographic transformations, covered under the demographic transition. These underline the need for the research of the potential geopolitical impact of the developments caused by the demographic shift;

- The most important demographic dimensions of the geopolitically relevant transition are: the numerical dimension, the age structure, the gender structure, the migration dynamics;

- In line with international scenarios, the great demographic transformations (the numerical dimension: the population boom, respectively its decline; the age structure: the masses of youth, respectively population aging; the gender structure: the gender ratio imbalances, the consequences of gender equality; migration dynamics: changes within the ethnic structure) can have geopolitical impact on the levels of: the power balance, the decline/continuity/emergence of some agents, the emergence of national and international security risks;

- For Romania the population, and as such demographics, has been the geopolitical advantage of this territory, hence the existence of the concept of “obsession with population”. Therefore, demographic evolutions are an extremely important study topic for this country;

- Post-1989, the traditional power factor for the native population has turned into a factor of vulnerability, following the present and future negative evolutions in geopolitically relevant demographic dimensions, brought by the demographic transition (along with national particularities);

- The vulnerabilities of Romania have been identified through the use of two perspectives of analysis: intra-state evolution and inter-regional/inter-state comparison;

- Since 1989, Romania has been facing a latent demographic crisis, its main weak spots consisting of: the sharp decline of the population that can lead to the risk of depopulation; the trend of population aging; mass emigration and the vulnerable groups it can create (families, the children involved, brain drain). Alongside these aspects of the demographic crisis, other vulnerabilities are represented by the population vacuum and its possible balancing through the differential evolution of some ethnic groups found within the state (the Roma minority) and through immigration (the European precedent, the scenarios put forward by Romanian academia) which could call into attention the challenges imposed by multiculturalism and the growth in

relevance of the idea of internal geopolitics; the ongoing inter-ethnic conflicts, especially on a political level (the existence of conflict in Romania according to the Conflict Barometer from 1989 to the present day – the question of autonomy that focuses upon the Magyar minority);

- Long-term evolutions predict the worsening of the crisis barring state intervention upon society, focusing on the long term. Currently, the state attitude seems to relate to the issues of population in a reactive rather than proactive fashion, despite the fact that their severity is noted even through the mentioning of demographic vulnerabilities within the National Defense and Security Strategies (2007, 2010, 2015);

- Through a comparative standpoint, within the geopolitically relevant regional contexts (EU, former Eastern Bloc states, former Eastern Bloc states that are currently part of NATO, the Black Sea Region, neighbouring countries), Romania is in one of the most precarious present and future situations;

- If the great international evolutions are predicted to have consequences upon the international geopolitical configurations, all the more so for the case of Romania, which is facing sharp, major transformations and which was used to having demographics as a traditional historical geopolitical power factor, hence the repercussions of the demographic transition are to be expected;

- Potential geopolitical implications for Romania are: as a member of international and regional structures, through the contribution to the European geopolitical decline and the need for strategic Atlantic alliances; domestic – directly, through the emergence of multiculturalism; indirectly, following consequences upon other factors of geopolitical power (economic, political, military, cultural etc. factors);

- The great global and national demographic evolutions shape population into one of the main power factors of the makeup of future geopolitical architectures.

Therefore, the research field that lies at the intersection of demographics and geopolitics is an extremely important one for current affairs, not just academically, for the purpose of understanding the repercussions caused by great demographic transformations, but also on an applied level, through the need, particularly of the Romanian government, to find proactive answers to the major demographic vulnerabilities, for the purpose of the mitigation of the geopolitical imbalances these could cause. As such, the endeavour on hand aimed to contribute to the scientific literature specific to this niche, through performing a complex analysis, which proceeded from theory to application and from the international stage to the national one, to serve as a scan of the most important and relevant current demographic

evolutions (which are mostly covered by the demographic transition) of a geopolitical nature, on an international level, but also more importantly on a national level, in answer to Romania's specific issues.

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