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DEFENSE, SECURITY AND STRATEGIES

**GLOBALIZATION AND
INTERNATIONAL SECURITY**

AN OVERVIEW

**TERESA RODRIGUES
RAFAEL GARCÍA PÉREZ
AND
SUSANA DE SOUSA FERREIRA
EDITORS**



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Chapter 3

POPULATION DYNAMICS: DEMOGRAPHY MATTERS

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ABSTRACT

The following pages focus on the discussion of the possible existing links between population and security. Globalization produces opportunities and raises fears for states, civil society and new international actors. Given the existing economic and social disparities, new and different challenges will rise, assuming a visible geographic expression. We wish to grasp the main issues that rise from these changes in today's human societies, as well as their possible evolution in the coming years. The globalization process brought a larger complexity to the link concerning population and security, as in the actual framework both the demographic conditions and the security environment are becoming increasingly complex. Demographic imbalances, poverty and economic inequality reinforced some threats and risks, worsened economic and financial instability, uncontrolled migratory flows, organized crime, traffic of human beings, and terrorism. Yet the social, economic, political, and environmental context matters. In fact, demographic changes alone are unlikely to inflame political violence, even if they can trigger conflict and insecurity situations or just their perceptions.

Keywords: Demography, population, security, sustainable development, well-being, development

INTRODUCTION

Demography matters. The globalization process brought a larger complexity to the link concerning population and security, as in the actual framework both the demographic conditions and the security environment are becoming increasingly complex. Demographic imbalances, poverty and economic inequality reinforced some threats and risks, worsened

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economic and financial instability, uncontrolled migratory flows, organized crime, traffic of human beings, and terrorism. The social, economic, political and environmental context matters [22]. Population is an underlying variable for conflict.

Nevertheless, demographic changes alone are unlikely to inflame political violence, but they can trigger conflict and insecurity. Population volumes, specific age structures, fertility and mortality average levels and migratory dynamics are both a resource, an indicator and a multiplier factor of power and security. They impact not only the capability of a given State to defend itself from external threats, but they also help it to prevent collapsing and can even contribute to guarantee reasonable wellbeing standards to its citizens. Thus, demographic characteristics have effects at two different levels which we can split in a simplistic and classical way into internal and external security risks. Although in contemporary societies this dichotomy had ceased to make an absolute sense, it still helps us in the analysis of the contextual factors of the demography-security link.

The characteristics of a given population at a given moment increase or reduce the likelihood of conflict and the levels of social instability and economic growth. They also influence the will of assertion of power from a political entity (State or ethnic group), its attempts of expansionism, the probability of ethnic conflict, terrorism, radicalism or religious fundamentalism, and even of environmental stress episodes.

Demographic trends influence political stability and security. For analytical purposes we can consider three major aspects correlated with the possible demographic impact on a State's national security [28]. The first one is the external framework, i.e., how to secure state borders and assure the capacity to project power in the international system. The second and third levels are associated to internal framework, both to regime issues and collective structural security. It concerns a) the guarantee of political and social internal stability, b) the protection of the system's interests; and c) the right to access resources and thereby its citizens human security.

For the coming decades we know how many, where, and which characteristics will the world's population have. But still we do not know how the inevitable changes it will face may represent an asset or an embarrassment to global security.

The following pages focus on the discussion of the possible existing links between population and security. Globalization produces opportunities and raises fears for states, civil society and new international actors. Given the existing economic and social disparities, new and different challenges will rise, assuming a visible geographic expression.

We wish to grasp the main issues that rise from these changes in today's human societies, as well as their possible evolution in the coming years. We will (a) present the links between demographic dynamics and regional asymmetries; (b) discuss the complex links of sustainability between population volumes, resources, economic and social development levels and security challenges; and (c) debate the crossing lines between demographic dynamics and security issues.

POPULATION AND SECURITY CHALLENGES. CONTEXTUAL FACTORS

Demographic studies should be regarded as a fundamental area of security studies and as an instrument of support for political decision. Information regarding population volumes,

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age and sex characteristics, and geographical distribution contributes to detect and prevent possible factors of risk.

So, population must be seen as a strategic vector in the context of security and defense sectors. In past societies the total number of inhabitants of a given State or a region was regarded as an element to measure its relative power. The issue was not complex, within a framework in which all populations grew moderately, had a similar age structure (many children and a few elderly), economic production was based in household units, and mainly focused in primary activities. Today the issue can no longer be seen in this simple way.

In contemporary and future societies the importance of demographic variables varies according to the main characteristics of human resources (in terms of gender, age, skills and education). Population's volume, sex and age characteristics can be considered as elements of soft and hard power, but can also trigger real or perceived insecurity risks.

In the new paradigms of the international system, the demographic volumes and their main dynamics are a crucial factor. Nevertheless, demographic changes occur slowly and imperceptibly, which partially hides its importance and interest for some of the actors responsible for the maintenance, prevention and mitigation of security threats. The inertia and predictability of demographic trends is an advantage for those who look into their dynamics for reliable information in terms of decision-making. But this characteristic is also one of the reasons why population studies are not always seen as an interesting subject for researchers and policy-makers [26].

In terms of academic research, the link between demography and security features three distinct perspectives [23]. The first one goes back to 1968, with the publication of *The Population Bomb* (Ehrlich, [8]). It considers that insecurity results from a complex and unbalanced relationship between population growth, vital resources and economic development. During the first stage it was mainly focused on discussing conflicts between States. Population volumes were seen as the determining factor for the assertion of power. But other factors were progressively added to the dynamic equation of the considered populations, such as the average levels of education and health status, employment and well-being, and quality of life in terms of housing, food and leisure. Those were recognized as determinant factors to guarantee satisfactory levels of collective security.

The second set of theories are symbolized by Weiner and Russell's work [34]. They assume a more historic and economic point of view and are linked to the International Studies Association, the American Political Science Association and the Environmental Change and Security Program [18]. Their emphasis is given to the way how environmental conditions, demographic trends, diseases, economic globalization and technology must be seen as solutions, but also as potential problems for war and peace, sovereignty and development. Supporters of this theory underline the security implications resulting from the patterns in which the relationship between population, natural resources and development patterns is based. They assume an ecological profile and highlights the risks to stability coming from competition for essential resources such as water, food, employment. The risk of conflict is higher in politically weak states and lower in democracies or dictatorial states. Some of its followers advocate the economic and military advantages of numerous populations and acknowledge that economic development leads to increased political and social security.

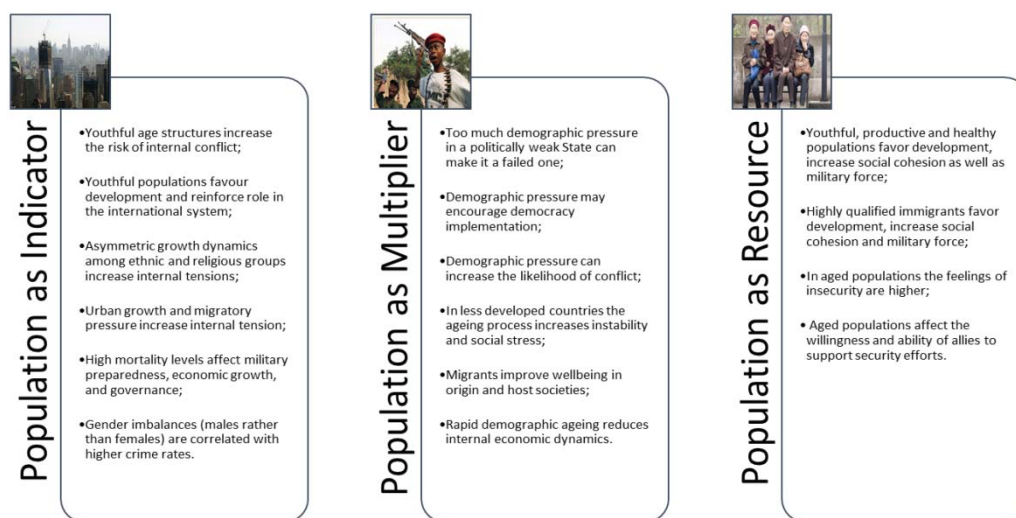
The third and last tendency is chronologically more recent and underlines the importance of geostrategy, geopolitics and prospective forecasting. It perceives population as an unconventional threat and considers demographic vitality as a strategic vector of security and

defense [28]. The future of conflicts is being shaped by demographic trends in terms of fertility, mortality and migration.

World population growth is mainly concentrated in developing regions and impacts local political power, influences regional capacity of economic development and might worsen social tensions. Demographic trends can hinder the achievement of human security, and thus put in danger the security of a nation. The existence of young population structures increases the risk of internal conflict, as there may be no responses from the labor market and difficulties to access health care and education.

But young political states can have their window of opportunity by having many young adults. This contributes to increase their importance in the international political system (e.g., projection of armed forces, advantageous alliances with ageing countries, consolidation of political strength international organizations).

If we look at the demographic model as a locked system, with its endogenous dynamics arising from the fecundity, mortality or migration variables, the study of populations might be considered as an end in itself. But we can also look at it as an open and dynamic structure, where each variable is both a cause and a consequence of exogenous political, economic and cultural conjunctures. The link between demography and security fits in this holistic view of the international system. The end of the Cold War brought new threats to populations and states security, although some of them might be unreal. The characteristics of a given population should be considered as a security predictor at three different levels (Figure 3.1).



Source: Author's elaboration, based on Sciubba [28].

Figure 3.1. The Demographic-Security link. A few examples.

DEMOGRAPHIC ASYMMETRIES, DEMOGRAPHIC CHALLENGES

The world's population doubled four times between 1900 and 2000, with a *momentum* of maximum increase in the mid-80. In 2011 we hit 7 billion inhabitants. Although today we

notice a slight reduction in all population increase growth dynamics, pronounced regional differences are still a reality.

These differences are connected with the prevalent stages of demographic transition models they belong to [12]. Populations grow quickly in South Asia, the Middle East and in sub-Saharan Africa.

In what concerns the international system and the geopolitical balances today's distribution of human populations presents three aspects of awareness. The first one is related to geographic distribution: a) there are major inequalities in that distribution; b) the number of inhabitants increases faster in least developed countries, while it decreases or stabilizes in the most developed ones (of a total of 250 thousand daily births registered in the world, 90 percent take place in poorly developed countries); c) only the evolution to new stages of the demographic transition model (and fertility levels reduction) will significantly reduce this increase.

The second aspect relies on the concentration of population levels: a) there are political units with optimal levels of population, others under or densely populated; b) differences are even more obvious at the internal level (e.g., urban/rural areas; costal/interior areas). Asia and Europe have higher average values of soil occupation, but only the first one will continue to see its density levels increasing.

Finally, we must highlight the importance of population's age structure: a) this was not a question in past societies, but becomes more complex today, as some areas are increasingly older, while others grow too quickly and have very young age structures; b) migrations do not solve the problem, as there is a "sociological limit of tolerance" in what concerns the percentage of immigrants in a given society. Those limits are being broken as we speak, arising serious social tensions, particularly in the European Union; c) demographic pressure worsens the inequalities between rich and poor societies: 70 percent of the world's population has less than 30 percent of the world's total income [31].

The economic boot of an undeveloped country with a rapidly growing population most frequently implies the adoption of measures which benefit capital holders and a few wealthy social groups which can generate popular discontentment and internal tensions.

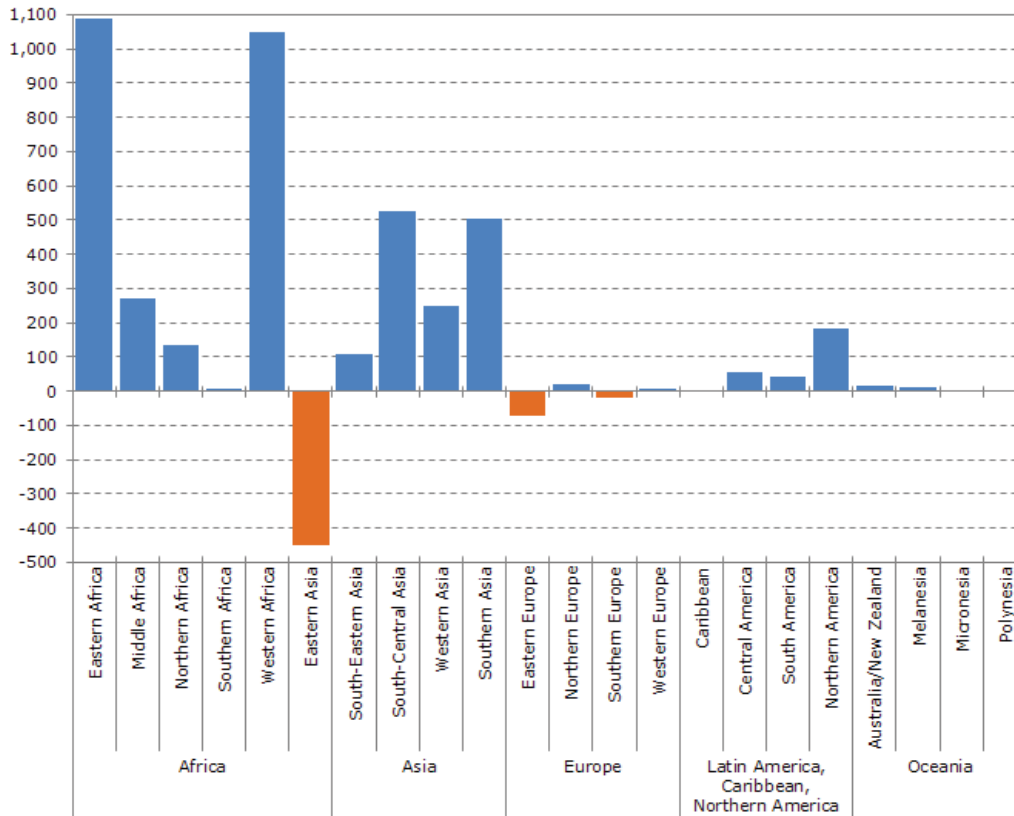
Until the end of the 21st century an increase of around three thousand million individuals is expected. More than three quarters of these "new populations" will have been born in Asia or Africa. The expected future depends on present differences in age structural characteristics (percentage of young, adults and aged population) (Figure 3.2).

However, the projections undertaken by different international organizations reveal a progressive slowdown in terms of demographic increase, due to the sharp reduction of fertility rates in regions where today they still remain high. Somewhere between the end of the 21st century and the beginning of the following one the world's population will start reducing, after reaching the maximum value of 10 billion [17].

In a two-speed world in terms of economic and human growth, the relationship between population, resources and development will face a multiplicity of challenges. The most developed countries will struggle with the accumulated effects of the double ageing of their age structures (less youngsters, more people with at least 60 years old), scarcity and ageing of their active population, the need of redefying labor market rules and social support systems, and a growing dependence on (not always wanted) migrations.

At the same time, more than 80 percent of the world's population will be confronted with the effects of a still substantial demographic increase rate and most of all with its

consequences to access vital resources, conditioned by new global phenomena such as global warming, water scarcity, and soil desertification.

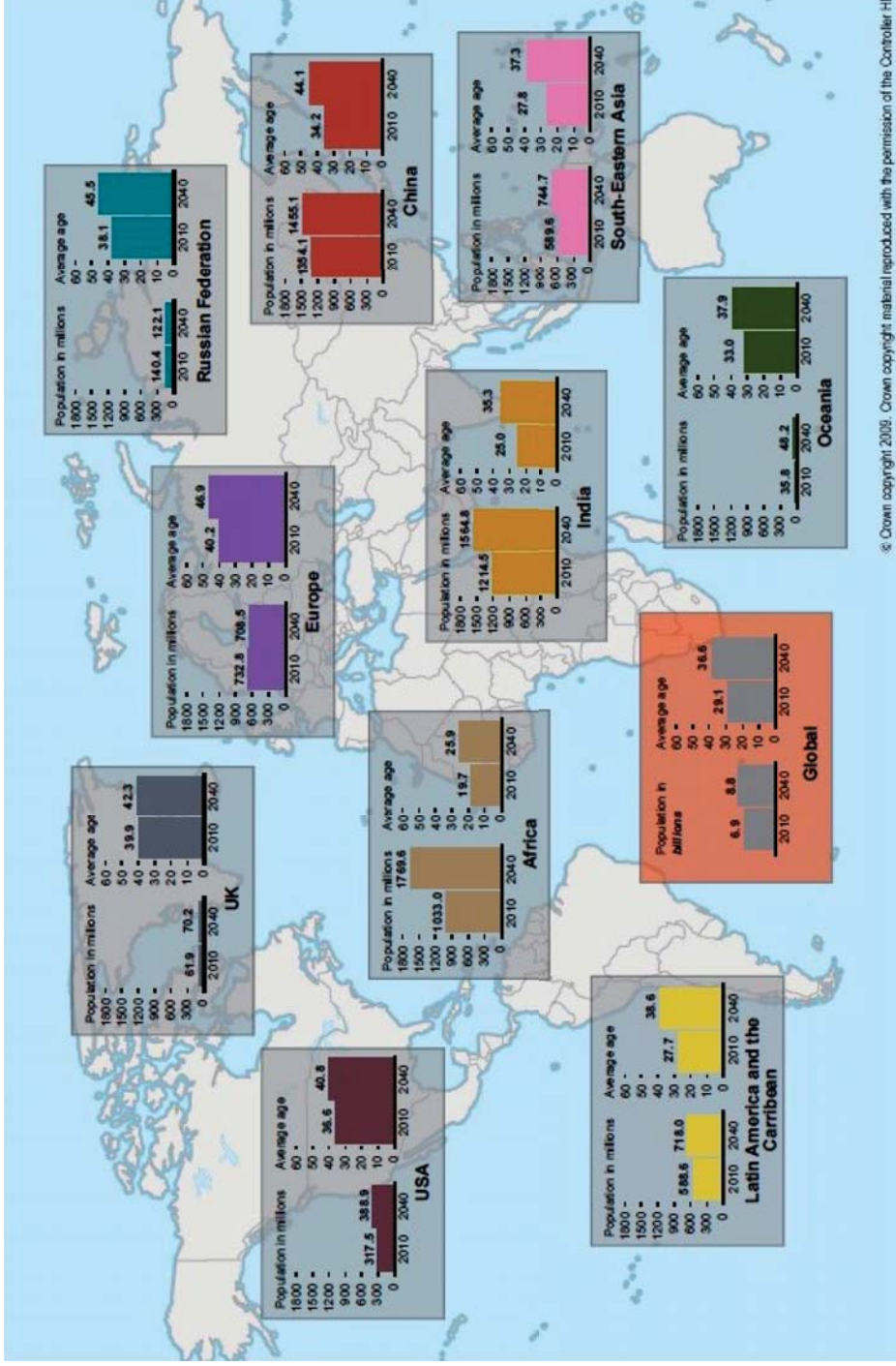


Source: UNDP [30].

Figure 3.2. World's population. Trends and distribution (2010-2100).

The inevitability of demographic asymmetrical growth (Figure 3.3) generates other uncertainties, particularly how to ensure the urgent improvement of life quality and well-being indicators in the least developed countries, against a backdrop of sharp demographic increase. And also how to ensure their economic development, considering the weakness of their domestic markets. Once again in mankind history it will be urgent to find a suitable answer to the following questions [21]: how to ensure a balance between population and resources, without endangering the necessary and desirable economic, social and human development? How to assure that this process guarantees a closer relationship between levels of well-being among populations without compromising the sustainability of vital resources and without increasing the pressure on the natural or built environment?

The management of the trilogy population, resources and development is increasingly difficult, as the geography of most vital natural resources does not match the geography of population (Figure 3.4). The growing pressure on resources, under the form of consumption and particularly of degradation, aggravates stress situations. Pollution levels are rising, as well as soil deterioration, shortages of drinking water and hunger episodes, as a result of the asymmetric distribution of resources, in the context of climate change. The latter act as multipliers of risks and threats and are potential facilitators of social tensions and conflicts.

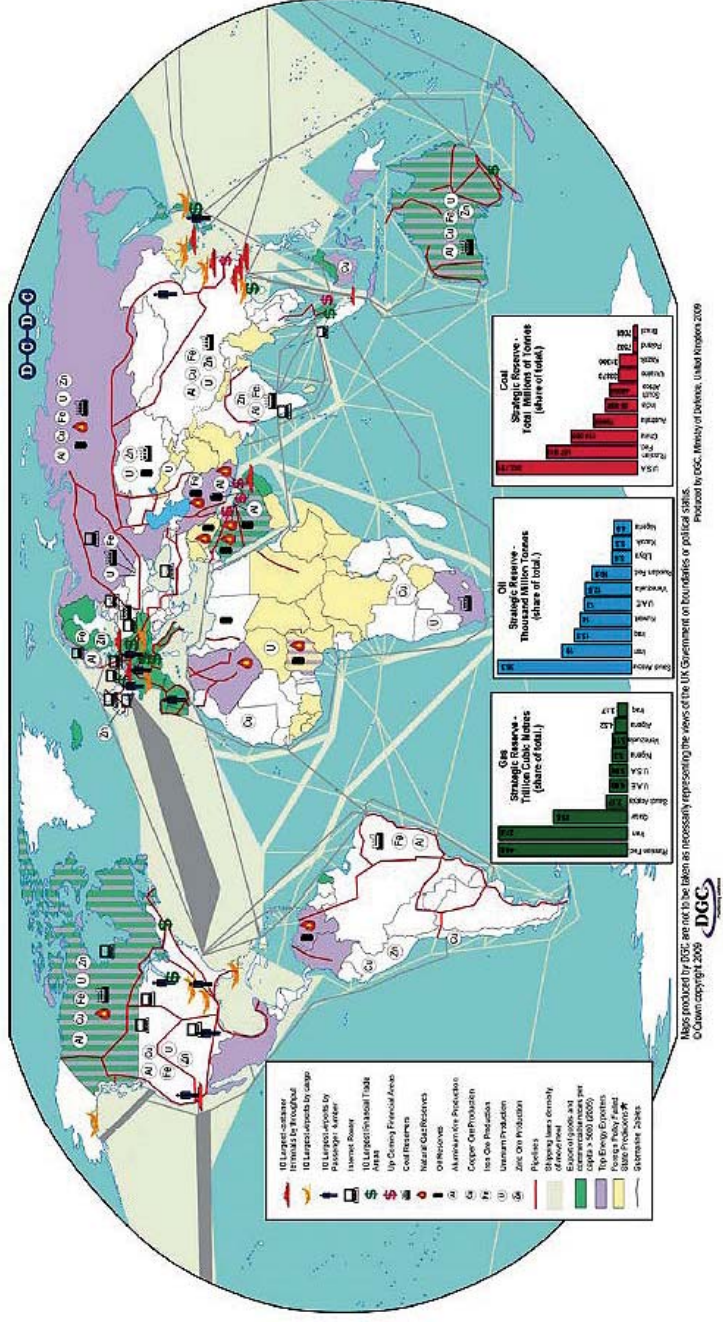


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Source: Global Strategic Trends [11].

Figure 3.3. Growth population rates and median age (2010-2040).

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Source: Global Strategic Trends [11].
 Figure 3.4. Infrastructure and global resources.

They intensify disparities between groups, ethnicities and political entities, generate processes of forced migration, either in the search of these resources or simply to escape from their costs. The challenges of global society tend to transform population into a vector that can trigger security risks [11].

Demographic dynamics figure among the MEGATRENDS assumed by the NIC for 2030 [11], although they are also seen as background for most of the GAME-CHANGERS. But of what are we talking about? 1) of individual empowerment, which will be accelerated by poverty reduction, growth of the global middle class, greater educational attainment, widespread use of new communications and manufacturing technologies, and health-care advances; 2) of power diffusion, as power will shift to networks and coalitions in a multipolar world; 3) of demographic patterns, as the demographic arc of instability will narrow; economic growth might decline in “aging” countries; 60 percent of the world’s population will live in urbanized areas; migration will increase; and 4) of tackling problems pertaining to one commodity will be linked to supply and demand for others, as the demand for food, water and energy resources will grow substantially due to demographic growth.

THE COMPLEX LINKS OF SUSTAINABILITY

The world of the 21st century inherited from the former one the need to understand and regulate the challenges and opportunities produced by globalization, but also the urgency to address the risks associated with it [24]. The relationship between population volumes and security is more complex nowadays, as we have populations with different characteristics and we also have new concepts and new environments of (in)security.

World society faces an increased interdependence of powers. In this complex reality the State performs the difficult role of acting as a moderator between the commitments undertaken externally within alliances and international institutions, while guarantying its acceptance by civil society and non-governmental agencies [1]. Countries with better socio-economic indicators and a better degree of political and social structuring can manage the neo-liberal offensive, even with different degrees of success. However, in the case of poorly consolidated states the process overlays the way to situations of tension and disruption, which can worsen internal inequalities. The accumulation of differences between those who are able or unable to follow the process creates risks of human security at an international scale, associated with exclusion processes, most of which have a clear spatial interpretation. One should discuss the achievement of balance between equality and equity, equality and/or identity, equality and/or profitability, redistribution or reward, the articulation between a global and "world culture" and regional specificities [2].

At the beginning of this century the world isn't getting politically more integrated, economically more interdependent, culturally more homogeneous or safer [27].

The Population-Development *nexus* returns to the agenda in a global risk society and acquires a new perspective of analysis: human security [25].

As we live in a two-speed world, nature is no longer used or shaped according to human interests in the short run. In fact, the new actors of the international system have to focus in the management, resolution or mitigation of problems that arise from the effects of technological and economic options from previous generations. We deal with different types

of risk (natural, technological, global and mixed) and different risk analysis dimensions, including spatial, temporal and social ones.

Our current society is characterized by the globalization of risk, in terms of intensity, generalization, existence or weightlessness of certain risks and the development of new ones. It also faces the ambivalence in the decision concerning the risks, as well as the need for international cooperation for its regulation and neutralization. We refer to risks without borders, both natural and technological, resulting from transnational threats and identity (e.g., pollution knows no borders, nuclear waste and genetically modified organisms have a long life span) [25]. Man's relationship with the ecosystem is at present characterized by new questions and concerns. Today's society faces a "readjustment crisis" of unpredictable extent in rhythm and intensity, which can even worsen for the coming generations, as the ecological footprint grows. How can we joint a world of contrasts?

Some controversy and major uncertainties frame the attempts made to rank the world's current and future global risks, according to their impact to human societies. The situation becomes even worse, if we consider its variability according to geographic regions. The international scientific community has given relevance to the effects of climate change, the issue of public health, armed conflicts, financial instability, poor governance and corruption, malnutrition and hunger, migration, ensuring access to drinking water and sanitation structures, trade barriers [7]. This listing, far from exhausting the emerging concerns, can be further simplified if restricted to the problems with larger consensus [14, 15].

Let us address some of them (Figure 3.5).

Climate change and global warming - major changes in ecosystems contribute to the decrease of the ice cap, the rise of water levels and coastal flooding, scarcities, desertification and famine, as well as a higher probabilistic occurrence of cyclones and other climate incidents [6, 16]. Pollution levels have risen, just like soil degradation, scarcity of drinking water and food, as a result of the asymmetric distribution of resources.

Climate change is a risk and threat multiplier and a potential catalyst of tension and conflicts associated with food insecurity, and access to clean water and energy. It deepens asymmetries between social groups, ethnicities, rich and poor populations.

Although climate change is never the only cause of conflict, it can increase its probability. It also generates forced migrations and struggles to ensure the ownership of these resources or to escape the consequences of its shortage. Most of the States affected by conflict already face social, economic, and political instability, which means that they will find it difficult to address the impacts of climate change.

Provision of drinking water - over the last fifty years freshwater resources have declined swiftly. Today, over a billion people have no access to sufficient quantities of water and two more billion do not have access to drinking water. The consumption's increase is accompanied by the diminishing of its quality, with direct impacts in food security and public health. Demographic growth will increase the need for water in the near future, requiring new technological investments and most of all a concerted international solidarity. Guarantying sufficient water will become a problem of international solidarity, but the forms and ways of doing it remain still unclear.

Technological risks - Nuclear energy is one of the best examples of technological risk, and a subject of the international political agenda. The option for nuclear energy can reduce the impact of global warming. However, its use is associated with severe accidents caused by the release of radioactive gases and also with the possibility of its use for military purposes or

terrorist acts (Weapons of Mass Destruction - WMDs). Another sensitive area in the field of technology lies on genetic research, molecular biology, cloning and genetically modified organisms.



Source: Author's elaboration.

Figure 3.5. Human population and global risks.

Public health, infectious and "avoidable" diseases - World's population health status has improved in the last decades. But despite all progresses situation is still far from satisfactory. Some diseases considered controlled in the past decades returned suddenly, new diseases with unknown prophylaxis appeared and the number of degenerative and disabling diseases increased [13]. The main problem is that in our progressively globalized society a growing number of individuals does not have access to health care or does not receive the appropriate treatments. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), 90 percent of the treatment means are committed to a tenth of world's total population. The situation is illogical: Africa loses 12 billion dollars per year due to malaria consequences, while a lower investment would assure the control of the disease. Moreover, donations in the domain of health cooperation faced a backspace in the last few years, due to the unfavorable economic context.

Management of wealth and opportunities - the percentage of world's poor people is decreasing, but not the number of poor. Regional inequalities have decreased, but not in regions or social groups who failed to keep up with the challenges introduced by globalization. Even in societies where the average income levels increased there were globalization "collateral" effects, visible in the rise of internal inequalities [35].

Impact of demographic ageing - in the coming decades there will remain a coincidence between aged societies and societies with better indicators of human development [20]. In fact the globalization of the aging phenomenon represents a victory of man over death. The

problem is the speed of the process in contexts of scarce sustainability and weak support networks. Changes in population's age structure in a given territory influence its economic capacity, governance characteristics, military strength and also collective behaviors [21]. As we know, the different chronologies of population's aging creates regional imbalances between demographic growth rates and most of all a growing migratory dependency in most developed societies.

Instability bred by international migrations - migratory movements represent one of the most obvious testimonies of world narrowing. But migration is a complex phenomenon, which does not fit in a strict economic logic. Therefore migratory movements and volumes represent one of the biggest challenges for the international community. There is no linear relationship between who wants to migrate and those who are wanted by host societies. But the dissemination of information on economic opportunities and the access to certain goods that define degrees of life quality will inevitably increase over the coming decades the volumes of migrants. All forecasts agree on an increase in the number of those who want and will leave their countries of origin [26].

Unevenness of life in large megacities - According to the United Nations, in 2008 the global urban population surpassed half of the world's population. Nowadays 52 percent of the world's population is urban. The number of urban residents will continue to grow at an accelerating pace during the first half of the 21st century, with the number of larger cities increasing as well. Delhi, Dhaka, Jakarta, and Mexico City will surpass the 30 million residents and more than 500 cities will have more than a million residents within a decade. Most of the global population growth will continue to be urban and take place in the developing world. Simultaneously urban inequality is becoming widespread and poverty average rates are increasing [4]. Moreover, life is dangerous in non-European megalopolis [7].

Ecological balance - The planet does not lack natural resources, and the real question lies in its unequal distribution [33]. The implementation of guiding principles of sustainable development must be based on effective planning, which: 1) enables population's growth in a perspective of resource sustainability and reduces the use of harmful products for human health in food production processes; 2) ensures food for all in the long term, through the adaptation of crops and soil stabilization to local resources, reforestation and the retreat of desertification; 3) preserves biodiversity and ecosystems, even in contexts of human pressure; 4) reduces the consumption of non-renewable energies and develops technologies to promote the use of renewable energy sources; 5) increases industrial production based on ecologically adapted technologies; 6) controls regional planning; 7) bets on environmental education, new forms of citizenship and behaviors (the recycling of renewable materials/unusable or not wasting water and food are exemplify the importance of the education of future generations).

Countries that lack the means to provide for their citizens' basic needs face greater risks of instability and conflict. The PAI identifies a few links between demographics and security to highlight strategies for governments and global institutions to combat poverty, ensure that growing nations develop sustainably, and create a more stable world. Some programs that promote demographic transition (such as family planning, girls education, maternal and child health, HIV/AIDS prevention, care and treatment) should be an integral part of the development assistance [22].

The future has to be seen in a perspective of sustainability which can only be achieved through a global diagnosis. We face a time for reassessment, and of search for new paradigms where human populations are the structuring element [25].

DEMOGRAPHY MATTERS. CROSSING LINES

Demographic trends influence political stability and security. We should not neglect the importance of demographic studies as an instrument of decision in security and defense policies. To further recognize the importance attributed to population volumes, it is paramount to obtain and manage information on the different kinds and geographical directions that demographic dynamics may assume.

Demography is progressively in the policy agenda and the diversity and novelty of the field requires a close connection between academics and policymakers.

Demography and policy influence each other. It is important to understand how governments perceive their own demographic issues and how these issues are integrated at different national and global levels. The question is whether demographic trends are dealt with sufficient resources.

What is therefore the influence that demographic dynamics have in a given political entity? Which other settings should be considered when it comes to measure the potential role or relevance of a given political reality in today's globalized world?

We can underline four factors or spheres of context:

- 1 Natural environment, i.e., location, topography, climate, natural resources;
- 2 Economic system, i.e., the status of the entity on the global economic system, either if it assumes a leading role or a role of economic dependency in a regional context;
- 3 Political system, i.e., if either we refer to a democracy or a dictatorship, a stable political regime or a vulnerable one;
- 4 Finally, men: a) in terms of volume large populations' benefit from an advantage situation, as a small country, even though highly developed, has greater difficulties to stand in the international system; b) the levels of human concentration and urbanization are also relevant, as the likelihood of social exclusion and facilities to uphold subversive practices are easier in areas with higher densities; c) the population's age characteristics in richer and older societies determine geriatric peace situations and intensify the real or perceived insecurity. In less developed societies the concentration of youngsters can fuel social tensions, as a result of poor living conditions, unemployment, and social exclusion.

So, today and in the near future we must consider four essential aspects in the link between population and security:

- 1 A two-speed world: population growth along with demographic inertia factors lead to a rapid population growth, which is higher in less developed regions. But population increase is only an advantage a) if complemented by internal stability, and b) if the State involved has endogenous capacity to maximize the advantages of this new

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workforce. On the other hand, the ageing phenomenon of societies with better indicators of human development makes them lose military capability and human force (hard power). In this case only alliances and technological investment can make up for the number disadvantage.

- 2 Globalization of migration: we face more sensitive and rapid human movements as a reaction to economic and political stress situations. Human mobility generate changes in cultural identity, balances in internal and regional powers and can be a source of conflicts and insecurity. All regions become regions of origin or destination of migrants. The percentage of foreigners in almost all societies rises, as well as the variety of nationalities, profiles and expectations [29].
- 3 Urbanization and asymmetric internal migration: the privileged directions of migration flows can reduce wealth standards in the most attractive societies. It can also increase the likelihood of occurrences and the intensity of humanitarian disasters. As we saw poverty is becoming an increasingly urban phenomenon. These profound demographic and economic changes are go along with geographic changes, which are especially important in a time of global climate change. Social inequalities are greater in the global cities of the 21st century, where vulnerable populations live. The scale and complexity of urban communities requires that politicians promote broader development and that security agendas acknowledge the urban context [4]. Urban growth clustered in places of social tension and economic exclusion increases the risk of violent occurrences. Anonymity is easy in the illegally built neighborhoods, safe havens for subversive actions and terrorism.
- 4 Age structure changes: changes in population age structures influence local economy, military capacity and governance. Youth predominance can accentuate social claims against the existing authority and dominant life conditions. Urban young people with some instruction, unemployed and with frustrated expectations easily join mercenary forces or adhere to radical groups. Moreover, in societies with numerous elders, isolation and vulnerability will increase insecurity, real or perceived. Political stakeholders will face the problem of what to do with so many youngsters, while others will face the issue of what to do with so few [22].

The link between demography and security requires a continuous process of adjustment, as we face dynamic realities. The future implies the redesign of global society, ensuring the sustainable management between more aged societies, complex and distinct migratory flows, needs in terms of economic development at local, national and global scales, without threatening human rights and guarantees.

In 2004, the United Nations established a Human Security Unit promoting the protection and empowerment of people to achieve “*survival, livelihood and dignity*” [32]. Human security includes four aspects: survival and physical safety; conditions for health and economic well-being; legitimate, trustworthy and capable governance; and individual dignity [3]. This concept, based on the dignity of the individual, implies a concern for our environment and with the geographical universe that surrounds us. Security is mainly the product of proactive and preventive attitudes and behaviors.

Demography matters, but we must avoid the securitization of the demographic issue. Population volumes need context. They are insufficient in themselves to foster social

tensions, political or economic disruptions, and conflicts. Population dynamics can create insecurity but they can also give answers.

As already stated, we believe that population trends should be read as an indicator, a resource and a multiplier. The link between demographic dynamics and security is not univocal. The same demographic behavior can have different impacts, depending on climate conditions, social reality and political context.

This happens mostly because threats assume diffuse forms in response to changes of various kinds, including the environmental ones. They frequently imply population mobility and displacement and in a matter of weeks they can change the human composition of a given region.

Future implications of security arising from demographic trends will depend on the political capacity (especially of institutions, Governments and a growing set of actors) to deal with the inevitable challenges.

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