

DEMOGRAPHY AS AN ELEMENT THAT INFLUENCES NATIONAL POWER

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DOI: 10.55535/RMT.2025.3.22

In the present paper, the authors examine demography, as an element of the social factor within the framework of NATO's comprehensive approach. On this basis, they set themselves the goal of revealing its influence on the national and allied power of a given country or alliance. The emphasis is on the importance and influence of the demographic element, an invariable part of the social factor, and its impact on the maintenance of national and allied power. The methodology used by the authors includes a systematic approach – suitable for the study of interconnected and related activities. The implementation of the chosen methodology has been achieved using literature review, comparisons, system analysis, theoretical research, and military scientific analysis. The paper is intended to be a logical attempt to reveal the significance and influence of demography on the essence of the social factor as an indispensable part of national power and national security.

Keywords: comprehensive approach; demography; social factor; national power; security;

INTRODUCTION

In the contemporary world, we are witnessing unprecedented transformations in the security environment, driven by and resulting from globalization, dynamic social processes, and growing interdependence among states. Within this context, *demography is emerging as a key factor with direct and long-term implications for the national power and security* of modern states. It constitutes an integral part of the social dimension within NATO's comprehensive approach and occupies a central position in the analysis of resilience, development, and strategic capabilities of any given nation. The comprehensive approach is a key principle of the Alliance, which underlies the preparation and conduct of every NATO operation, campaign or non-combat action (Stoychev, 2023, p. 8).

Demographic trends – such as population aging, declining birth rates, migration processes, and the associated socio-economic transformations – have a direct impact on a state's capacity to sustain its national power, both independently and within allied frameworks.

In the modern world, national power is determined not only by a country's economic and military capabilities but also by a complex set of social, political, cultural, and technological factors. Among them, *demography occupies a particularly important place*. The population represents the bearer of social capital, the primary source of labour, military potential, and political legitimacy (Nye, 2004, p. 45). In this context, demographic processes are not only a quantitative dimension but also a strategic factor, which determines the long-term trajectory of development for every state.

The development of national power requires a systematic approach that integrates the demographic dimensions with economic, political, and military factors. That is precisely why many contemporary researchers emphasize the link between demographic trends and the ability of states to defend their interests in the international system (Kugler, 1989).

Historical experience shows that demography is one of the most reliable indicators of the rise and fall of states and empires. A classic example is the Roman Empire, whose demographic decline is associated with the weakening of its military capacity and economic base (Goldstone, 2012).

Similar processes can also be observed in the Ottoman Empire, where the decline of the productive population and internal migration weakened state stability. In contemporary terms, examples such as Japan and Germany illustrate how aging populations and low birth rates pose serious challenges to social systems, defence capacity, and economic resilience (Coleman, 2006).

Conversely, India and Nigeria demonstrate the potential of young and numerous populations to drive economic growth and enhance international influence. In this sense, demography is established as a structural component of the social factor, which occupies a central place in comprehensive models of national power. It influences all other elements – economic, military, political, and cultural.

The present paper aims to analyse the role and significance of demography as an element of national power, to present the main challenges and their impact on security and economy, as well as to propose conceptual models for assessing and integrating demographic factors into strategic planning.

The methodology of the present study is based on a systematic approach, which enables the analysis of the interrelations among various elements of national power. Methods of analysis and synthesis, system decomposition and aggregation, as well as comparative analysis of existing models have been applied. Both theoretical studies and a military science perspective have been used to highlight the importance of demographic factors for the defence capabilities of the state. Such an interdisciplinary approach ensures the objectivity, complexity, and reliability of the conclusions drawn (Bloom, 2003).

A key emphasis is placed on the relationship between demography and national security. Negative demographic trends – such as population decline, aging, and migration – can weaken social stability, increase pressure on social systems, and limit defence capacity. In contrast, positive demographic trends create conditions for economic growth, innovation, and the expansion of strategic capabilities.

According to Grudi Angelov *“without a stable demographic structure, national strategies remain fragile, as there is insufficient human potential to achieve the national goals and to guarantee sovereignty”* (Angelov, 2024a). Particular importance is attached to examining the demographic factor in both international and allied contexts. Within organizations such as NATO and the EU, demographic differences among member states affect their ability to contribute to collective security. Countries with negative population growth face challenges in providing military and economic support, while states with young and growing populations may play an increasingly significant role in allied strategies (EU Commission, 2020).

Alongside the mentioned aspects, demographic processes have a direct impact on economic development. The labour force is not only a resource for production but also a determining factor for innovation and competitiveness. Therefore, investments in education and healthcare as well as a sound migration policy become tools for offsetting negative demographic trends (Bank, 2019). This is where the role of strategic planning and the need for a long-term national doctrine become evident, by integrating demographic priorities into the overall development framework of the state (Angelov, 2024b).

The scholarly relevance of the topic stems from the fact that, under conditions of global uncertainty, demography becomes a key indicator of resilience. As Nye points out, national power is no longer defined solely by military and economic dimensions, but also by the state's ability to manage social capital and human resources (Nye, 2004). That is precisely why the systematic study of demographic factors is a prerequisite for the creation of effective strategies and policies that ensure national security and prosperity.

This study investigates the influence of demography on the structure and projection of national power with particular attention to its integration into strategic policy development. The following key objectives are set:

- To examine demography as a structural component of the social factor as well as in relation to national security;
- To analyse demographic challenges and their impact on economic and defence development;
- To present existing models for assessing national power and to propose a conceptual model integrating demographic indicators.

This study is intended to contribute both to the theoretical debate on national power and security and to the practical application of strategic planning. In this regard, it follows the logic of contemporary works in the field, which highlight the need for a systemic and comprehensive approach in examining the relationship between demography and national power.

On the other hand, this study seeks to contribute to the scholarly discourse on national power and security by providing a focused examination of the demographic dimension as a strategic variable. It builds upon recent academic developments that advocate for an integrated, multidisciplinary approach to understanding how demographic dynamics shape a state's long-term capacity and influence. By adopting a research-driven perspective, the study emphasizes the need for robust analytical frameworks that connect population trends with national strategic objectives.

DEMOGRAPHY AS A STRATEGIC DETERMINANT OF NATIONAL POWER

In the context of globalization, migration processes, increasing labour mobility, and technological change, demography has become one of the key parameters for strategic planning. Over the past decades, a number of countries with aging populations have faced the need to adapt their defence and social systems to new realities. At the same time, countries with young and growing populations are encountering challenges related to unemployment, social instability, and migration pressure.

Demography is not merely a statistical indicator, but a strategic factor that directly influences the formation and development of national power. In classical theories of international relations, national power is often associated primarily with economic strength and military capabilities (Morgenthau, 1948). In the contemporary context, however, social dimensions – including demography – are gaining increasing importance, as human capital is a fundamental resource for sustaining resilient institutions, driving innovation, and ensuring national security (Nye, 2004). As Grudi Angelov emphasizes *“population dynamics is not only a background variable, but a direct determinant of the strategic capacity of the state”* (Angelov, 2024a, p. 122). It suggests that demographic trends play a fundamental role in shaping national strategy and doctrine, as well as in the development of models for assessing national power.

On the other hand, the strategic or so-called environmental factors, encompassing the political, economic, military, social, informational, and infrastructural systems, are deeply interwoven and mutually influenced by demographic characteristics. Therefore, demographics characteristics are directly influenced by the determination and the supporting elements of the national power.

Even a cursory review, or a preliminary study of these factors, reveals the extent of their interdependence and impact. For example:

- ❖ *Political factors/systems* concern the stability of a state, coalition, or alliance; governance and public administration; the functioning of judicial institutions; law, order, and legitimacy; the dynamics between groups with converging or opposing political interests; and the conduct of international relations and diplomacy;

- ❖ *Military factors/systems* encompass issues of security, stability, and threat environments – both internal and external; the armed forces, their readiness, manning, and sustainment (where demographic characteristics play a critical role); internal security forces; paramilitary and irregular formations (again shaped by societal demographics); as well as armaments, equipment, and logistics;

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❖ *Economic factors/systems* relate to vital national resources and critical infrastructure (including human resources), production, markets and trade, the distribution of goods and services, consumption, inflation, debt, and other aspects of national economic resilience;

❖ *Infrastructural factors/systems* address energy, transportation nodes and networks, communications infrastructure, industry, and public facilities;

❖ *Informational factors/systems* involve national intelligence, mass communications and media, the information activities of societal groups, susceptibility to manipulation and disinformation, vulnerabilities to messaging, and the resilience of established information and communication systems.

❖ *Social factors/systems* include social support structures, healthcare, education, quality of life, human development, advocacy and pressure groups, displaced persons, and refugees – all of which, as noted, being also integral to the demographic profile of a population or society.

These strategic factors are inseparably linked to the instruments of national and allied power that states or coalitions of states develop and maintain across the continuum of contemporary strategic competition. This continuum encompasses both peaceful competition or rivalry and the phase of cooperation. Within this framework, NATO identifies four primary instruments of power: diplomatic, informational, military, and economic (DIME model).

Demography as a Structural Component of the Social Factor

Demographic characteristics – such as population size, age structure, migration patterns, educational profile, and urbanization – form the foundation of a country's social capital. These features have a direct impact on economic development, political stability and defence capabilities.

❖ *Population size* – a large population provides a greater pool of human resources for both economic and military activities. China and India are examples of countries leveraging their demographic potential to gain global influence. Conversely, smaller states often compensate for limited population size through innovation and participation in international alliances (Singer, 1985);

❖ *Age structure* – a youthful population serves as a driver of economic growth, whereas an aging population presents significant challenges to social systems and defence readiness (Coleman, 2006). Europe, for instance, faces demographic aging that limits its labour force and increases public spending on social services;

❖ *Total Fertility Rate (TFR)* – the average number of children a hypothetical cohort of women would have at the end of their reproductive period if they were subject during their whole lives to the fertility rates of a given period and if they were not subject to mortality. It is expressed as children per woman;

❖ *Migration* – the emigration of young and skilled individuals weakens national potential. However, well-managed immigration can strengthen the economy and support societal development (Bank, 2019);

❖ *Educational profile* – an educated population enhances national competitiveness and increases innovation capacity. In this regard, investments in education are viewed as strategic investments in national power (Bloom, 2003);

❖ *Urbanization* – the population concentration in urban centres facilitates economic dynamism and innovation, but it also raises the risk of social tensions and inequality.

These strategic factors are inseparably linked to the instruments of national and allied power that states – or coalitions of states – develop and maintain across the continuum of contemporary strategic competition.

The Link between Demography and National Security

Demographic processes have a direct impact on national security. They influence both social stability and defence capabilities.

❖ *Social stability* – negative demographic trends – such as low birth rates, population aging, and migration pressure – can undermine public trust in institutions and generate internal tensions (Teitelbaum, 1985);

❖ *Defence capabilities* – conscription pool, along with health and educational levels, are key determinants of military readiness. In the context of demographic decline, the state is often forced to rely on high-tech systems or allied support (Angelov, 2024a);

❖ *External threats* – demographic vulnerability may expose a country to external pressures – such as migration crises, demographic spill from neighbouring states, or subversive activities by hostile actors.

In his presentation at the 45th International Congress of Military History, Grudi Angelov pointed out that: “*Without a stable demographic structure, the national strategy remains fragile, as there is no sufficient human potential to achieve the national goals and to guarantee sovereignty*” (Angelov, 2019). This conclusion aligns with international scholars that underscore the role of demography as a fundamental component of national security.

Demography and Economic Development

Demographic dynamics plays a crucial role in shaping economic outcomes and therefore human capital represents the primary resource for production, innovation and consumption. The labour force is a key driver of economic growth, while the population age structure determines not only the supply of labour market but also the demand for goods and services across different sectors. In this context, countries with young and growing populations often benefit from the so-called “*demographic dividend*” – a period during which the share of the working-age population is significantly higher than that of the dependent population (children and the elderly). It creates favourable conditions for economic expansion, if it is accompanied by adequate education, healthcare and economic policies. A classic example of such positive dynamics is India, where the youthful age structure supports both domestic consumption and the global supply of labour (Bloom, Canning, 2003). When properly managed, these demographic characteristics become a strategic advantage that can sustain long-term economic growth and strengthen the country’s position in the international system.

Demographic trends have a profound and direct impact on national economic performance and strategic capacity. One of the most pressing negative developments is population aging, which leads to an increase in social expenditures and a decline in the available labour force-factors, which poses significant challenges to economic stability and growth. Japan serves as a classic example of such demographic transition, where a rapidly aging population has placed considerable strain on the welfare system and contributed to long-term stagnation in productivity and economic output (Coleman, 2006, p. 53). In contrast, proactive strategies such as well-regulated immigration policies and sustained investments in education have the potential to mitigate these adverse effects. By replenishing the workforce and enhancing human capital, such measures not only support economic resilience but also reinforce the broader dimensions of national power (Bank, 2019). Therefore, adapting to demographic shifts through comprehensive and forward-looking policy frameworks is essential for maintaining socioeconomic stability and strategic autonomy in the context of global competition and internal transformation.

Demography and Strategic Planning

In the context of modern strategic governance, demography must be regarded not merely as a background variable but as a central and dynamic component of national power. Strategic planning and the formulation of national strategies and doctrines require the integration of demographic indicators in order to provide a realistic and sustainable basis for decision-making. Population size, structure,

distribution, and trends influence a state's capacity to generate economic output, maintain security, support innovation, and ensure social cohesion, which are core elements of long-term strategic effectiveness.

Without integrating demographic analysis, national strategies risk overlooking critical vulnerabilities or untapped potentials. As Grudi Angelov argues, strategic documents such as the National Security Strategy or National Doctrine remain incomplete and potentially ineffective if they do not explicitly account for population dynamics (Angelov, 2024a, p. 163). It is particularly evident in the formulation of defence policies, labour force development, education systems, healthcare planning, and migration management, all of which are interdependent with demographic trends.

Recent approaches to measuring national power increasingly incorporate demographic variables alongside traditional indicators such as economic strength, military capability, political stability, and technological advancement (Ib., p. 122). These integrated models adopt a system-based perspective, recognizing population dynamics not merely as static background data but as active multipliers of a state's strategic capacity. For instance, a young and well-educated population can enhance a country's ability to innovate, compete globally, and maintain national resilience. Conversely, a rapidly aging population lacking sufficient social infrastructure may impose significant burdens on the economy and weaken the long-term sustainability of public policy and national defence.

Furthermore, the development of a comprehensive *Grand Strategy* – a long-term, all-encompassing vision that aligns a nation's objectives with its available resources and capacities – must be grounded in a thorough understanding of demographic realities. Demography shapes the scope and limits of the state actions, both domestically and internationally. It determines the sustainability of public policy, the resilience of institutions, and the credibility of national commitments in alliances and international organizations such as NATO or the EU. In this regard, demographic research becomes not merely a statistical exercise but a cornerstone of strategic foresight and governance.

DEMOGRAPHIC CHALLENGES AND THEIR IMPACT ON NATIONAL POWER

Demographic processes are not static phenomena, but dynamic social factors that shape a state's capacity to build and sustain its national power. In the context of global security and international relations, they have become a critical indicator of societal resilience, economic development, and defence capabilities (Bloom, Canning, 2003; Coleman, 2006).

An analysis of demographic challenges reveals that they can have both internal dimensions – affecting social stability and institutional resilience – and external ones, related to the state’s international influence and its obligations within allied frameworks. Without systematic consideration of demographic risks, national strategies are in danger of losing their relevance and applicability in real-world security contexts (Angelov, 2019, p. 88).

On this basis, we will present some fundamental dependencies and influences of this element – demography, in relation to national power. The authors of the present paper, even without referring to the so-called “*demographic wars*”, have every reason to assert their position now: in just 30 years, the world will be unrecognizable. Unrecognizable because, according to them, demographic parameters not only influence, but are fundamentally at the core of the social factor, of the generation and maintenance of national power. From there, the connection to the outcome of the confrontation in contemporary global politics – which we have been witnessing for over a decade – is direct.

We can boldly state that this aspect of global rivalry is still underestimated. Yet, it is precisely that aspect (*demography*) that will ultimately determine the results of the transformation of the global community: the transition from a unipolar to a multipolar world, a transition that is already underway (and will be completed no later than the end of the 2030s). Not artificial intelligence (despite all its significance), not smartphone factories, but demography will decide everything. Moreover, the ideas that will be instilled in the minds of future generations. But for now, let us talk about demography.

Demographic Decline and National Security

Negative demographic trends – declining birth rates, population aging, and high levels of emigration – have a direct impact on national security.

❖ *Population aging* is a phenomenon that leads to a decrease in mobilization potential and an increase in social expenditures. Countries such as Japan and Italy are experiencing difficulties in maintaining their defence capabilities precisely due to demographic aging (Coleman, 2006);

❖ *Emigration*, defined by the mass departure of young and educated individuals, weakens the economy and limits the potential for military modernization. In some countries, this process is described as a “*brain drain*”, which undermines strategic resilience (Bank, 2019);

❖ *Social cohesion* or lack thereof witnesses the weakening of social trust, which can lead to political instability and increased vulnerability to external influences (Teitelbaum, 1985, p. 112).

National security is inseparable from the demographic base of society, as without it, no defence system can sustain itself in the end (Angelov, 2019). This observation is particularly relevant for small states, whose limited material and technological resources make them especially reliant on the quality and availability of their human capital. In such contexts, demographic trends such as population decline, brain drain, and aging can have a disproportionately large impact on national resilience, economic competitiveness, and defence capabilities. Therefore, maintaining a stable and productive demographic base is not merely a social priority, but a strategic imperative for ensuring national sustainability and sovereignty in a highly interconnected global environment.

Continuing the exploration of the demographic element, the authors of the paper focus on another illustrative (not only according to them) example of how direct and immediate the connection is between building and maintaining a nation's power and how the demographic decline can impact the national security. The example concerns Sweden and Israel, and we can pose the question: Which country continues to build its national power and national security, and which one fails to maintain them?

When discussing demographic policy – or policies aimed at the demographic element of a given country – examples are often brought up highlighting how important financial well-being is when having a child, as well as the various measures of social support for families with children.

So, what is the situation, or what are the important living and reproductive conditions for the population in Sweden?

In Sweden, people live in comfort and prosperity from a purely financial point of view. There is no need to worry about becoming homeless, elderly people are not abandoned, and every child is guaranteed a place in kindergarten. Sweden is a country well-known, not just in Europe, for its social policy. And this is for good reason: the core lies in the fact that Sweden implements a consistent demographic policy aimed at genuine care – not only for the elderly, but also for children and for the families in which these children are born.

Yet, despite all these favourable conditions and policies that support the demographic element, in 2023 Sweden recorded the lowest birth rate in its entire history – since such records and statistics have been kept, essentially since the 18th century. The fertility rate dropped in that year to 1.45 children per woman

– well below the so-called replacement level, which is generally accepted as 2.1 children per woman of childbearing age. In fact, this places Sweden among the lowest in Europe.

A rhetorical question arises naturally: Why, despite all the mentioned advantages, does no woman in Sweden want to give birth?

The answer according to the authors, and not just them, is this: comfort does not automatically produce offspring. Offspring is about trust. It is continuity. It is the sense that there is something greater than one, something one is called to serve.

In Sweden, there is no such purpose. There is no nation as an idea. There is no religion to justify sacrifice. There is no military duty, no historical pain, no memory for which someone would be willing to die – and therefore live – for something greater than themselves. Personal well-being and individual success are present. Collective ones, however, have dissolved.

On the other side is Israel. A country that for decades has been in a state of emergency, of tension, of mobilization, and of war. Where every morning can begin with a siren, and every summer with a new campaign in the Gaza Strip (not only as now, with one of the largest-scale campaigns there). But the fertility rate there is 2.9 – the highest among developed countries. And in this case, it is not just a statistic, it is a diagnosis. And in that diagnosis lies everything: economy, culture, faith, fear, national power, and purpose.

Israel is an anxious country. But it knows who it is. It knows where it came from and where it is going. There, family and the continuation of lineage are not an *“option”* or a *“choice”*, but a duty to the ancestors and a matter of survival. There, a child is not an *“extra expense”*, but a participant in a common cause. Yes, the State of Israel pays for childbirth. It covers in vitro fertilization (IVF). It supports mothers. But that is not the main thing – Sweden has those policies too. The main thing is in the minds of the people, of the population, of society. In Israel, even so-called secular women have three or four children. Because society expects it. Because family is the centre of society, not a personal project or personal interest.

In Israel, meaning, honour, duty, and participation – for every citizen, not only for the woman who gives life – are not something belonging to the past. They are the present itself, the present upon which Israel builds its future, and with which it builds and sustains its national power. If we are to describe in another way the demographic element in Israel, we can say that in the entire society there is a clear understanding: the woman continues, the man carries, and the child receives. And all of this is called Kin.

Demography, however, is not only about characteristics and social policies – it is a matter of national security. It is not just one of the topics, even if we call that topic “*national power*”. First and foremost, it is a matter of survival. But we know that a state can survive and move forward in time with a clearly built and sustained, strong – not hollow or imaginary – national power.

In the provided examples of Sweden and Israel, it is telling how, because of misguided, unclear, or poorly presented policies in the sphere of demography and in the social, cultural, and economic factors, a country like Sweden demonstrates how a nation in comfort heads toward its decline, and perhaps even toward gradual assimilation and oblivion. Israel, on the other hand, shows how a nation in a state of anxiety gives a meaning to birth. How it not only builds but sustains its national power, how it moves forward to defend its national interests, even though compared to Sweden, it (the State of Israel) is surrounded almost entirely by hostile countries.

Impact on Defence Capacity

Military power is traditionally regarded as a core element of national strength. However, the quality and quantity of the human resources it depends on are intrinsically linked to demographic processes.

❖ Shortage of military personnel. Countries experiencing population decline face difficulties in recruiting sufficient numbers of military personnel. It necessitates changes in military structures and a shift toward professional armed forces and reserves (Singer, Bremer, Stuckey, 1972).

❖ Technological compensation. When human resources are limited, states often invest in high-tech weaponry and defence systems. However, it requires substantial financial resources that not all countries can afford (Nye, 2004);

❖ Allied mechanisms. Smaller states frequently rely on collective defence within NATO and the EU to offset their demographic weaknesses (European Commission, 2022);

Based upon everything mentioned above, it could be outlined: “*For small states, demographic decline is not only a social problem, but also a defence problem, which requires reliance on alliances and shared security frameworks*” (Angelov, 2024a, p. 67).

The demographic characteristics of a country also influence the methods of confrontation and warfare that it is compelled to adopt when faced with the need to defend or uphold its national interests. For example, based on their demographic characteristics, a number of countries choose so-called asymmetric methods and actions as means of confrontation. In the contemporary context, we can also say

that hybrid actions or hybrid warfare represent such an asymmetric method – though not exclusively for countries with smaller demographic capacity or a smaller population. Of course, the concept of hybrid warfare is not a new discovery for modern society. It is a natural evolution of war (Yordanova, 2024).

Strategic Approaches to Demographic Challenges

Addressing demographic problems requires a comprehensive strategic approach that integrates economic, social, and defence policies.

❖ *Encouraging birth rates* – Tax incentives, social programs, and support for families can help mitigate the effects of low birth rates;

❖ *Managed migration* – Controlled immigration, combined with effective integration policies, can support the economy and renew the labour force.

❖ *Investments in education and healthcare* – Enhancing the quality of human capital is a key factor in societal resilience.

❖ *Adapting defence systems* – Incorporating reserve forces, modernizing the military, and integration into allied structures are all vital.

Taking everything mentioned above into account, it could be concluded that: *“The future of national power lies in the ability of states to adapt their strategies to demographic realities, rather than ignoring them”* (Angelov, 2024a, p. 140).

Overall, it could be summarized that, demographic challenges represent a fundamental factor influencing the economic development, social stability, defence capacity, and international role of states. Furthermore, negative trends – such as declining birth rates, population aging, and migration – require strategic approaches and international cooperation. Only by integrating demographic factors into national strategic planning can states build sustainable and effective national power.

CONCLUSIONS

In conclusion, demography is now widely acknowledged as a core determinant of national power, shaping and reinforcing its economic, social, military and political dimensions. The findings of this paper indicate that population should not be viewed solely through numerical indicators such as size or growth, but rather as a multidimensional factor reflecting the quality of human capital, the resilience of society, and the strategic capacity of the state to sustain long-term stability and advancement.

Chapter one clarifies the role of demography as a structural component of the social factor. The interdependence between age structure, educational profile, and geographic distribution of the population, on the one hand, and economic viability and defence capacity, on the other hand, have been highlighted. It has been

emphasized that demographic trends have direct implications for national security, as population aging and migration can weaken social cohesion and create strategic risks (Nye, 2004; United Nations, 2022).

Chapter two depicts the major challenges arising from negative demographic trends. They manifest both internally – through shrinking workforce, increasing social inequality, and decreasing mobilization potential – and externally – by reducing a state’s international influence and its contribution to collective security systems. Special attention has been given to the sustainability of social systems and the need for long-term policies aimed at encouraging birth rates, reducing emigration, and integrating migrants (Bloom, Canning, 2003; Coleman, 2006).

The synthesis of the examined issues leads to several key conclusions:

1. *Demography is a strategic resource* that shapes a state’s capacity for economic growth, defence sustainability, and social stability;
2. *Negative demographic trends* – such as population aging, low birth rates and emigration – pose a critical risk by undermining national resilience and reducing a state’s international influence;
3. *Strategic planning* necessitates the integration of demographic factors, as their absence renders national strategies and doctrines incomplete and challenging to implement;
4. The *international and allied context* amplifies the importance of demography, as demographic deficits in a single member state – within frameworks like NATO and the EU – can weaken overall collective security;
5. A *comprehensive approach* is essential, requiring demographic policies that include fertility incentives, strategies to encourage return migration, effective migrant integration, and sustained investments in education and healthcare.

As emphasized in recent literature, “*the integration of demographic indicators into a national power index is not optional but mandatory for states facing existential demographic risks*” (Angelov, 2024a, p. 112). Therefore, the strategic future of every nation – regardless of its size or economic strength – depends directly on its ability to manage and shape demographic dynamics.

In conclusion, demography should not be regarded as a secondary statistical variable but rather as a strategic pillar of national power and security. It reflects the current state of society and serves as a crucial indicator of its future trajectory. States that integrate demographic factors into their strategic frameworks will be better positioned to ensure stability, resilience, and international relevance in the face of global challenges.

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