Original Researcher Article

Common Threats to Economic Security in the Context of Armenian-Russian Cooperation: Diagnosis of Common Demographic Threats and Possible Means of Addressing Them

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ABSTRACT

This study is aimed to examine the demographic threats as important elements in the system of economic and national security. At the same time, it should be taken into account that the EAEU countries have significant intellectual potential for solving the problems of ensuring demographic security and it should be properly used for the mentioned purpose. As a result of the study, it can be concluded that it is possible to support and strengthen demographic security in modern conditions by eliminating economic and political threats, satisfying the basic interests of the individual, society and the state. Finally, an important threat to ensuring intellectual and security in the context of the demographic development of Eurasian integration is the targeted activity of various states, on the one hand, "luring" highly qualified specialists trained in post-Soviet countries and especially in the EAEU countries, and on the other, deliberately underestimating or discrediting the achievements of their own scientific intelligence in the world community. It is obvious that in order to ensure, maintain and strengthen demographic security it is necessary to implement a set of organizational, legal, economic and other measures aimed at preserving and reproducing the existing intellectual potential.

Keywords: demography, strategy, action plan, refugees, "brain drain", population aging, migration.

INTRODUCTION:

A long-term and stable security architecture that guarantees human resilience in both Armenia and Russia will not be achieved without a thorough analysis of the risks, challenges and threats related to human security and, in particular, demographic security. Our countries face relatively similar threats to human security and, in particular, demographic security. For the purposes of our analysis, we defined demographic security as an integral part of economic security, the purpose of which is to reduce and eliminate threats related to population changes. In particular, it deals with overpopulation, aging, urbanization, migration, brain drain, ZPG (zero population growth), etc.

In this article, we review the main challenges facing the Republic of Armenia and the Russian Federation and point out parallels with the challenges facing our countries in order to propose strategies that could be implemented by states to address their common threats. In particular, we consider the devastating impact of wars, armed conflicts, forced displacement of civilians, mass migration, brain drain, as well as other threats facing the countries as significant obstacles to human resilience. Given the common nature of the problems, a common effort is required to develop solutions to address these issues.

We review various approaches and projects of governments, professional societies of our countries, as well as reports, concepts and indices of international organizations to better understand the current trends that challenge the favorable environment for human capital growth and security. Scientific arguments and methods are carefully considered during the review of expert articles and other literature sources to substantiate the provisions highlighted in this study. Finally, some recommendations are formulated to support the expected joint efforts, as well as the institutions that make the relevant decisions.

TRENDS AND PROBLEMS

Since 1800, the world's population has increased sixfold [1]. It began to multiply rapidly at some point during the Industrial Revolution. In 1650, the absolute number of people in the world was about 500 million, and within two centuries it had doubled. Eighty years later, in 1930, the population had increased to two billion [3], in 1950 to 2.5 billion [1]. Thus, in less than 40 years, the world's population approached four billion. Adding more than 215,000 people to the world's population daily,

according to Bleier, and 95 million annually, according to Irvine [3], or 800 million people per decade[^footnote0] leads to more than 8.5 billion people in 2025. This rapid population growth places a significant burden on the earth, as space becomes scarce not only for people, but also for wild plants, animals, fish and birds. Armenia and Russia are no exception to this trend. In addition, there are socio-economic consequences of population growth. Every year it becomes more and more difficult to create new jobs, provide social benefits and improve the living conditions of the population, especially in developing countries. Unfortunately, population growth and population aging will become the norm in the coming years. Population aging is just one of the local trends in our countries, which has turned into a global problem. Population aging has become a serious threat to demographic security. Moreover, many regional problems, such as growing nationalism, racism, ethnic and religious conflicts, increasing military spending, environmental degradation, polarization of society, as well as global social and political problems, are presented as direct consequences of uncontrolled human fertility. According to Bongaarts, "As societies become more prosperous, fertility is impacted by all sides: social, economic, environmental and biological. Shortages of skilled labour and the deterioration of the elderly care sector are just the beginning. Managing the social, political and economic consequences of unchecked population decline, and the accompanying shift in age structure, will be extremely difficult" [5].

Methodology and Literature Review.In our study, we use methods developed by the scientific direction of demography, including: the cohort method, the cross-sectional analysis method, the method of standardization of demographic coefficients, the method of demographic modeling, the cartographic method, the demographic grid method and the method of demographic forecasting. In this case, demographic events can be of two types: non-recurring, which can occur once in a person's life, and recurring, which can occur many times. Demographic processes are the processes of excluding individuals from the original number of cohorts (death, divorce), and not excluding individuals from the original number of cohorts (marriage, birth rate). Longitudinal and cross-sectional methods allow us to compare the reproduction of a number of generations. This is important both for historical demography and for demographic and social forecasting in order to adjust the design of social policy. The method of standardization of demographic coefficients allows us to determine the influence of structural features for comparing demographic communities when comparing demographic coefficients. This method uses data for a specific year: demographic coefficients are calculated, taken as a standard, and in relation to the standard and by multiplying this index by the standard indicators, the index is calculated. This results in standardized demographic coefficients, which are used to compare demographic aggregates (determining the mortality rate by social groups, the birth rate by strata). The demographic modeling method is the most common

method for forecasting reproductive processes. This method replaces the experimental method when it is not applicable. The demographic modeling method is used to study demographic processes and reproduction in general. The cartographic method is also widely used. Maps of populated areas, population density, age structure, and population movement are used. It allows us to compare demographic conditions and processes by territory, in our study – by all three Caucasian peoples. In our study, we use the demographic forecasting method based on the analysis of modern trends and events, taking into account population aging, fertility and mortality, as well as urbanization and migration. This method allows us to forecast and evaluate certain components of population change, comparing their impact on the size and structure of the population in the future.

In order to better understand the main demographic trends and events in Armenia and Russia, we review the scientific works of the most famous specialists. In particular, many works are devoted to the problem of ensuring demographic security. A number of comprehensive studies have played an important role in defining and defining the problems associated with demographic security in Armenia and Russia. Such works include the works of Sargsyan, N., & Manaseryan, T. (2022), Bongaarts, J. (2023), de Waal, A. (2022) and others [2,5,6]. The multiplicity of interpretations regarding the concept of sovereignty and security in international law and the theory of international relations is expressed in the works of Betts, A., & Bloom, D. E. (2023), Cleland, J., et al. (2022), who proposed a solution to the demographic problem both in line with the normative-legal approach and from the standpoint of an interdisciplinary approach to the theoretical justifications of this concept [7,20].

Diagnosis of Challenges: Wars, Refugees, Diseases
As de Waal has noted, "Armies and civil societies are not immune from a new wave of attacks involving intense use of weapons of different generations and origins. It is therefore difficult to underestimate the role of wars in slowing the growth of the world's population. By some estimates, there were about ten wars in the world between 1950 and 1962, in which a thousand or more people died. Over the next twenty years, this number of deaths almost doubled, then rose sharply in 1983 to thirty, and has not decreased since then, including fifty or more countries, especially in 1990-1994" [6]. In 2020, Armenia and Artsakh, and in 2022-2025, the war with Ukraine, the population declined even further.

The countries have faced the problem of mass migration, especially after the collapse of the Soviet empire. Since declaring independence in 1990, both countries have faced a number of demographic problems, including mass migration and a persistent brain drain, despite several initiatives aimed at reversing these trends. However, these issues remain unresolved and continue to challenge current and future governments. According to some studies, insecurity and unemployment are

among the main drivers of mass migration. It is also important to note that many of those who left the country decided to do so temporarily, with only a third indicating that they would stay abroad for a long period of time or permanently [10]. A comprehensive study by the European Training Foundation analyzed the reasons for migration, as well as the reasons for return given by those who returned to their home country. These reasons were: lack of work/inability to find work in home country, poor wages and career prospects in home country/better prospects abroad, obtaining education or training, accompanying/following spouse/parents abroad or getting married, improving standard of living, paying off debts, reuniting with relatives or friends abroad, funding children's education or training, inadequate social security system in home country, fear of war/civil conflict/persecution, other predominantly negative reasons related to home country (push factor), other predominantly positive reasons related to destination (pull factor) [11].

The above mentioned trend is quantified by examining the human flight and brain drain index that considers the overall influence of the movement of human capital (for economic or political reasons), as well as the possible outcome that it may have on the development of the country. The higher the index, the greater the movement of people. The average value for Armenia from 2007 to 2023 was 6.45 index points, with a minimum of 5.7 index points in 2014 and a maximum of 7.2 index points in 20234.
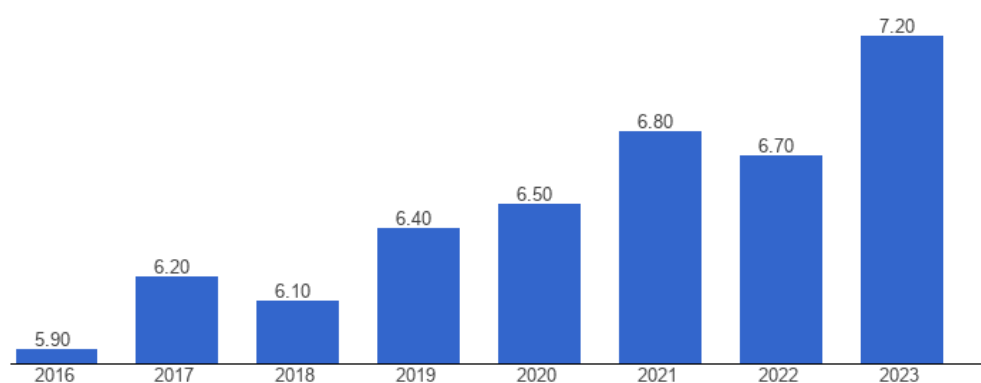

Chart 1. Data for Armenia in recent years
Source: [12]

As shown in the chart, human displacement was relatively low in 2016, while the last few years are characterized by a higher index, which is obviously a consequence of Azerbaijan's attacks and abandonment of Nagorno-Karabakh in 2019-2023, when 120,000 people became refugees and were forced to leave their homes.

- ❖ "Brain Drain"
- ❖ Armenia People Outflow and Brain Drain Index, 0 (low) - 10 (high)
- ❖ Latest Value 6.7
- ❖ Reference 2022
- ❖ Measurement Index Points

Source The World Peace Foundation
As reported by Global Economy, "Armenia's average over this period was 6.41 index points, with a low of 5.7 index points in 2014 and a high of 7 index points in 2010. The latest value since 2022 is 6.7 index points. For comparison, the global average in 2022, based on 177 countries, is 5.21 index points." It is also important to consider global rankings for this indicator or use a country comparator to compare trends over time[^footnote4]. According to the same sources, the state of demographic security according to the indicated indicators is also not encouraging for Russia.
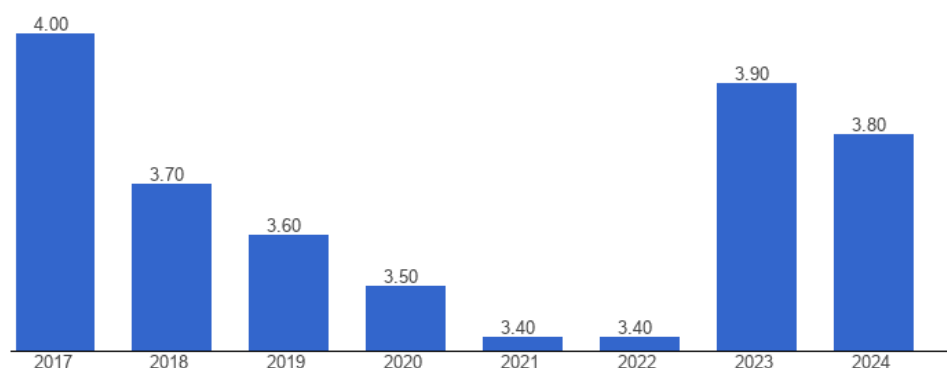
Chart 2. Russia data for recent years

Source: [12]

As shown in the chart, the movement of people was relatively low in 2021, while the last few years are characterized by a higher index, which is obviously a consequence of the special military operation in Ukraine.

The latest value for 2024 is 3.8 index points, which is lower than 3.9 index points in 2023. For comparison, the global average is 4.98 index points based on data from 176 countries. Historically, the average for Russia from 2007 to 2024 is 4.68 index points. The minimum value, 3.4 index points, was reached in 2021, and the maximum value of 6.5 index points was recorded in 2007. Explore global rankings for this indicator or use the country comparator to compare trends over time.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Despite differences in policy, culture, and economic growth priorities, many demographic challenges are common to Armenia and Russia. Given that the demographic challenges our countries face are regional phenomena, national efforts to ensure demographic security are insufficient. Moreover, some of them are global demographic challenges. It is therefore worthwhile to review current realities at the regional and international levels and learn from success stories in order to develop more effective common policies to reduce and combat demographic threats.

Several attempts have been made to address demographic security issues at the global level. At the 1974 World Population Conference in Bucharest, Romania demonstrated its political fragmentation between the North and the South. Developed countries attempted to adopt the World Population Plan of Action. Curbing high fertility rates was a central issue at the 1984 International Population Conference in Mexico City, as well as at the 1992 Rio Earth Summit and the 1994 Cairo Conference. All planned actions failed, as religious groups, gender organizations, and political leaders from less developed countries strongly opposed resolutions calling for immediate action. However, in 1989, nearly eighty countries pledged to devote four percent of developed countries' foreign aid to family planning and adopted the Amsterdam Declaration, with a joint plan to equalize world fertility rates and provide contraceptives to three-quarters of the world's women.

In 1994, the UN International Conference on Population and Development again called for decisive action on family planning. Since global forums are not always fruitful in terms of action, developed countries try to solve global problems on their own, and for this reason they have initiated several projects. Canning & Wang warned that "in a country with a stable population that is in the process of economic take-off, an investment program of at least 8 percent of national income is needed to achieve an annual growth rate of 2 percent." But more typically, these countries are also areas of high population growth. " The administration began to promote population growth limitation with adequate funding from the U.S. government budget and supported the United Nations Population Fund with related programs in 130 countries. Subsequently, administrations continue to combat demographic threats by spending the necessary funds and expanding cooperative ties with other stakeholders [21].

Despite global collective efforts, the post-Soviet space remains one of the regions where no action has been taken since the countries gained independence in 1991-1992. As can be seen from current trends, it may be impossible to reduce or even eliminate many demographic threats, as measures taken by local authorities may be insufficient. Demographic security largely depends on coordinated regional efforts and actions in cooperation with international organizations. Some of them were formulated in the Millennium Development Goals (MDG-8) in 2000 and further developed in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG-17) in 2015. Others are considered and recommended by experts within the Copenhagen Consensus format[^footnote5]. In addition to the mentioned goals, which can serve as a solid basis for regional cooperation, we propose a more specific agenda aimed at a more realistic diagnosis of the existing problems, as well as at developing coordinated actions for the three neighboring countries. A thorough assessment of the growing tensions in the Caucasus, of which Russia is a part, and in the surrounding region leaves no alternative to finding unconventional, innovative ways to build lasting security. In turn, any acceptable solution requires a strong commitment and political will for its precise and timely implementation. In particular, we recommend the development and implementation of common action

plans by national governments in cooperation with experts and civil societies in Armenia and Russia. We expect that the states will express a firm intention, firstly, to stop armed conflicts and military actions, and secondly, to express their readiness to take steps to eliminate common demographic and other threats. These efforts should be motivated and supported by the expert and technical expertise of such international organizations as specialized UN agencies (UN Population Fund, UNDP and others). Joint actions are needed to ensure the free movement of people in all countries by opening all internal and external communications. On the other hand, a commitment to reduce the arms race will significantly contribute to increasing the funds aimed at providing solutions to demographic problems and social security. The expert communities of our countries can contribute by organizing regional conferences on common demographic threats, as well as developing regional strategies and common policies against mass migration and "brain drain", population aging and other demographic problems. Finally, coordinated actions of the three countries are needed to implement priorities aimed at migration flows, equal opportunities for access to labor markets, protection of children and families, improvement of maternal health, social security, etc.

All the above recommendations are aimed at establishing peace and security in our countries. Therefore, they can have a positive impact on human security and resilience. This will stop mass migration, "brain drain" and will use the benefits of cooperation.

In general, demographic security is an important part of human security and resilience. Ignoring the threats described in this article, mass migration, "brain drain", population aging and others can seriously undermine the efforts of local authorities to maintain an adequate level of human security and resilience. Political tensions, armed conflicts and wars force people to leave their homeland and become refugees.

A number of valuable studies and analyses related to various aspects of demographic security are still being conducted. However, less attention has been paid to the growing dependence of human security and sustainability on demographic security. Our study serves as a first attempt to reveal the common nature of some demographic threats in the troubled post-Soviet region using the example of two fraternal countries.

Initial coordination of efforts and attempts to develop common policies to reduce common threats could include possible cooperation between expert societies in the three states aimed at gradually eradicating existing hostile actions.

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