

European Aging Dilemma and Political Problematic

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RESUMO: Os patróns demográficos asociados ao aumento do envellecemento teñen serias implicacións para as sociedades europeas, onde haberá cambios estratéxicos con un efecto polarizador. Polo tanto, aínda que as proxeccións se fan baixo o suposto de “todo segundo a ecuación económica pura está baixo control”, no noso artigo sinalaremos que estas proxeccións deben ir acompañadas de compromisos nun ámbito político e cultural máis amplo. Non ten sentido tratar os dilemas do envellecemento coma se fosen unha cuestión económica allea ao futuro político de Europa, se non ao seu propio destino. En consecuencia, hai que cuestionarse como recrear a cultura, a economía e a política, especialmente se os líderes e as elites políticas seguen centrándose só na enxeñaría financeira mentres descoidan os dilemas políticos e de seguridade do envellecemento.

Palabras chave: Europa, Demografía, Envellecemento, A UE, Política, Economía, Seguridade.

RESUMEN: Los patrones demográficos asociados al creciente envejecimiento tienen serias implicaciones para las sociedades europeas, donde se producirán cambios estratégicos con un efecto polarizador. Por lo tanto, si bien las proyecciones se realizan bajo el supuesto de que “todo está bajo control de acuerdo con la ecuación económica pura”, señalaremos en nuestro artículo que estas proyecciones deben ir acompañadas de compromisos en el ámbito político y cultural más amplio. Donde, no tiene sentido tratar los dilemas del envejecimiento como si fueran una cuestión económica ajena al futuro político de Europa, si no a su propio destino. En consecuencia, uno debe preguntarse cómo recrear la cultura, la economía y la política, especialmente si los líderes y las élites políticas continúan enfocándose solo en la ingeniería financiera mientras descuidan los dilemas políticos y de seguridad del envejecimiento.

Palabras clave: Europa, Demografía, Envejecimiento, UE, Política, Economía, Seguridad.

ABSTRACT: Demographic patterns associated with increasing aging have serious implications for European societies, where there will be strategic changes with a polarizing effect. Therefore, while the projections are made under the “*Everything according to pure economic equation is under control*” assumption, we will point out in our article that these projections must be accompanied by compromises within the broader political and cultural. Where, it does not make sense to deal with the dilemmas of aging as if they were an economic issue unrelated to the political future of Europe, if not its own destiny. Consequently, one must question how to recreate culture, economy, and politics, especially if leaders and political elites continue to focus only on financial engineering while neglecting the political and security dilemmas of aging.

Keywords: Europe, Demography, Aging, The EU, Politic, Economy, Security.

1. Introduction

The phenomenon of aging is one of the most prominent trends in the global demographic reality, which provides us with many indicators about the future of countries in the 21st century. In this context, Europe is expected to suffer the most from these strategic shifts (Repetti & Casasanti, 2021; Walker, 2019).

Where, it is impossible to understand Europe's current reality, and it be difficult to read its future complexities away from the problematic associated with aging, which will have repercussions that will result in an integrated system of radical changes in the level of European societies (Fauve-Chamoux, Bolovan & Sogner, 2016).

Consequently, undoubtedly, the very serious implications of aging issues require new ways of thinking. Where, many of the threats in Europe have become clear that they can not be understood without a new type of political analysis. Therefore, it is logical to ask the following questions:

- » *What are effects of the high aging rate on European countries? How can Europe build its future with an aging rate of over 30% of the total population of the continent (Aurambout, 2021)?*
- » *Is there a multi-dimensional strategic to meet these shifts and challenges? Is there a clear European vision for dealing with the dilemma of aging in the context of the broader security, political and cultural sphere rather than focusing only on the economic dimension?*

2. European Aging Challenges

Despite the prolonged life is a sign of Europe's prosperity, but with the decline in fertility rate, it is creating an array of challenges. The proportion of people of working age is shrinking while the number of those retired is expanding. This in turn will increase the burden on the working age group, in order to secure or cover the social costs and expenditures resulting from the increasing rate of aging (Kiss, et al.,2020). Perhaps most critical is the fact that are evident as follows:

- » The old-age dependency ratio will nearly double: The old-age dependency ratio in the EU is projected from 29.6% in 2016 to 51.2% in 2070. This implies that the EU would go from having 3.3 working-age people for every person aged over 65 years to only two working-age persons (DG ECFIN, 2021; 2020).
- » Significant implications for labor force: The total supply of labor in the EU among those aged 20 to 64 is expected to fall by 9.6% between 2016 and 2070 "9.7% in the euro area" (Lutz et al, 2019; DG ECFIN, 2018).
- » The working-age population (15-64) will drop very dramatically: For all EU countries (except the UK), the working age population (15-64) is projected to fall the next few decades from 291 million in 2016 to 246 million in 2070 (DG ECFIN, 2021a).
- » Negative effects on National Savings Rate: Increase in rate of aging means an increase in consumption rate, which has negative effects on national savings rate (Wise, 2017).

- » While funding plans are under increasing pressure, the problematic of how to sustain pension systems of huge social and financial size and linked to an aging population is considered one of the most serious challenges for the future. The adequacy of pensions is of paramount importance to retirees, who make up approximately 124 million people (i.e. about a quarter of the total EU population). Pension spending in the European Union accounts for up to 12% of the GDP of member states (SPC, 2020).
- » Increased pressure on public spending (public finances): For example, Long Term Care (LTC) systems will face increasing demand over. Therefore, public expenditure in the EU is projected to increase from 1.6% of GDP to 2.7%, i.e. an increase of 73% until 2070. So, the total cost of ageing (public spending on pensions, health care, long-term care (LTC), education and unemployment benefits), is expected to increase to 26.7% of GDP until 2070 (DG ECFIN, 2021b).
- » Threat to sustainability of health care financing: In the future far fewer people will contribute to finance public health care, while a growing share of older people may require additional health care goods and services. This reality may pose a political problematic in terms of priorities in public spending, there are always competing demands for public resources. For example, in Western Europe, with already extensive social welfare structures in place, their prohibitive costs will inevitably make them difficult to bear in the coming decades, as the proportion and size of the needy population continues to increase. On the other hand, Eastern European countries face a different political dilemma: Providing care to elderly relatives logically causes great losses to families, as the general capabilities and resources in these countries are still scarce to establish nursing homes or homes for the elderly (DG ECFIN, 2021c).
- » Informal care challenges: Even as countries seek to develop the rates of professional medical care providers, they seek to make informal family care more meaningful. But it will also raise many problematic regarding how to control quality. So, it must be asked: How can governments know or ensure that the age group related to aging receives appropriate health and social care? Also, who is responsible for monitoring the well-being of an aging? (Pavlova, 2017).
- » A social structural change: Aging has an impact on all ages because it generates major changes in family structures and a rising imbalance between young and old cohorts, as young people become a minority who coexist with several older generations. In such circumstances, the interdependencies between cultural norms that surround intergenerational co-residence, should be treated as critical (Castrén, 2021).

Based on these challenges, it should be recognized that demographic patterns associated with aging have serious implications across the European countries' basic structure, as there will be strategic changes that have a polarizing effect on political competition within Europe. Some will blame governments and others blame immigrants. Whatever the result, there will inevitably be a more polarizing and volatile political, social, and cultural crises (Ertürk & Karaçizmeli, 2022).

Hence, demographic factors play a key role in assessing the future of countries and the cohesion of societies, this may require the EU to reconsider many of strategies and policies associated with problems of aging, migration, citizenship and welfare state (Repetti, 2021a).

Increasing demographic aging, rising levels of debt and social inequality have reinforced perceptions that the European welfare state (in the long term) is at risk. Where, the free market and welfare state principles require population growth and commitment to providing social aid, but considering the dialectic relationship between demography and the welfare state we must ask:

- » *Can the economic growth pace persist under the weight of a low fertility rate and high aging rate? Is there any model that confirms that?*
- » *To what extent can EU countries work together in order to face problematic of aging, is within a strategic vision that be accompanied by compromises within the wider political and cultural sphere, not just focusing on the economic side?*

3. Pattern of Dealing With the Phenomenon of Aging

Considering the problematic of aging, it has become natural to question the future trends associated with the possibility of crises that may lead to the reduction of social and health aid, not to mention the repercussions of the tax exhaustion policies that will affect the youth, and whatever will result from all those developments such as an increase in the pace of political and societal instability.

3.1. Societal Conflict and the Risk of Market Logic Itself

The dilemmas of aging will inevitably disrupt the equilibrium of pension systems, requiring a new equilibrium. *But it seems that the process of reforming pension systems has not and will not be easy at all.* Many of these reforms faced objections and rejection, whether at the political or social level, to the extent that they were mitigated or even reversed. Not to mention that those reforms were challenged on a constitutional basis (Branco et al, 2019).

Thus, in order to avoid social and political conflicts, reforms must be carefully prepared and a comprehensive assessment of the potential impacts must be made in the political sphere. Therefore, it is necessary to take into account the national characteristics of each country, and to strive to achieve the greatest broad political and societal acceptance.

To confirm that logic, many cases can be mentioned in which governments that have adopted the proposed reforms associated with pension systems have been overthrown (as what happened in France and Italy in the 1990s). As well as the developments in the Greek crisis in 2015, where the most important requirements of the European Union (In order to help Greece) is to reduction of retirement benefits and raise retirement age. In the name of preserving the "European project" and European "solidarity," this deal on the Greek Debt Crisis revealed Europe's Deepening Fissures (Börsch-Supan & Coile, 2018).

In the same context, the French government waived in 2020 the full implementation of the pension reform bill and was forced to amend it, against the background of the political turmoil that occurred as a result of general strikes called by trade unions and retirees (BBC, 2020).

In the future, also, there seems to be no escaping the possibility of substantially reducing social aid programs. And at the political level, it is natural for older citizens to vote against any possible reductions in services granted to them, and in the future their political weight will be much greater than it is now.

Based on this facts, we will have many problematic that will be asked:

- » How will the European aging generation deal politically with declining support provided for them?
- » What is the impact of this future reality on the quality of security and stability of European societies?

In any case, it is not possible to determine definitively the direction of these conflicts, *but there are many facts that must be taken into account, which confirm the logic of the existence of real problematic*. For example, in order to prevent the increase of inter-generational community disruptions due to the high rate of aging and its impact on the economic reality, many States are now making efforts to enact anti-discrimination legislation on the basis of age (Ertürk & Karaçizmeli, 2022a). *Currently, in many States there is a form of anti-discrimination legislation that opposes discrimination on the basis of age* (UN, 2017).

Also, on the political level, one must not overlook the importance of the aging dilemma affecting the stability of health and social care programs, not to mention pensions, labor markets, services and investment, and all life conditions. So, *if there are no clear plans and projects (at the level of social, economic, demographic, and cultural policies), many strategic challenges can be met in the long term* (Eurostat, 2018; Lutz et al., 2018).

Consequently, the reality of the European future will be very difficult if leaders and political elites continue to focus only on public financial engineering while neglecting those risks, which may be based on the same logic and principles of the free market advocated by the ruling bureaucratic classe. For example, if investors decide at one point that countries will not be able to control the worrying financial and economic situation as a result of the economic consequences of the increased rate of aging. *Therefore, decided to withdraw from those markets and refrain from any economic activity or any investment*. Accordingly, it appears that at that time many of these countries will actually enter the public debt trap. Thus, that reality will also have serious repercussions on principle of equity in distribution of income (Hager, 2016).

It might be difficult to predict the inevitability of a future economic crisis, but it remains a strongly possible issue as positive expectations for the welfare state in societies that are aging quickly remains uncertain at best.

Hence, without adequate adjustments or reforms (*as: suitable interventions of social, economic and demographic policies, not to mention the necessary changes in community behaviors, etc.*) the repercussions of the aging dilemma can lead to many negative consequences in the long term. Especially, if accompanied by the emergence of disturbances in the social and political contract within the European countries, which are now becoming increasingly clear day by day (Repetti, 2021b). There is therefore a need to *promote harmony between sustainable development and demographic change and to try to increase economic sources in order to ensure political stability and maintain community cohesion*.

3.2. Random Walking and Pure Economic Equation

Most of the strategies and scenarios for addressing risks of aging are based on following expectations and assumptions:

- » Increasing economic growth.
- » Increasing immigration rate.
- » Raising retirement age.
- » Increasing labor force participation.

But, how can confront risks and build the future according to strategies and scenarios whose credibility and consequences are questionable, not to mention their cultural and political implications. The reality of aging in Europe is a multidimensional process that sets a new political context for the coming decades. Consequently, some political areas related to demography now require strategic attention, especially with the complexity of data and the different results between European countries.

Therefore, the following facts or data must be taken into account:

- » 1. The increase in economic growth as a result of options based on increasing immigration and raising the retirement age may not be sufficient to compensate for the decline in population growth in the future (OECD, 2017). *For example, according to The International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis is a scientific research institute located in Austria (IIASA) reports, and based on The Centre of Expertise on Population and Migration (CEPAM) research, has found that even optimistic scenarios that are based on high and irrational increases in fertility (up to about 50%) or as well as positive expectations related to double migration (nearly 20 million people per 5 years), it cannot bring about a fundamental change in the age structure of Europe's aging population (Lutz et al., 2019a).*
- » 2. A shrinking labor force increases pressures to maintain work–life balance in the future, especially as demand for the female labor force is likely to increase. If such a balance is not reached, it may hinder fertility levels and further accentuate population aging. *As well changes in labor force size will be one of the main challenges coming from aging in the EU, because the negative challenges of demographic aging may sometimes be stronger than the cost-reducing effects of, among other things, the increasing employment rate and the increase of the average retirement age (DG ECFIN, 2020a).*
- » 3. There is uncertainty as regards future migration flows. Therefore, it is very important that the impact of higher or lower net migration is appropriately analyzed to take account of the uncertainty concerning. *Thus, any attempt to incorporate any past regularity in migration flows into the assumption for the future; in several cases, however, the best possible model was a 'Random Walk'. Considering that the prolongation of the latest migration trends very far in the future may require implausible assumptions (Marois et al., 2020).*
- » 4. Increasing immigration will not stop the population from aging. *There are some predictions that a higher rate of increase in the the population of Europe (over 65 years of age) is certain or inevitable, regardless of increased immigration or fertility. In this context, even if European families had more children in the future, it could eventually*

- stabilise the labour force size and slow down population ageing, but with more children, the number of dependent people would also increase significantly by 2060 (Lutz et al, 2019b).*
- » 5. *Migration is unlikely to be an effective policy response to population aging. Conversely, trends in migration are projected (young workers) will inevitably lead to an acceleration of population aging in Eastern Europe. In addition, there are concerns about accelerate the upward shift in the age distribution of countries sending large numbers of migrants abroad, which will increase the burden on social security systems. In response, some of these countries have enacted policies to slow rates of emigration or to encourage the return of their citizens (UN, 2017a)*
 - » 6. *Mobility within the European Union will have an impact on the future demographics of the EU (especially the trend from Eastern European countries to Western European countries). This is what some eastern and southern European Union countries are already experiencing, where they are experiencing a clear population decline. Thus, if this trend continues at its current pace, the population of these countries will shrink at an additional rate by 2060 (Lutz et al, 2019c).*
 - » 7. *There are many question marks about those expectations which based on the increase in labor force (especially for women) and raising the standard and quality of education (whether for citizens or immigrants) have the power to nullify concerns about aging. Hence, we must be very cautious with these solutions proposed, based on the current data on the employment gender gaps or the problematic of education level. For example, but not limited to :*
 - » *A. Gender gaps: Women are still disadvantaged in terms of the type of jobs and occupation they hold (Eurostat, 2022).*
 - » *B. Low-skilled youth who are disconnected from both employment and learning to represent 17% of 15-29 year-olds in the EU, and risk being permanently left behind in the labour market (OECD, 2017a).*
 - » *C. There is a gap in education outcomes among individuals with different parental socioeconomic backgrounds. For example: A child from an advantaged socio-economic background will score on average 20% higher in mathematics than a child from a disadvantaged background (OECD, 2017b).*
 - » 8. *Many projections seem optimistic (as Eurostat's population projections) when compared to the projections of national authorities in European countries or the UN (Nerlich, 2018).*
 - » 9. *It is very unlikely that it would be possible to achieve significantly higher productivity and lower structural unemployment rates without major structural reforms (Hinrichs, 2021). While the projections are made under the "Everything according to pure economic equation is under control" assumption, but it is not possible to know to what extent this will be possible? Also, what are the political implications of radical major structural reforms?*
 - » 10. *Most attention is focused on economic approaches rather than on deep cultural shifts or strategic political dilemmas. If a low-fertility Europe is not viable, societal trends*

might also be unviable, which requires a cultural balance. Otherwise, the fertility rate will be on its way to declining faster and faster. It should be recognized here that demographic issues are the result of acts of cultural and political forces that are broader and more comprehensive than mere financial or technocratic decisions made by officials in European countries or the EU. Also, the negative impact of the aging rate is not limited to the economy alone. There are question marks about the security aspect.

In addition to all the above facts, one should also draw attention to a very important issue. although the resulting strategic changes from the dilemmas of European aging are irreversible, *but one thing that stood out is that older persons were predominantly addressed as a vulnerable group and issues related to aging were portrayed as a challenge. What is less understood, is that population aging need not be framed only as a challenge, or a risk or a burden.* Such characterizations are the result of a culture of ageism, which is definitely an obstacle to the development of sustainable policies on aging, not to mention the of political strategies capable of coping with the dilemmas of aging (Aronson , 2019). Hence, the real problematic is rather: *How can seize the opportunities presented by active aging community?*

3.3. Active Aging: What's More Complicated

The means to confront and promote the aging of society is politically possible and morally acceptable, based on the human value of all members of society. Thus, in order to do what is appropriate to adapt to the challenges of aging in Europe, it should focus on the policies required in many fields: *social equality and citizenship, economic sustainability and extending working lives, healthy aging and long-term care, technological innovations, .etc.* (Walker , 2019a).

Hence, it's time to revisit the approach to addressing aging issues, in order to create a paradigm shift towards enabling aging as an opportunity to build on. Where there will be a *New Aging Economy*. As the elderly will have a purchasing power that cannot be underestimated, but in return there is an urgent need to meet their needs in order to be able to benefit from their active capabilities (Fengler , 2021). By adopting strategies based on the following:

- » Redefining retirement and adjusting workplace policies.
- » Improving functional ability and increasing productivity.
- » Investing in the health aging sector.

This requires first of all, recognition of the elderly age group as one of the active factors that have already made and will continue to contribute significantly to the development of Europe (Verdugo , 2021). *People should retain the right to live in dignity as they get older, regardless of the size of aging (the older population).* This requires challenge the cultural norms and stereotypes that underpin ageism and other forms of discrimination (Ertürk & Karaçizmeli, 2022b).

Inevitably, such a vision requires public policies based on providing support and social protection for all segments of society without any exclusion or marginalization of any them.

For example, as the average age of populations continues to rise, Governments should implement policies to address the needs and interests of aging, as a form of intergenerational solidarity. Also, by anticipating this demographic shift, countries can proactively enact policies

to adapt to an aging population, which will inevitably be necessary to fulfill the strategic prospects associated with the White Paper on the future of Europe (Reflections and Scenarios for the EU27 by 2025), or the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (SDGs) that “*No One Will Be Left Behind*” (European Commission, 2017; SDGs, 2015).

Indeed, bold adaptive actions are urgently needed across many policy areas in order to support active, healthy and productive aging. *And here it is worth noting that many of the behavioral changes that help reduce dependency and maintain productivity cannot necessarily happen automatically* (DESA, 2020). Thus, we must know that how to find solutions to the dilemma of aging in Europe must be viewed as a matter more than a mere bureaucratic and financial reform of health care systems and intergenerational pensions. Rather, it is much more complex, as it includes, among other things:

- » *How to be able to transform health systems and social care towards preventive care, primary care and more diagnostics. The Covid-19 pandemic and its repercussions may be an example of the importance of this orientation* (Kiss, et al., 2021) .
- » *Reforming academic and educational policies and systems to enhance cognitive skills capable of keeping pace with the requirements of the labor market for as long as possible* (Bussolo, et al., 2015).

In this context, *it should be noted that many of the European Union’s efforts to boost innovation, with direct effects on employment levels and activity rates being already under way, will not be sufficient unless accompanied by a cultural strategies based on promoting aging as an opportunity, not to mention strategic plan based on political foundations and dimensions* (Walker ,2019b).

To sum up, in light of the aforementioned facts and data, it is logical to say in this reality of uncertainty and extraordinary hardship, that *we cannot understand the way it is being dealt with patterns of demographic changes as if they were a purely technocratic economic issue unrelated to the political future of Europe and its global influence, if not its own destiny* (European Commission, 2020).

4. Maps of global influence And Political Agenda

In fact, demography itself is malleable. *For this reason, the relationship between politics, demography, economic growth, and welfare distribution is quite complex.* Therefore, if there is an increase in the level of European awareness of demographic shifts, including the issues of aging, it must be recognized that facing these shift requires a realistic vision with a comprehensive and long-term perspective, which is based not only on concern for formulating technical and financial public policies, *But, also the issue of aging must be placed on the table for deep political discussion, based on the importance of each of:*

- » Adopting strategies not only economically, but also political, cultural and security.
- » *Inclusion of the dilemma of aging in the global political agenda. The demographic trends associated with aging are expected to provoke many global problems, not least at the level of the already indebted global economy* (Goodhart & Pradhan, 2020).

4.1. The Realistic Vision and Deep Political Agenda

It is clear that the efforts made at the level of confronting the dilemmas of aging and the sustainability of justice between generations *are incomplete and tainted by many flaws at the level of political discussions, especially at the level of its strategic implications.*

Thus, European political reality needs to work hard on how to approach the demographic issue starting from recognizing importance of demographic and economic policies are political choices and decisions that are entirely linked to the future of Europe. *Whereas, an approach to aging dilemmas helps to shed light on the future political challenges that governments and the EU face as a result of demographic trends. It feeds a host of political debates and processes at Europe level.* In particular, they are used in the assessment of potential economic growth and public finance sustainability, also, coordination of economic political and the analysis of the impact of population aging on the labor market, in order to identify relevant political challenges and options.

In light of the foregoing, *it is also necessary at the European level (and specifically the European Commission) to give utmost importance to the inclusion of the aging dilemma on the global agenda* (Walker, 2019c). So, the following dialectical questions must be raised:

- » *How can Europe build its future with an aging rate of over 30% of the total population of the continent* (Aurambout, 2018a)?
- » *If developing countries are now aging faster than developed countries, and aging is one of the most important problematic it will face in the future, how can Europe develop many strategies that depend on increasing the number of migrants when those developing countries will suffer from the same problematic* (Berganza, et al, 2020)?

Consequently, there is a need for a unified European foreign policy based on coordination with all countries. If the dilemmas of aging are local in some countries but its economic, security and political repercussions *will lead to a major change in the balance of power at the international level, which in the future will make it a global problem with distinction.*

In this context, the discussion of the G20 for the first time, demographic challenges, may be only a first step to confirming the seriousness of aging dilemmas (in terms of increasing health care costs, labor shortages.etc). Not at the level of developed countries, but also developing countries. Where it was emphasized the necessity and importance of moving quickly towards finding solutions before it is too late. Given that if this increasing trend in the rate of aging is continued, it will not be easy to stop it suddenly at all. *Hence, there will be Geostrategic effects, also very serious economic and political challenges* (G20, 2019).

4.2. Very Dangerous Geostrategic Effects

Aging is a multifactorial and multifaceted issue, as it has implications in a wide range of areas. There will be a sharp acceleration in the rate of increase of older people who need support (SPC, 2020a).

So, certainly, Europe will face, at the level of its economic, political and security influence, crises that are exacerbated day after day due to the dilemmas of the high rate of aging. When the elderly constitute more than a third of European societies in the year 2050, this re-

ality will have very important implications. Therefore, *it is necessary to consider the radical changes in the demographic structure with a kind of concern and caution, and this requires the adoption of strategies not only economic, it is also political, cultural and security* in order to face these deep dilemmas, which will inevitably lead to very dangerous geostrategic effects. Including, for example, but not limited to:

- » 1. Decline in economic power: *With the decline in the useful life, and the steady rise in the costs of health and social care systems, there will be an imbalance in economic performance in rich and developing countries alike. The increase in the proportion of the elderly necessarily means a decrease in the workforce and a radical transformation of the global workforce. Thus, the size of the workforce will inevitably affect the economic strength of countries.*
- » 2. Deep cultural changes: *The pattern of demographic challenges associated with aging will logically lead to cultural changes that could turn societies upside down* (SPC, 2020b).
- » 3. Declining political influence and widening the gap of divisions: *How to confront the dilemma of aging will deepen the gap between Western Europe and Eastern and Central Europe. For example, Western European countries which better able to cope with demographic shifts and attract labor. In contrast, the poorer European countries do not have much potential to attract labour* (EPRS, 2020).
- » 4. A change in European power dynamics: *Demographic challenges or shifts associated with the aging of the European population will affect European power dynamics among the central powers within it or on a global scale. For example, the aging of German society will threaten the German economic and industrial supremacy, thus the decline of the political influence of Germany within the continent or at the global level.*
- » 5. Military and security risks: *Despite the development of military technology, the number of the army will remain a strategic factor in measuring the military power of countries. In this context, Europe faces serious security challenges, especially with the decrease in the number of young people eligible for military service* (The Heritage Foundation, 2020).

There are unprecedented complexities, Europe is also changing ever faster. Here, question marks must be placed about the extent to which EU institutions and political leaders in European governments are able to deal with these challenges and dilemmas. A simple example, military recruitment will certainly become more complex under the weight of an aging demographic. Consequently, there are many problematic that will arise at the level of whether the demographic change will limit the ability of European countries to control and manage foreign policy and pursue their national security interests. Thus, this reality requires asking many of the following strategic future questions:

- » Who will join the military service in Europe?
- » Is there a conviction in Europe to rely on immigrants to join the military service in the European armies?
- » Is there a strategic awareness among European political leaders of how dangerous such a conviction is?

Realistically, it requires the availability of an insightful vision capable of finding realistic and proactive options in order to reduce the sensitivity of European armies to the risks of structural demographic changes, not to mention their repercussions on the level of influence of the Europe. Based on the methodology based on studying the challenges of demography and migration according to a multi-dimensional approach, it can be said that the repercussions of European aging have been incompletely approached (so far) at the level of strategic politics and international relations (EPRS, 2017).

In this context, it is clear that according to human capital projections, there will be an interaction between the decline in the number of young people, trends in academic achievement and the health structure of adolescents, which will lead to increased fears at the level of military recruitment, in the future. Also, *the measures taken by some countries in Europe seem insufficient*. Such as: raising the retirement age in general, developing military technologies, or providing incentives to encourage military service, etc. (Apt, 2014). All these attempts cannot be an accurate answer to the problematic question: *Who will join the military service in the European continent in the future? Also, what may be more dangerous than this problematic question is the answer to it through the strategy of some European countries (specifically Germany), which is based on the fact that immigrants are the only way through which this dilemma can be overcome* (Apt, 2014a).

Regardless of the development of automatic weapons or what technological developments provide, it is logical to take into account the impact of aging on the capabilities of European armies, as the decline in the birth rate will negatively affect the strengthening of human resources in armies (Kepe, 2018). *For example*, half of the existing active duty service members will retire in the German army by 2030, so it will be difficult to replace these retirees with new recruits from the rapidly aging German population. *Where the complexities of the German demographic reality led to the reconsideration of many of the postulates of military service, to the point that the German Ministry of Defense adopted in 2016 proposals that the German army start accepting and recruiting citizens from other European Union countries*. Also will citizenship must be given to new soldiers to avoid the risk of it becoming a mercenary army (German Federal Government, 2016; DW,2018).

Inevitably, *this logic raises major question marks about the possibility of recruiting non-citizens in general in security and military institutions, as, the German army has openly declared that it will rely heavily on immigrants* (Winnick, 2017).

5. Conclusion

If aging dilemma is combined with the immigration problematic, we will have just a simple model of these dangerous dilemmas (Aurambout, 2021b). Where it has become clear that most European countries now stand in the face of the practical problematic of demographic challenges, especially those related to the implications of migration issues at the cultural and security (Peri, 2020; Ocampo & Stiglitz, 2018).

Hence. it does not make sense to deal with the dilemmas of aging as if they were an economic issue unrelated to the political future of Europe, if not its own destiny. *It is clear that*

this gap has precarious repercussions. Accordingly, strategies and policies must be developed at all levels, including political, cultural and security. Where aging problematic is no longer purely economic policies. So, there is an urgent need to find multi-dimensional on how to deal with aging issues and their future impact on Europe (Mounk, 2022). This is perhaps the least of the lessons that can be drawn from how Europe confronts the repercussions of the Ukrainian-Russian war, the least on the military and security levels.

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