

**Article Type: Research paper**

Evaluating Population Management Strategies on National Security Components Based on Securitization Theory

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Article Info.**Received:** 2024/3/18**Accepted:** 2025/5/23**Available Online:** 2025/6/10

Abstract

Extended Abstract:

Population increase or decrease is one of the top priorities for governments, as there is a direct relationship between population and national power, and national power guarantees national security. Population scenarios are an essential tool for planning and risk management used by governments, businesses, NGOs, and individuals. Accordingly, governments often have deep concerns regarding population trends, as demographic changes can either enhance or undermine both national and global security and stability.

This research aims to examine the relationship between population management strategies and their impact on national security components, based on securitization theory. In response to the question: According to securitization theory, what is the relationship and impact of population management strategies on national security components? — the hypothesis was

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Elahi, V., bay, A. and Sadri, M. F. (2025). Evaluation of population management strategies on the components of national security based on the theory of securitization. *The Fundamental and Applied Studies of the Islamic World*, 7(1), 1-3.



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proposed that there is a direct correlation between population management strategies and the realization of national security.

Using a qualitative and interpretive method along with documentary and library data collection, it was found that understanding and managing demographic changes is of increasing importance. This study can help clarify the challenges arising from population management and its effects on national security factors, leading to a new and practical perspective on its relationship with social issues.

The core idea and analytical framework of this research is to transform the population issue from a social matter into a political and security one — thereby placing it on the national agenda and highlighting its political and security dimensions. This aspect sets the research apart from others.

Population is a fundamental factor in economic, social, security, political, and cultural discussions. It is a multidimensional variable that affects all aspects of security. Today, one of the key priorities of governments is to focus on population structure and stability. Population (in terms of structure, composition, and distribution) is a critical factor in authority, national power, and the internal strength of a country's political system. Implementing demographic strategies requires ongoing generational changes that typically take at least three decades.

Population management and national security are inseparable needs. A true power on the international stage can only ensure security if it has not only a proportionate population relative to the country's size but also citizens with intellectual development, skills, education, and competence. Thus, population-based planning is highly effective in promoting national security.

Efforts to theorize the relationship between demographic changes and national security have been limited. The key to understanding the interactions between demographic changes and national security lies in the securitization perspective, which reveals how these changes interact with national security components. A comprehensive view of national security is impossible without considering population.

Securitization theory, examined through the Copenhagen School framework, posits that military power alone does not threaten state survival. Buzan divides security into two categories: national security centered on sovereignty, and societal security centered on the continuity of identity and community. Migration and demographic changes are seen as factors that harm national identity and social structure, as they gradually alter the societal landscape. These demographic changes play a significantly influential role in security issues and national power, impacting cultural, social, political, and economic aspects, and thus critically shaping national security.

The larger a country's population, the more achievements it is likely to attain across various sectors. Since the active population of a country is a decisive factor in power

dynamics, a future population decline could hinder competitiveness with regional and global powers. This is directly linked to national security, as a crucial element of security is maintaining a strong position both domestically and internationally. Therefore, population quantity and quality are fundamental components of a nation's security.

As demographic changes affect sensitive domains such as national sovereignty, identity, culture, employment, development, citizenship, and internal affairs, managing them becomes increasingly complex. As a result, a security-centered perspective can be observed in the population management strategies and policies of various countries.

Population and national security provide a general outlook on how demographic trends act as components, indicators, and multipliers of a nation's security. Population decline and aging are among the most critical factors affecting the existence of the Islamic Republic of Iran. As population decreases and the demographic structure shifts in Iran, political, economic, and military threats will intensify. Given Iran's power structure, population — as a social phenomenon — has undergone securitization, and has become the country's most pressing challenge.

The two phenomena of population decline and demographic shifts are key variables affecting Iran's national security. There is a direct relationship between population and economic, military, and political security. If population decreases and its structure changes, the variable that once contributed to stability could become a source of disorder, activating new internal threats. Supporting families, ensuring economic stability and dynamism, boosting motivations for childbearing, and strengthening hope for the future can all contribute to revitalizing the population.

Key words: Population Management; National Security; Securitization Theory.

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest in conducting this research study.