

# DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

**Editorial note.** This section of the Journal contains the articles that are associated with the preparation of the all-Russian research-to-practice conference “Society and sociology in modern Russia” scheduled for November 2014. The articles cover the role of sociological knowledge and its practical application in the development of the Russian society. We are particularly pleased that V.V. Lokosov, Doctor of Sociology, Professor, has joined the discussion. V.V. Lokosov is Director of RAS Institute of Social and Economic Studies of Population, an institution that has longstanding scientific cooperation with ISED RAS.

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## The transition from extensive to intensive demographic policy\*



**Vyacheslav Veniaminovich  
LOKOSOV**

Doctor of Philosophy, Professor, Director, the Institute of Social and Economic Studies of Population of the Russian Academy of Sciences (32 Nakhimovsky Avenue, Moscow, 117218, Russia, info@isesp-ras.ru +7(499)129-08-01)

**Abstract.** The article analyzes the “window of opportunities” to overcome the demographic crisis through the actualization of intensive approach to the implementation of demographic policy. The main areas of this approach, according to the author, include the redirection of demographic policy from the quantity to the quality of the population, the accumulation and realization of human potential; the adjustment of migration policy taking into account the strategic interests of the indigenous peoples of Russia; the provision of support to traditional values of the Russian people with regard to family life and happiness. The transition to intensive demographic policy can serve as a long-term basis for improving the demographic situation.

**Key words:** demographic policy, extensive and intensive approaches, quality of the population, migration, traditional values.

The current demographic situation in Russia is considered to be in a state of crisis. The reason for such grave assessments lies in depopulation, which is figuratively called the “cross that the Russians have to bear”: birth rate in Russia is lower than that

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in developed countries, and mortality rate is higher than that in underdeveloped ones.

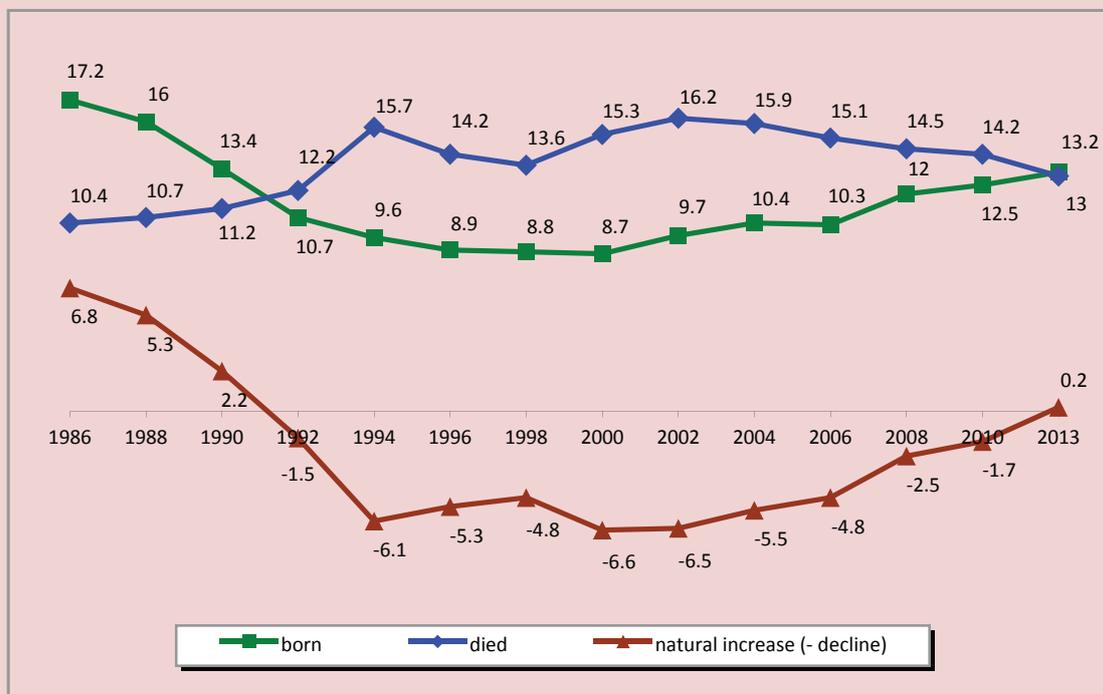
Total natural population decline in Russia over the last 20 years was 13.4 million.

The long-term negative dynamics of demographic processes has been contained currently due to implementation of the measures set out in the Concept for demographic policy of the Russian Federation for the period until 2025. The levels of Russia's demographic development for 2015 approved by the Decree of the RF President in 2007 were reached earlier. Life expectancy at birth increased from 67 to 70 years in 2007–2013 (with the remaining 11-year gap in this indicator for men and women), the total fertility rate increased from 1.3 to 1.7 children per woman. Over

the last 20 years the year 2013 was the first, in which Russia's population has increased (fig. 1).

Certain measures aimed at family support, adopted in 2007 and focused on providing the so-called federal and regional maternity (family) capital (MFC) turned out to be efficient. Birth rate in this period was growing rapidly, even under the crisis. The measures were effective despite the skepticism of many demographers; it was confirmed by the census data, which recorded the growth in the share of large families from 6.6 to 7% for 2002–2010. An important part of the MFC program consists in the annual increase of the capital due to its indexation. The size of MFC has grown from 250 thousand rubles in 2007 to 429 thousand rubles in 2014. The law

Figure 1. Overall rate of natural population movement (Russian Federation, per 1000 population)



Source: Rossiya v tsifrakh: stat. sb. [Russia in Figures: Statistical Digest]. Rosstat. Moscow 2013.

establishing the procedure of adjustment for inflation has been adopted.

At the same time there has been an outspread of abuse related to MFC. For example, the survey of the focus group produced the following answers: *«Now we see that the Government is carrying out the right reforms; however, the law has been adopted, but when it comes to its practical implementation, all of these reforms are being distorted. For instance, now land plots are allotted to large families, but where? One is located closer to town, and another is 100 km far from town, and the owner just would not go there, everything is so distorted. And what about the maternity capital? There are a lot of ads everywhere like “we will help you get the maternity capital”, it turns out to be a deception; but the most interesting fact is that the very officials, judges, and the Procuracy see these advertisements and no one cares. And how many families are there that have no money at all, a mother is happy to get at least 50 thousand rubles and 250 thousand are taken from her»*<sup>1</sup>. In February 2014 A.G. Khloponin, Presidential Plenipotentiary Envoy to the North-Caucasian District pointed out that there were 110 thousand «fictitious» children in the District, which means that the certificates exist and the children themselves do not.

Despite the costs, it is expedient to extend this generally efficient program of maternal (family) capital for 2017–2025, to widen the spheres, in which MFC can be used; to provide a wider choice of measures that could actually improve the living conditions of families with children.

<sup>1</sup> The surveys of the focus-groups were held in 2012 in Kirov and Tyumen under the supervision of RAS Corresponding Member V.L. Shul'ts and V.V. Lokosov.

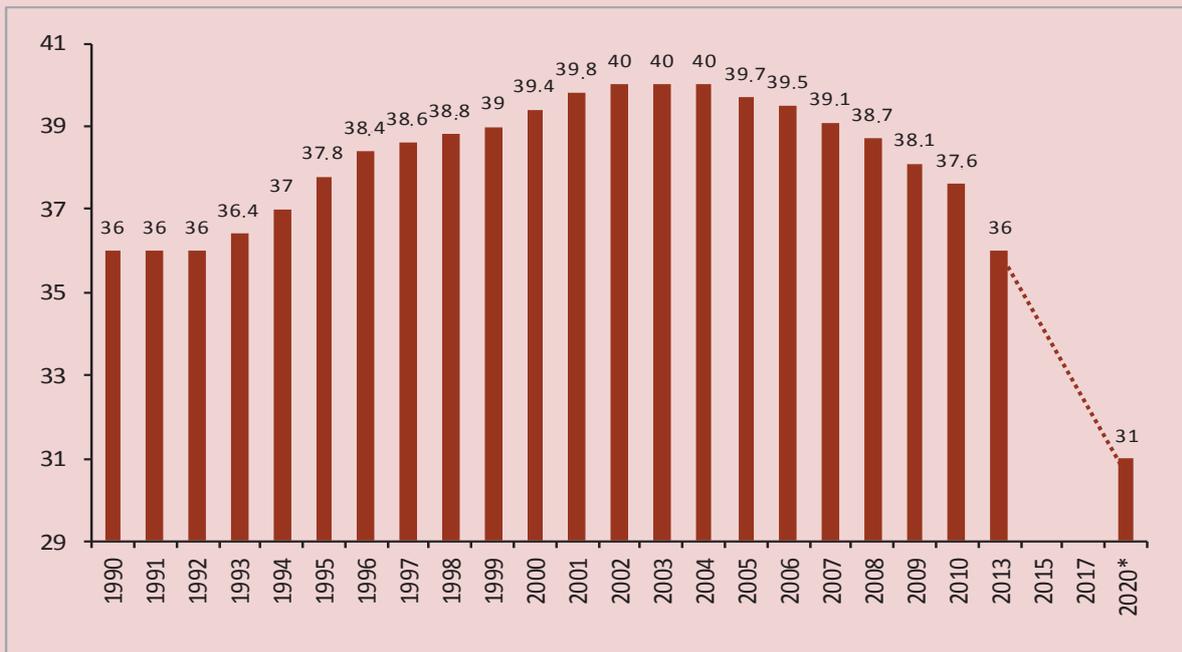
The successive results achieved in the demographic situation should not be misleading, since they are in many respects temporary and unstable and, most importantly, they do not eliminate those depopulation factors, which emerged in the previous years. **Most experts have no doubt concerning the onset of the “second stage of depopulation”**. The “demographic pit” associated with the small number of young generation, born in the 1990s, brings negative changes virtually in all the spheres of economy and social life. The forthcoming change in the age structure of the population is a challenge to Russia's security.

The increase in the overall fertility was caused not only by the implementation of measures aimed at stimulating the birth rate, the implementation of the priority national project “Health”, but also by the increase in age-specific birth rates and favorable shifts in the sex-age structure of the population (achievement of the reproductive age by the young people, born in the 1980s).

After 2010, the number of women of childbearing age is decreasing, because small generations born in the 1990s reach active reproductive age. In 2012 the number of 10–19-year-old women was 1.7-fold less than the number of 20–29-year-olds. Forecasts show that in the next 10 years, there will be an almost twofold decline in the number of women of active reproductive age of 20–29 years, who account for more than 60% of all births (*fig. 2*).

First of all it will affect the working age population. For 10 years it will decline by almost 7.7 million people, and the demographic burden on the able-bodied population will grow by 30%. As a result, there

Figure 2. Number of female population of reproductive age (Russian Federation, million people)



\*Data for 2020 – forecast.

Source: Rosstat.

will be an increase of burden on health care, pension and social security.

The number of army draftees and college entrants will reduce.

It is unlikely that in the near future there will be an increase in the number of families with many children that are necessary to preserve population. Among families with children, as before, there are mostly one-child families – almost 2/3 of all households with children [3].

The improvement of standard of living and quality of life, so that people will be able to implement their reproductive intentions through the family's own resources, is a priority task for social policy. However, the minimum wage rate (MWR) does not correspond to Article 2 of the Labor Code, which stipulates that wages

should provide a decent level of life for a worker and his family. According to the calculations made at the Institute of Social and Economic Studies of Population at the Russian Academy of Sciences, the increase in the level of relative poverty at the birth of the first child is 8 percentage points, at the birth of the second child – 14 percentage points, at the birth of the third child – 21 percentage points. The scale of child poverty is 10 times higher than the Western European indicators. In comparison with childless families, families with children live in cramped housing conditions in 2.5–3.7 times more often. Therefore, 96% of maternity capital goes to the purchase of housing.

“The national strategy of actions for the benefit of children for 2012–2017”

approved by the Decree of the President of the Russian Federation of June 1, 2012, highlights the main issues in the sphere of childhood such as the high risk of poverty at the birth of children, especially in families with many children and in one-parent families; disparities between the Russian Federation subjects with regard to the volume and quality of available services for children and their families. The strategy envisages the development and adoption of a federal law that defines the fundamentals of state policy in the sphere of family, as well as the formation of a system for monitoring and statistic accounting to assess the effectiveness of social and family-related policy in the sphere of motherhood and childhood. The planned measures to reduce poverty among families with children include the development and adoption of minimum state guarantees in the field of income and social services defining the main indicators of the quality of life of families with children; the improvement of the system of tax deductions for families with children, and other measures [13]. Currently, according to the studies of people's reproductive plans, the main obstacles for the birth of children in Russia can be found in the financial and housing difficulties, lack of confidence in the future. These difficulties are pointed out equally by interviewed men and women [11].

Scientific community should discuss the necessity of establishing decent wages; and the development of standards for economic security of families with children is useful in practice [8]; but, taking into consideration

the fact that the natural-resource model of the country's development is not efficient anymore, and that there exist certain objective difficulties in economic growth, it would be unwise to forecast the achievement of significant results in creating the social state in the near future. Rather, the process is opposite. The reduction of the government's social obligations is accompanied by the commercialization of health care and education. According to Rosstat, in 2011 15% of the Russians aged 15 and older were not able to receive medical care because they were not able to pay for it. In 2010 the share of students who study with full reimbursement of costs was 30% in the system of secondary professional education, and 63% – in higher education.

Without diminishing the importance of enhancing the standard of living and quality of life, it is difficult to reverse the demographic situation only by implementing extensive measures of demographic policy, such as financial stimulation of fertility and improvement of healthcare. The vector of effective demographic changes should be sought in the actualization of intensive demographic policy. It is possible to highlight three main interrelated directions in this policy.

**The first direction. The shift of demographic policy priorities from the number of population to the quality of population, and to accumulation and realization of human potential.**

The quality of the population (human potential) identified through indicators of

health (understood, according to the World Health Organization (WHO), as physical, mental and social health), education and culture, is currently a major factor in economic development. In particular, the analysis of socio-economic achievements in developed countries shows that the growth of national GDP in recent decades was largely due to the improved health of population in these countries.

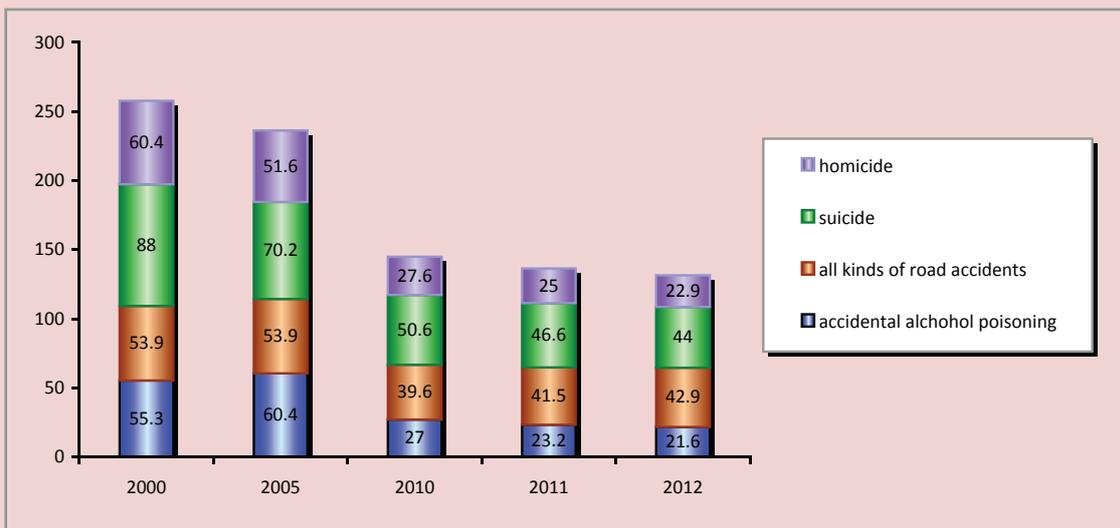
In this country the physical health of the population, on the contrary, is deteriorating. Children’s health is deteriorating even faster: the health of each new generation is worse than the health of the previous generation [9, p. 74-79]. The analysis of the results of a longitudinal study (1995–2010) of children’s health and development conducted by ISEDT RAS in the Vologda Oblast, leads to similar conclusions [14, p. 108].

There is a gradual increase in childhood disability: it occurs both in absolute value and in terms of the level of disability. In 2007 the level of primary disability in children at the age under 3 was several times higher (43.6 per 100 thousand children) than at the age of 15–17 (12.4). Eventually, the number of children with serious diseases increased [6]. The share of children constituting the first group of health, i.e. with no deviations for all the health evaluation criteria, has decreased from 49% to 9% for 25 years.

The incidence rate among children and adolescents, significantly affecting the implementation of reproductive function, arouses concern. According to experts, 70% of girls and 50% of young men have problems in the reproductive sphere; one in five teenagers in the future will not be able to have children.

The age of mothers, who give birth to children, is increasing steadily in Russia.

Figure 3. Mortality among working age men\* due to external causes of death\*\* (number of deaths per 100 thousand people)



\* Men aged 16–59.

\*\* Figures for 2005 and 2010 were calculated using the figures adjusted with regard to the results of All-Russia census-2010.

Source: Zdravookhranenie v Rossii. 2013: stat. sb. [Healthcare in Russia. 2013: Statistical Digest]. Rosstat. Moscow, 2013. P. 27.

The postponement of birth shows a more conscious approach to childbearing, a desire to “settle in life” first. However, this will have a negative impact on the dynamics of fertility. As a person grows older, his/her reproductive health deteriorates, i.e. delaying the birth of children can lead to deterioration in children’s health, or to inability to have them.

Social health defined by the indicators of deviant behavior, often exceeds their maximum critical (threshold) values.

Deviant behavior has become a widespread phenomenon and it directly affects the increase in mortality, primarily among working age men. Russia ranks first in the world by the number of smokers – 39% of the adult population (2011). According to the Ministry of Health, about 288 thousand people die prematurely from smoking tobacco in Russia. Due to this, the country’s economy loses about 1.5 trillion rubles or 3.5% of GDP every year.

Over 2 million alcoholics are registered in dispensaries; 3.3 million Russians have mental health disorders. According to various estimates, the number of Russians, who consume narcotic and toxic substances on a regular basis, exceeds 3 million people. It is important that there is a “rejuvenation” of all forms of social diseases and 80% of Russians aged under 30 are drug addicts. According to Rosstat, about 100 thousand Russians aged 15-30 die from drug abuse every year. Because of these premature deaths the society annually loses about 300 billion rubles of investment in education and training, regardless of lost profit from the loss of workers.

Human losses from accidents, poisoning, homicide and suicide resemble military communiqués. For example, according to the WHO, the figure of 20 suicides per 100 thousand population is considered extremely critical for social health. This threshold was exceeded in 2-4 times among working age men in Russia (*fig. 3*).

However, the changes in many indicators of deviant behavior are positive. Healthy lifestyle is coming into fashion and is becoming part of everyday life of the Russians. The Sochi Winter Olympics, active promotion of sport and healthy lifestyle, revival of GTO (All-Russia physical culture training program) contribute to reduction in mortality from external causes and promote social health. The official figure is 40% of the population that will soon be regularly engaged in physical training and sport. Being in poor physical shape becomes “indecent”. The government’s paternalistic care became a thing of the past, and today the loss of health often leads to the social bottom. It is difficult to win a competitive struggle for a job if one has bad habits. A new work culture and discipline is gradually introduced.

Russia maintains its leading position by some quantitative indicators of educational and professional potential of the population. The level of secondary and higher professional education among the population aged 25–64, corresponding to the International Standard Classification (ISCED-97), is higher than that in most developed countries of the OECD – 26.9%.

In 2010 the number of students per 1000 people in Russia was 65 people, and it remained one of the highest in the world.

However, the quality of education is declining. According to the Knowledge Economy Index developed by the World Bank, Russia ranked 55th among 145 states in 2012. One of the negative indicators is the value of Education and Human Resources Index that reflects the level of education and the skills for creating, disseminating and using knowledge.

The process of accumulation of human potential is ineffective: 60% of Russians do not work by their specialty; the accumulated actual education in every one out of five employees is redundant [4]. This is due to the unsolved problems of diversification of the Russian economy, regulation of wages, financing of education and science. According to opinion polls conducted by ISED T RAS, people in the prime of their working age (from 40 and older) begin to feel a reduction in the standard of living, although their professional experience and physical capacity should have led to the opposite trend.

**The second direction. Adjustment of migration policy taking into account the strategic interests of the indigenous peoples of Russia.**

The forecast return to depopulation can once again turn immigration into the main source of population increase in the country. In absolute terms, Russia ranked second after the USA by the number of immigrants; in relative indicators Russia was also on the second place in the world after Germany. Over the last two decades

migration growth in Russia compensated for more than half of the natural decrease of the Russians. International migration fully compensated the loss of demographic potential in 2011–2012.

Despite the indisputable importance of immigration, the disputes between those who consider it important for the solution of demographic and economic problems, and those who see it as a threat endangering the native population, remains acute. The arguments of those, who support immigration, are simple. Russian demographer A. Vishnevskii argues: «Immigration is the only real resource that can now become a source of preservation and increment of the people» [2]. But historical experience of the last decades, the experience of Kosovo, Ukraine, the recognition of the failure of the multicultural doctrine by leading politicians from Germany, France and Britain make us treat with caution those simple benefits that immigration brings, and consider certain long-term consequences and risks it carries. The ethnic structure of society is no less important for its life than its class or age structure.

Each society has its own extremely critical (threshold) indicators showing the extent of resettlement of people of different mentalities and cultures, and in this context, immigration can become a threat to the country's socio-cultural security. National (ethnic) and migration policy are like communicating vessels. For example, it was found that in the German army the number of immigrants from the former Soviet republics should not exceed 10% of

the total number of servicemen, otherwise, the risk of reduction in the fighting efficiency of the units can increase. A shy political correctness on this issue, the ban on obtaining statistical information concerning the ethnic composition of migrants and ethnic crime only imitate the preservation of a friendly status quo.

According to sociological data, Russians' public opinion on important «points of growth» in demographic policy is focused on the «increase in the birth rate of the Russia's indigenous population» – 51%; followed by «reduction of mortality» – 26%; «prevention of people's outflow abroad» – 11%. The attraction of migration resources is unpopular: it is supported by only 4% of respondents<sup>2</sup>. The survey, conducted by the Research Center Superjob.ru shows that almost every fifth Russian has already felt the competition with those arrived from Central Asia [11]. And the lower the income of the respondents, the more they felt this competition. A sociological survey by the Levada Center also revealed the discontent of the Russians: in 2012 70% of respondents said that the government should limit the inflow of outsiders to the country [7].

The socio-economic and socio-cultural consequences of the large-scale attraction of migrants in Russia in modern conditions are mostly negative. Moreover, according to experts, the actual influx of immigrants is a lot greater, because “the state statistics of migration in Russia has lost one of the

fundamental advantages: the unity of methods for collecting primary data in the country” [10, p. 217]. According to expert estimates, there are nine illegal labor migrants per legal one in the country. The increase in the number of unskilled workers in the domestic labor market leads to a decrease in the quality of the country's labor potential. The official goal of creating and upgrading 25 million highly productive jobs is unlikely to be achieved if the government continues pursuing the current immigration policy.

**The third direction. Provision of support to the traditional ethnic group of the Russian people, promotion of the value of family life and desire to have many children.**

Russian society remains oriented toward traditional values, and therefore, it has the necessary demographic potential. The analysis of empirical data shows that the determination to have a certain number of children depends more on parents' wishes to have children, on subjective values rather than on the perception of quality of life that promotes or hinders these wishes [1, p. 36-41].

In a sense, Russia remains a peasant country. And it is not because a large share of the population – 25% – lives in rural areas, 40% of citizens have private subsidiary plots. A more important fact is that urbanization in the Soviet period was so rapid and peculiar, that the significant share of citizens continued to live by the rules of traditional community with its ties of relationship, neighborhood and other affections. Urbanization in Russia was accompanied not by the

<sup>2</sup> You can find out more about these data from the materials of the information-analytical collection “Modern social-demographic processes in public opinion” [12].

individualization of traditional society, but it rather preserved a «patriarchal character» of social practices.

There is an increase in the level of religious affiliation of the population, i.e. in the share of «believers» – people acting in compliance with the canons of one religion or another. According to ISPR (Institute of Socio-Political Research) RAS, it was 29% of the adult population in 2011. These are people, for whom the Orthodox values and lifestyle become significant; it is reflected in their attitude to the family, to the birth and rearing of children and rejection of abortion. Together with the Orthodox community the Muslim Ummah is expanding: about 16 million people in Russia belong to ethnic groups that traditionally practice Islam. Without exaggerating the significance of the religious factor, we can state that its socio-demographic role is increasing.

Birth rate is associated with a traditional pragmatic interest in having children as a future support in one's old age. As a result of reforms, Russia's older generation was largely left to its own devices; that is why the «pragmatic interest» toward the birth of children can be revived. This interest is supported by anomy in the society, when the ties of kin and «community» often become mandatory for social survival under new conditions. The role of biosocial, population function of society is increasing; it also encourages people to have children.

Despite the liberation of modern sexual relations, the absolute majority of Russian citizens and young people do not question

family values and childbearing. Long-term studies of value orientations, in particular, the monitoring «Our present-day values and interests» supervised by N.I. Lapin, the monitoring by the Institute for Comparative Social Research supervised by V.G. Andreenkov showed the priority of the family as a most important value. Equal contractual participation of husband and wife in the family budget; feminist aspirations to fix in legislation the gender equality in everyday life; the legalization of homosexual marriages and many other developments relating to the second demographic transition in Europe do not have wide social support in Russia.

Of course, population growth is necessary, but one should not overly dramatize this need. The following question arises naturally: does the country need to implement the extensive and quantitative approach to handling the demographic crisis, often at the cost of health deterioration or excessive immigration? Why should we set a goal of «catching up with and overtaking» the demographically developed countries, when it is the people capable of creativity and self-organization that make their society competitive in the modern world? The Russian Empire and the RSFSR of 1930s had about 100 million people, and that was enough to preserve state sovereignty and identity.

According to various estimates, labor productivity in the Russian economy is about 30% of that in the U.S. The total level of environmental pollution per unit of output in Russia is 2.5–3 times higher than that in developed countries, total

consumption of materials is higher in 1.5–2 times. These figures result from the labor of millions of people, and a highly organized society does not need such labor. There is no problem of labor shortage in Russia. It has another problem – the deficit of high-qualification jobs and the lack of a modern system of continuous training, first of all, for workers and technicians.

The reasons for depopulation in the Russian society are “unnatural” and are closely associated with the negative conse-

quences of neo-liberal transformation of the society. The changes in mass consciousness due to the consequences of the reforms have not rooted deeply in the people’s mentality. Moreover, predisposition to traditional values is strong in the Russian market conditions and under the primitivization of social relations. The transition from the extensive to intensive demographic policy can serve as a long-term basis for improving the demographic situation in modern Russia.

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