



MANAGEMENT OF THE STATE FAMILY AND DEMOGRAPHIC POLICY

УПРАВЛЕНЧЕСКИЕ АСПЕКТЫ ГОСУДАРСТВЕННОЙ СЕМЕЙНО-ДЕМОГРАФИЧЕСКОЙ ПОЛИТИКИ

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State demographic and family policy: an overview of current research and practices

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Государственная семейно-демографическая политика: обзор актуальных исследований и практик

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Introduction

We present to your attention a special thematic issue of “RUDN Journal of Public Administration”, devoted to topical issues of the state family and demographic policy of Russia. In modern conditions characterized by profound socio-cultural transformations and demographic challenges, a comprehensive understanding and improvement of state policy aimed at strengthening the family and increasing fertility is especially important. In this regard, in the context of the implementation of the “Strategy of Action for the implementation of family and Demographic policy and support for large families in the Russian Federation until 2036”, approved by the Russian Government in March 2025, various aspects affecting demographic processes in the Russian Federation have become central issues.

The current demographic situation in Russia is characterized by combination of low birth rates, an aging population, and persistent increased mortality, especially among men of working age. According to Rosstat, since 2018, there has been a steady decline in the birth rate: from 1.62 children per woman in 2017 to 1.32 in 2024. The demographic crisis threatens the socio-economic development of the country and requires active measures on the part of the state. In response to these challenges, Russia is implementing a series of strategic initiatives: a number of demographic policy documents have been adopted, national projects “Healthcare”, “Demography”, “Education”, “Culture” have been initiated. Recently a new national project “Family” has been launched, aimed at comprehensive support for families with children, poverty reduction and promoting a positive image of having many children. At the same time, it is obvious that demographic processes are determined by a complex of interrelated factors — economic, social, and cultural. None of them acts in isolation: the material conditions of life interact with the spiritual and moral guidelines of society, forming trajectories of demographic behavior. Effective state demographic and family policy should take into account this multidimensionality. It is necessary to simultaneously improve measures of social support for families, stimulate fertility, strengthen the institution of the family and the value of parenthood, as well as use new management technologies. A thematic issue of the journal presents research on various aspects of this issue. This review article summarizes the main provisions of these works and analyzes the identified trends and proposals.

The purpose of the study is to present the main contents and conclusions of colleagues' research published in this issue, and to analyze key trends in demographic development and family support.

Reproductive attitudes of youth

M.A. Beduleva's research is devoted to the analysis of factors influencing the formation of women's attitudes towards childbearing in the context of the modern demographic transition. One of the key conclusions is that the current stage of demographic transition acts as an objective birth rate limiter: its influence dominates and does not depend on the will of an individual woman. Nevertheless, subjective factors such as age, marital status, value orientations, and life priorities can, within certain limits, adjust procreative attitudes even in the face of a demographic shift. Beduleva notes a shift in reproductive behavior to a later age (the tendency to postpone the birth of the first child until achieving material and social stability) and the influence of marriage stability on fertility. A sociological study shows that the vast majority of young people declare a desire to have children, but plan to realize this desire "in a few years" after they "get back on their feet". It is only by the age of 26–30 that many begin to implement parental plans: in this group, the proportion of those who are already expecting a child or planning to give birth in the near future is significantly higher. At the same time, the value of the family remains high in all age categories. According to surveys, "family" is consistently among the leading life values of Russian youth (3rd place), which indicates a steady focus on starting a family and having children, despite the later timing of their onset. Thus, the problem of low fertility among young people is not the loss of family values, but the delay in the onset of parenthood until favorable conditions occur. Beduleva emphasizes that demographic transition, as a feature of the modern stage of society's development, is of global importance, determining the specifics of people's needs and the functioning of the family. In this regard, measures are needed to allow young people to combine educational and career aspirations with raising children, so that the childbearing mindset can be realized without excessively long postponement.

Men's health as a factor of demographic policy

A significant contribution to demographic imbalances is made by the gender gap in health and life expectancy. D.K. Tanatova and I.V. Korolev in their study focused on the over-mortality of men of working age as one of the factors of the steady excess of mortality over fertility in Russia. The authors note that

biological differences only partially explain this situation; in many ways, the problem is related to the insufficiently formed culture of men's respect for their health. Based on a sociological survey of 6280 men, typical unhealthy lifestyle practices of Russian men were identified. Many respondents neglect physical activity, are prone to an unbalanced diet, avoid regular medical checkups, and do not follow doctors' prescriptions, demonstrating a passive attitude towards maintaining health. During the analysis, three dominant models of men's attitude to health were identified: orientation towards the public health system; reliance on external (environmental) factors and their own psychological stability; and focus on personal responsibility. At the same time, a passive attitude prevails, when responsibility for health is shifted to medicine, which reduces the effectiveness of prevention.

Tanatova and Korolev conclude that there is a need for targeted influence on the male audience in the framework of demographic management. They justify the use of special "health-shaping" and health-strengthening technologies aimed at men. Particular importance is attached to information and communication strategies aimed at overcoming harmful stereotypes and motivating men to lead a healthy lifestyle. The authors emphasize that measures are already being taken in Russia to improve men's health (development of primary health care, fight against cardiovascular and oncological diseases, development of children's healthcare, popularization of physical education, etc.), however, without increasing men's conscious attitude to their own health, it will not be possible to reduce the gender gap in life expectancy. Therefore, improving the culture of a healthy lifestyle for men should become an integral part of the state demographic policy aimed at increasing active life expectancy and strengthening the institution of the family.

Spiritual and moral values and reproductive behavior

The importance of spiritual and moral factors for Russia's demographic security is emphasized in M.A. Korolev's research. In the context of the "axiological crisis" and the erosion of traditional values, it is spiritual and moral education that can play a central role in overcoming the demographic crisis, revitalizing family orientations in society. According to Korolev, the erosion of moral imperatives negatively affects the institution of the family and the reproductive strategies of the population. The Russian patriarchal cultural tradition, with its values of a multigenerational family and mutual assistance, has historically ensured a high birth rate, while a departure from these values carries the risk of depopulation. In his work, Korolev justifies the need to return to the values of responsible parenthood and family traditions as a key condition for birth rate stabilization. The spiritual and moral education of young people

is considered as a factor in the formation of pro-family behavior in the long term. Korolev suggests several practical measures aimed at strengthening the spiritual and moral foundations of family life:

- the introduction of special modules in educational programs that form the value of family and responsible parenting;
- Support for government and public initiatives to promote traditional family values through media and cultural projects;
- creation of a system of psychological and pedagogical support for young families to strengthen their moral foundation.

The implementation of these steps, according to the author, will require the integration of the efforts of the state, civil society institutions and the families themselves. Only through joint actions can the value paradigm be revived and supported, contributing to an increase in the birth rate and sustainable demographic development.

Regional demographic policy: the example of Tatarstan

The experience of comprehensive demographic policy at the regional level is analyzed in the work of A.Z. Khuramshina, Y.R. Khairullina and F.T. Talibova on the example of the Republic of Tatarstan. The authors consider the evolution of Russian approaches to managing demographic processes and the specifics of modern demographic policy, based on statistical data and regulatory documents. There is an expansion of the range of socio-psychological and cultural motives influencing reproductive behavior. The state demographic policy is considered as a response to the challenges of the country's social development, while emphasizing the key role of a number of documents and national projects. At the federal level, the projects "Healthcare", "Demography", "Education", and "Culture" were crucial, which were aimed at overcoming the birth rate crisis. Most of the measures to support families with children and stimulate the birth rate were provided for in the national project "Demography". Attention is drawn to the launch of the new national Family project in 2023, which continues the best practices of the Demography project and provides comprehensive support for families, reducing poverty, and creating a positive image of a large family.

The authors systematize the measures of demographic policy at the federal and regional levels, and identified their specifics in Tatarstan. The republic has implemented a set of measures to support families with children and large families (benefits, payments, housing, etc.), including special programs aimed at increasing the birth rate in rural areas. Statistical analysis shows that during the period of implementation of these measures, the demographic state of Tatarstan was more prosperous compared to other regions of the Volga

Federal District and Russia as a whole: in 2022, the total birth rate in Tatarstan was 9.2% (compared to the national average of 8.9%), life expectancy also exceeded the national average.

As further steps to neutralize the declining birth rate trends, the authors suggest simultaneously strengthening economic support for families and promoting family values. As noted in the work, it is necessary “not only to maintain the current favorable socio-economic situation, improve the quality of family life, and strengthen economic measures to support families with children... but also the mobilization and lobbying of the socio-cultural component of the prestige of the family lifestyle, parenthood, the birth of children, having many children, and the revival of a multi-generational family”. Thus, the regional experience of Tatarstan confirms the effectiveness of an integrated approach combining material measures to stimulate fertility with strengthening the institution of the family and family values.

Urbanization, agglomerations, and fertility

Statistical geographical aspects of demographic development are discussed in the article by A.M. Sitkovsky on the impact of agglomeration policy on long-term population trends. The study is based on a comparative analysis of demographic indicators in urban and rural areas and includes scenario modeling of population dynamics up to 2100. Sitkovsky assessed three scenarios — further urbanization (an increase in the share of the urban population), the preservation of the status quo, and deurbanization (an increase in the share of the rural population). The forecast results show that with continued low birth rates (total coefficient less than 2.1) and without immigration, the population will steadily decrease in all variants. Even a radical redistribution of the population between urban and rural areas cannot prevent depopulation: according to calculations, the difference between the most “urban” and the most “rural” scenario is only about 5 million people by 2100, while the total population decline will exceed 70 million. The decline in the birth rate is particularly acute in large cities, which is aggravated by the policy of enlarging agglomerations. In conclusion, it is concluded that simple deurbanization will not solve the problem of depopulation, and continuing the policy of enlarging urban agglomerations will only exacerbate the demographic crisis. To stabilize the population, a significant increase in the birth rate and an influx of population from outside are necessary; at the same time, optimization of the spatial distribution of the population can only partially slow down the rate of decline. These findings emphasize the paramount importance of measures to stimulate fertility, especially in urbanized regions, in a set of demographic policy measures.

Innovative methods of demographic process management

The review concludes with A.V. Dozhdikov's research, which offers an innovative approach to solving demographic problems based on artificial intelligence methods. The author models the procedures of public administration of the demographic sphere using multi-agent reinforcement learning (MADDPG algorithm). The experiment simulates the interaction of several regions of the country under different scenarios of socio-economic development. Trained intelligent agents have shown the ability to co-ordinate balanced demographic, economic and resource policies in an unstable environment. As a result of the simulation, simultaneous population growth, regional economic growth, and rational use of resources without depletion were observed. This indicates the prospects of using hybrid human-machine decision support systems to develop demographic policy. In other words, modern machine learning algorithms can become an effective tool for optimizing managerial "hyperparameters" of demographic policy in order to achieve comprehensive positive results. Dozhdikov points out that further research in this direction will include the factors of external migration and the social structure of society. Thus, digital technologies and artificial intelligence open new horizons for the development of scientifically sound demographic and family policy measures.

Public opinion on gender equality: Jordan's experience

The thematic issue also includes an international aspect of family and demographic issues. In the X article. Al-Hamidiyn examines the attitude of the Jordanian population towards the ideas of gender equality. Achieving gender equality and empowering women and girls is the fifth UN Sustainable Development Goal for 2030, however, according to the study, a significant part of Jordanian society remains wary of this idea. An analysis of the survey data (Arab Barometer 2021–2022) showed that men in Jordan are significantly less likely to support the principles of gender equality than women, and the level of education positively correlates with greater support for gender equality. At the same time, the degree of religiosity did not show a statistically significant effect on the population's attitude towards gender equality. Based on these results, the author concludes that it is necessary to focus efforts on raising the level of education and awareness of the population to promote gender equality more effectively. Jordan's experience illustrates that socio-cultural attitudes can significantly influence the implementation of demographic and family policy goals: improving educational standards and changing stereotypes can create more favorable conditions for increasing women's participation in public life and, indirectly, for strengthening the family.

Conclusion

Modern state demographic and family policy should be based on a comprehensive consideration of multiple factors and interdisciplinary approaches, which is convincingly demonstrated in the studies under consideration. The general conclusion that follows from the analysis of the articles in the thematic issue is the need to combine measures of financial support for the family with the impact on cultural values and the use of scientific and technical innovations in management. Such an integrated approach will achieve the main goal of improving demographic indicators while improving the quality of life of families. Based on the conclusions of colleagues and his own vision of the problem, we identified the following priority areas for the development of state demographic and family policy:

- *Strengthening the institution of the family and family values*: the introduction of programs of spiritual and moral education and enlightenment in the education system and the media, the formation of respect for parenthood, large families and family traditions in society.
- *Targeted support for various categories of families: development of special measures to support student families* (for example, providing housing and scholarships for young student spouses), expansion of programs for young families (preferential mortgages, affordable kindergartens, benefits for the birth of children), comprehensive assistance to large families, as well as stimulating the revival of multigenerational families (benefits for families who live together with elderly parents).
- *Improving the well-being of prosperous middle-class families*: creating conditions under which financially secure families would be interested in having more children (tax benefits, support for working parents, flexible working hours) to overcome the tendency to limit offspring to two children for economic reasons.
- *Preservation and strengthening of public health*: implementation of preventive programs aimed, among other things, at the male audience (promotion of a healthy lifestyle, regular medical examinations, fathers' responsibility for their health), which will help reduce mortality and prolong the active period of life of citizens.
- *Integration of data and technologies into demographic management*: the use of modern information technologies, monitoring and forecasting systems (Big Data, artificial intelligence technologies) to track demographic trends, evaluate the effectiveness of measures and support decision-making at all levels of government.

The implementation of these measures will require coordinated actions by the authorities, the scientific community and civil society institutions. The materials of this thematic issue of the journal attest to the high scientific potential of the authors in the field of demographic research. Their practical implementation can

ensure a transition to a more stable demographic situation and strengthen family values in Russian society. Only the synergy of efforts in the economic, social and cultural spheres will make it possible to achieve the strategic goals of demographic and family policy of the Russian Federation. We are confident that the articles presented in this issue will make an important contribution to the development of scientific understanding of the mechanisms and tools for implementing effective demographic policy in Russia.

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