

# THE STATE'S POPULATION POLICY: THE REGIONAL DIMENSION

Olga Gokova – Albina Kiseleva

---

## Abstract

Russia is the state that possesses a very large territory that is why it is necessary to use a differentiated approach and to take into account regional dimensions in the implementation of population policy because realities of regions may differ considerably. Consider this specificity using the case of one of the largest regions of Russia – Siberia.

Despite the fact that in the 2012-2016 birth rate in the Russian Federation were equal to 1.9 million people, which is more than one and a half times higher than the 2000 year rate (1.3 million), it is still not possible to talk about a turning point in the complex demographic situation in the country. Therefore, it is important both for the whole Russia and for regions to change a traditional model of a family with one or two kids and to focus on families with many children.

It must be noted that over the past 10 years the demographic situation in Russia has improved. Nevertheless, most experts believe that this improvement in the demographic situation does not have a long-term perspective. Hence the need to save the achieved level of natural population growth in the long-term.

**Key words:** the population policy, the State support, demographic development, the pro-natalist policy, Russia, Siberia

**JEL Code:** J11, J13, J14

---

## Introduction

The birth rate in the Russian Federation in 2012 – 2016 was 1.9 million people it is 1.5 times higher than the rate in 2000 (1.3 million people). It is thus misleading to speak of a turning point in the complex demographic situation in the country (Fertility, mortality and natural increase, 2018). An optimal balance between births and deaths has now been established but the demographic waves still exist (Frejka & Zakharov, 2013). To date, the generation of the

«record» 1980s creates a positive statistic. But over the next decade – the 1990s – there has been a demographic crisis in the country and the experts expect some decline in the birth rate in the future. The rise and falls in birth rate is a periodic process. Therefore, for Russia as a whole and for the regions, it is important to change the familiar model of a family with one or two children and focus on a large family (Zakharov, 2008; Ivanov, 2017). That's when it would be possible to expect the major natural population increase that can be achieved only through the related family and demographic policy.

The Russian Federation entered into the 21st century in the conditions of depopulation – that is, the sustainable excess of deaths over births. In 1999 the excess was 930 thousand people for the whole country, in 2000 – 958 thousand people. Since 2000 there has been a progressive reduction of the natural decline in the population, and in 2013-2015 was noted the natural population growth. However in 2016-2017, the natural population decline is experiencing again: in 2016 the decline rate exceeds 2,3 thousand people, in 2017 – 135,8 thousand people (Fertility, mortality and natural increase, 2018).

The main reason for the depopulation process in the Russian Federation is the low birth rate. The modern fertility features in Russia 1.3 times less than is needed to the generation replacement level: in 2017 the average number of children born to a woman was 1,62 when the natural replacement level shall be 2,15 births per woman (The natural movement of the population of the Russian Federation, 2017).

According to the Minister of Economical Development of the Russian Federation M.S. Oreshkin, in the coming years, the population of working age in Russia will annually decline by approximately 800 thousand people. In November of 2017, experts from the Center for Strategic Research of A.L. Kudrin outlined the main demographic challenges in Russia: low population densities, caused by low fertility rate, the aging of the population, the high mortality rate and the issue of migration (The head of the Ministry of Economic Development, 2017). The current Russian demographic state policy is mostly focusing on economic measures, without addressing the root causes of the demographic crisis. Therefore, this policy can be only partial and temporary. Currently, the measures aiming at increasing the fertility rate are being implemented by Russian authorities with the poor insufficient research and understanding of the factors impacting on the development of the reproductive activity, with the lack of regional differentiation of the measures, with the lack of understanding their linkage to the regional socio-economic policy and with the lack of average approach to encouraging in fertility among the different population groups (Shishkina & Popova, 2017). This requires a procedural and record-keeping support of all the conditions of ensuring the

good-quality life of the population and the development of a separate demographic policy – pro-natalist policy, whose formation must begin with regional level for the consistent solution of the demographic crisis at the national level.

## **1 The demographic situation in Siberia**

With regard to the demographic situation prevailing in the Siberian Federal District to the beginning of 2019, it reflects general trends of its development in the Russian Federation and continues to cause deep concern.

The total population of the area at 1 January 2019 amounted to 17 173,3 people (11,7 % of the population), the urban population represents about 73,1 % (74,4 % in Russia as a whole) of the total population. At the start of the year, the most urbanized region in the Siberian Federal District is the Kemerovo area, where the per cent of urban residents is equal to 86. In the Altai Republic, in turn, the per cent of the rural population is equal to 71 from the total population (Omskstat, 2018; The population of the Russian Federation, 2019).

During 1989-2018 years the population of Siberia decreased by 3.9 million people, including: a) through the excess of deaths over births on 2.3 million people (59%); b) as a result of the migratory movement of the population – 1,6 million people (41%). In the past five years alone (2013-2018), the amount of Siberians decreased by 2,1 thousand people (Fertility, mortality and natural increase, 2018).

The formation and development of the age-sex distribution of the Siberian population are directly related to the process of human reproduction in Siberia. The feature of this process is reducing the number and proportion of children that have affected the ageing of Siberians.

The fertility rate fell 2.3 times compared to the second half of XX century. Simultaneously, the mortality rate had increased by 2.2 times. In 2018, in the whole area, the number of deceased residents exceeded the number of births 1.3 times (Fertility, mortality and natural increase, 2018).

The number of women in Siberia exceeded the number of men by 1,334.2 thousand people (by 14.8%). Compared to 1989, this gap increased by 433.5 thousand people, which significantly worsened the balance of sex ratio indicators. So, if in 1989 there were 1089 women per 1,000 men, in 2017 there were 1,148 women (Omskstat, 2018; Fertility, mortality and natural increase, 2018).

All these factors combined lead to a sustainable decline in the size of the population of Siberia.

In general, during the period of 2000-2018, the population of the area has decreased by 3.6 million people. The greatest losses were caused by natural movement (fertility and mortality), they were observed in the Kemerovo Region (-3.6 ppm) and Altai Area (-3.2 ppm), the smallest – in Omsk (-1.4 ppm) and Novosibirsk (-0, 5 ppm) in the Republic of Khakassia (-0.2 ppm). At the same time, in the Republics of Tyva (13.2 per thousand), Altai (6.1 per thousand) and Buryatia (3.8 per thousand) there is a significant natural increase in population.

The population aging processes have resulted in the fact that more than 4.5 million people in Siberia (23.3%) are older than persons of working age. The largest share of pensioners (over 24%) among residents of the Altai Territory (26.6%), Kemerovo (25.1%), Novosibirsk (24.7%) and Omsk (24.4%) regions. According to UN criteria, the population is considered old if the proportion of people in the age group of 65 years and older is more than 7%. As of January 1, 2018, about 15% of the inhabitants of Siberia were in this age group (Andreev & Becker, 2010; Fertility, mortality and natural increase, 2018).

Since 1989, the number of people under working age has decreased by 32%, and their share in the total population of the region has decreased from 27.4 to 19.6%. In addition, it should be noted that over the period 1989-2017, the indicator of the demographic load of the population increased. Thus, in 1989, there were 749 disabled age categories (479 children and 270 elderly) per 1000 people of working age, in 2017 - 773 (respectively, 359 children and 414 elderly) (The population of the Russian Federation, 2019).

While preserving current trends, the distribution of the population throughout the country as a whole and in Siberia, in particular, will undergo major changes: the proportion of Russians living in the European part of Russia will increase, with the intensive reduction of residents of the Far North and Eastern regions. The overall decline in the population of Siberia, the decrease in its population density to the parameters of almost three times less than the world average create problems of a political, economic and geopolitical nature.

## **2 Measures of demographic policy**

That's why the implementation of population policies aimed at an increase in the birth, at a reduction of mortality and morbidity in all age groups, at the increasing life expectancy of the people, should be continued. Currently, new mothers receive several types of state social

benefits according to the Russian legislation of Social Support of families with children: a one-time allowance for childbirth, a «maternal capital» (in connection with the birth of second and subsequent children), a monthly childcare allowance. A one-time allowance for childbirth is paid in the Russian Federation whether a woman is employment, unemployment or had been registered in the employment service (Rybakovskiy, 2015). The size of a one-time allowance for childbirth is 17480 rubles. In addition, a woman is entitled to receive a one-time allowance for the duration of the childcare leave up to the age of 18 months. Unemployed mothers can receive it with the help of social welfare agencies directly from the child-age of 1 month with a fixed minimum of 4512 rubles for the first child and 6285 rubles for each additional child. A one-time allowance for a working woman is calculated in the Accounting Department of the organization, where a woman was working before maternity leave. Since 2011 there is a rule for calculating this allowance: the days that fall on the duration of the temporary disability, parental leave, maternity leave, and leaves with keeping the full pay are excluded from the calculated period. In calculating the size of a one-time allowance an average salary is divided into the total calendar days in two years (730 or 731 days, if one year is a leap year) (Gokova & Kiseleva, 2017).

Since the first January 2018, Russian families receive a new monthly allowance at first birth at the rate of a minimum subsistence income in a region (average rate throughout Russia in 2018 was 10500 rubles). A new monthly allowance is designed for indigent families 18 months of age until the child reaches the age of 18 months. Since 2018, a similar allowance is provided at the birth of a second child but through the funds of maternal capital (Gokova & Kiseleva, 2017; Fauzer, 2018).

The right to receive a maternity capital is granted once at the birth of the second or subsequent child in the family, and if the family did not exercise the right to receive it if there are two children, it can receive a certificate of maternity capital for the third and subsequent children. In addition to the child's mother, a man can receive this state social benefit if he is the father, as well as the only adopter of the second, third child or subsequent children, and the court's decision on adoption entered into force between January 1, 2007, and 2021 inclusive (Frejka & Zakharov, 2013). The size of maternity capital in 2019 is 453026 rubles. According to the Federal Law of 29.12.2006 No. 256-ФЗ (as amended on 07.03.2018) "On additional measures of state support for families with children" maternity capital funds can be used to improve housing conditions by cashless transfer of these funds for the purchase of housing in of the Russian Federation, to receive an education for a child (family capital can be directed to the education of any of the children in the family, and not just the one whose birth

gave the right to maternal capital), to reimbursement of the costs of purchasing goods and services for I social adaptation of children with disabilities, the formation of the funded part of the mother's labor pension, as well as the monthly cash payments from the maternity capital in the amount of the subsistence minimum (average of 10,000 rubles a month in Russia) for a second or subsequent child under the age of one and a half years and the right to use the certificate, without waiting for 3 years for the maintenance of a child in a nursery or kindergarten.

Moreover, when a child is born, the region grants allowances, whose amount depends on the budget of each region. Also, the wives of army personnel receive one-time and monthly allowances regardless of any others allowances (27442 rubles and 11761 rubles on each child, respectively).

It is worth to mention the compensation by the authorities for not providing a place in kindergarten and the electronic queue at the kindergarten. The issue of compensation to parents (or their legal representatives) for not providing a place in kindergarten is not settled at the federal level, however, decisions about compensation payments for lack of places in kindergartens are made at the regional level. In a number of constituent entities of the Russian Federation (Kirov Area, Perm Territory, Krasnoyarsk Territory, Smolensk Area, Khanty-Mansiysk, and Yamalo-Nenets Autonomous Area, Tomsk Area, etc.), this benefit is already being paid, and its value depends on several factors: the child's age, average family income and number of children. This compensation is paid to all families, regardless of whether the young mother is working or not. As a rule, the average amount of compensation ranges from 2,000 to 5,000 rubles and is subject to annual indexation. The amount returned to parents from 2016 is not subject to personal income tax (Fauzer, Lytkina, Smirnov, 2018).

Since 2013, in the Russian Federation has been implemented an electronic queue to the kindergarten through the Unified portal of state services of the Russian Federation ([www.gosuslugi.ru](http://www.gosuslugi.ru)), which allows you to submit electronic applications for enrollment or transfer of children to kindergartens, to carry out automatic verification of information in electronic applications through interaction with authorities Registry Office, to notify citizens via SMS and emails, to notify parents of available places in preschool educational institutions. This public service makes it possible to speed up and to simplify significantly the process of enrolment the children in kindergartens.

Russia also has standard tax deductions for children who rely on both parents, which means that 13% of income tax is not withheld from a certain amount of parents' income. The tax deduction on children from 2016 is granted up to a month in which the taxpayer's income,

taxed at a rate of 13% and calculated on a cumulative total from the beginning of the year, exceeded 350 thousand rubles. The deduction is canceled from the month when the employee's income exceeded this amount: 1,400 rubles for the first and second children, 3,000 rubles for the third and each subsequent child, up to 18 years for each disabled child, or a full-time student, graduate student, resident, intern, student under the age of 24, if he is a disabled person of group I or II – 12 000 rubles. If the spouses, besides the common child, have a child from early marriages, the common child is considered the third. Deduction on a child can be provided in double the size of a single mother or one of the parents (adoptive parents) of their choice (Standard tax deductions, 2019).

The maternity leave in Russia is available for working women to 70 calendar days before childbirth and 70 calendar days after childbirth with payment of social insurance benefits at the rate of the average wage during that period. For the period of maternity leave, a maternity allowance is paid, both for working young women, and for female students, women soldiers, and also for those dismissed due to the liquidation of the organization and registered with the employment service. At the same time, non-working women do not receive maternity allowance. From January 1, 2011, this benefit is calculated on the basis of the average daily earnings for the 2 calendar years preceding the year of leave. The payment is made by the employer at the expense of the state organization – the Social Insurance Fund of the Russian Federation.

Since the end of the parental leave young parents (since 2009, the provision of parental leave to the father has been simplified) who are caring for a child can take a parental leave, during which the employer pays to their employees an allowance amounting to 40 per cent of average salary from the social insurance fund. This allowance is paid until the child reaches the age of 18 months. After this, one of the parents (as well as any relative – grandmother, aunt), can take parental leave in order to care for the children up to the age of three. During this leave, the workplace is kept for the person.

Because of the current difficult financial and economic situation in the regions of Russia and the need to use a targeted approach to the provision of social assistance measures due to limited budgetary funds, there are two opinions about the need for the state and regional authorities to participate in the implementation of the family-demographic policy. On the one hand, given that the basic principle of the distribution of social security in the state is universalism, all citizens, including young families, have the right to social security and social services implemented through the state budget. On the other hand, in the state, an individual principle should prevail, which implies the personal responsibility of young people for the

future of their family. This principle implies a direct dependence of the size of insurance premiums and the number of social services received from the state. The state assumes responsibility for maintaining only the minimum incomes of all citizens and for the welfare of the most vulnerable segments of the population.

At present, in the demographic development of Russia and its regions, there is a trend towards the way out of the state of depopulation and the beginning of the new fertility rise. The question is whether or not this new tendency will become a trend or it will turn out to be the only episode in the process of the reproductive decline of Russia.

## **Conclusion**

On the basis of the studies had been developed a number of measures of Russian pro-natalist policy for the regional level:

1. Changes in conditions of maternity leave provision – the possibility of providing several options for maternity leaves and allowance system, according to the wishes of parents (Maternity leave of 4 months without loss of job and 100% salary or Maternity leave is shared between both young parents).

Our research shows that the reluctance of most women (including Russians) to fall out of social and professional life due to the childbirth and child-bearing is the main factor affecting the delaying or even foregoing childbearing.

2. The development of a childcare system under the age of 3 and support for employment of young women. The commercial funds, the increased excise taxes on tobacco and alcohol, gambling taxes and their target districts may become the additional financial sources for the development of family policies.

3. Creating a "work-life balance" culture (balance between career and personal life). A culture which will guide young people into family creating, based on working compatibility, on having and bringing up of children is good for both young people and the whole society.

4. The progressive development of the supporting environment, which includes a wide range of adjustments and daily practices, improved the lives of young families. The use of special bicycles seats for children or cargo-bicycles which have a capacity up to 4 children allows spending a lot of time together with children outdoors and staying healthy at the same time.

5. Information and education on issues relating to sexual and reproductive health and rights of young people.



All actors of the youth pronatalist policy are interconnected. They form the unified holistic set of interactions and they involved in a follow-up mechanism of the youth pronatalist policy carried out by the regional government. This follow-up mechanism includes some specific elements and stages.

It is important to underscore the fact that the coherence and consistency should refer to the key attributes of the youth pro-natalist policy. Such measures should flow from the real context that means the mix of policy instruments must reflect specific conditions and circumstances of the specific region. Without a doubt, they shouldn't be forced, should respect personal rights and should be financially profitable, that means they should be substantiated by long-term regional budget. Otherwise, binding themselves with commitments without financial viability it is a way to treat economic growth and contribute to further deterioration in the demographic situation in the region.

## References

- Andreev, A., & Becker, C. (2010). Age-adjusted disability rates and regional effects in Russia. *Demographic Research*, 23, 749-770. doi: 10.4054/demres.2010.23.27.
- Ivanov, S. (2017). Population Explosion: Dynamics, Problems, Solutions. *Mirovaya Ekonomika I Mezhdunarodnye Otnosheniya*, 61, 15-26. doi: 10.20542/0131-2227-2017-61-7-15-26.
- Fauzer, V., Lytkina, T., Smirnov, A. (2018). Sustainable Development of the Northern Regions: Population Dimension. *Ekonomika Regiona-Economy of Region*, 14, 1370-1382. doi: 10.17059/2018-4-24.
- Fertility, mortality and natural increase in the population of the Russian Federation from 1950 to 2018. Statistical Bulletin (Rep.)*. (2018). Moscow, Russian Federation: Rosstat. Retrieved from [http://www.gks.ru/wps/wcm/connect/rosstat\\_main/rosstat/ru/statistics/population/demography/#](http://www.gks.ru/wps/wcm/connect/rosstat_main/rosstat/ru/statistics/population/demography/#)
- Frejka, T., Zakharov, S. (2013). The Apparent Failure of Russia's Pronatalist Family Policies. *Population and Development Review*, 39, 635-647. doi: 10.1111/j.1728-4457.2013.00631.x.
- Gokova, O., Kiseleva, A. (2017). Comparative Social And Economic Study Of Youth Pro-Natalist Policy In The Regions Of Germany, France And Russia. *Ekonomika Regiona-Economy of Region*, 13, 537-549. doi: 10.17059/2017-2-18.
- Population of Omsk region (Rep.)*. (2018). Omsk, Russian Federation: Omskstat Service. Retrieved from [http://oms.k.gks.ru/wps/wcm/connect/rosstat\\_ts/oms/ru/statistics/population/](http://oms.k.gks.ru/wps/wcm/connect/rosstat_ts/oms/ru/statistics/population/)

Rybakovskiy, L. (2015). Demographic Policy Concept in Russia: Experiences in Development and Ways of Improving. *Sotsiologicheskie Issledovaniya*, 9, 62-70.

Shishkina, M., Popova, L. (2017). Impact of Modern Pro-Family Demographic Policy on Birth Rate Intensity in the Northern Regions of Russia. *Economic and Social Changes-Facts Trends Forecast*, 10, 161-177. doi: 10.15838/esc/2017.1.49.9.

*Standard tax deductions for children in 2019* (Rep.). (2019, February 12). Retrieved from <http://www.b-kontur.ru/enquiry/258>

*The head of the Ministry of Economic Development considered the situation with demography in Russia among the hardest in the world* (Rep.). (2017, September 25). Retrieved from <https://www.rbc.ru/society/25/09/2017/59c8b82b9a7947ef169ee4bc>

*The natural movement of the population of the Russian Federation – 2017* (Rep.). (2018). Moscow, Russian Federation: Rosstat. Retrieved from [http://www.gks.ru/bgd/regl/b17\\_106/Main.htm](http://www.gks.ru/bgd/regl/b17_106/Main.htm)

*The population of the Russian Federation of January 1, 2019* (Rep.). (2019). Moscow, Russian Federation: Rosstat. Retrieved from [http://www.gks.ru/wps/wcm/connect/rosstat\\_main/rosstat/ru/statistics/population/demography/](http://www.gks.ru/wps/wcm/connect/rosstat_main/rosstat/ru/statistics/population/demography/)

Zakharov, S. (2008). Russian Federation: From the first to second demographic transition. *Demographic Research*, 19, 907-972. doi:10.4054/demres.2008.19.24.

## Contact

Gokova Olga

Institution – Dostoevsky Omsk State University, Department of regional economy and territory management

Full address of institution – 644077, Omsk, Lickiewicz Square, 1

Mail – capri484@yandex.ru

Kiseleva Albina

Institution – Dostoevsky Omsk State University, Department of regional economy and territory management

Full address of institution – 644077, Omsk, Lickiewicz Square, 1

Mail – albkis@mail.ru