

## THE ROLE OF SOCIAL VALUES IN ENSURING THE REGION DEMOGRAPHIC SECURITY\*

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In modern Russia, there is a tendency of natural population decline, which, despite all the efforts of the state, cannot be overcome in any way, and many Russian regions, including the Republic of North Ossetia-Alania, have dangerous demographic characteristics: a high mortality rate, rapidly aging population and long-term negative migration. In order to achieve demographic security, the regions of Russia, according to the Demography national project, should make efforts to increase healthy life expectancy, create social norms for a healthy lifestyle and systematic physical education and sports. However, this applies to already born people. As for the key goal of increasing the total fertility rate for ensuring socio-demographic security, in addition to financial support for families and solving their housing problems, it is necessary to strengthen the system of social values that have undergone a significant transformation as a result of reforms, as well as in the process of the second demographic transition. In particular, at the highest level of state and regional government, the highest social values should be systematically supported and the unconditional value of a large family should be demonstrated.

Key words: social values, socio-demographic security, demographic development of the Republic of North Ossetia-Alania.

### **[А.В. Джюев Роль социальных ценностей в обеспечении демографической безопасности региона]**

В современной России наблюдается тенденция естественного сокращения численности населения, которое несмотря на все усилия государства никак не удается преодолеть, и многие российские регионы, к числу которых относится и Республика Северная Осетия-Алания, имеют опасные демографические характеристики: высокий уровень смертности, быстро стареющее население и многолетнюю отрицательную миграцию. В целях достижения демографической безопасности регионам России, согласно нацпроекту, «Демография», следует приложить усилия по увеличению ожидаемой продолжительности здоровой жизни, созданию социальных норм здорового образа жизни и систематического занятия физической культурой и спортом. Однако это касается уже родившихся людей. Что же касается ключевой для обеспечения социально-демографической безопасности цели увеличения суммарного коэффициента рождаемости, то помимо финансовой поддержки семей и решения их жилищных проблем, необходимо укрепить систему социальных ценностей, претерпевших существенную трансформацию в результате реформ, а также в процессе второго демографического перехода. В частности, на самом высшем уровне государственно-регионального управления следует системно поддерживать высшие социальные ценности и демонстрировать безусловную ценность многодетной семьи.

Ключевые слова: социальные ценности, социально-демографическая безопасность, демографическое развитие Республики Северная Осетия-Алания.

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## Introduction

The most important socio-economic problems of modern Russia are directly related to the problems of demographic development of the country and its regions. This is reflected in the Concept of Demographic Policy of Russia<sup>1</sup>, in the Concept of State Family Policy in the Russian Federation<sup>2</sup>, and in the National Project "Demography"<sup>3</sup>. Strategic documents emphasize the key role of the socio-demographic factor in ensuring national security and sustainable development of the country's economy: thus, in the National Security Strategy of the Russian Federation<sup>4</sup>, the first goal is "saving the people of Russia and developing human potential," and in the Strategy of Scientific and Technological Development of the Russian Federation, among the big challenges, the most significant from the point of view of the scientific and technological development of the country, the demographic transition is indicated, caused by the increase in the life expectancy of people, the change in their lifestyle, and the associated population aging, which collectively leads to new social and medical problems<sup>5</sup>.

The key role of socio-demographic security is explained by the increase in threats – in the vast majority of regions of the Russian Federation, the established fertility rates (no more than 1.5 children per family) do not provide simple reproduction of the population, devalue the institution of the family and qualitatively transform society. In the past two years, the death rate of the country's population has sharply increased, and the maintenance of the population is ensured by external migration (in terms of the number of received migrants in the last decade, Russia is in the list of leading countries). The extinction of the Russian population is due to a group of objective and subjective factors: firstly, the demographic transition, which led to a decrease in the fertility rate; secondly, the unstable development of the national economy, high inflation and frequent currency and financial crises, relatively small incomes of the population, a low level of development of the national health and security system; thirdly, the fragmentation of state support for families with young children and large families, fourthly, the alarming expectations of people and the lack of confidence of the population in the future; finally, fifthly, a long depreciation of the institution of family and motherhood, a change in the values of modern society, leading to a further decrease in the fertility rate and a decrease in population. In this regard, a research question arises. To what extent are the moral imperatives of a large family decisive for ensuring the expanded reproduction of the population of Russia, especially the small Russian regions, which include North Ossetia-Alania?

## Study hypothesis

If the Republic of North Ossetia-Alania does not launch social processes aimed at unconditionally recognizing the value of a large family, then in a few decades there may be not only a decrease in population, but also a tendency to reduce human potential due to a deterioration in the socio-demographic structure of the region.

## Literature Review

The mainstream of demographic research in world and domestic science is the concept of demographic transition (Lesteg R., Thompson W., etc.), according to which cyclical socio-demographic changes occur in the world due to the development of production technologies

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<sup>1</sup> The concept of demographic policy of the Russian Federation for the period up to 2025. Approved by Decree of the President of the Russian Federation No. 1351 of October 9, 2007.

<sup>2</sup> The concept of state family policy in the Russian Federation for the period up to 2025. Approved by Order No. 1618-r of August 25, 2014.

<sup>3</sup> The passport of the national project "Demography." Approved following the results of the meeting of the Presidium of the Presidential Council for Strategic Development and National Projects on December 24, 2018.

<sup>4</sup> National Security Strategy of the Russian Federation. Approved by Decree of the President of the Russian Federation No. 400 of July 2, 2021.

<sup>5</sup> Decree of the President of the Russian Federation "On the Strategy of Scientific and Technological Development of the Russian Federation" dated 01.12.2016 No. 642.

and social progress; at the first stage of such a cycle (the first demographic transition) mortality falls and the fertility rate rises sharply (Vishnevsky A., Andreev E. and others), at the second stage (the second demographic transition) the life expectancy of the population grows and the fertility rate drops significantly (Kapitsa S., Iontsev V. and others); finally, the third demographic transition is associated with a qualitative increase in the role of international migration as the main source of population growth in countries and regions against the background of high natural decline and insufficient for simple reproduction of the population fertility rate (Coleman D, Singer M, Vishnevsky A, Zaharov S, etc.)

Regional problems of demographic development were investigated in the works of Andreev E., Arkhangelsky V., Denisenko M., Kalabikhina I. Rostovskaya T., Rybakovsky L., Ryazantsev S., Elizarov V., Volgin N., etc. Studies of these and other authors have studied regional birth patterns with varying degrees of depth, and show the role of family, and family policies in the demographic development of regions. However, such studies on the materials of the Republic of North Ossetia-Alania, as a region with a high mortality rate, a growing share of the elderly population and intensive negative migration, are clearly not enough, which updates the problems raised in the article.

### **Research methods**

The work uses methods of analyzing theoretical sources, the evolutionary-dialectical method, sociological methods.

### **Purpose of the article**

To investigate the role of the value of the family as a basic moral value in ensuring the socio-demographic security of the Republic of North Ossetia-Alania.

### **Results**

In most developed countries, the socio-demographic process, called the "Second demographic transition," has been completed. It led to the consequences predicted by Lesteg R., Dick van de Kaa and other authors of the demographic transition conception, having a negative impact on the fertility and population structure [1, 7]. This stage of transition, as Zakharov S. writes, is associated "with fundamental shifts in the life cycle of a modern person and in the system of individual marriage and family planning, with the expansion of freedom of choice of the marriage partner and forms of life as a couple, with a more responsible approach to the consequences of sexual relations, with higher, than before, effectiveness of timing planning of the offspring appearance, in one word, with the increased capacity of each individual to manage their individual demographic destiny. Among the main consequences that affect the fertility rate: 1) an absolute and relative increase in the number of unregistered marriages, more or less long premarital unions, separation living of partners while rapidly reducing the proportion of hasty, forced marriages stimulated by premarital and extramarital pregnancy at a young age; 2) an increase in the average age of entering into a registered marriage, the average age of the first child birth and the average age of motherhood as a whole; 3) an increase in the proportion of extramarital births with an increase in the average age of the mother at the birth of an extramarital child due to an outstripping increase in the extramarital fertility rate among the middle aged; 4) a sharp decrease in the contribution to the final fertility rates of the youngest age group of 15-19-year-old mothers and an increase in the contribution of the older age groups of 25-29-year-old mothers (and in some countries even in the age group of 30-34 years)" [5].

That is, the formation of the final fertility rate in economically developed countries begins and ends at a much more mature age. Getting an education and finding the first job in developed countries, as a rule, are not burdened with problems related to the performance of maternal functions. For this reason, the low contribution of young women (up to 25 years old and especially up to 20 years old) to the total fertility rate is compensated by an increase in the contribution of middle-aged and older women.

Until the early 1990<sup>s</sup>, all these changes affected Russia relatively weakly, and until the collapse of the Soviet Union, marriage and fertility rates in most Russian regions, on the contrary, were "younger," following a long-term tendency of more than thirty years (this is clear according to the regional statistics from the North Caucasus to the Northern regions of Russia). In the early 1990<sup>s</sup>, the indicator of the final fertility rate for conditional generations (the total fertility rate) in Russia was provided by more than half by the childbirth of mothers under 25 years old. By that time, in the developed countries of the West, which made the second demographic transition, with a similar fertility rate, the contribution of mothers under 25 years old had been everywhere less than 40%, and in a number of European countries about 20% [2].

However, as a result, all signs indicated that the population of Russia was increasingly moving along the path of the second demographic transition, which led to a change in the model of family formation: firstly, the proportion of illegitimate births increased significantly, which indirectly indicates a wide spread of marriage forms, different from the traditional model of registered marriage; secondly, the age of the bride and groom of the first marriage in Russia since 1994 began to grow rapidly; thirdly, the decline in the fertility rate was combined with a decrease in the number of abortions, which is evidence of a restructuring in family planning; fourthly, after a long period of growth, a decrease in the fertility rate under the age of 20 began (in twenty-five years after the collapse of the USSR, it turned out to be two-fold), which recorded an irreversible transition to a new age-related model of fertility. Accordingly, the average age of a woman at the birth of a first-born child and the average age of motherhood as a whole increased, and the new for Russian society practice of postponing the first-born child in newly created families became widespread [3, 5].

Since these complex and interrelated changes have been going on in Russia for the third decade, they can hardly be considered market fluctuations due to exclusively market reforms, rising unemployment and falling living standards of the population. Although, of course, in Russia, the transition to a new model of fertility has experienced and, apparently, will still experience the influence of a changing political, social and economic reality in the coming decades [6,13]. Moreover, the highly mobile and poorly predictable external environment of the family institution carries additional risks of population development and increases threats to the preservation of socio-demographic security.

Speaking about the tendencies in the demographic development of Russia, the following question immediately arises. Does it need an upward dynamic of the population? The leading demographer of Russia, L.L. Rybakovsky, answers this question: "For any country (Russia is no exception in this regard), the scale of its population is the basis of its strength and interstate status. The amount of labour resources that the state can have, the number of its reproductive, educational, military and other contingents depend on the size of the population. But for Russia, with its largest territory among all other countries, rich in natural resources that make the Russian state self-sufficient, the population is an indispensable factor in its defensive potential.... the growth of its population is a condition for maintaining the independence of the country, and its reduction is a path to demographic collapse with all its negative geopolitical consequences" [10, p.141].

The instability of the social construct of the family and the fertility rate, especially in regions with a deteriorating demographic situation, gives reason to expect that demographic security is becoming a priority in the national security system of Russia. Soboleva S.V. Smirnova N.E. and Chudaeva O.V. equate demographic security with other types of national security – political, cultural, military and others. They point out that "the main subject of demography is population reproduction, and therefore the concept of demographic security should reflect precisely the process of population reproduction. In addition, the definition should contain opportunities for assessing and measuring indicators by which it will be possible to

assess safety (mortality, fertility rate, sex-age structure)" [11, p.142]. Thus, by demographic security, the authors mean "the state of protection of life, reproduction and the formation of demographic structures (sex-age, ethnic, family) from demographic threats maintained with the help of an institutional environment" [11, p.150]. It should be noted that this interpretation is similar to the generally accepted definitions of security (both national and regional) and contains an important component – demographic threats.

In North Ossetia, as in many Russian regions, the demographic crisis has been brewing for a long time. Since the second half of the 60<sup>s</sup> of the last century, the degree of intensity of birth has constantly decreased, and the mortality rate, on the contrary, has increased, therefore, the indicator of natural growth has changed for the worse, and the structure of migration flows has negatively affected the competitiveness of the socio-economic development of the region. Gurieva L.K., having studied the migration factors of the strategic competitiveness of the region, concludes that "over the past decade, migration flows unfavourable for the competitive socio-economic development of the region have developed in the Republic of North Ossetia-Alania: firstly, the flow of working age people leaving for neighbouring and distant regions of Russia is steadily increasing; secondly, the number of migrants from the economically less developed CIS countries is growing, coming to the Republic of North Ossetia-Alania in search of a better life and hope of greater earnings" [4, p.120]. This led to a pronounced change in the national, age and social structures of the population. That is, the unfavourable socio-demographic situation has developed in the region, which undermines the foundations of sustainable socio-economic development and leads to an increase in the likelihood of possible negative consequences.

Indeed, as Russian Federal State Statistics Service<sup>1</sup> data show, for two decades in the Republic of North Ossetia-Alania there has been a very unstable dynamics of the natural movement of the population: for the period of 2001-2021, the total population decline amounted to 25.1 thousand people, or 3.5%, and for the period of 2007-2021 the population decreased by 20.7 thousand people or 3%, that is, the intensity of population decline increases despite the fact that during the analyzed period the natural population growth amounted to 30.2 thousand people in the region. The mortality rate of the population is steadily growing in the region, in 2020-2021 it increased to 12.3 and 14.1 permille. While the fertility rate, by contrast, tends to fall from 14.2 permille in 2016 to 11.6 permille in 2021. As a result of the current trends in fertility and mortality, the total natural population growth rate in the Republic of North Ossetia-Alania over the past five years fell by 6.2 permille: from 3.7 permille in 2016 to -2.5 permille in 2021.

Population migration affects population dynamics. The analysis of the migration movement of the population of the region indicates the total negative balance of migration of the region, which in the period of 2002-2021 amounted to 61.8 thousand people<sup>2</sup>.

Such a demographic situation could not but affect the deterioration of the age structure of the population: in 2007, 60.3% of the population of the region was of working age, and in 2022 its share fell to 56.7%, while among the urban population the share of the able-bodied population is even lower – only 55.2%. In 2007, there was 19.8% of the population older than working age, and in 2022 – 22.0%.

The author agrees with the opinion of scientists who believe that the decline in fertility rates is influenced not only by the socio-economic conditions of the institution of the family, which we have discussed in detail above, but also by modern views, social values that dominate in society, as well as a change in the traditional lifestyle.

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<sup>1</sup> Show data. Available at: <https://showdata.gks.ru/finder/descriptors/294468>

<sup>2</sup> Show data. Available at: <https://showdata.gks.ru/finder/descriptors/294468>

The authoritative European demographer M. Sieger writes about this: "In most countries that have passed from traditional to modern society, the fertility rate is not enough to replace the population. This applies to almost all countries, with the exception of countries with small religious communities. However, some individuals may have values radically different from those of the rest of the world, and, as a result, a different fertility rate. No one can say whether the world population will be very low, as it depends on what social values will dominate in the future" [13, p.5].

As the analysis showed, a very unfavourable socio-demographic situation has developed in the Republic of North Ossetia-Alania for decades. At the same time, the situation is not unsolvable for the following reasons: firstly, the share of the young population in the region has increased, and secondly, the basis of the negative migration flow is also made up of young people who leave North Ossetia mainly for reasons of an ineffective labour market, in the sense that employment should provide a decent income to the employee. And finally, thirdly, at the personal level, the younger generation shares the value of the family, as evidenced by the results of a survey on the topic "Family is..." conducted by us on Telegram (October-November 2022). The survey was attended by 269 students of three faculties of North Ossetian State University. The survey participants selected the statements they shared (Table 1), indicating that young people really need family traditions, unity of family views and other family values (as 94% of students who took part in the survey believe), the highest values of a person are formed in the family (this statement is shared by 73% of students), family is among the main values of youth (56%), family should be built on mutual love (this statement is shared by 38% of respondents).

**Table 1. Answers of students of the North Ossetian State University on the topic of sociological survey "Family is..."**

Statement <sup>1)</sup>	The number of people who supported the statement
Family traditions have a huge impact on children, first of all, because existing traditions hold the family together, characterize the family as a single whole.	253
Family is both a school of love and a school of morality, a source of person's most intimate values.	197
The most important and valuable thing in human life is family. First the one in which he is born, and then the one that he creates himself.	151
To make a family "the territory of love," it is important to meet your love and grow true family values together.	103
A happy family in modern society is rather a utopia, and having a lot of children is not the key to a happy life, but rather, on the contrary, condemns people to suffering and deprivation.	74
Other negative statements about large families.	17

<sup>1)</sup> You can choose two answers

Source: compiled based on the results of a content analysis of a survey of 269 students of the North Ossetian State University in the contact groups of the Telegram channel.

It is noteworthy that 28% of respondents believe that there are no happy families, and that large families lead to problems and poverty. In total, negative ratings for a large family

amounted to 33.8%. That is, a little more than a third of the students who took part in the survey have a negative attitude towards a large family, do not share the values of the following statements: "Children are the flowers of our life," "Happiness is a big family," etc.

According to various sources, social values are: 1) life ideals and goals that, according to the majority in this society, should be achieved; these are ideas, principles, objects and their properties in terms of meaning to human life and society; 2) a set of moral, aesthetic, ideological and other attitudes that are generally accepted in a particular society; 3) these are values accepted in a certain society and shared by the majority of its representatives, while they can be both spiritual and material [6, 12].

Tkachenko D. correctly concludes: "The social values of an individual are a product of his socialization. They depend on the conditions in which he grew up and lives, on his upbringing and education, on interests and life principles. At the same time, they can be perceived not only as a product, but also as a socialization factor or a mechanism that provides it with a successful result. The fact is that the adoption of social values by an individual contributes to the successful inclusion in society and becomes an important condition for his personal development" [12].

Anyway, values are formed in a particular society, which means that each individual in the process of socialization learns them and becomes their carrier, and in the future he models his behaviour and evaluates the behaviour of others in accordance with social attitudes and standards adopted in society. The strengthening and development in the North Ossetian society of the social value of a large family, the introduction of the standard of large families as the norm of a young family is a completely solvable task, since the youth of Ossetia, for the most part, consider the family through the prism of the cultural and historical features of the North Caucasus, love and marriage as an important life event and family as the highest life value.

The amount of financial resources necessary for the implementation of effective measures to create a standard for a large family as the highest goal of demographic policy, the development and implementation of systemic scientifically based measures, etc., are all quite solvable tasks in the presence of political will.

### **Conclusion**

Socio-demographic security of Russian regions has a serious impact on the prospects for their development, defining basic existential characteristics, including the convenience of the region for people's lives. Not only economic conditions, but social values that dominate society, as well as people's lifestyle, have a big role in ensuring demographic security and rising fertility rates.

Using the example of the Republic of North Ossetia-Alania, the article substantiates the hypothesis that in order to ensure demographically safe development and reduce threats to the loss of national values and traditions of the historical lifestyle of the population of the region, it is necessary to initiate social processes, aimed at strengthening the institution of the family and unconditional recognition of the value of a large family, thus strengthening the already in force measures in Russia to support family, motherhood and childhood.

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