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**SOCIOLOGICAL ANALYSIS OF DEMOGRAPHIC SITUATION IN  
SOUTHERN REGIONS**

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***Abstract***

Currently, scientists and journalists talk and write about demographic problems, a number of educational institutions in Russia teach demography courses. In recent decades, when we have witnessed a "demographic explosion" in developing countries and a decline in the reproduction rate of the population in economically developed countries, historical demography has attracted widespread attention. Until 1985, data on the population, births and deaths were provided only in special publications, but data on life expectancy, child mortality and the number of abortions were not published anywhere. And it is clear why: these data reflect the essence - the state of the state. The Far Eastern region, one of the most important geostrategic springboards of Russia in the XXI century, may become the object of demographic expansion of neighboring countries. More than one hundred million people live in China's provinces adjacent to the Russian-Chinese border alone, compared to 5 million in the most populated, southern part of the Far Eastern region. In Heilongjiang Province, the population density reaches 46 people per square kilometer, while in Khabarovsk Krai it is only 1.9 people per square kilometer, Primorsky Krai - 12.3 people per square kilometer, Amur Oblast - 2.7 people per square kilometer. The possibility of demographic pressure on the Far East from outside is facilitated by the fact that since 1992 the negative migration balance has been combined with the natural decline of the population, which has taken the character of a depopulation the overall acceleration of population losses in the region.

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## 1. Introduction

Today, there is an increase in negative demographic phenomena, such as falling birth rates, instability of marriage and high mortality rates. At the same time, the age composition of the population is also changing in a direction of decreasing the share of children's ages and increasing the share of elderly ages. The result of this is a depopulation - a decline in the population that began in Russia in the 90s and is taking place at a rapid pace.

At present, demographic issues are extremely topical for our country (Antonov & Arkhangelsky, 2002). Birth and death rates do not correspond to the level required to stabilize the population.

According to experts, the main reason for the natural decline is the extremely low birth rate. At the same time, there is an abnormally high mortality rate in our country, which gives the Russian depopulation an accelerated character.

Despite the devastating population decline, it is worth noting that the devastating demographic inertia is only gaining strength. At present, the decline in the population is constrained to a certain extent by the favorable gender and age structure resulting from the high birth rate of the eighties. The latter circumstance has contributed to the emergence of numerous marriage contingents today, which explains the slight increase in fertility in recent years.

The relevance of this work is due to the importance of identifying the factors that dominate the development of depopulation processes in the Russian Far Eastern society in connection with the catastrophic processes of migration from the Far East, declining birth rates, increased mortality and reduced life expectancy.

## 2. Problem Statement

The Far East is the most remote region from the capital and the historical center of the country. This fact already creates quite serious problems, given the size of the state. In Soviet times, a lot of efforts were made to develop the Far East - to increase population density, develop infrastructure, build naval bases, and develop resources (Baikov, Motrich, & Filonov, 2002). As a result of the collapse of the Soviet Union, the Far East has found itself in a very vulnerable position: the local Russian population began to leave the region, industry has degraded, and there is an acute shortage of jobs.

At the same time, birth rates in neighboring Japan and China continue to rise and the economy is booming. These states are experiencing serious economic and environmental problems due to extreme overpopulation, while the neighborhood has a vast and almost uninhabited area rich in natural resources.

One of the main demographic characteristics of the Far East is its insignificant population in comparison with its area (36.4% of the Russian Federation area). In this regard, since the XIX century the tsarist Russian government has been attracting the population to the area to raise virgin lands and create infrastructure (Kalimeri & Beiró, 2019) The Soviet government attracted the population to the Far East with high wages and better living conditions. The Soviet government attracted the population to the Far East by high wages and better living conditions.

Whereas in 1991 the population of the Far East was 8 million people (5.4% of the total population of the Russian Federation), by January 1, 2004 the region already had only 6.6 million people (4.62% of

the total population of the Russian Federation). According to the results of the 2017 census - 6.2 million people.

The regions of the Far East differ significantly in terms of population and demographics, with five of them (the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia), Primorsky and Khabarovsk Krai, Amur and Sakhalin Oblasts) accounting for 89% of the total population of the Far Eastern Federal District. Along with the general trends in the Far East as a whole, there are significant differences between regions in terms of fertility, mortality and migration.

Today, the rapid socio-economic development of the Far East requires the solution of ambitious tasks in the organization and management of demographic processes (Schultze & Mujica, 2019). In the context of limited resources, it is necessary to take measures to improve the quality of life of the population, which should provide conditions for birth rate growth, reduction of mortality and reduction of migration of the population. At the same time, the solution of such problems will help to increase the migration attractiveness of the Far East regions.

### **3. Research Questions**

The subject of this study is the southern regions of the Russian Far East.

### **4. Purpose of the Study**

The objective of this paper is to provide a sociological analysis of the demographic situation in the southern regions of the Russian Far East.

### **5. Research Methods**

The following research methods were used in this paper: dialectical cognition method, special philosophical, sociological, psychological and legal literature. The article uses historical and comparative legal approaches, methods of analogy, specific sociological methods of polling, interviewing, observation, content analysis.

### **6. Findings**

The demographic situation in the Russian Federation has been receiving great attention for many years now. Until recently, Russia was experiencing a demographic catastrophe: population ageing, population decline, low birth rates, high mortality.

Thanks to the measures taken, these problems have now been almost resolved. The increase in the number started in 2010, and natural growth was observed in 2013. In 2009, the population was the smallest, at 142.7 million people. Since 2009, the population has been gradually increasing (Lukin & Lee, 2015). In 2014, there was a significant increase in the population compared to 2015. In 2016, this figure increased by 200,000 people. The share of the urban population prevails in the total number of people. In 2005, there were 105.2 million people in urban areas and 38.6 million in rural areas. In 2009, the urban population was reduced by 300,000 people. The rural population was then 37.8 million, 800,000 fewer than in 2005. The

increase in the population was mainly due to migration, as the number of migrants increases every year. As noted earlier, positive natural growth began only in 2013. Prior to that, there had been only negative increases, which meant a decrease in fertility and an increase in mortality. Positive overall growth has started in 2009. In the Russian Federation, the number of women far exceeds the number of men. In 2005-2009, there has been a decline in both trends. From 2009 to 2014, there were no significant changes, but after that we see a rise in trends. In 2016, 78.6 million people were women and 67.9 million men. The share of women in the total population is 54% and that of men is 46%, respectively. Between 2009 and 2017, the total fertility rate in the Far Eastern Federal District increased from 1.52 to 1.89, steadily exceeding the Russian Federation's average fertility rate of 1.78 in 2015, but did not reach the level required for population reproduction. The total birth rate was lower than the national average in 2015 in Primorsky Krai (1.76) and Magadan Oblast (1.66), while the Sakhalin Oblast reached 2.02 and the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia) had one of the highest birth rates in the country - 2.19.

The mortality rate in the Far East regions is steadily decreasing, but slower than in other regions of the Russian Federation. Between 2009 and 2016, the mortality rate in the Far Eastern Federal District fell by 8 per cent (to 12.6 cases per 1,000 people), while in Russia as a whole it fell by 10.3 per cent (to 13.1 cases per 1,000 people). In 2014, the mortality rate exceeded the national average in the Primorsky and Khabarovsk Territories, the Amur Region, and the Jewish Autonomous Region, where about 70% of the population of the Far Eastern Federal District resides.

Prevention of morbidity and increased access to high-tech medical care, among other measures, have contributed to reducing mortality and increasing life expectancy. Thus, life expectancy in 2007-2017 increased by 3.9 years, reaching 68.7 years, but remains below the national level by 2.7 years (71.4 years). The gap between men's and women's life expectancy in the Far East is 11.1 years (63.3 years for men and 74.4 years for women), which exceeds the national average of 10.8 years (65.9 years for men and 76.7 years for women). The main reason for this situation is the increased male mortality rate (78.3 per cent of all deaths in working age in the Far East are men).

The main causes of mortality in the Far Eastern Federal District, according to data for 2016, were diseases of the circulatory system - 50.8, neoplasms - 15.1, external causes - 13.2, diseases of the digestive system - 6.2 and diseases of the respiratory system - 4.5. As a result of natural and migration losses over the past 2 decades, the largest population losses have occurred in the northern territories: Chukotka Autonomous District, Kamchatka Territory, Magadan and Sakhalin Regions. At the same time, migration from the North to the South of the Far Eastern Federal District is very popular.

The development of the Far East is mainly connected with an active engagement of indigenous minorities of the North, Siberia and the Far East (Onwards - indigenous minorities) in economic activities. It is especially relevant in the areas with unfavorable life conditions.

In the Far East live 20 different ethnicities, more than 70% of which live in the rural areas. Comparative analysis of All-Russian population census of 2016 and the same census of 2014 showed the decrease by 2.7% in indigenous minorities' population. These ethnicities live in the regions of the Far East. Nowadays, the population of indigenous minorities of the Far East accounts for 103.8 thousands of people, which is 40% of all Russian indigenous minorities and 1.7% of the Far East Federal District' population.

Migration outflow outside of the Far East is conditioned by the lost comparative advantages of this district in the Russian economy (Monnet & Wolf, 2017). The analysis of migration outflows shows that the main reasons for that are educational migration, work migration and return to the previous place of residence.

The intraregional population movement is characterized by the predominance of migration flows oriented from the north to the south of the region, where the Khabarovsk Krai is the most attractive (due to a sufficiently developed network of higher and secondary special institutions). Khabarovsk Krai has a positive balance with all the territories of the Far East (there is a slight outflow of population to the EAD). Among them, the Magadan Oblast (-13.3% per year) and the Chukchi Autonomous Okrug (-12.2%) still stand out in terms of net outflow. Migration loss of population in the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia) increased (-2501 vs. -1780).

One of the special coefficients is the total birth rate. It shows how many children a woman would give birth to on average during the entire reproductive period (15-49 years), while maintaining the age-appropriate birth rate at the level of the year for which the indicator was calculated. It shows how many children a woman would give birth to on average during the entire reproductive period (15-49 years), while maintaining the age-appropriate birth rate at the level of the year for which the indicator was calculated.

Between 2007 and 2017, the total birth rate in the Khabarovsk Territory increased by 18.5%. In general, the indicators reflect the tendency of birth rates in Russia. The Sakha Republic has an average increase of 23.9%, which is quite high compared to other regions.

Certainly, the introduction of maternity capital has played a role here. As of January 01, 2008, 14878 state certificates for maternity (family) capital were issued in the Far Eastern Federal District. At the same time, 1,126 people received certificates for the birth of a second child and 3,592 for the birth of a third and subsequent children. It is likely that these are, to a certain extent, postponed births.

Unfortunately, there is no research that would help to reveal the motivation of women to have second and subsequent children. However, maternal capital has now materialized through women's enthusiasm for childbirth. Growth in the number of newborns has been interpreted as an increase in birth rates (Mindogulov, 2003). But in order to achieve at least substitution of outgoing generations, a woman must give birth to two to three children during the reproductive age. Today, the FEFD has a population replacement rate of 0.6, i.e., ten parents are replaced by six "deputies" (the total birth rate in 2006 was 0.6) - 1.392. At this level of fertility, an average woman has 1.4 births per lifetime. It is not possible to achieve this indicator yet due to the focus of reproductive orientation mainly on 1-2 children in the family.

Among the many reasons for the new vector of fertility processes is the main one - the poverty of the population. The population does not have enough financial resources for its normal reproduction. Treating children as their own wealth and giving birth to a desired child are embodied in the high cost of children to families. Families with three or more children spend 54 % of the total expenditure on food, with one or two of them spending about 47 %. Therefore, unfortunately, it is legitimate to conclude that in today's environment, large numbers of children are equal to voluntary poverty. It is no coincidence that families with no children at all are spreading on the principle of "two salaries and no children". Less than 1% of GDP was spent on birth rate stimulation in Russia in 2007, while in developed countries it was 2%. The introduction of maternity capital will not solve the problem of fertility in general - it is a too simplistic

approach, it can not give an immediate effect. It takes time to assess the possible impact of these measures on the demographic development of the country. And it takes at least 30 years for the assessment to take place, i.e. the next generation to emerge.

## 7. Conclusion

The demographic consequences of the transformation of economic relations in Russian society and, above all, the components of population reproduction, predetermine the need to analyze changes in the intraregional demographic space (Mason & Kinugasa, 2008). The geopolitical and economic consequences of the disruption of the region's structure have yet to be assessed, but the fundamentals of demographic policy in the region in this regard must take into account that. Firstly, the distortions in the transition to a market economy in the region have had a significant impact on the speed and mass of intra-regional migration flows from the north to the more southerly, urban areas of the region. Thus, they create an imbalance in the overall pattern of population settlement in terms of economic feasibility. Secondly, the increase in the number of economically unpromising areas and the related decline in living standards reduces their costs of preventing diseases, maintaining and restoring health and that of family members, and has a negative impact on their overall level of adaptation to the area of residence.

The formation and functioning of the regional economic space will be largely determined by the extent to which it will be associated with the sphere of reproduction of labor resources, and, above all, in the sectors of the former specialization of the region, in the areas of placement of complex industries with a disrupted settlement scheme and insufficient demographic potential. It seems that regional population policy should significantly reflect the understanding of the problem of population reproduction regulation as a multilevel process in which legal, economic, ethnic and other aspects are much more intertwined and interdependent than before.

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