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DEMOGRAPHIC TRANSITION AND FAMILY-DEMOGRAPHIC POLICY

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Abstract. Proponents of the popular demographic transition theory acknowledge that the transformation of the social institution of the family has led to depopulation in Russia and in many other countries, and will lead to the same consequences worldwide in the future. They claim that depopulation will stop at some point, but do not explain how or why this will happen. Adherents of this theory view changes in the social institution of the family, including the decline in the number of children, not as a crisis, but as an irreversible modernization. The conclusion is made that any attempts by the state to increase birth rate are ineffective, so family-demographic policy cannot be based on the demographic transition theory. Such a basis can be provided by the concept of the institutional crisis of the family, which recognizes the possibility of overcoming this crisis and indicates ways out. Family-demographic policy should contribute to an increase in the number of legal marriages, a decrease in the number of divorces, an increase in the birth rate and the preservation of the connection between generations. Measures to reduce mortality rate and regulate migration are necessary, but do not solve the problem of depopulation and are not part of family-demographic policy.

Key words: demographic transition • birth rate • mortality rate • depopulation • social norm • marriage • cohabitation • voluntary childlessness • family crisis • family-demographic policy

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Demographic transition theory. In 1945, F. Notestein, American demographer, called “the demographic transition” a change in the regimes of population reproduction, i.e. the transition from sharp fluctuations of population size with high uncontrolled death rate and high unregulated marital birth rate to stabilization as a result of a more stable equilibrium between low controlled mortality rate and low regulated birth rate [Notestein, 1945]. Until the end of the first stage of the transition, the population increased when there were no crop failures, wars, or epidemics, but fell sharply because of these frequent cataclysms, and then recovered after them. Society balanced high uncontrolled mortality rate with high nuptiality rate and marital birth rate, the limitation of which through contraception and abortion was considered sinful.

In the second stage, mortality rate began to decline, but birth rate remained high. This led to a “demographic explosion” – in Russia and all of Europe from the 18th century to the 1920s, in Asia and Africa from the 1950s to the 1980s, subsequently there also came the third stage, in which this was created. For the first three stages, it explained the past and the present, and for the fourth, it predicted the future. The prediction did not come true.

In the third stage, because of the decrease in infant mortality rate, the birth of “spare” and “replacement” children almost ceased. Since the decline in birth rate is also influenced by other factors that remain in force (including urbanization, the prolongation of schooling, that is, the period when parents must provide for children, the mass involvement of women in wage work outside the home, the reduction in the strength of marriage and its replacement by cohabitation, the development of a pension system that allows old people to live without cash assistance from children), one should not have expected birth rate to stabilize at the same level as death rate. According to demographic transition theory, this equilibrium should have come at stage four, which was thought to be the last stage. But this stage turned out to be just the point of intersection of birth rate and death rate curves, after which the fifth stage came, i.e. depopulation, not envisaged by this theory.

It is not necessary for the level and pattern of employment among women to become the same as among men in order for the birth rate to fall below the death rate. In West Germany, for example, depopulation began as early as 1972, when many married women of active reproductive age did not work, also because their husbands were earning enough. At that time in Russia, the vast majority of families even with one or two children could live more or less comfortably only on two salaries. Almost all women of working age were working or studying. After the transition to a market economy, in many families the husbands’ incomes became sufficient for a normal life. Their wives may be housewives, but often still work. For men, salary is what matters most when looking for a job. For women it is often more important to have a job close to home and to be able to combine it with family life [Shevchenko, Shevchenko, 2019]. Many of them earn less than their husbands, but enough to make a living without them if the marriage fails.

During the 1992–2020 period, the number of births in Russia was 15 million¹ fewer than the number of deaths, more than the direct population losses in the RSFSR during the Great Patriotic War². In the 2010s, natural population decline was already taking place in Europe as a whole, as well as in Japan. According to one of UN forecasts, depopulation will cover the entire world by 2055 [World Population..., 2019]³. However, many adherents of the demographic transition theory believe in the coming stabilization of the population, but do not explain when and how this will happen (Fig.).

Demographers R. Lesthaeghe in Belgium and D.J. Van de Kaa in the Netherlands concluded that the theory of the four stages of the demographic transition explains only the “first transition”. For the fifth stage they developed the “second demographic transition theory” [Lesthaeghe, 1994; Van de Kaa, 1987]. It became very popular. In Russia, the leader of its supporters was A.G. Vishnevsky, Director of the Institute of Demography of the National Research University Higher School of Economics. He considered the second transition as one of the stages of a single demographic transition, and the two theories (first and second transition) as stages of development of the same theory [Vishnevsky, 2019: 97]. But there are also critics of this theory among sociologists and demographers [Klupt, 2010; Antonov, 2020].

¹ Calculated by: *Demograficheskiy yezhegodnik Rossii*. Demographic Yearbook of Russia. 2019: Statistical Handbook / Rosstat (Federal State Statistics Service). Moscow, 2019. P. 80–81. (In Russ.) URL: https://rosstat.gov.ru/storage/mediabank/Dem_ejegovod2019.pdf (accessed on: 23.07.2021); Natural movement of population of the Russian Federation for 2020. (Statistical Bulletin). Moscow: Federal State Statistics Service, 2021. P. 5. URL: <https://rosstat.gov.ru/folder/111110/document/13269> (accessed of: 12.06.2021).

² *Velikaya Otechestvennaya voyna. Yubileyny statisticheskiy sbornik*. The Great Patriotic War. The Anniversary Statistical Handbok. / Rosstat. Moscow, 2020. P. 268. (In Russ.)

³ This UN publication gives not only population projections for all countries of the world until 2100, but also indicators of birth rate, death rate, positive (or negative) natural or migration balance for the same countries since 1950.

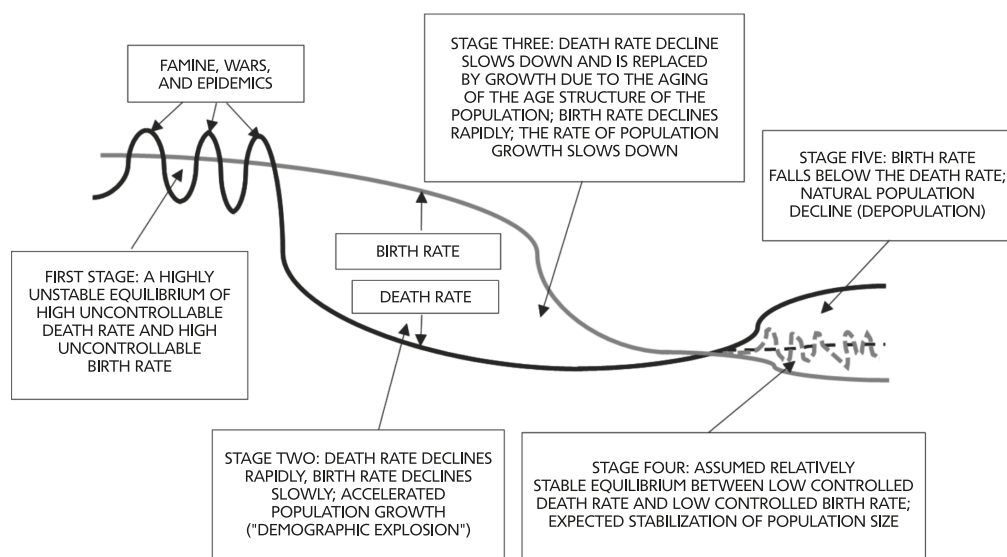


Figure. Stages of the demographic transition

Note. The dotted lines show the assumed dynamics of total birth rate and death rate factors in the fourth stage of transition.

According to Van de Kaa, "Behind the 2nd transition is a dramatic shift in norms toward progressiveness and individualism, which is moving Europeans away from marriage and parenthood. Cohabitation and out-of-wedlock fertility are increasingly acceptable; having a child is more and more a deliberate choice made to achieve greater self-fulfillment ... Only measures compatible with the shift to individualism might slow or reverse the fertility decline, but a rebound to replacement level seems unlikely and long-term population decline appears inevitable for most of Europe" [Van de Kaa, 1987: 1].

Before the "second transition" only the "natural family" was recognized as corresponding to social norm [Carlson, 2003: 32–40], i.e. spouses with children. "Old maidens" and childless couples were considered "inferior", and mothers of "illegitimate" children and divorced persons, if the divorce was caused by their adultery, were considered as an "immoral". Nowadays, social norms of personal and family life are more liberal. In the second stage of transition, customs obliging one of the adult children to live near their parents and take care of them have become a thing of the past. Having children was no longer a guarantee against lonely old age. In the third stage, abortion and contraception became socially acceptable, but singlehood, cohabitation, births outside marriage and voluntary childlessness of couples were still considered deviations from the norm, and divorce was recognized acceptable only as a reaction of one of the spouses to flagrant violations of family life rules committed by the another spouse.

In the fifth stage, i.e. already in the era of the "second transition", almost all traditional social norms related to the formation and disruption of families withered away. Society has recognized that voluntarily childless couples are no worse than couples with children, and cohabitants are equal to legal spouses in everything. Divorce, even where there are children, began to be considered as a normal occurrence [Vishnevsky, 2014: 20], including when the abandoned spouse was not guilty of anything and tried to keep the family together. It has become a popular opinion that children in single-parent families are brought up no worse than in families with two parents [Gurko, Orlova, 2011].

If people decide to have a child not because society demands it, but for the sake of self-fulfillment, it can be achieved in other ways – for example, through a career, which is hindered

by children, at least for women. That's why there are so many childfree people. In liberal Western society, the choice of any path of personal and family life is considered as one of the basic individual rights. This has led to mass voluntary childlessness.

"Compensation" for depopulation by the influx of immigrants from countries with higher birth rates has led to civilizational conflicts between them and the local residents.

When society demanded that all healthy people except monks, nuns, and priests who had taken vows of celibate marry and have children, the vast majority of men and women did so. The birth rate of their families compensated for the childlessness or few children of those who had other types of families or were single. There are always people who are unable or unwilling to comply with this social norm (as with any other norm), but they are relatively few. When the norm loses validity, this minority gradually turns into a majority, and spouses with children become a minority that no longer compensates for the low birth rate.

Separation of Marriage from Parenthood and Fatherhood from Motherhood. Changing social norms have led to a separation of marriage from parenthood. This is evident, for example, in liberal attitudes toward childfree. Around the world, including Russia, this word is already clear to everyone without translation. The attitude towards them can be judged by the data of the international European Social Survey (ESS), in which Russia also took part⁴. According to the data of the third round of the ESS, conducted in 2006 (ESS-2006), in ten Western European countries (Austria, Belgium, Switzerland, Germany, Great Britain, Ireland, the Netherlands, Norway, Finland and France) combined, only 18% had a negative attitude towards the childfree. In Russia, on the contrary, only 18% did not disapprove them. According to the ninth round of the ESS (ESS-2018), in these ten countries the level of social acceptance for the childfree reached 88%, and in Russia – 32%, i.e., it almost doubled in 12 years. The share of those who are neutral about voluntarily childless has increased from 15% to 21%, and 11%, rather than 3%, have begun to approve their choice.

The liberalization of attitudes toward voluntary childlessness is accompanied by an increase in the share of childless people, including in the post-reproductive age. In Russia, their share has increased from 8% in generations born before 1958 (in 2018–60 years old and older), to 10% in generations born in 1959–1973 (in 2018 they were 45 to 59 years old). In ten Western European countries, the proportion of childless people in the same generations rose from 14% to 20%⁵. This is twice as much as in Russia. Since Russia also have childfree among 10% of childless people, it is very likely that in European countries there are more of them than people who do not have children because of health problems.

From 1976 to 2016, A.I. Antonov conducted a number of sociological studies using the semantic differential method and found that "the profile of the "0 children" object, shifted in the past to the negative part of the scale, in 2000–2016 began to move toward the positive pole" [The Family-Children..., 2018: 128–129]. Not only marriage and parenthood are separated from each other, but also the two sides of the latter – fatherhood and motherhood. In the past this was usually caused not by the anti-family behavior of the father or mother, but by the death of one of them. The fifth stage is characterized by a pluralism of socially acceptable family types. The number of "natural families" has reduced. The birth rate in them can no longer compensate for the lower birth rate among the women living in other types of families or having no family.

Even if we refer only to families with children, their structure by type has changed greatly. Due to the decrease in death rate, the number of widows and widowers with children, as well as step families with a stepfather or stepmother replacing deceased parents, has decreased. However, nowadays there are many single and divorced mothers with children, as well as families with

⁴ Every two years, starting from 2002 (in Russia since 2006), a new round of the ESS is conducted during which from 1,000 to 3,000 respondents are interviewed in each of the countries participating in the ESS project (in Russia – about 2,500). See URL: www.europeansocialsurvey.org. The ESS database is publicly available in Russian at <http://ess-ru.ru> (Russian Social Survey under the European Social Survey program), and in English at <http://nesstar.ess.nsd.uib.no/webview>, with the possibility to build tables online.

⁵ Calculated by the author according to ESS2006 and ESS2018 microdata base.

Table

Number of ever born children per 100 women of a given marital status

	Number of children (in %)				Total	Total number of children per 100 women
	0	1	2	3 or more		
<i>Total number of children born per 100 women aged 40–44</i>						
In the first registered marriage	3	37	45	15	100	177
In the first unregistered marriage	18	46	26	10	100	136
Never married	57	37	5	1	100	51
In a registered remarriage	5	23	48	24	100	198
In an unregistered remarriage	5	48	32	15	100	169
Not married, but were in a registered marriage before	9	56	28	7	100	135
Not married, but were in an unregistered marriage before	28	51	18	3	100	95
All with experience of termination of marriage, including remarried and not remarried	9	50	31	10	100	146
All women	11	44	34	11	100	148
of them: women in a registered first marriage and remarriage	3	34	46	17	100	181
<i>Expected and desired number of children for women aged 18–44</i>						
Expected number of children ("How many children (including those you have now) do you plan to have?")	3	25	44	17	89*	188
Desired number of children ("How many children in total (including those you have now) would you like to have if you had all the necessary conditions for that?")	2	17	48	27	94*	215
<i>Distribution by the total number of children necessary for a simple replacement (as per A.B. Sinelnikov's calculations)</i>						
In a registered first marriage or remarriage	3	12	40	55	100	256

Note. *The sum of percentages is less than 100% due to the fact that some respondents found it difficult to answer these questions.

Sources: author's calculations based on data from RPP2017: Observation Results: Sample Observation of the Reproductive Plans of the Population in 2017 // Federal State Statistics Service. URL: http://www.gks.ru/free_doc/new_site/RPN17/reports.html (accessed on: 15.07.2021); see also: [Sinelnikov, 2019: 27–28].

a stepfather and an alive father. Many women give birth "for themselves," not only without husbands or cohabitants, but also without permanent partners, without living together with them. The behavior of women who deliberately (rather than because they were deceived by "seducers" who promised to marry them) separate their motherhood from fatherhood and marriage is consistent with current social norms, but it limits the reproductive and educational functions of the family.

The vast majority of mothers who have never been married have one child (Table). He has no experience with siblings. If it is a son, he will not present himself as a husband or father when he becomes an adult because he has not seen relevant examples in the family during his childhood years. If it is a daughter, she sees motherhood without fatherhood in her childhood and does not see marriage at all. It will be difficult for her to imagine herself as a married mother. Motherhood is being separated from fatherhood also by those women who believe they can properly raise children without a father and therefore decide to divorce their husbands, not only because of their cheating, drinking or lack of care for the family, but also because "love has finished". Husbands abandoned through no fault of their own are often good fathers.

According to a study conducted by the Department of Sociology of the Family and Demography at the Sociology Faculty of Moscow State University in 2018–2019 using quota sampling, 71.2% of 2489 respondents believe that a wife has a moral right to divorce an unloved husband,

even if they have children; 68.6% responded that a husband has a moral right to divorce an unloved wife. This reason for divorce has become a respectful reason in an individualistic society where the personal interests of the spouse who destroys his or her family take precedence over the interests of the children and the other spouse who is not at fault in any way.

Having a stepfather come into the family can create problems for the children, especially if the wife has left for another man who is unable to replace a good father. Many mothers prevent children from meeting their fathers who pay alimony, do not initiate divorce, and suffer from forced separation from their children [Shevchenko, 2019: 194, 203–232].

Average number of children in families of different types. According to data from RPP2017, a sample observation of the reproductive plans of the population conducted by Rosstat in 2017 and covering 15021 respondents in reproductive ages – men who were 18–60 years old, and women who were 18–44 years old, in 81 of 85 subjects of the Russian Federation at any marital status per 100 women who were 40–44 years old and for whom the number of children born can already be considered a final, this number is much lower than the level of simple generational replacement (256 children per 100 women in a registered marriage). The total number of children in couple families based on legal first marriage or remarriage is most often equal to two, in couple families based on “unregistered” marriage or remarriage, as well as in single-parent families – to one. Many children are born in remarriages [Zakharov et al., 2016], but not many divorcees remarry. According to RPP2017, “among women who were 18–44 years old with experience of terminating their first marriage, only 19% had new legal husbands, and 12% had ‘common-law’ husbands” [Sinelnikov, 2019: 29]. The incomplete compensation of divorces by remarriages is sometimes explained by the fact that the status of the divorcees is often temporary – not all enter into a new marriage immediately after divorce [Churilova, 2015: 81]. But remarriages are also not always lifelong – they break up no less often than the first ones [Population of Russia 2013, 2015: 76–77]. Many divorcees “steal” other people’s husbands and wives, which makes their former spouses divorced.

Per every 100 women whose first marriage ended at some point (regardless of their marital status at the time of the survey), 146 children were born, significantly less than for those who remain in their first legal marriage up to exit from reproductive age (177:100). The negative impact of post-divorce singleness on the final number of children for the majority of women who survived the breakup of their first marriage far outweighs the positive effect of having children in legal remarriages for those few who not only remarried but also did not divorce their new spouses. Even in this group, however, there are only 198 children per 100 women. Unregistered remarriage does not have such a positive effect either – the final number of children per 100 women with this marital status (169) is lower than for 100 women in their first legal marriage (177). More than half (53%) of women 40–44 years old who are in unregistered remarriage either have no children at all (5%) or have only one child (48%). Nine out of every ten of their only children were born not from that marriage.

Only 13% of women who have legal husbands postpone having children because they are unsure about the strength of the relationship, but among those in unregistered marriages this proportion reaches 46% [Sinelnikov, 2019: 28–34]. These same doubts also keep people from registering their marriages. In an individualistic society, cohabitation has clear advantages over marriage. It is socially acceptable, but it does not create the obligations associated with legal marriage. In order to avoid complicating their lives, many people prefer childlessness. In terms of achieving the goals for which a family is created (getting rid of loneliness, achieving happiness, having children), cohabitants are between single people and legal spouses [Sinelnikov, 2018: 108]. But this intermediate position is not always identical to the transitional one. According to RPP2017, even if a child is born, only 38% of men and 35.8% of women in unregistered marriages intend to surely register this marriage⁶.

⁶ Observation Results: *Itogi vyborochnogo nablyudeniya reproduktivnykh planov naseleniya v 2017 godu*. Sample Observation of the Reproductive Plans of the Population in 2017 // Federal State Statistics Service. URL: http://www.gks.ru/free_doc/new_site/RPN17/reports.html (accessed on: 17.08.2021). Table 11: Intention of women in unregistered marriages to register it; Table 12: Intention of men in unregistered marriages to register it. (In Russ.)

Ways Out Of Depopulation. According to proponents of the demographic transition theory, depopulation saves the world from overpopulation [Vishnevsky, 2014: 23–24]. However, after the population decreases to an economic or ecological “optimum,” its size will stabilize only when at least 55% of married women give birth to three or more children in their lifetime. According to RPP2017, only 27% of women would like to have so many children, given all the necessary conditions (see table). Even if their need for children will be fully realized, generational replacement will be quite incomplete.

Birth rate depends not only on economic factors. Therefore, birth rate cannot be substantially increased only by means of financial assistance to families with children. This assistance should be increased, but it affects only the degree of realization of the need for children, not the need itself, and stimulates only the birth of children in already existing families, not the creation of new “natural families”. The number of legal marriages is decreasing. They are being replaced by “common-law” marriages, where the average number of children is much lower than that of legal spouses (Table). Little is done to prevent divorces.

Many people prefer cohabitation, realizing that even if they are good husbands and wives, their spouses can dissolve the marriage on their own volition and demand the division of the apartment and other property. The Family Code of Russian Federation (Articles 40–44) allows entering into a marriage contract regarding to common, personal or shared ownership of all or certain types of property (an apartment, house, car, etc.). If there is no contract, community property acquired during the marriage shall be considered to be common and subject to division after the divorce. The number of agreements is growing, but most couples do not conclude them yet, for fear of offending the bride or groom with mistrust. If the marriage cannot be registered without contract, there is nothing to be offended about.

When one spouse requests a divorce without the consent of the other, but fails to prove that the other spouse has violated the basic rules of family life, the initiator of the divorce should be recognized as the culprit and this should be taken into account when deciding on the division of property and who the children will stay with. If these amendments were made to the Family Code, there would be more marriages and fewer divorces.

According to the author’s calculations, the probability of a son’s death in the lifetime of the mother is 24%, in the lifetime of the father – 14%. The probability of a daughter’s death in the lifetime of the mother is 10%, in the lifetime of the father – 6%⁷. Until the nineteenth century inclusive, this risk was perceived by parents as an imminent and real danger. They lost mostly small children, since infant mortality rate was very high. That is why families had many children “just in case”. If they died, it was “compensated” by new births. Nowadays, the majority of those who died while their parents were alive are over 40 years old. Such a distant perspective goes beyond the family’s horizons. But if media reports on accidents frequently would mention the deaths of the only children of any age (and there are many such tragedies), then parents with only one child will realize how much they are at risk. In the republics of the North Caucasus, many families give birth to several daughters until a son appears. This was the case all over Russia before the revolution. Nowadays the gender of children is no longer as important to parents. But if, following the example of the popularization of ideas of gender equality, one propagates having children of both genders in every family, and society accepts these ideas, then a family would need at least two children. If they are of the same gender, more children will be born. The resulting average number of children would be sufficient to way out of depopulation.

The intergenerational bond should not be allowed to weaken. The number of childfree people is particularly high in Western countries, where parents were once taken care of by older sons who inherited all their real estate. The abolition of primogeniture right and the withering away of related with these laws informal social norms have removed this incentive. Almost

⁷ Calculated by: *Demograficheskiy yezhegodnik Rossii*. Demographic Yearbook of Russia. 2019: Statistical-Handbook / Rosstat (Federal State Statistics Service). Moscow, 2019. P. 80–81. (In Russ.) URL: https://rosstat.gov.ru/storage/mediabank/Dem_vezgod2019.pdf (accessed on: 23.07.2021).

all adult children began to leave their parents families. With no hope of their help, the elderly chose nursing homes. Fear of lonely old age no longer encourages people to have children. This is partly why many people decide never to have any children.

The generational bond in Russia is stronger than in the West. It is very important for families to have grandmothers to help take care of their grandchildren. Firstborns are usually born while grandmothers are still working, but second and third children (the number of which determines generational replacement) are often born when grandmothers are retired. Because of the rising retirement age, many families may refuse to have them. Grandmothers caring for multiple grandchildren in the same family should be allowed to retire at age 55, or even earlier.

Conclusions. The demographic transition theory cannot be a scientific basis for family-demographic policy in Russia, since it this theory recognizes the instability of marriage and small number of children in most of modern families as irreversible and positive phenomena inseparable from the modernization of society. Proponents of this theory ("modernizers") consider this transition to be a progressive process that takes place all over the world, earlier in some countries and later in others. They do not deny that this process has already led to depopulation in Russia and many other developed countries, and that something similar will happen worldwide in the future, but they do not believe that family-demographic policy can raise birth rate to the level of mere generational replacement. Considering the world to be overpopulated, they view depopulation as a positive trend, but claim, without elaborating, that the population size will stabilize at some point [Vishnevsky, 2019].

"Demographic self-regulation and low birth rate" online discussion at the joint meeting of the Demographic Section of the Central House of Scientists of the Russian Academy of Sciences and the Scientific Seminar of the Institute of Demography of the National Research University Higher School of Economics "Demographic Challenges of the 21st Century" in November 2020, which was attended by A.G. Vishnevsky, A.B. Sinelnikov, A.I. Antonov, V.N. Arkhangel'sky, V.V. Yelizarov, S.V. Zakharov, A.I. Raksha and other demographers and sociologists, showed that scientists who believe that depopulation will stop on its own ignore the data of sociological studies and demographic statistics, which testify the opposite, and do not provide any data to support their point of view⁸.

Adherents of the demographic transition theory view this transition as a liberation of the individual from the pressure of social norms that prescribe marriage, no divorce without serious objective causes, and, most importantly, to have children. The withering away of these norms is viewed as a liberation of the individual from the pressure of society, i.e. as a positive trend [Vishnevsky, 2014]. The results of the demographic transition are assessed not by demographic, but by democratic criteria.

"Crisisists," i.e. proponents of the concept of the institutional crisis of the family, agree with "modernizers," or adherents of the demographic transition theory, about factors of birth rate decline and family transformation, including the leading role of individualism in the current stage of transformation. However, unlike the "modernizers," the "crisisists" believe that this individualism has taken extreme forms that are dangerous for society as a whole⁹. They assess the outcome of family transformation on the basis of whether a "modernized" family can fulfill its basic functions, i.e. to provide full generational replacement, as well as the proper upbringing and socialization of children. The reproductive function of the modern family has been weakened. This has led to depopulation. The performance of the upbringing function is hindered because many children grow up in fatherless families, which affects their socialization, including their preparation for marital and parental roles.

Proponents of the crisis concept recognize that the family crisis and the resulting depopulation are related to the transformation of society as a whole. Since the direction of this

⁸ See: Demoscope Weekly. 2020. No. 877–878. (In Russ.) URL: <http://www.demoscope.ru/weekly/2020/0877/nauka01.php> (accessed on: 18.07.2021); Demographic self-regulation and low birth rate [video record]. URL: <https://youtu.be/1qGfHr1paxw> (accessed on: 18.07.2021).

⁹ Radical individualism is also evident in the massive protests against measures to combat the COVID19 pandemic. Participants in these protests, especially in the U.S. and Western Europe, believe that these measures infringe on individual rights. The threat to the lives of others and to society as a whole has no meaning for them.

transformation remains unchanged, they do not believe that the institution of the family will revive by itself and that birth rate will increase at least to the level of mere generational replacement. This will require a comprehensive family-demographic policy aimed not only at increasing the birth rate, but also at stimulating legal marriages, preventing divorces [The Family-Children Way Of Life..., 2018: 436–522], and strengthening the connection between generations. There is a need for a demographic expertise of draft laws and regulations on socio-economic issues as to their possible demographic consequences. Those who drafted the pension reform did not seem to think that it could lead to a further decline in the birth rate.

Family-demographic policy measures are still being adopted and applied mainly by trial and error. The scientific basis for this policy may be the concept of the family crisis, which recognizes necessity and feasibility of such a policy, and indicates ways to achieve its goals. If the state and society want to survive, they will solve the problem.

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