

DEMOGRAPHIC VECTOR OF TRANSFORMATION: SPREADING SMALL FAMILIES IN GEORGIA

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Abstract

Transformation of post social countries proceeded with a different path after the collapse of the Soviet Union. Transformation period of Georgia is interesting with lots of aspects, including the analysis of ongoing demographic processes in the country. Nowadays, demographic situation in our country is problematic. Severe economic conditions and unstable circumstances, created in the country, reduced birth-rate to critical limit and increased death-rate. Certain concepts, explaining reasons of small families, were formed on the grounds of numerous researches on reproductive behavior, held in our country and many others. These reasons are stipulated with changes of family function and part of children in family. Sooner or later, all population of the earth will stop growing and move to a stationary position. Such small nations as Georgians should be stop decrease of population. Are such small nations threatened to disappear physically during a globalization process?

Key words: *Georgian population, demographic processes, birth-rate reduction, small families*

INTRODUCTION

Transformation of post social countries proceeded with different path after collapse of the Soviet Union. From such initial conditions, affected by various outer and inner factors, these countries reached different level of development.

Transformation period of Georgia is interesting with lots of aspects, including the analysis of ongoing demographic processes in the country. In the presented work, we want to attract attention to a demographic vector of transformation and its characteristics. [*Economic Transformation: 20 Years of Independence*. European Initiative - Liberal Academy Tbilisi 2010: 7]

Nowadays, demographic situation in our country is problematic. Severe economic conditions and unstable circumstances, created in the country, reduced birth-rate to critical limit and increased death-rate. In the 1980s, the average birth-rate in Georgia was 94 000 children a year. At present, a number of new-born children has changed considerably [www.geostat.ge].

Fewer children are born compared with quantity that is necessary to change parent's generation. Outer migration processes became frequent because million people left the country lately and moved to other countries to earn their living as a result of hard economic situation. Consequently, the rate of young age class reduced while the number of 60 years old people increased, i.e. population becomes demographically older. These processes have been significantly highlighted in recent years and appeared in Georgian population. Considering the present conditions, it is too difficult to improve the situation even in case of economic progress.

According to the official survey, in Georgia, 104 000 children were born in 1961 and that that has been the biggest number. In 1960-1990, on average 93 000 children a year were born. Steep decrease of birth-rate started in 1992. In 2005, 46 000 children were born in Georgia and birth-rate became twice less. In 2010, birth-rate reached 62 000 and in 2014 decreased to 60 000. As a result of that natural growth of population has decreased in recent years [Totadze 2013: 12-14].

Small families are becoming mass in the country. The number of families having three and less children gradually reduces. Notably, in Georgia, birth of third and next child was 36.5 % of all born children in 1960. In 2005 this rate became 10,8 %, in 2010 – 11,3 %, in 2014 – 14,1 %. Among all born children, number of first child is the highest. The rate of first child for a mother was 34,7 % in 1960, in 2005 – 10,8%, in 2010 – 50%, in 2014 – 44 %. Thus, a low level of birth in Georgia is related to the upbringing of only-child families in Georgia and consequently, connected to extremely high birth-rate of first child among total number of births. Georgia outstripped economically developed countries with this point [www.geostat.ge].

As a result of all abovementioned problems population of the country decreases year by year: according to 2002 statistical survey Georgian population was 5,4 million people while in 2014 it reduced to 4,4 million.

Generally, as a result of decrease of birth-rate during worse economic conditions, a number of born females was also reduced and consequently, the country will not be able to prevent further reduction of population even in case of improvement of economic conditions. Hereby, learning the issue is compulsory not necessary.

THE REASONS FOR GROWING THE NUMBER OF SMALL FAMILIES

Certain concepts, explaining reasons of small families, were formed on the grounds of numerous researches on reproductive behavior, held in our country and many others.

These reasons are stipulated with changes of family function and part of children in family [Borisovi 2001: 341-344].

High birth-rate and having multiple children in family was necessary for securing old age for parents. Economic function of family played an important role in high birth-rate. In such families, children whose work was widely used in agricultural economy had certain economic importance. The use of child labor frequently took place later at manufacture and moreover, child labor appeared as a severe exploitation of power at the beginning of capitalism development. On the next stage,

the use of unqualified children's labor was restricted and child became a customer instead producers. Therewith, in the 1900s in the European countries, children labor under the age of 14 was prohibited as a result of progressive public pressure. Restriction of child labor had economic excuse among other advantages.

Public progress, development of social distribution system minimized the role of children as guarantee for their parents in their old age and made it unnecessary in many countries.

After industrial revolution in the 18th century, on the path of industrial development, all abovementioned roles gradually moved from family to other social institutions. Family and outer-family interests with life providing facilities were polarized. Step by step children's profitability for parents fell to 1-2. That is the optimum which enables parents to agree satisfaction of parent's requirements with satisfaction of other requirements (with the purpose of getting salary for work done, for social advance, relaxation, i.e. all – out of family).

Then, obstacles are aroused between reproductive interests of family and society. The society is not able to exist (physically) lastingly without a part of families with three and more children when most families do not have requirements for such a number. Only "social support" for family and economic assistance for individual families: aids, privileges, etc. are not enough to overcome these obstacles. Such actions can only influence the birth-rate by increasing the sufficient number of children in families. But if this number of children reduces then it is not enough for a simple reproduction of population, only such economic supports will become scant. The whole culture and lifestyle must be changed so that children's beneficial role for parents in quantitative aspect grows till a socially essential level. In this case reproductive interests of family and society will coincide with each other [Khmaladze 2009: 344-346].

We would never find out about a belief which became mass superstition that we need to live in good material conditions to have several children. Long time before establishing statistics and demography, scientists' observation gave ground for an opposite opinion. A great economist Adam Smith marked feedback between the quantity of born children and social condition of mothers but this link was explained by a difference between the productivity and not difference in desire for having children. It is not random, those times, number of children was considered to be God's will and interference in godhead affairs that was regarded as profanity.

France was the first country where birth-rate started decreasing at the end of the 18th century on interfamily restriction. It was the first country where public figures and scientists expressed concern about the danger of depopulation and attempted to learn the reasons of decrease of birth-rate. Though, scientific research of birth-rate factors were expanded on the bounds of the 19th – 20th centuries when improvement of surveys of population, statistics of their natural movement and birth and marriage rates, prepared informational base for researches where differential birth-rate was discussed, i.e. system differences between birth-rate levels of social groups [Borisovi 2001: 346-349].

AFFECTING FACTORS ON BIRTH-RATE

As stated in demographic literature, changing a large family with a medium family is a natural phenomenon after demographic development but actually, most countries of the world transferred to smaller families (1 or 2 children), that exposes the danger of depopulation. The change is caused by plenty of factors influencing the birth-rate, some of which is defined with vague and contradictory character. Though, it looks simple enough to explicate.

First of all, it regards to the interrelation the level of birth-rate and material welfare. In accordance with the Soviet demographic literature, socialism provides a steady growth of welfare of population compared with capitalism that for its part stipulates a high birth-rate. This theory failed as a result of systematic reduction of birth-rate from the 1960s. Herewith, after the researches in the Soviet Union and foreign countries it turned out that the better is the material welfare of families fewer children they have. As demographers call, this is “a paradox of inverse relationship”. Indeed, what can explain the fact that when people are dressed well, fed well, better living conditions, they should have fewer children?

The Soviet demographers tried to explain the “paradox” in the following way: it is the truth that material welfare grows but requirements do it faster. Consequently, a difference between requirements and their satisfaction also grows that causes the reduction of birth-rate. We would agree with this concept if not following circumstance: why do we face a low birth-rate in advanced develop countries where practically all requirements are satisfied?

Reasons for a birth-rate reduction are also considered when influencing factors on a birth-rate are analyzed. At present, we do not have any established theory about increasing factors of birth-rate.

Women’s emancipation and involving in social activities greatly affected the reduction of a birth-rate. It is established that a rate of natality is in a proportional relationship towards the level of women’s employment. A birth-rate is differentiated in accordance with social groups and the level of education. National and religious possession also has influence on the birth-rate.

Generally, affecting factors on natality operate at the same time. They are interlaced and can be discussed separately by using abstract-analytical methods.

We should highlight that today the reduction of natality is conditioned by the complex of factors affecting it. “Requirement of having children” is not reduced but the number of them. One or two children in a family are enough to satisfy the “requirement of having children”. Here we meet an obstacle between the family and society as far as it is essential to have more than two children in a family for wide survey of population [Khmaladze 2009: 406-409].

DEMOGRAPHIC AND SOCIAL RESULTS OF SMALL FAMILIES PROLONGED IN GEORGIA

Though, demographic results of small families are quite transparent, their social results have never been designed and discussed in our society. Such an outlook

has been considered impossible for a long time. That is why, the beginning of depopulation looked like a snowy hurricane in a cloudless summer.

Let's try to imagine possible results of small families in a Georgian society:

Even if a birth-rate is not reduced, which is not serious to suppose, considering the present conditions of demographic education in the country and non-existence of any social movement for saving the nation from extinction, depopulation will prolong for a long time, probably till the total disappearance of Georgia from political map. The country can collapse when population is so little and some big neighboring country will annex it.

We should add aging of population which accompanies depopulation and interrelates to it. Aging certainly happens on defined stage of growth of life expectancy but according to correlation between a birth-rate and a death-rate, discussion can be carried out regarding various scales and speed of aging population.

Therefore, joint labor power will also grow old in the country. A lower birth-rate and a higher death-rate, oppressed renewal of generation and their degradation can lead us to intense problems of manpower resources and reproduction of military-selectee contingent. All these are contemporary problems. This is not a problem for only our country but for those countries having a low natality, especially a problem mostly for countries with a high productivity of labor. In due time, during discussions about issues of our demographic future, some economists claim that small families can be compensated with a growth of labor productivity and reduction of the requirements of economy for working power. Great Britain, Germany, France, and Scandinavian countries, as well as the USA have to attract foreign labor power, so-called "Gastarbeite", to compensate the shortage of native labors. Later, in these countries, relations between the nations strained and reached serious conflict.

Certainly, we could continue this list but it is established mainly on suppositions. In any case, the suppositions should become the subject of discussions and researches, probably with a supportive modeling [Borisovi 2001: 305-307].

CONCLUSION

In order to abandon a zone of demographic disaster, increase in a birth-rate should be much more than size 2,12, calculated per one woman. We need to have influence on reproductive requirement of millions of families of Georgia and to raise up to size 2,8-3,0 children for which we need to popularize 3-4 children families and we should not forget to pay attention to large families.

Considering all above-mentioned, policy, oriented to the growth of birth-rate and affecting reproductive behavior of population, consists of two directions: 1) Regulating the living conditions for families for the purpose of satisfying their requirements for number of children. 2) Regulating the living conditions so that increase the number of children till that size that will save our community from demographic disaster.

First direction totally agrees with the tasks of traditional social policy. They should not include support and privilege system. On the contrary, we need such a social

policy that would decrease the number of the families who need state charity. In other words, we should increase the number of those families who are able to live on their own.

Second direction of pro natal policy of work of state and social organizations means growing advantages and attractions of family life, making family institution more firm and encouraging families to have more children.

Sooner or later, all population of the earth will stop growing and move into a stationary position. Such small nations as Georgians should be stop decrease of population. Are such small nations threatened to disappear physically during globalization process?

Eventually, we need to accomplish special operations to improve demographic conditions of the country: on the one hand required material and financial resources should be mobilized and on the other hand we should form such reproductive vein that is desirable for the community.

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