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Introduction

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1.1 Aim and Scope

This book describes the unique Russian experience of the dynamics and factors determining demographic trends. To do so we: (1) collected numerous earlier studies and explored data in the Russian State Archive of the Economy, which became publicly available after the collapse of the Soviet Union and is still largely unexplored; (2) used available microdata from household surveys conducted in Russia since 1994; and (3) analyzed official statistics offered by the Russian Federal State Statistics Service.

Discussion on the uniqueness of Russian demographic trends started several decades ago. Between the collapse of the Soviet Union at the

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end of 1991 and 2010, Russia was characterized by a natural population decline—the number of deaths exceeded the number of births—also known as the Russian demographic crisis. International net in-migration from the former Soviet Union republics was observed contemporaneously; this partially mitigated Russia's depopulation. Since 2009 the population seems to have stabilized, but the trend of a natural population decline is unlikely to change. In fact, a similar trend has been observed since the 2000s in other advanced countries, such as Italy and Japan.

What are the factors lying behind this phenomenon? Is this trend a result of the USSR's collapse, or does it have a longer history? What were the dynamics of the numbers of births and deaths in the Soviet Union? What are the current demographic trends? How far does the Russian case differ from other countries' experiences? What solutions has the Russian government undertaken to mitigate the demographic problems? This volume attempts to answer these questions.

By the beginning of the twentieth century, decades later than Western countries, Russia experienced a reduction in mortality, especially infant mortality. The latter was the main factor in the subsequent population growth, which was as fast as that observed in Africa in the mid-twentieth century. The October Revolution of 1917 and the civil war that followed led to a huge decrease in the Russian population. Moreover, agricultural collectivization, Stalin's Purges, and the human loss caused by World War II, all induced tremendous fluctuations in population dynamics. By 1946 the total population of the territory occupied by the modern Russian Federation was less than that at the time of the October Revolution.

Russia did experience a small baby boom following World War II, but a decline in both fertility and mortality followed up until the early 1960s, also seen in other countries. Russian demographic trends then diverged from their Western European counterparts as a slowdown in infant mortality decrease and an increase in adult male mortality were clearly observed. Life expectancy at birth either remained at or fell below the level of the 1960s for almost 30 years, significantly lagging behind advanced countries. Except for the periods 1963–1966 and 1986–1989, when male life expectancy at birth was above 64.0, this figure had been static since 1960; not until 2011, after the collapse of the Soviet Union, did it rise above 64.0 for the first time. On the other hand, the fertility rate

was almost always higher than in many Western European countries, due to multiple social support policies implemented by the socialist regime.

After the collapse of the Soviet Union, a rapid increase in mortality and a decrease in fertility resulted in the natural decline that began at the start of the 1990s. Fertility dropped quicker than in Western European countries. The last time that Italy's total fertility rate (TFR) was higher than required to maintain a stable population (population replacement level) was 1976 (TFR=2.11); in Russia this occurred in 1989 (TFR=2.01). In Italy, the natural decline in population began at least 15 years after the TFR fell below the population replacement level. The gap in life expectancy between Russia and other advanced countries, which was evident even in the late 1960s, thus became larger.

In the second half of the 2000s, with social stabilization and economic growth, Russian demographic indicators improved. However, the impact of historical trends is still significant and the future demographic situation remains unpredictable. Multiple disturbing factors make even short-term forecasts virtually impossible; however, medium- and long-term qualitative and quantitative predictions suggest a further, gradual natural decline in the Russian population, due to its age structure.

1.2 Approach

This book integrates approaches from several disciplines (demography, economics, and sociology) to provide a comprehensive overview of the demographic development through the eras of the late Russian Empire, the Soviet Union, and the modern Russian Federation.

The book focuses on the following issues:

- (1) development of the population statistics system in the Russian Empire, Soviet Union, and Russian Federation, and the construction of long-term population statistics;
- (2) population policies in Soviet and modern Russia concerning fertility and the family;
- (3) marriage and divorce patterns as a proximate factor of demographic trends;

- (4) decline in fertility and the role of uncertainty;
- (5) probability of and factors for having second and third children;
- (6) trends in mortality and its causes;
- (7) changes in demographic distribution as a result of interregional migration.

The authors use a range of official publications and well-known data sets, as well as sources that are rarely consulted: (a) *Dvizhenie naseleniya v Evropeiskoi Rossii (Population Dynamics in European Russia)* edited by the Statistics Bureau of the Russian Ministry of Internal Affairs (1862–1918; official publication); (b) USSR Council of Ministers' declassified references (national archive); (c) nationally representative household survey data from the Russian Longitudinal Monitoring Survey – Higher School of Economics (RLMS-HSE); (d) oblast-level in- and out-migration matrix (available from the Russian Federal State Statistics Service).

1.3 Contents

The second chapter (*Population Statistics of Russia: The Russian Empire, the Soviet Union and the Russian Federation*) aims to: (1) offer an overview of the statistical systems and methods of maintaining population statistics in the Russian Empire, Soviet Union, and Russian Federation; (2) provide population statistics for territorial units comparable to those of the Russian Federation based on primary sources; and (3) take a general view of long-term population dynamics over the last century. The heterogeneity of territorial units across a country is rarely taken into account by population research covering both the imperial period and that following the October Revolution. Moreover, only a few studies use primary data to describe population dynamics, a gap this chapter bridges.

The chapter starts with the institutional background to collecting population statistics in the Russian Empire, and then examines the population statistics systems after the Soviet government was established. Thus, the population estimates rely on archival data, reported by territorial units comparable to those of the Russian Federation. This makes the chapter a

fundamental source of historical information about the development of population processes in Russia.

Further, the chapter highlights the role of structural factors and demographic waves, resulting from the tragic history of the twentieth century, in shaping the natural population decline—often referred to as depopulation. These factors are often neglected in the general public literature, which indirectly reinforces the following erroneous public beliefs: first, the collapse of the Soviet Union was the main reason for the worsening demographic situation; and second, the current depopulation is mainly due to low fertility.

It seems that official Russian government documents to combat depopulation have often overlooked these factors (see Chap. 3). Indeed, international experts often criticize the optimistic and ambitious demographic targets of the Russian government, which interprets the population growth since 2009, caused in part by structural factors, as evidence of the effectiveness of government policies.

The aim of **the third chapter** (*Population Policies in Soviet and Modern Russia*) is to provide a comprehensive overview of how population/fertility policies have changed between the October Revolution of 1917 and the present time; during this period, the reproductive function of women remained high on the political agenda. The chapter starts with the first legislation implemented immediately after the Revolution and during the 1920s. It then illustrates, chronologically, the development of the new Soviet concept of family through the 1930s to the 1950s, and the “masculinity crisis” of the 1960s—the period, according to Vishnevsky (2009), when latent depopulation started.

The chapter leads the reader through the pro-natal policies of the 1980s and later measures to combat the evident depopulation in the Russian Federation following the collapse of the Soviet Union. The concluding remarks are presented alongside a summary of achievements in the implementation of the first two stages of the *Concept for the Demographic Policy of the Russian Federation through 2025*. The authors pay close attention to such measures of demographic policy as: marriage and divorce regulations; family support through benefits and taxes; reconciliation between the family and work spheres (maternity/paternity leave, workplace flexibility); fertility promotion; childbearing and childcare support; and rare reproductive health protection initiatives.

The fourth chapter of the book (*Marriage and Divorce, 1994–2014*) addresses the dynamics of marriage and divorce rates as well as the determinants of getting married and divorced in the period 1994–2014 in Russia.

The chapter consists of descriptive statistics, a theoretical section and an empirical section. First is a discussion of current statistical trends, then an overview of the theoretical considerations and a review of existing empirical studies of contemporary marriage and divorce in Russia. Then ongoing Russian demographic changes within world trends for more flexibility in marriage are discussed. The authors group the factors into economic, social, physical, and psychological groups and estimate their impact on the probability of getting married or divorced within a year. The regression modeling is based on the panel representative household data RLMS-HSE for 1994–2014.

In many European countries females became more career oriented and independent, which made them less tolerant of unsuccessful marriages. Is this global trend relevant to Russian society? How many free Russian women are having children without husbands? Are children a real obstacle to divorce? All these questions are tackled in this chapter.

The fifth chapter (*Fertility and Uncertainty in Modern Russia*) investigates the probability of having a first child. The chapter covers a period of nearly two decades after the socio-economic transition began, focusing on women of fertile age (15–49) living with a partner, in or outside wedlock.

First, the authors study the most important individual characteristics, of both women and their partners, associated with a higher probability of having a first child. Transitional features during the period covered enabled an investigation into the role of uncertainty and insecurity, global and personal, in deciding to have a child. In fact, ex-Soviet citizens were ignorant of unemployment and non-standard employment contracts, while the proportion of temporary and part-time jobs has been increasing since the mid-1990s. In the second part of the chapter, the authors therefore expand on the set of explanatory variables, and investigate the role of objective and subjective insecurity in the labor market, including type of contract and unemployment concerns. Unlike previous studies that predicted women's unemployment was likely to induce a higher probability

of having children in post-socialist countries, the authors find that higher (employment) security is associated with having a child.

The sixth chapter (*Factors Affecting the Birth of Second and Third Children*) reveals the predictors for the birth of the second and third children in Russia. The chapter discusses how women's successful adaptation to new family and working conditions after the first child influences further fertility behavior and illustrates how the experience of returning to the labor market further affects fertility planning. This necessary but difficult return is often quoted as an explanation of their low fertility. However, high wages and stable employment increase the chances of having further children. There is strong evidence that the decision to have more than one child depends on the strength of women's position in the market, especially if the woman is the main breadwinner, a common situation in the late 2000s.

A negative experience after the first child—such as long-term unemployment, job instability, downward mobility or wage decrease—pushes women to prioritize their job over having further children. The probability of having a second and further children grows when the female is secure, either because of her husband's income or her own prospects in the labor market (e.g. the chance of finding a job easily after another child-birth). The authors test the empirical models on the basis of the nationally representative RLMS-HSE panel data for 2000–2009. Additionally, the results of qualitative interviews (30) with mothers living in different Russian regions were used to underpin the results from the quantitative tests in the chapter.

The complex phenomenon of the trend in Russian mortality cannot be explained by socio-economic factors alone. In the **seventh chapter** (*Changes in Mortality: Meta-Analysis*), the analysis is complemented by a literature review in the fields of both social and natural/medical sciences. The chapter begins with descriptive statistics illustrating the trends in both age-specific mortality rates by cause of death and life expectancy at birth. Statistical distortions and gaps in records are said to have an impact on data reliability, so there is discussion on whether the trends reflect reality.

While levels of medical care and environmental pollution are obviously important, they cannot completely explain either the rise in

mortality rates throughout the Soviet era or their fluctuation after the collapse of the Soviet Union. Hence, the chapter continues with a study of medical literature that significantly enriches the list of contributory factors. Previous research strongly suggests that alcohol consumption has been key in slowing down the growth in life expectancy at birth and the subsequent increase in mortality rates since the 1990s. The reason for high alcohol consumption is rooted not only in Russian culture but also in the impact of the turmoil in transitioning from a planned to a market economy for individual incomes and labor market conditions. Such economic stagnation must have affected alcohol consumption, resulting in a further increase in adult male mortality.

The eighth chapter (*Interregional Migration: Analysis of Origin-to-Destination Matrix*) examines regional economic conditions and their impact on interregional population redistribution patterns. The chapter starts with an overview of migration patterns in Russia immediately after the collapse of the Soviet Union, describing regional economic trends to familiarize the reader with the socio-economic context. Specifically, the authors address the unique migration flow towards the extreme north regions caused by Soviet-era policies, including: large construction projects, or the construction of resource-mining and military bases; the concentration of population in the European part of Russia, especially around Moscow; and the vitality of the resource-producing areas. Despite the difficulty in gathering reliable data, previous research has already indicated that such factors as regional economic conditions, market scale, and distance have played a part in emerging new migration patterns compared to experiences during the Soviet era.

The chapter continues with an econometric analysis of interregional migration patterns for 1990–2013 using data from the Russian Federal State Statistics Service (Rosstat). Unlike Andrienko and Guriev (2004), who relied on gross migration data from 1992 to 1999, the authors extend this period to include the 13 years after 2000, when Russia began to witness explosive economic growth due to soaring oil prices, and uses data from the Soviet era, 1990 and 1991. The authors also introduce into the analysis a list of previously ignored factors, such as the prominence of the resource-producing areas, and show their major impact on population redistribution patterns.

The book concludes with a short discussion on such issues as international migration and the population forecasts of the Russian Federal State Statistics Service.

1.4 Brief Description

The system for population registration and statistical data preparation was well developed in both the Russian Empire and Soviet Union. No other advanced country has a centralized statistical system, instead they have individual ministries collecting and publishing statistics; therefore, it is unique that the Russian/Soviet Statistics Bureau of the Ministry of Internal Affairs collects all kinds of statistics. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, population data for the periods of the Great Purge, the famine in the Volga River basin, and during World War I became available, offering the possibility for qualitative, as well as quantitative, research. The huge loss of life during the October Revolution, collectivization, the Great Purge, and World War II all had an impact on demographic waves and population structure in modern Russia, as evidenced by the archival materials used in this book.

The Soviet Union's fertility rate was relatively low compared with countries of a similar per capita income level, but it still allowed some population growth. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, however, it declined rapidly, for which social turmoil and the dramatic drop in all income levels are widely considered to be factors. Often overlooked, but also worth considering, are the long-term trends in demographic characteristics and the possible effects of Russian demographics catching up with stylized demographic transitions; the lowest fertility rate observed in Russia may only be a catch-up with the trends in advanced economies.

Alongside the rapid decline in fertility, a rapid rise in mortality was observed during the early years of modern Russia. These seemingly new phenomena, however, are rooted in the 1960s, when the improvement in life expectancy at birth stopped. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, those factors affecting mortality expanded due to deteriorating medical treatment, long-lasting effects from environmental pollution, and limitations in the cognitive capability of the government's statisti-

cal organization. Among the possible explanations for the upward trend in mortality, the effect of alcohol consumption seems plausible, behind which may lie increased social tension or social unrest. Further sociological surveys are needed to shed light on the connection between the two phenomena, however.

Interregional migration was facilitated mainly by central government during the Soviet era. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, though, the direction of modern migration flows was determined by the labor demand from resource mining, high incomes, and other socio-economic factors. The size of international labor migration also increased, especially in the second half of the 2000s, but most migrants stay in Russia for less than one year; the downward trend in total population is thus only slightly mitigated.

The Russian population declined naturally from 1992 to 2013 (more than 20 years) and, according to demographic experts, it will shrink by a further one-third by 2050 compared to 2008 (Vishnevsky and Bobylev 2009). However, these projections depend heavily on underlying assumptions of fertility, mortality, and other conditions. Currently, the number of deaths and births are the results of long-term demographic trends; therefore, the main trend of a declining population cannot be drastically changed in the short term. The challenges of Russian demographics will continue into the foreseeable future.

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