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Veröffentlichungsversion / Published Version

Zeitschriftenartikel / journal article

Empfohlene Zitierung / Suggested Citation:

Iontsev, V. A., & Subbotin, A. A. (2018). Current Scenarios for the Demographic Future of the World: The Cases of Russia and Germany. *Baltic Region*, 10(3), 4-18. <https://doi.org/10.5922/2079-8555-2018-3-1>

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DEMOGRAPHY



CURRENT SCENARIOS FOR THE DEMOGRAPHIC FUTURE OF THE WORLD: THE CASES OF RUSSIA AND GERMANY

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In this article, we explore the demographic future of the world with a focus on scenarios for Russia and Germany. We seek an alternative to the Western standards of scenarios for global demographic development. We consider demographic development both in a positive and negative sense. Our analysis rests on such theoretical structures as the general theory of population, the classical theory of demographic transition, the concepts of the 'second', 'third', and 'fourth' demographic transitions, and scenarios for the 'Eurasian demographic development path'. We employ a range of methods from comparative demography as well as historical analogies, expert evaluations and demographic forecasts. We analyse the patterns of current demographic development in Russia and Germany to explore various demographic scenarios.

In the conclusion, we stress the need for Russia and other countries, including Germany, to embark on the 'Eurasian demographic development path' in view of the countries' geographical positions and demographic values, with children being a dominant one. Otherwise, both Germany and Russia may disappear as national states as early as this century. The findings of this study can be used to improve the demographic policies of Russia and Germany.

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Submitted on May 16, 2018

doi: 10.5922/2079-8555-2018-3-1

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Keywords: Eurasian demographic development path, classical demographic transition, second, third, and fourth demographic transition, demographic development, demographic crisis, individualistic family, ageing, international migration



Introduction

We would like to begin with a quote from T. Sarazzin's book *Germany is Abolishing Itself*: 'A cynic might argue: they [migrants] can do all the lowly jobs — for instance, the bearing and rearing of children — that Germans are reluctant to take... The childless or child-poor German middle and upper classes live comfortably in their suburbs and decorate old buildings. They have not even registered the fact, but the land is changing beyond all recognition due to demographic developments and Germany is threatening to abandon itself, to put it mildly. When they do notice it, it could be too late. As G. Hegel poetically and darkly wrote, "The Owl of Minerva first takes flight with twilight closing in".'¹ At the end of the article, we will propose a scenario that will deter the great state of Germany and the equally great state of Russia from 'abolishing themselves'. This is up to the politicians and people living in these countries, the fates of which have become so closely intertwined in the history of civilisations.

We must make several important remarks regarding the concepts of 'demographic development', the 'Eurasian path of demographic development', and 'demographic crisis'.

Demographic development is usually associated with a continuous ascent. However, 'demographic development' is a more complex phenomenon that comprises both positive and negative determinants [2, pp. 78—79]. Moreover, the world population has been shaped by these determinants throughout its history. At different stages, these determining factors have different weights. We believe that today's demographic development of the countries of the West, some Asian states, and Russia, is dominated by negative determinants that amount to a demographic crisis.

The demographic crisis started in 1963 in the US [3]. Later, at the turn of the 1970s, it spread across Western Europe. The crisis manifests itself not only in quantitative negative changes, primarily in the marriage and birth rates (which corresponds to the second demographic transition

¹ Ein Zyniker könnte argumentieren: Die können dann auch all die anderen niedrigen Arbeiten verrichten, die viele Deutsche — wie die Zeugung und Aufzucht von Kindern — nicht gerne selber erledigen... Die deutsche Mittel- und Oberschicht lebt dagegen kinderlos oder kinderarm und komfortabel in ihren Vorstadtvillen und schmucken Altbauwohnungen. Sie registriert nicht einmal, dass sich das Land infolge der demografischen Entwicklung bis zur Unkenntlichkeit verändert, dass es sich selbst aufzugeben droht — um das Mindeste zu sagen. Wenn sie es merkt, könnte es zu spät sein. Wie sagt Hegel so poetisch und so dunkel: „Die Eule der Minerva beginnt erst mit der einbrechenden Dämmerung ihren Flug“. (Sarrazin T. 2010. *Deutschland schafft sich ab: Wie wir unser Land aufs Spiel setzen*. Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, p. 361).

concept formulated by Ron Lesthaeghe [5] and Dirk van de Kaa [4]), there are both negative structural (sex and age) and qualitative (demographic behaviour, reproductive health and spirituality) changes in the population. The demographic crisis in today's Europe was described in detail in a recent article by the famous Hungarian-American demographer Paul Demeny. However, he did not address the third component of the phenomenon, which we believe to be the most important [6, pp. 111—114] — the negative qualitative changes in the demographic development both in Russia and in many developed countries of the world.

We are convinced that the demographic crisis can be overcome, at least in Russia, through treading the Eurasian path of demographic development — a combination of different models. One of them is that of fourth demographic transition, which we will consider in detail below, alongside the idea of Eurasianism.

Statistical data and methods of research

This study employs the official data on socio-demographic measures from Russia's Federal Service for State Statistics (Rosstat). These are the results of 2002 and 2010 national censuses, the Statistical Yearbook of Russia, Rosstat's statistical reports 'Natural Population Change in the Russian Federation' and 'Population Number and Migration in the Russian Federation', the Russian Demographic Data Sheet 2016, and a number of other Russian sources published over the past 20 years. The statistics for Germany are taken from the data of the Federal Statistical Office of Germany, the US Central Intelligence Agency, the World Population Prospects, and the Human Mortality Database.

In using these data and employing the method of comparative demography (a range of demographic measures and rates), we corroborated the conclusions made in the course of empirical observations and the analysis thereof. The examination of the total fertility rate demonstrates that Russia and Germany have relatively similar fertility rates (see Tables 1 and 2). However, if we consider the development prospects, the process of ageing, and the territorial factors, Russia might seem to be faced with a more complicated situation.

As to the mortality rate, cross-country comparisons largely use such an indicator as life expectancy at birth (LEB). Our forecast, based on an analysis of the current trends and life tables and the extrapolation method, shows that, by 2050, LEB in Germany will reach 90.6 years for both sexes (90 years in males, and 91.6 years in females), whereas LEB in Russia will be 75.7 years for both sexes (69.9 years in males and 80.7 years in females). The forecasted gap once again stresses the need for Russia to adopt a nation-saving lifestyle, which is the essence of the Eurasian path of demographic development.

Table 1

The total fertility rate in 2017 in selected countries

Developed countries	Baltic region	Eurasia	Developing countries
France — 2.07	Sweden — 1.88	Tajikistan — 2.63	Turkey — 2.01
UK — 1.88	Norway — 1.85	Kirgizia — 2.61	Nicaragua — 1.89
US — 1.87	Finland — 1.75	Kazakhstan — 2.25	Vietnam — 1.81
Netherlands — 1.78	Denmark — 1.73	Uzbekistan — 1.76	Chile — 1.80
Belgium — 1.78	Estonia — 1.60	Armenia — 1.64	Iran — 1.87
Australia — 1.77	Lithuania — 1.59	Russia* — 1.61	Brazil — 1.75
Canada — 1.60	Latvia — 1.51	(1.62)	Thailand — 1.52
Switzerland — 1.56	Germany — 1.45	China — 1.60	
Italy — 1.44	(1.60)	Belarus — 1.48	
South Korea — 1.44	Poland — 1.35		

* Russia is also a Baltic region state.

The data of national statistical services are given in brackets.

Prepared based on The World Factbook by the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA). 2018.

Cross-country migration analyses usually employ such an indicator as net migration per 1,000 population. As Table 2 shows, Germany has been outperforming Russia in terms of net migration over the past 12 years. Immigration is both Germany's advantage and a phenomenon harbouring a threat of the native population being replaced by immigrants (*cf.* 'third demographic transition' concept). As to Russia, the forecast prepared by the Russian researchers D. Ediev and S. Shulgin and colleagues² predicts that, by 2035, the projected population number will reach 141.1 million people at zero migration or 146.5 million people with migration taken into account. Thus, at the moment, there is little hope of 270,000—300,000 immigrants per year coming to the country (see Table 2).

Table 2

The main demographic measures of Russia and Germany, million people

	1995		2005		2015	
	Russia	Germany	Russia	Germany	Russia	Germany
Total number of births	1.363	0.765	1.457	0.686	1.940	0.738
Total number of deaths	2.203	0.885	2.303	0.830	2.030	0.925

² See the Russian Demographic Data Sheet 2016. Russian Presidential Academy of National Economy and Public Administration (RANEPA), the Federal State Statistics Service (Rosstat), and International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis (IIASA): Moscow, Russia and Laxenburg, Austria, 2016.

End of Table 2

	1995		2005		2015	
	Russia	Germany	Russia	Germany	Russia	Germany
Natural increase/decline	-0.840	-0.120	-0.846	-0.144	-0.090	-0.188
TFR*	1.34	1.25	1.29	1.34	1.77	1.50
LE*	64.5	76.4	65.4	78.9	71.3	81.1
Total size of the resident population, as of the beginning of the year	147.938	81.538	143.801	82.501	146.267	81.198
Number of females	78.5	41.893	77.1	42.148	78.5	41.362
Number of males	69.5	39.645	66.7	40.353	67.8	39.836
Age groups (years)**:						
0—19	34.03** (23.0%)	17.53 (21.5%)	34.32 (23.9%)	16.75 (20.3%)	31.22 (21.3%)	14.78 (18.2%)
20—59	84.03** (56.8%)	47.13 (57.8%)	84.46 (58.7%)	45.21 (54.8%)	85.98 (58.8%)	44.17 (54.4%)
60 and over	29.88** (20.2%)	16.88 (20.7%)	25.02 (17.4%)	20.54 (24.9%)	29.07 (19.9%)	22.25 (27.4%)
Net migration	0.503	0.398	0.282	0.790	0.228	1.139

* TFR is the total fertility rate (the average number of birth per a woman of childbearing age). LEB is life expectancy at birth (years).

** Age groups for Russia in 1995: 0—15 years, males aged 16—59 years and females aged 16—54 years, males aged 60 years and over and females aged 55 years and over.

Prepared based on data from Russia's Federal Service for State Statistics (Rosstat). URL: <http://www.gks.ru> and from the Federal Statistical Office of Germany. URL.: <https://www.destatis.de>

Demographic development theories and concepts behind different demographic scenarios

The general theory of the classical demographic transition has not only gained wide currency but it is also being imposed by the Western countries upon the international community. However, the question arises whether the other states have to copy slavishly the Western model of demographic development. The central thesis of this theory holds that all the countries without exception have to go through the four stages of demographic transition. This was emphasised as early as the 1970s by the famous Australian demographer John Caldwell. In his analysis of the demographic transition in developing countries, he emphasised the 'Westernization' of fertility [7]. He also stressed that, in theory, the de-

mographic transition was not a universal process. The pervasiveness of the transition, which is involving a growing number of developing countries, is a result of their mindless imitation of social relations, worldview, and lifestyle stemming from the West, primarily the US and Western Europe. Moreover, such ‘borrowings’ are possible only as part of the industrial transformation of society [7]. Some countries that have not completed the fourth stage of the classical demographic transition (for example, Poland, Latvia, Estonia, etc.) are trying to skip to the fifth stage of the ‘Western model’ (the second demographic transition). The latter means the dead-end road to demographic extinction, which is looming for countries with small populations.

The process of ‘imposing’ negative Western demographic standards on less developed countries has gained momentum in the recent 30 years, as the global information space is being drawn into the World Wide Web.

Among these standards, the emergence of the so-called nuclear family raises the greatest concern. The reproductive goals of such a family are changing dramatically to the worse. ‘One family — one child’ has become the dominant model. In a short-time perspective, it may turn into a childless family, i. e. one that rejects the idea of bearing children. According to the director of the Berlin Institute for Population and Development, Reiner Klingholz, childless families accounted for 15% of all German families in 2012 [8, p. 8]. This proportion is similar in other developed countries. To a degree, this situation is brought about by the childfree movement, which — having appeared in the US in 1993 and planted in the rich European soil of sexual revolution — rapidly spread across Western Europe. Unfortunately, in 2006, this movement appeared in Russia too. In effect, this and similar movements advocate a conscious rejection of childbirth or ‘personal freedoms without children’. If one takes into account a steep increase in the number of quasi-families — egalitarian families, cohabitation unions, and same-sex families (same-sex marriages have already been legalised in 16 European countries and throughout the United States), one starts questioning the demographic future of these countries. Why should all these ‘charms’ — which, if nothing changes, will inevitably lead to ‘the Death of the West’ [1; 3; 9] — be imposed upon the whole world? Probably, this is done to expedite the absurd idea of the ‘world domination’ without damaging the environment and natural resources. Why should one spend trillions of dollars on armaments, when one can simply change the minds of new generations so that they start killing themselves demographically? However, this does not mean that Germany and most European countries will be part of this ‘world dominion’. Probably, the above explains the negative demographic changes observed across Europe since the 1960s-1970s. One of the first affected states was Germany, where the natural decline in the native population (i. e. the mortality rate exceeding the birth rate took place) was first observed in 1971. The trend continues and is expected to accelerate (see Table 2).

The slow but sure homicide has already begun. It is aggravated by the Internet, which — alongside other forms of the information technology — has become a tool in the information war waged by a small group of developed countries, primarily, the US and the UK, on less developed states [10; 11]. The Russian philosopher A. A. Zinoviev, who had spent many years in Germany, was among the first to consider the consequences of this war. In particular, he wrote, ‘the bomb of Westernisation, which exploded in Russia, caused unprecedented devastation not only in the spheres of statehood, economy, ideology, and culture but also in the *very human material of society* (our italics). At such a scale and in such a short time, it had never been done by any conqueror or by any weapon. Designed by its inventors to defeat communism, the ‘bomb of Westernisation’ turned out to be a much more powerful weapon — it destroyed the centuries-old robust union of people’ [12, pp. 11—12]. This thesis is open to debate. However, the possible highly negative influence of information technology on human minds has become a reality. This reality is especially pronounced when it comes to demographic behaviour. Moreover, the changes are occurring at the genetic level, which was stressed by V. I. Danilov-Danilyan, who wrote about ‘genetically distorted decay-bringing individuals’ that pose ‘a threat to the humanity as dangerous as the degradation and demise of the environment’ [13, pp. 474—475].

The consequences of the ‘Westernisation’ of fertility are felt not only in developing but also developed countries (see Table 1). Especially conspicuous is the decrease in the fertility below the replacement level (2.15 children per a woman of fertile age) in Italy and Poland, where the traditions are becoming blurred and the Western lifestyle is being imposed upon the population. All this has virtually resulted in a demographic crisis.

The famous demographer David Coleman believes that the increase in fertility to 2.0 observed in some countries of the West, for example, France, may herald the Western demographic renaissance [14, pp. 107—115]. Nevertheless, such a renaissance seems questionable if today’s negative qualitative changes in the Western population continue. Swedish kindergartens instil into children, who start associating their sex with certain somatic and behavioural characteristics as early as age 3—4, the perception of themselves as sexless creatures. Sexlessness is being increasingly imposed upon people. In particular, this is achieved by the ‘mindless’ and broad use of the concept of ‘gender’ as the ‘social sex’. The term ‘economic sex’³ was coined by some Russian gender scholars. It is very

³ See, for instance, Kalabikhina I. E. *Ekonomiko-demograficheskoe razvitie Rossii: gendernyi aspekt. Doktorskaya dissertatsiya na soiskanie uchenoy stepeni doktora ekonomicheskikh nauk [The Economico-Demographic Development of Russia: The Gender Aspect. A Postdoctoral Thesis]*. Moscow, 2010, pp. 36—36. Is not it symbolic that, in this work, the word ‘gender’ is every now and then autocorrected to ‘tender’?



difficult to imagine a more dangerous anti-demographic notion. In 2017, Germany officially recognised a ‘third sex’. Against this background, it is not surprising that the number of same-sex marriages and quasi-families, which are *a priori* unable to contribute to population replacement, is increasing. Adoption by such marital unions can end in a tragedy for the adopted children.

Although fertility is increasing in the West, none of the Western countries has achieved the replacement level (2.15). A special role in this process is played by numerous immigrants, most of whom naturalise. Among immigrants, the fertility rate is much higher than among the native population. For instance, the fertility rate among the Turkish population exceeds that of the German native population three or fourfold. Probably, it is not a coincidence that, as the Turkish community in Germany has grown (the number of Turks naturalised as Germans exceeded 3 million people). The total fertility rate increased from 1.34 in 2005 to 1.5 in 2017. Thus, the process of the native population being replaced by immigrants — Coleman described the phenomenon as early as 2006 in his concept of the ‘third demographic transition’ [15, p. 402—407] — continued and even accelerated.

The concept of the ‘third demographic transition’ offers a demographic scenario for the developed countries. It suggests that if the current trends continue, the native population may be completely replaced by immigrants. The countries will remain, although they will change their identity and culture. To prevent it, Coleman suggests banning or limiting the new waves of migration from developing countries. To what degree is this possible in today’s globalising world? We believe that since the world has been set in a continuous migration motion (for more detail, see [16]), which is crucial for future development, migrations cannot be stopped by any ‘iron curtain’. With all the reservations, this scenario can be perceived as a warning of to what the underestimation of the demographic factor in the development of the world, its regions, and its countries may lead.

Unfortunately, the ‘Western charms’ are spreading across Russia — from the Far East to the Kaliningrad region. It is important to understand that Russia has unique demographic features. Firstly, the country has a vast territory of over 17 million sq km, which cannot be cultivated without ‘extra hands’. This holds true for not only the northern regions and Siberia but also the central part of the country, where hundreds of thousands of sq km of non-black-earth lands have been virtually depopulated. Secondly, Russia has completely exhausted its domestic demographic potential. There is not a single region in the country that can contribute to the population of desolate territories, as was the case in the imperial and Soviet periods. All this lends urgency to the problem of Russia’s demographic future.

Choosing the Eurasian path of demographic development

All the above gives rise to the questions as to what path of demographic development should a country choose and whether this should be the Western path or an original one taking into account a country's location, traditions, demographic and cultural values, religious beliefs, historical experience, and many other factors. As of today, the second path has been chosen by very few states. These are, for example, China and North Korea. These considerations lend urgency to the problem of the Eurasian demographic development (Eurasian demographic transition) of Russia and the neighbouring countries. Although these countries trod the Western path of demographic development (the second demographic transition), they are advocating the idea of Eurasianism. Remarkably, the President of Russia Vladimir V. Putin proposed the creation of a big Eurasian partnership in his speech at the Saint Petersburg International Economic Forum held on June 16—18, 2016 [17]. It was not the first time President Putin had addressed the idea of Eurasianism. In April 2012, he stressed that 'Eurasianism is a tradition in our political thought. It established itself in Russia a long time ago and, today; it is being given a new dimension' [18].

This idea did not simply establish itself in Russia as early as the 1920s. Russia is a unique country. Its location, or *mestorazvitie*⁴, as Lev Gumilev put it [19, p. 10], in Europe before the Ural Mountains and in Asia behind them — and its mentality (the double-headed eagle) make it a truly Eurasian state, the Core of the Eurasian space. Russia's geographical location between the West and the East translates into its Core position. The causes of the revival of Eurasianism were considered by Prof. M.L. Titarenko. Not long before his death in February, 2016, he wrote, 'we are interested in the essence of new Eurasianism, which was the focus of post-Soviet ideo-political discussions and a key element in the search for a national idea that would ensure Russia's cohesion and prosperity amid the aggressive cultural and civilizational expansion of the West. This expansion resulted in the considerable blurring of the cultural and civilizational self-identity, apoliticisation, the spiritual depression of the Russian people and the other ethnicities of the Russian Federation, the germinating ideas of local separatism and regional isolationism, and the emergence and aggravation of ethnic tensions' [20, p. 2]. As mentioned above, all this had an extremely negative effect on the demographic behaviour of the Russian population. None of its numerous nationalities and peoples was spared and the country found itself pushed towards the path of second demographic transition.

⁴ The term is usually translated as 'developmental space' or 'topogenesis'.

Although opposing the idea of the Western path of demographic development, in particular, that of the second demographic development, we do not reject it completely. The countries of Western Europe were the first to achieve a notable demographic success. Having strengthened the institution of family and having secured a relatively high fertility rate, these states managed to dramatically reduce the mortality rate. All this translated into the 100 years of the so-called European demographic explosion, which began in the 1830s. It was accompanied by a decrease in infant and maternal mortality, an increase in life expectancy, and the improvement of physical health. However, contrary to common sense, these and other demographic achievements underwent dramatic negative changes at the turn of the 1970s to cater for the interests of large capital and the consumer society. These trends constituted the concept of the second demographic transitions, which is being imposed upon the world. The central element of the concept is the transition to a nuclear family that either has one child or is childless. However, when developing this concept, van de Kaa emphasised that it applied only to the developed European countries. Thus, he forgot in some mysterious way about the US — the absolute champion in imposing mass culture and the quasi-family models (this imposition was especially pronounced under Presidents Clinton and Obama).

The Eurasian demographic transition, on the contrary, suggests following the best national traditions of the ‘multiplication and preservation’ of the population, (M. V. Lomonosov wrote on the issue in the context of Russia as early as the 18th century) [21], while adopting the best European achievements. This is the essence of the ‘phenomenon of Eurasianism’, which, as Titarenko stressed, ‘embraces elements that are characteristic of not only the cultures of the peoples of Eurasia. Eurasianism postulates equality and horizontal relations between different cultures, whereas Eurocentrism postulates vertical relations, thus recognising one culture as superior and the others as inferior. The stratagem of Eurocentrism considers the assimilation of other cultures and the extinction of unique small cultures as a normal and inevitable phenomenon. It demands that original systems of cultural values be replaced with some ‘universal’ ones, which, in effect, are nothing else but the values of Western mass culture’ [22, p. 4].

To gain a better understanding of these values, one may address the book of the eminent US politician Patrick Buchanan *The Death of the West* (2001). He wrote, ‘Public homosexuality, pornography, abortion, trash talks on TV and in movies, and filthy lyrics in popular music have all been around since before they [new generation] can remember... It is the traditional culture they find odd’. The following 17 years aggravated the situation, having added a dozen new ‘non-traditional generations’.

The muddy waters of the marketed mass culture flooded many a country and the Internet is ready to bury the whole world beneath them. Unfortunately, this flood did not bypass Russia and many other states. Undoubtedly, this had a negative effect on the demographic development of the affected countries.

Despite a slight increase in the birth rate and a reduction in the mortality rate observed in 2010—2015, Russia is drowning ever deeper in the demographic crisis brought about, primarily, by negative changes in the Russian youth, which has grown susceptible to marketed mass culture and demographic surrogates. The latter is facilitated by not only the Internet but also mass media and, especially, ‘our own’ television. As S. P. Kapitsa stressed in his article ‘Russia is Being Turned into a Land of Fools’, television is engaged in ‘corrupting the consciousness of people’, which is, in essence, a criminal act. Over the eight years, the situation has not improved in the least. ‘What a disappointment! The fool is being cherished, the fool is being nurtured, the fool is being nourished, and there is no end in sight...’ [22, p. 126]. Thus, one may assume that, if the number of ‘fools’ or ‘decay-bringing individuals’ continues to increase, soon it will be too late to speak of the demographic renaissance in Russia. Any renaissance would be impossible with such a population. The same has been stressed by Sarrazin in the case of Germany and by Buchanan in the case of the US. The goal of the healthy part of our society and the leadership of the country and its regions is to prevent this situation. To this end, one must at least acknowledge the harmfulness of the current demographic development, which, in part, is the result of the raging information war.

Our efforts to develop the concept of the ‘Eurasian demographic transition’ [23, pp. 463—464], which can embrace different models of demographic development, are aimed against the above-described ‘universality’ of the Western demographic transition and the spread of mass-culture demographic values across the world. In the case of Russia, the Eurasian model rests on the concept of the fourth demographic transition [8, pp. 15—21; 1, pp. 80—84], which incorporates the basic Eurasian demographic values (a major one being healthy children) and principles (a harmonious coexistence of cultures). From the perspective of demographic development, the mentioned principle is crucial.

The concept of the fourth demographic transition, proposed by V. A. Ion-tsev in 2010 as an alternative to Coleman’s scenario, considers migration as an entirely positive phenomenon, which can have negative consequences only if its essence is misinterpreted and the relevant national policy is flawed. A positive phenomenon, migration can have a beneficial effect on the future demographic development, if the national interests are taken into account and marriages between the native population and immi-



grants are encouraged. Children born from such marriages will create the core of the ‘new population’ that will have better reproductive attitudes and qualitative characteristics meeting the 21st-century national needs.

Note that the number of such marriages is constantly increasing in many countries, including Russia and Germany. According to the Federal Statistical Office of Germany, transnational marriages accounted for 11 % of all marital unions. Russia has witnessed an increase in the number of transnational marriages since 1959. The 1989 census recorded 12.8 million such marriages (17.5 %). In today’s Russia, this trend is continuing.

It is important to understand when speaking of quantitative and qualitative changes in the population — the more so when the negative ones are considered — that the two types of changes are interrelated. ‘Sick’ parents usually give birth to even ‘sicker’ children, whose future children will probably be unable to produce a new generation. Many of these ‘grandchildren’ may not be even able to reach the reproductive age (for instance, drug-addicted infants). Therefore, one generation later, negative qualitative changes may have a negative effect on fertility, mortality, and other demographic processes. Unfortunately, this is already happening in Russia and Germany.

Conclusions

Both qualitative and quantitative measures presented in Table 2 significantly aggravate the demographic situation that has developed over the past 35 years. Common to Russia and Germany is that, in the past decades, they have experienced depopulation as a result of low fertility, which rapidly leads to an increase in the proportion of the senior population and, thus, to problems associated with demographic ageing. In Russia, the elderly account for almost 20 % whereas the population of Germany is ageing at an even greater rate (the proportion of senior citizens is above 27 %). In Russia and Germany, depopulation has reached an extreme level, which is manifested in the natural population decline. In Russia, this process started in 1992. The 20-year population loss (1992—2012) reached 13.5 million people. In Germany, where the natural population decline was observed as early as 1971—1972, the population loss of 1980—2012 reached 3.42 million people. However, the level of losses is decreasing. It amounted to 90,000 in 2015 against 846,000 in 2005. Unfortunately, this trend, which is expected to accelerate in Germany, is not observed in Russia (see Table 2). In recent years, Russia’s working-age population (aged 15—59) has declined at a rate of 1 million people per year. Actually, Germany’s working-age population is also declining. Since 2016, the least numerous generation of females born in the 1990s

has been reaching childbearing age. This exerts an additional negative effect on fertility and aggravates the already grim demographic situation in the country. Moreover, there is an urgent need for a special attention to the quality and rearing of children.

Having assumed office on May 7, 2018, President Putin signed the decree ‘On the National Targets and Strategic Goals of the Development of the Russian Federation until 2024’. As one of the goals, the document mentions an increase in **healthy** life expectancy up to 67 years in 2024. This testifies to the fact that the improvement of qualitative characteristics of the population has finally attracted attention [24].

Thus, Germany and, even to a greater degree, Russia are faced with the choice of a demographic development path. This also holds true for the neighbouring countries. We believe that the best option for these states is the Eurasian demographic transition, which takes into account a country’s geographical position, traditions, culture, mentality, and demographic values, a major one being ‘healthy and intelligent children’. For Germany, a leading destination for migrants, — such a scenario may also prove helpful. If the country continues to develop within the framework of the second demographic transition, until the end of the century, Germany may cease to exist as a German state. A similar fate may await Russia and many other Baltic Sea states — especially, in view of their small populations and negative net migration — if they do not abandon the negative Western trend of demographic development.

Acknowledgements

This study was supported by a grant from the Russian Foundation for Basic Research No. 16-06-00048a ‘The Social Paradigm of Regional Development: The Selection of Priorities and the Transformation of Economy’.

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To cite this article:

Iontsev, V. A., Subbotin, A. A. 2018, Current scenarios for the demographic future of the world: the cases of Russia and Germany, *Balt. Reg.*, Vol. 10, no. 3, p. 4—18. doi: 10.5922/2079-8555-2018-3-1.