

PSYCHOLOGY, PEDAGOGY AND EDUCATION

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DEMOGRAPHIC ASPECTS THROUGH THE PRISM OF THE FAMILY

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Abstract. *In Bulgaria in 1990, the abandonment of socialist protectionism and paternalism under the banner of transition to the market and capitalism contributed to taking a course towards the version of the liberal model where virtually all family policy was eliminated. The increase in mortality and the decline in the birth rate accompanying the political transformations in the country turned out to be so serious that they forced the government to proclaim first the family and then the demographic policy of the state. In the article the author offers his views on the development of the demographic problem in Bulgaria, through the focus of family policy and birth policy.*

Key words. *Demography, demographic crisis, socio-demographic aspects, welfare state, birth rate, mortality, standard of living, social protection, migrants*

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INTRODUCTION

Today, the tendency to reduce the birth rate below the level of simple reproduction of the population is observed in many countries around the world, regardless of the socio-political structure of the state and socio-cultural, including national, ethnic and religious characteristics. However, with the social type of state (and its variants, oriented to the welfare of the majority of the population), many scholars associate the possibility of successfully solving acute social problems, including problems of family and demographic policy, related to ultra-low fertility (Bengtson, 2003).

However, there are also opposing assessments of the welfare state. For example, the prominent American familyist A. Carlson believes that the system of social security, social support arises and spreads in the capitalist system as a substitute for the family (Carlson, 2003). The welfare state has captured what the family has been doing for millennia with regard to its "dependent members" - children, the elderly, the disabled. *The interception of family functions (mainly education and upbringing of the younger generations) by state institutions became*

the first reason not only for the decline of the family, but also for the welfare state system itself (Cheal, 2008).

The crisis of the "social system" in Sweden ("Swedish socialism"), Great Britain and other Western European countries (as well as the Soviet version of "Welfer" in the former USSR and former socialist countries) suggests that the welfare state is already dying all over the world. under the weight of their own contradictions " (Brink J., Van Den, 2008). All varieties of existing family and demographic policy in Europe have common roots in the foundations of statehood, which are a mixture of liberalism, socialism and capitalism. The purpose of this "cocktail" is to divide the joint or joint activities of family unions and groups, to divide family members and to draw the state's attention to an individual isolated from the family (from "family dependence") - a regular customer of social and government services. . In fact, the differences between the three types of public policy highlighted in the review of family policy concepts by R. Klik, D. Chill, H. Huglander, A. Gottayer and other Dutch scholar **Van den Brink** are secondary (Brink, 2009).

In all types of family and demographic policy, there is no birth rate policy aimed at increasing the share of families with three or more children (Gauthier, 1996). Why? This is considered "interference" in the personal world of the family, claiming that it violates the individual's right to need any number of children, not just the number the state needs. The conflict between the state and the market must be resolved in a liberal model of family policy (Anglo-Saxon countries), while reducing the role of the state until it is completely eliminated by providing any assistance to a family with two (rarely one) working parents (Cliquet, 2004).

In the traditional model (Germany, France and some other countries) financial support for families in child care is practiced. A specific feature of this model is to maintain the traditional practice of one parent staying at home to take care of the children (Preston, Heuvelin, Guilot, 2000).

It should be noted that *in Bulgaria in 1990 the abandonment of socialist protectionism and paternalism under the banner of transition to the market and capitalism contributed to the course of the version of the liberal model where virtually all family policy was eliminated*. The increase in mortality and the decline in

the birth rate accompanying the political transformations in the country turned out to be so serious that they forced the government to proclaim first the family and then the demographic policy of the state, but within the social-democratic model described above.

The extra-family (and therefore anti-traditional or anti-conservative) thinking of the "reformers", alas, did not allow them to set themselves the task of building a social structure characteristic of true capitalism. In other words, *a structure in which there will be a significant (and depreciating) middle class between the opposite classes of rich and poor, which is in fact impossible without single-income families or families in which the mother is a housewife*. Today, all the talk about the need to create a middle class in the country is conducted within a political-economic approach, unfortunately, without taking into account the family structure and the family-demographic criterion of social well-being. The share of families in which the mother is dedicated to raising and educating children must be drastically increased, which will improve the socialization of the younger generations.

In order to normalize the demographic as well as the social structure (reduce the share of the poor and increase the share of the rich classes), it is necessary not only to restore the class of family hosts destroyed in socialist times, but also to fill the social role of the mother with new content so that she can include the functions of teacher, educator, nanny and housewife (Gauthier, 1996). This task is much more difficult than looking in the depths of the bureaucratic system for always scarce funds for social assistance to needy families through no fault of their own and for modest benefits for children. However, the decision of the project for new motherhood is possible provided that at all levels of the power vertical matures understanding of the destructiveness of demographic trends that have developed in recent decades for the fate of the Bulgarian state.

A decisive role in the functioning of the Bulgarian state (*declaring its social orientation to help the poor*) *in the current century will play the declining population, health and life expectancy, as well as ethnic structure, ie all those characteristics that are a direct result of the functioning of society, social changes, including the value priorities of the state and the value orientations of the individual*. The quantitative

decline of the population is determined by the qualitative (value) state of society, the crisis orientation of the socio-economic system of market capitalism to a mass character with a simultaneous reduction of the human mass, ie. potential consumers and producers of wealth.

Depopulation as a result of ultra-low birth rates in a market economy is unable to create mechanisms to stimulate birth rates due to the fact that wages are not focused on creating and maintaining a stable family with several children (Cliquet, 2004), points to the demand for a sharp increase in productivity and increases the need not only for a skilled workforce but also for the workforce as a whole. However, the modern economy, unfortunately, is not able to adequately respond to the decline in the labor force with the corresponding "explosion" of labor productivity.

Therefore, in developed countries, "their" population is sufficient only to occupy high-quality jobs, while the demand for low-skilled workers is met by "foreigners" - immigrants from "poor" countries. For example, the ethnic culture of EU countries, which presupposes the spontaneous completion of immigration, contains a likelihood of ethnic clashes and conflicts on national and religious grounds, which in fact occurs in France, Austria, Germany and other countries.

Demographic processes in Bulgaria are in line with global demographic trends, but have national specifics: for example, in terms of low birth rates we are at the level of "advanced" countries, and in terms of over-mortality - at the level of "backward" countries. At the same time, the outflow of intellectual forces to Western countries is increasing, which is not compensated by the influx of immigrants.

At the moment, there is a turning point in the demographic dynamics, aimed so far at population growth. *The world as a whole is on the brink of total depopulation: in the last quarter of the 21st century, the number of humanity, reaching a limit of approximately 8.5-9 billion people, will begin to decline.* The total birth rate in more than 70 countries is currently below the level of simple generational change (2.1 children per woman) - 2.8 billion people or 40% of the world's population (60 years ago there were only 5 such countries). According to the average version of the UN forecast made in 2008, in 2050 there will be 147 such countries with young children

(out of 196), whose population will be 76% of the world's population. According to the UN forecast, all countries in the world will have few children as early as 2040, which in fact means the subsequent depopulation of the whole world (World population prospects, 2008).

Today, the negative population growth is becoming a mass epidemic. Already 20 countries around the world are depopulating, and about 30 countries are on the road. As predicted in the 1970s by representatives of the scientific school of pronatalism, population decline began in the 1990s in the European part of the former socialist countries. In 2008, the natural decline of the population compared to the total number was 0.5% per year in Serbia and Ukraine, 0.4% - in Bulgaria, 0.3% - in Russia, Latvia, Belarus, Hungary, 0.2% - in Romania and Macedonia, less than 0.1% in Japan, Estonia, Austria, Monaco, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Greece, Italy and Portugal (World population prospects, 2008). The population is expected to decrease in 40 countries, with only 19 of them decreasing by 10% or less (it is important to note that this includes 10 non-European countries). The population of 13 countries will decrease by 11-19% by 2050, and in four non-European ones; our country falls into this group with a population decline of 18% (up to 5 million people in 2050). For example, the largest population decline (from 20 to 29%) is expected in 9 countries: Japan (25%), Moldova (24%), Georgia (23%), Ukraine (23%), Bulgaria (22%), Latvia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia (by 20%). China's population with a total fertility rate of 1.6 will increase in inertia by 2025, but then begin to decline and in 2050 will be 39 million less - 1437 million people (World population prospects, 2008).

Thus, by 2050, according to the UN forecast, in addition to Bulgaria, depopulation will cover Western European, Eastern European, Japanese and Chinese civilizations. This is a completely new and practically unknown stage in the history of mankind: until now, all spheres of life have been declared in the face of the growth of the world's population. It is not known how the ways of life and the way of life of the people will change when the population of the world decreases. Although there is no answer to the questions of the inevitable changes in the geopolitical situation, the economic system of the world, relations between countries, the

interaction between developed and developing countries, finally, it is not clear how relations between large and small nations and nations develop will they develop in the conditions of their gradual aging and disappearance.

Equally unclear are the issues related to the functioning of social countries, as an increase in living standards is inevitable as the population declines. *Of course, there will be new criteria for poverty and new problems for those sections of the population who will be included in the orbits of social support.* But these "bright" prospects must not lead to the forgetting that, in the context of depopulation, "delayed growth" in labor productivity may slow down social security needs, including for pensioners, whose share will continue to grow and grow faster than economic growth rate.

By 2025 in Bulgaria there will be most likely be an exacerbation of the already observed negative consequences of depopulation and declining birth rates, there will be a noticeable shortage of workers in basic industries and services and a shortage of population. It is also obvious that the costs of social programs of the so-called family allowances will increase - for material support from the state of previously announced and politically loud decisions in the field of motherhood and childhood, which were adopted when demographic problems at the state level were recognized as crisis.

By 2050, the population will increase significantly in 30 countries around the world, including the United States (up to 370 million people), and half of the total increase in world population during this period will be due to nine countries: India, China, Pakistan, Nigeria, Ethiopia, Congo, Tanzania, Bangladesh and the already mentioned USA. At the same time, 45 countries will experience a population decline of at least 10% (this group also includes our country) (World population prospects, 2008).

The uneven demographic situation in different regions of the world, the contrast and polarity of the global demographic space will become a source of growing geopolitical and geosocial tensions and the growing threat of a clash of civilizations, especially in the period 2020-2040, when the diversity and severity of the demographic picture of the world will be especially obvious.

In a period of demographic disorganization, Bulgaria - provided it refuses to actively counter depopulation by increasing the birth rate due to a sharp increase in the share of families with three or more children in the family - may face new waves of immigration, but not from near abroad, and from Africa, India and other centers of population movement. This is met with the emergence of problems of the new cultural interaction due to the difficulties in adapting the new ethnic and cultural communities to the conditions and mentality of Bulgaria. At the same time, it should be noted that migrants traveling to our country may perform mainly low-skilled work, including the share of declassified elements who tend to see our country as a transit point on their way to more desirable countries from Western Europe is increasing. However, even today the countries of Western Europe are building much stricter filtering systems on the way of such migrants from Bulgaria. Accordingly, migrants, who do not actually consider Bulgaria as a desirable point of arrival, will begin to settle in our country and in different regions.

The aforementioned demographic threats of the 21st century, which have a global character (depopulation due to ultra-low birth rates, demographic polarization and increased migration flows), prove to be particularly dangerous for Bulgaria, as they overlap with the changing political system in the country. The tendencies of demographic catastrophe clearly began to appear at the end of the 20th century, during the disintegration of the socialist bloc, ie. a policy of radical and abrupt abandonment of social security and social protection of the population. Instead of gradually and slowly adapting the masses to activities and living in a market economy, the policy of market reforms has led to higher prices, leaving wages low and putting the level of pensions on the brink of personal survival. In this regard, social inequality is manifested primarily in the field of health care, in the social differentiation of mortality (general, child and infant) against the background of the spread of social pathology, including drug addiction, alcoholism and others.

According to the author of the article, *in the coming years the scale of depopulation of the Bulgarian population will begin to increase again*, although unfortunately, public opinion and a significant part of specialists and civil servants do not realize the problem of depopulation as the most acute - global and national - at a

level sufficient to implement radical measures in this area. This is due to the **widespread but misconception that the main cause of depopulation is high mortality, not low birth rates**, and that it is not necessary to increase the birth rate if there are already many orphans and street children.

The growing natural decline of the population, the intensification of the consequences of a depopulated economy, which is not able to dramatically increase labor productivity and therefore is gradually becoming a redistributive economy, remains a demographic threat to Bulgaria. As a result, the demographic structure will deteriorate due to negative changes in the age and gender structure: the share of children will decrease, the share of older people will continue to grow, the population will continue to age and the demographic burden on workers will continue to grow. Morbidity and mortality in old age will increase, which will lead to a reduction in the number of labor contingents.

The huge difference in the standard of living of the rich and the poor *not only takes our country beyond the edge of civilization, but also serves as a brake on overcoming depopulation.* In Bulgaria, the majority of the population is poor by international standards (in terms of minimum wage, subsistence, share of food costs, housing conditions, etc.), which characterizes the impossibility of the material base for creating a full-fledged family with children and support for health. Poor health and life expectancy indicators, which have persisted for decades, are a direct result of people's extremely low living standards, unsatisfactory living standards, sanitation and poor health care organization. When the population does not have the necessary funds for health prevention through physical education and sports, home hygiene and household amenities, payment for medical services, it is not surprising that the average life expectancy is short.

According to the author of the article, the most probable trends in the demographic processes of the Bulgarian society until 2025 are:

The first (liberal) version of forecasting social and demographic events in Bulgaria until 2025 *assumes a spontaneous development of the demographic situation in the country, similar to what happened in the previous three decades. Science's suggestions for strengthening birth control programs are ignored,*

demographic policy is reduced to reducing mortality and bureaucratic rationalization of labor immigration flows. Reducing the overall birth rate is seen as an integral part of improving the quality of life, expanding "family planning" and pluralism of forms of marriage and family relationships. The decrease of the Bulgarian population against the background of the continuing increase of the well-being of the citizens does not lead to an increase of the internal tension. The reduction of the total coefficient to 1.0 and less leads to a further reduction of the population on the territory of Bulgaria. This version of the forecast describes a possible refusal of the government and society from an active pro-family policy and from a powerful stimulation of the birth rate.

The second version of the forecast (the ban policy). As the prospect of disintegration is very real and sufficiently realized by individual politicians, in the period until 2025 the tendency to limit the crisis trends in the population by strengthening the statehood and the federal center may arise and intensify. The stronger the sympathies of the political and financial elite to the ideology of liberalism, the sooner voters will be offered political technologies to stimulate consumerism and individual well-being. The response of opposition forces may be no less powerful and prone to violent authoritarianism. *However, the content of the authoritarian model in the field of demography can predictably be reduced to a policy of restrictions and fines for young children and divorce, to escape from family and alimony, to ban abortions and at the same time to activate measures that partially improve the economic situation of families with children, but without increasing the needs of the individual in children.*

The third version of the forecast (the policy for attracting immigrants) *considers the possibility of concentrating the demographic policy on conducting an active immigration policy without focusing on the policy for increasing the birth rate. External immigration can partially offset population decline.* The assimilation of "newcomers" as Bulgarians may not be as successful as in the United States and Canada, countries initially oriented toward growth mainly through immigration and with extensive experience in adapting migrants to new living conditions in terms of time and methods. Thus, reducing demographic to immigration policies, as many

liberal experts suggest today, is incapable of eliminating depopulation. But Bulgaria risks becoming another country, where two-thirds of the population will be immigrants and their children.

The fourth version of the forecast (active family and demographic policy) relies on the free choice of families and individuals in conditions when the society, guided by demographic criteria for negative assessment of the current reproductive regime in the country, focuses on comprehensive promotion of the middle family. *It provides an increase in the prestige of a family with three or four children, good parenting and motherhood, and a family lifestyle in general. At the same time, the proposed model of a medium-sized family (as an alternative to a small family) must be strongly supported by economic incentives within income taxes.* The pro-family policy of the society, related to the equalization of the position of the family institution among the other social institutions, with the reorientation of the public opinion, economy, social sphere, activity of the government, political parties and media to a family with three children. The result of the implementation of this option may be an increase in the total birth rate and a decrease in the rate of population decline with the prospect of transition to "zero growth" of the population in 2040 - 2050.

Fifth (integrating) forecast option. Here the solution of the demographic crisis can be *related to the integration of Bulgaria into the European Union. This would reduce the burden of the demographic situation through a more flexible use of human resources.* At the same time, eliminating depopulation will require a family-friendly policy similar to the fourth option.

In conclusion, it should be emphasized once again that:

1. The abandonment of an active demographic policy will lead to the disappearance of nations under the slogan of an early transition to the "golden billion". Latently, this option contains an international agreement between the demographically diverse camps of already depopulated countries and not yet depopulated nations. Achieving such a political balance is very problematic and unbelievable in the near future, especially in connection with the rise of terrorism.

2. The lack of concern of the "super-democratic" leaders of the countries about the disappearance of the population of their countries leads to the rejection of political measures to neutralize the decline in the population due to the ultra-low birth rate, but this is possible only for two to three decades. the negative natural growth does not become obvious to everyone.

3. The version of the powerful policy for strengthening the family lifestyle with three or four children will hardly be taken as a basis given the existing extra-family atmosphere of public opinion in the country. Therefore, the most acceptable option would be a demographic policy of half-measures and child benefits, which will inevitably lead to a further decline in the birth rate and a worsening of the situation.

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