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VARIA

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Demographic processes in Ukraine in the second half of the 20th – beginning of the 21st century in historical perspective

This commentary is based on the statistical data of general population censuses and archival information about the problems of demographic development in Ukraine in the second half of the 20th till the beginning of the 21st century. An outline of the socio-demographic features of the population is provided in terms of the number, sex and age composition. Particular attention is paid to the causes of the current demographic crisis. We consider the deformation of the sex and age composition of the population, the aging of society, the impact of migration and urbanization processes on the demographic situation in the country.

Introduction

The period of the second half of the 20th and the beginning of the 21st century became an important historical stage for Ukraine, during which key features of its present social and demographic development were forming. In the late 1950s in the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic the main administrative and territorial changes came to an end, wars, Famine–Genocide, repressions, the deportations of the nations were left in the past, the migratory processes stabilized. However, despite the absence of a social crisis which could lead to huge demographic losses and could be a hindrance to the socio-economic development of the republic, between the 1960s and the first half of the 1980s a wide range of demographic problems was outlined. The further course of historical events ended with the socio-political and socio-economic transformation that brought about the systemic demographic crisis in the 1990s.

At the present stage, the demographic situation in the country is characterized by the population diminishing, by a deformation of its sex and age structure, a reduction of life expectancy, a deterioration in the state of the population's health, family and domestic sphere violation etc. All these factors complicate the further development of the Ukrainian state and make necessary a retrospective research of the mentioned demographic processes, the consequences of which come with a time lag and which cannot be explained only by the general societal reorganization. The

analysis of the demographic development of Ukrainian society within the context of historical events allows one to characterize the sources of the crisis of population reproduction and to define the priority directions of the demographic policy.

Significant information about the social and demographic processes in Ukraine is contained in works on demography. More comprehensive studies became those that were started by the department of demography of the Institute of Economics at the Academy of Sciences of the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic (*Демографическое развитие... 1977; Демографическое развитие... 1987*). The fundamental academic works of a historical-demographic content in which the period of the end of the 1950–80s would be studied, were not published in Soviet times. Academic works in the discussed field are devoted only to the study of single social and demographic processes. Soviet researchers ignored the main reasons for a deterioration in the demographic situation because of the ideological political bias: the results of the permanent famine, real losses during World War II, political repressions, voluntary forced resettlements and deportations which distorted the social and demographic structure of Ukraine.

At the present stage economists, demographers and geographers are mainly engaged in research into the social and demographic processes. The problems of the depopulation, natural and migratory movement of the population of Ukraine are analyzed in the works of E. Libanova, V. Piskunov, S. Piskunov, S. Pirozhkov, I. Prybytkova, V. Steshenko, A. Homra. Interesting studies were conducted by the Canadian demographer A. Romanyuk who described the modern population policy in Ukraine and Canada (Романюк 1997) and the Polish researcher P. Eberhardt, who studied the national structure of the population of Ukraine in the 20th century (Eberhardt 2006).

The features of depopulation in Ukraine

For more than two decades Ukraine has endured a deep demographic crisis, as a result of which the number of permanent population of the state has reduced from 51452,0 (1989) to 45245,9 (December 2013) thousands of people (the indices concerning the demographic situation are quoted or calculated by the author with reference to: *Кількість та територіальне розміщення населення України... 2003; Склад населення Української РСР... 1991; Итоги Всесоюзной переписи населения 1959 года... 1963*). Though the diminishing in the growth rates of the population is considered by some scholars to be quite a natural process, desired for the achievement of harmony within the number of inhabitants of a certain territory, the demographic crisis can threaten the further existence of the population of Ukraine.

According to population censuses, during the period of 1989–2001 the number of the permanent population of Ukraine reduced by 3311,1 thousand people. Even the most pessimistic versions of population forecasts had not foreseen such a substantial reduction in the population of the country. As we know, modern Ukrainian history and the history of the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic are extremely closely related, which has caused an expansion of the chronological limits of historical reality.

The transition to the modern type of reproduction in Ukraine began at the end of the 19th century, and in the second half of the 20th century the country became one

of several federal republics which finally underwent the European type of population reproduction (characterized by a low birth rate and low mortality). War, epidemics, natural disasters and territorial changes did not play a key role in depopulation any more. The main reasons for the contraction in the population were the decrease in the birth level and the increase of migration.

At the beginning of 1959 the population of Ukraine comprised 41720,6 thousand people. The demographic consequences of the war were still tangible, but the age structure of the population of that time resulted in the growth in the number of the republic's inhabitants. In the eleven years that followed the growth rates of the population amounted to 112,8% and in 1979 the number of the inhabitants of Ukraine had increased to 47055,9 thousand people. However, in the following years a reduction in the natural increase of the population took place. Whereas in 1959 the crude birth-rate was 20,9, and the crude death-rate 7,5, by 1990 these rates were almost equal, and the natural increase of the population was only 0,6 per thousand. Already in 1991 the death-rate in the country exceeded the birth-rate, and in 2002 with a crude birth-rate of 8,1, the crude death-rate had reached 15,7. Last year the crude birth-rate increased to 11,1, and the crude death-rate decreased to 14,5 (see: *Народне господарство... 1967; Народное хозяйство... 1990; Населення України, 2002 рік... 2003*).

Therefore, the demographic development stage of the population which in the Soviet historiography was characterized as "progressive" and "economic" turned out to be rather threatening. In the modern demographic studies negative features of such a mode of reproduction have been defined, with complete depopulation and an aging of the population featuring among them.

Dynamics of the sex and age structure

The study of the sex and age structure of the population of a country is extremely important for an understanding of the development of the population and the prediction of its number. In Ukraine, women outnumber men. So, in 1959 among the total number of the population of Ukraine of 41720,6 thousand people, men constituted 18511,4 thousand people (44,4 per cent), and women 23209,2 thousand people (55,6 per cent) (indices concerning the ratio of the sex and age groups of the population are quoted or calculated by the author with reference to: *Возрастная структура... 1972; Жінки та чоловіки України... 2004; Итоги Всесоюзной переписи населения 1959 года... 1963; Итоги Всесоюзной переписи населения 1970 года... 1972; Итоги Всесоюзной переписи населения 1979 года... 1989; Чисельність і стать населення Української РСР...1990*). The predominance of women by 11,2 per cent is first of all caused by the losses to the male population during the repressions and in the years of the Second World War. The Ukrainian researcher V. Nikolskyi, analyzing the sex structure of losses from political repressions, pointed to the fact that while men were generally shot, men of a working age died in the camps (for instance, among 2,526,402 people who were in camps in 1953, women made up only 438 thousand). In the second half of the 20th century the disproportion in the sex structure of the population of Ukraine persisted. Even in 2001, the index of numerical predominance of women over men made up 7,4%. According

to the population census of 1959, in the young age groups which had not suffered from the consequences of war, men prevailed. The essential disproportion in the sex structure of the population of the Republic was observed among the people born between 1924–1925, whose age at the beginning of the war was 16–17 years (in 1959 they belonged to the age group of '30–34 years'). In the older age groups (of '35–39 years', '40–44 years', '45–49 years') the census of 1959 recorded an excessive predominance of women, reaching 25%.

Studying the demographic history of the Soviet Union is, anyhow, interlaced with the characteristics of its political history. That is why it is not a surprise that the consequences of the Second World War become all the less notable with every year, though they still influence the sex structure of the population of the country. So, in 2001 the majority of the people who took part in military operations reached the age of eighty, and the share of this age category made up less than 2%. However, the number of their children and grandchildren remained less in proportion. In the modern sex structure of the country's population the essential imbalance is connected with the greater mobility of men and, more importantly, with the higher level in the death-rate within the male population.

Characterizing the Ukraine's population sex structure, it is preferable to address the analysis of the ratio of the age groups among men and women, as the sex composition of the population at the reproductive age has a considerable influence on the marriage and birth-rate. A significant disproportion in groups of the reproductive age was observed in 1959, but over the years this index decreased. However, the reduction in the share of the reproductive age prevented the demographic reproduction of the population. It is worth saying that unlike most developed countries, for which the post-war decades were a period of significant reduction in mortality, in the Soviet republics a clear improvement in the situation did not occur, even in an environment of increasing birth rates.

According to the J. Beaujeu-Garnier–E. Rosset's scale (*Демографический энциклопедический словарь* 1985), in 1959 Ukraine reached the stage of "an actual old age threshold" – the number of inhabitants aged 60 years and above made up 10,5%. In 1970 the share of people aged more than 60 years already equalled 13,9%. The appropriate coefficient for the next nine years grew to 15,7%, in ten years to 18% and in 2001 it had reached 21,4%.

The aging process in Ukraine has intensified because of the reduction in the share of children. In 1959 the comparative share of children aged of 0–14 years was 25,9%, that was 6,6% less than in 1939. It is necessary to mention that despite some reduction in the relative number of children and the increasing in the percentage of elderly people, the age structure of the population in the late fifties, according to experts, had to promote increase in the population number.

The Soviet government implemented measures to reverse the situation in the republics that were diverse. Some innovations relating to families included providing state financial and social support, namely the improvement of children's activities at pioneer camps and health centres, the creation of school educational groups, extended day and boarding schools; setting lower prices for children's goods; support of kindergartens. Other measures were intended to directly stimulate the birth rate in the country: keeping children in kindergartens in part was paid for by the state, which provided regular financial aid to children in families with low income;

gradually increased paid leave for mothers after childbirth. However, as it turned out, the state-proposed social measures were not enough to reverse the situation in the Soviet republics.

The demographic potential of the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic in 1959 equalled 1,26 (Кваша 1974, p. 28), implying that in the conditions of the observed mode of population reproduction the number of inhabitants had to be increased soon up to 26% based on its own potential only. However, by 1970 this index had decreased to 1,14 (while at the same time almost without conceding to the appropriate indices of Western Europe countries) (Кваша 1974, p. 28–29). Soon these reserves were exhausted as well. The birth-rate lowering between the 1970s and the 1980s led to a reduction of the share of children in the total number of the population of Ukraine. The simultaneous aging of the population of the republic “at the top” and “from below” showed the high intensity of this process. The aging of the population was affected by factors such as a decrease in the birth rate and the emigration of young people. According to population census data the average age of the entire population of Ukraine grew from 31 in 1959 to 38,9 years in 2001.

Demographic consequences of the migratory and urbanization processes

Migratory processes can be named as one of the main factors contributing to the contemporary depopulation. Till 1994 the migratory balance of Ukraine with other regions was positive. Such a situation, at first sight, can seem quite favourable, especially if one considers the twisting nature of the migratory processes in Ukraine. However, mass movement which in Soviet times was practiced in the form of organized sets, the mobilization according to *komsomol* (the Young Communist League) permits, the spatial distribution of young specialists etc., significantly worsened the demographic situation within the republic.

Between the 1950s and the first half of the 1960s the planned migrations of workers to the Kazakh Soviet Socialist Republic (further: KSSR) predominated, and from the end of the 1960s – to the organized sets in the Russian Soviet Federal Socialist Republic (RSFSR) which proceeded until the end of 1980s. The plans of the organized sets supposed the migration as single individuals as well as whole families. Family migrations were directed mostly to Kazakhstan: according to the State committee of labour in 1959 alone 5903 families were moved to KSRR (the average composition of families being 3,4 people) (*Справки управления о выполнении плана переселения...* 1959, p. 1). In spite of the fact that the migratory balance of the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic with KSSR and RSFSR was positive, the growth of the volume of migration of the population (both external, and internal) initiated a fall in the birth-rate as a result of putting aside child-bearing and changes in the reproductive behaviour. Young, healthy people left Ukraine, and pensioners, or the people who had lost their health under the severe working conditions returned. All these significantly influenced the growth in the rates of aging within the republic's population and worsened its sex and age structure.

Archival records testify to the mass returning of the migrants first of all due to the lack of appropriate living conditions. In particular, in the Far East region immigrants were provided with summer barrack-type rooms as accommodation during

the winter period, which were not at all adapted for living (*Переписка с Госпланом СССР... 1970*, p. 124). Living conditions in Kazakhstan were even more unsatisfactory. Incidentally, according to social surveys, the very desire to improve living conditions was the principal reason for moving (*Переписка с Госпланом СССР... 1970*, p. 90–91). It is clear that having been deprived of the possibility to accomplish their intentions, people returned home in large numbers. However, a significant number of them returned already physically and morally undermined, having sometimes lost their relatives and even children during the difficult moving (*Листування з Радю Міністрів Союзу РСР... 1960*, p. 103–107).

Officially the necessity of the organized sets was explained by the irregularity in the distribution of labour: its excesses in the Western and Central regions and a shortcoming in the East and the South of the Ukrainian republic. Intensive industrial development of the Eastern regions and the agriculture of the Southern regions required a significant number of labourers. However, judging by those letters which arrived at the Supreme Council of the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic from the boards of collective farms, separate collective farms, that include a huge number of plots of land of the Central and North-Eastern regions also lacked labour and even tried to entice workers from each other. Labour redistribution during 1959–1989 occurred preferentially at the expense of people from the rural areas of the Central and North-Eastern regions, that further negatively influenced their demographic development.

The process of urbanization began in Ukraine in the 19th century, but only in the 20th century when industry turned into a leading branch in the production of goods, did urbanization become the prevailing direction of the spatial organization of the vital activity of society. The industrialization development, which caused the changes in the geography of the economy, caused the growth of mobility of the population. The migratory processes which had a spontaneous character and were encouraged at the state level played the main role in the formation of the size of the urban population of the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic.

During the researched period (1959–2001) the number of urban areas grew to 24,8 per cent and was equal to 1343 city settlements (cities and urban-type settlements) including 454 cities in 2001 (indices on the demographic consequences of the migratory and the urbanization processes are quoted or calculated by the author with reference to: *Итоги Всесоюзной переписи населения 1959 года... 1963; Итоги Всесоюзной переписи населения 1970 года... 1972; Итоги Всесоюзной переписи населения 1979 года... 1989; Основні підсумки... 1961; Численность населения Украинской ССР... 1990; Кількість та територіальне розміщення... 2003*). The fastest rates of the quantitative increasing of the urban areas were in 1959–1969, which was connected with the rapid industrialization of the republic. In the following years this index noticeably decreased.

During the period between 1959–1969 the urban population of the republic was increasing first of all due to migrations. For a long time in the cities, as a result of the gradual lowering of the coefficients of a natural increase in the population, the coefficients of mechanical growth remained almost unchanged. Peasants, in the search of the best living conditions, went to the city in large numbers, despite the difficulties connected with receiving internal passports. Social (the population level of service, the discontent with living conditions) and economic factors (the

organization and labour compensation) first of all influenced the reasons for the migration. Besides, migration to the cities was encouraged at the state level. When in 1961–1962 the decreasing of migration flow to the cities (almost by half in comparison with previous years) caused a labour deficit at plants, the newly arrived people were given additional privileges to increase the influx of population to the cities.

Growth in the number of cities and in the urban population was accompanied by the reduction of the absolute and comparative number of villages and the inhabitants of rural areas. The highest rates in the reduction of rural settlements were recorded from 1959 till 1970 when the number of villages decreased by more than a third. Such a situation was connected first of all with the government policy which was directed towards the liquidation of 'unpromising' villages. In 11 years alone, the number of rural settlements with a population of up to 25 people was reduced 10 fold. The share of settlements from the aforementioned category within the total number of rural settlements decreased from 15,4% in 1959 to 2% in 1970. There was a necessity of the gradual changing of the collective-farm villages into enlarged settlements of a city type as part of the Policy Programme of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union.

The general number of village people in the mentioned period was reduced by 1242,5 thousand, while the number of urban population increased by 6577,7 thousand people. Growth of the urban population happened both due to natural, and a mechanical increase in the population, but also because of the changing of the rural settlements into urban ones.

Soviet scientists, during the research of the migratory processes connected with urbanization, pointed out their positive contribution to the development of the social structure of the society and the increase of welfare for the migrants. However, the mass departure of the peasants to the cities caused an essential deformation of the sex and age structure of the population of Ukrainian rural areas. As the migrants were mostly young people of working age, their departure caused a shortage of the labour on the collective farms and state farms. Besides, as a result of the urbanization the coefficients of the birth-rate and death-rate had been changing, and, so the age composition of the rural population as well. Urbanization became the basic reason for the growth in the rates of aging within Ukrainian rural areas, the reduction of the share of children and the increasing proportion of elderly people and had led to the depopulation of the rural areas.

From 1969 the birth-rates in the cities became higher than the similar indexes in the rural areas. The aforementioned factors led to a situation whereby in 1970 the proportion of elderly people in the cities of the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic equalled 11,4%, while in the rural areas – 17%. In the following years the gap between the coefficients of aging within the urban and rural population increased. In 1979 the proportion of elderly people in the cities made up 12,7%, in rural areas – 20,3%, and in 1989 – correspondingly 14,9 and 24,2%.

The growth in death-rates (caused by aging) together with the decrease in the birth-rate had led to an essential natural reduction in the number of the rural population. Since 1979 the coefficients of a natural increase in the rural areas became negative, during the period 1959–2001 the size of the rural population decreased 1,4 times. In 2001 the age structure of the population of the rural areas turned out to be totally deformed: more than a quarter of peasants (28,6%) were of an age higher

than working age (60 for men and 55 for women), and the share of the peasants aged 60 years and over made up 26,1%. Even the migratory inflow to the rural areas at the beginning of 1990s could not correct such a situation.

Thus, urbanization processes in Ukraine during the whole researched period influenced the dynamics of changes in the number and demographic structure of the population. In fact the first problems which arose in the demographic development of the society were connected with the mass migrations of the young rural population of working age (16–59 for men and 16–54 for women) to the cities. At the same time in certain regions of the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic the situation was noticeably corrected by the organized inter-regional migrations of the labour.

Influence of female employment on the demographic situation

The employment of women in the social economy had impact on the demographic situation in the republic. Since the second half of the 20th century the lack of the labour is felt in the republic. In 1959 in the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic three quarters of the total number of women of working age were employed in the various sectors of the Soviet economy (*Основні підсумки Всесоюзного перепису... 1961*, p. 72–73). They made up nearly a half of the total number of those involved in the republic. However, this did not compensate for the lack of labour either. Due to this fact on August 28, 1969 a decree of the Council of Ministers of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics “About the measures concerning the wide use of the work of pensioners, disabled people and persons, who were engaged in a household, at the enterprises dealing with the fast moving consumer goods and in the sphere of services” was issued. The latter included first of all women.

And though the population of working age involved on house and personal subsidiary small holdings consisted of 97 per cent women who had children and therefore could not join the ranks of ‘normal’ workers, nevertheless, the state managed to increase the share of women as part of the labour force. According to the population census of 1970 in social production 84,3 per cent were already employed (indices on employment are quoted or calculated by the author with reference to: *Основні підсумки... 1961*, pp.72–73; *Возрастная структура, уровень образования... 1972*, pp. 100-101; *Соціальна і професійно-галузева структура... 1992*; *Итоги Всесоюзной переписи населения 1979 года... 1990*). In 1988 nine out of every ten women of working age of the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic were involved in economic activity and this index was the highest across the entire Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.

Increase of the labour activity of women led to a reduction in birth-rate which is why questions as to female employment started to be raised, when taking into account the function of motherhood. In the Soviet period as an example of the state’s care for a woman – the worker and the woman – a mother in one person, the act about giving women who gave birth to a child the right to a vacation (without having to forgo a monthly salary) in connection with looking after the child before it reached the age of one year (and later 3 years) and the introduction of a partial payment for this vacation were often declared from 1982 onwards. In reality, women were granted maternity leaves on pregnancy, delivery and looking after a child,

besides, there were paragraphs in the Legal Code whereby it was forbidden to make pregnant women and women with small children work overnight, do overtime, or to send them on business trips. However, despite these measures the efficiency of the socio-demographic policy was insignificant.

The aid of the state in the extent and form offered could not encourage women to have children. So, a completely paid holiday for pregnancy, childbirth and looking after a child was given to women only during 112 calendar days (56 days before and 56 days after the delivery). Maternity and child care leave (for mothers with children up to one year of age) were paid out to the amount of 35 roubles per month. In the 1980s, to increase the material security of families with children, the payment of one-off aid to working mothers to the amount of 50 roubles at the birth of the first child and 100 roubles at the birth of the second and third child was introduced. The amount of state monthly aid was only fixed with the birth of the fourth child and was only 4 roubles a month. The maximum monthly aid (to the amount of 15 roubles) was set at the birth of the eleventh and every next child. Given such conditions women often had to work.

The Soviet state could not still provide women with the harmonious combination of the roles of a worker and a mother. Measures which were accomplished by the Soviet state, only “pushed” women to a conscious restriction of birth rate. The revoking of a ban on abortions in 1955, the simplification of the procedure for divorce in 1965, the mass involvement of women in the employment structure of different branches of the socialist economy, the decreasing of the value of motherhood within the public consciousness, the insufficient state aid to women with children, led to a catastrophic decrease in the birth rate and the modern demographic crisis.

Ideas on the necessity for new approaches to the government regulation of the birth rate process are increasingly expressed by researchers into the problem. For example, the Canadian demographer A. Romanyuk claims that the state has to take upon itself the problem of the transformation of motherhood into a profession attractive to women as well as striving to ensure a real gender equality within society (Романюк 1999, p. 70–79). Certainly, such a policy could cause initial resistance, first of all among women who could conceive such proposals as a restriction of their rights and a return to the traditional role of “housewife”. However, women should have the opportunity to choose any social role.

Conclusions

At present the demographic situation in Ukraine is close to catastrophic. According to the forecasts of the Institute of Economics of NAS (National Academy of Sciences) of Ukraine, the country’s population will gradually reduce, and in 2026 it will be about 42122 thousand persons. Despite the fact that the population of Ukraine increased up to 1994, these modern demographic problems have their origins in a period as early as the mid-20th century. Extremely unfavorable for the demographic development of USSR were the losses of population incurred because of the Civil War, the First and Second World Wars, the Great Famine (*Holodomor*) in Ukraine between 1920–1930, and also the repressions of 1930–1940. In the decades following the Second World War Ukraine’s population was negatively influenced by

migratory and urbanization processes, the consequences of unsuccessful experiments in the area of social policy, orientation of Ukrainians towards a quasi-planned family (one-child family).

The decline in the birth-rate began in 1953 and has lasted almost continuously. Even the deliberate policies implemented by the Soviet state, with their aim being an increase in the birth-rate and life expectancy, was unable to improve the demographic situation in a significant way. In the 21st century the situation has changed – since 2001 the birth rate has gradually, though very slowly, begun to grow. But the situation is still very far from one in which one would be able to talk about overcoming depopulation. In addition, the present day demographic increase is mostly conditioned by temporal factors, namely: now the generation of 1980 is having children, a generation that is more numerous than the depopulation generation of the 1990s by almost two fold.

The demographic situation in Ukraine especially deteriorated after the collapse of the USSR. Low birth-rate, mortality, an unprecedented decline in life expectancy, and an absolute decline in the population of Ukraine were caused by the deterioration in the material welfare of the population, an increase in foreign migration (increasing out-migration of the population), political instability, further changes in the stereotypes of social consciousness (the family orientation of today's young Ukrainians often does not imply that they want to have children).

In order to search for a way out from the demographic crisis, the following measures in our view would help: giving priority status to the demographic problem, a fundamental change in the conception of public demographic policy; the implementation of public policy to see a stimulation in the birth-rate; the revival of traditional family and moral foundations; termination of funding of all measures related to birth-control; a change in public awareness campaigns; the realization of medical and health-protection development programmes; the use of the migration potential of the neighbouring countries (including repatriation of Ukrainians).

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