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## **IN SEARCH OF THEORY: PROSPECTS OF POPULATION RESEARCH IN COUNTRIES THAT HAVE COMPLETED THE DEMOGRAPHIC TRANSITION**

**Abstract.** The article continues the discussion on the ways of further development of the demographic theory initiated by A. Vishnevsky's article in the first issue of the journal. In the author's opinion, Vishnevsky's "demographic eschatology" is incompatible with real political practices, as evidenced, in particular, by the biographies of A. Landry, the creator of the theory of the demographic revolution, and K. Davis, one of the founders of the theory of demographic transition. Landry was never guided by "demographic fatalism" in his political activities and Davis, praising administrative methods of reducing fertility in the Asian countries, opposed passive expectation of the fruits of modernization. The article shapes the approaches to the theoretical understanding of population issues that lie outside the framework of the theory of the demographic revolution/transition: theorizing aimed at finding mechanisms, not laws; adaptation of theories developed in other scientific disciplines to the description of these mechanisms; interpretation of post-transition demographic development as a movement between attractors, the speed and direction of which is determined by available economic resources and established institutions. According to the author, the interaction of mortality, fertility and migration, which occupies a central place in Vishnevsky's concept, cannot explain many of the problems associated with the impact of demographic development on the modern world. To analyze such problems, it is necessary to design systems that include not only demographic, but also social, economic and political variables. The possibilities of such an approach are shown on the example of a study of political & demographic mechanisms that led to the unexpected for most experts victory of supporters of Britain's withdrawal from the European Union and the election of D. Trump as the president of the United States.

**Key words:** theory of the demographic revolution; theory of demographic transition; French pronatalism; demographic fatalism; political demography; institution; mechanism; attractor.

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A. Vishnevsky's article, published in the first issue of "Population and Economics" [Vishnevsky, 2017] stimulates the continuation of the discussion about the prospects of theoretical understanding of demographic development and its

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interrelations with other areas of social life. Speaking of the unresolved issues of the theory of the demographic revolution, Vishnevsky suggests «to broaden its methodological foundations to the point where they become adequate to the complexity of the processes being studied and to the entire social system in which these processes occur» [Vishnevsky, 2017: 149], but does not reveal the veil over how it can be done. This, in turn, raises a number of questions.

Is the theory of the demographic revolution capable of further development or is it to occupy an honorable place in the museum of the history of scientific thought? Are the modern concepts of «women’s revolution» [Esping-Andersen, Bilari, 2015], «gender revolution» [Goldscheider et al., 2015], «the gender equity dividend» [Anderson, Kohler, 2015] a continuation of that theory? Are the initial assumptions and the conceptual apparatus of the theory of the demographic revolution / transition adequate to the issues emerging today at the junctures of demographic, economic and political development? Isn’t it time to go beyond this theory and supplement or replace it with other approaches to researching these issues? An attempt to answer these questions is offered to the attention of a reader by the article

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## **Demographic fatalism and political practice**

The theory of demographic revolution in the version of Vishnevsky is based on three prerequisites: 1) there is a global demographic homeostasis; 2) the differences between countries that are at the same stage of demographic transition are not significant for the theory; 3) the study of non-demographic factors of demographic behavior can not make anything new in the theory. This version can hardly be regarded as a logical continuation of the “canonical” concepts of A. Landry and a group of American demographers (F. Notestein, C. Davis etc.), but rather, it is an independent system of views on the same process. The principal differences are, first, in the negative attitude of Vishnevsky to Notestein’s and other researchers’ attempts to explain the decline in the birth rate not by a decrease in mortality, but by a set of socioeconomic factors and,

secondly, in what Vishnevsky calls “demographic eschatology”- in his concept, it occupies a central place

Vishnevsky considers «the concept of the ultimate result, to which the demographic revolution leads» as demographic eschatology [Vishnevsky, 2017: 146]. Here he leaves somewhat unsaid: eschatology as a religious teaching includes perceptions not only of the «ultimate result», but also that the result is originally predetermined. In view of this, as well as trying to avoid intersections with theology, we will further talk not about demographic eschatology, but about demographic fatalism.

Demographic fatalism has been criticized by many scientists, their positions are well known, I will allow myself not to retell them all, especially as it was done by Vishnevsky himself [Vishnevsky, 2017: 146-149]. The aim of my further thesis is different - to show that unanimous rejection of demographic fatalism by the world of politics is by no means accidental. At the heart of this rejection is not the deficit of «enlightenment» or the foresight of politicians, but something deeper - the laws of the political world that do not accept the principle «it's better not to do anything than do nothing.» The rejection of demographic fatalism is due to the very nature of political activity, always aimed at changing the current situation, mobilizing the energy of those who are not satisfied with it. In the coming decades there will be more than enough of those unsatisfied with the state of affairs in the area of fertility and, even more so, in the area of migration.

In social sciences, there are numerous ways of argumentation. One of them, though not irrefutable, is analysis of biographies. Below, we will try to justify our view of the relationship between the theory of demographic revolution / transition and political practice, by analyzing the biographies of Adolf Landry (1874–1956), the creator of the theory of the demographic revolution, and Kingsley Davis (1908–1997), one of the founding fathers of the theory of demographic transition. Without claiming to have a detailed biography of these researchers, we will only try to establish how their activities as a politician (Landry), a political consultant (Davis), and a scientist (both of them) were correlated.

***Landry was not a demographic fatalist.*** The activities of any major scientist and politician inevitably cause contradictory, sometimes diametrically opposite assessments. Landry is no exception in this respect. My vision of his scientific and political activities differs significantly from what Vishnevsky suggests in his article.

Landry, was not, as Vishnevsky asserts [Vishnevsky, 2017: 147], an adept of “pessimistic eschatology.” The entire political biography of this French demographer says the opposite: he was opposed to any “demographic fatalism” — both pessimistic and optimistic ones.

Landry was not only a scientist, but (and perhaps most of all) a politician. The consequence of this, probably, was the preference given by him to explanatory schemes, though rather crude but simple in political use. The logic according

to which the birth rate is the result of certain factors, influencing which it can be increased, undoubtedly belonged to such. Nevertheless, Landry's political activities were precisely aimed at creating "possible new 'forms of social organization' that ensure the adaptation of society to new demographic realities". Vishnevsky calls for adaptation of this thesis [Vishnevsky, 2017: 147].

Many serious politicians, and Landry, a deputy of the French Parliament from Corsica and minister in several governments, was undoubtedly one of them, are throughout their life searching for a way out of a certain contradiction created by the very course of historical development. For Landry, this contradiction consisted in the fact that the rapid decline in the birth rate in France, as he understood very well, was the result of deep changes in French society, but at the same time carried a mortal threat to the geopolitical status of France as a great power. Landry saw the way out of this contradiction in the development of the system of benefits and privileges for families with children - in other words, in pro-natalist demographic policy. This measure, he believed, would help solve two interrelated tasks — ensuring domestic political stability and the closely related to it protection of France's foreign policy interests.

Most of Landry's life fell on the period of confrontation between France and Germany. Landry was born only a few years after the occupation of 1870-1871 by Prussian troops in much of France. He survived in the First World War and feared arrest during the Second. French pronatalism, one of the most vivid representatives of which was Landry, in many respects represented a reaction to the Damocles sword of the German aggression, constantly hanging over France. "Germany would not have attacked us in 1914, had the French been 10 million more," read one of the pro-natalists slogans, "400,000 abortions a year means depopulation, depopulation means war," — proclaimed the other [Thebaud, 1985: 282-283].

"The Demographic Revolution", the famous collection of works by Landry (1934), was published by far not at the beginning of his political career. The political activity of Landry reflects his views no less than scientific works. Landry's efforts largely contributed to the fact that since 1913 in France, laws were passed one by one to help families with children. Initially they provided support to families having many children and families of military officers and non-commissioned officers. Later, after 1917, to families of all civil servants. Discounts were established for travel in rail transport for families with three or more children. In 1932 the enterprises were obliged to make contributions to the fund for the payment of benefits to large families. Landry also had an important role in the development and adoption of the Family Code of France in 1939.

The French pro-natalism of the 1920s - 1930s should not be idealized. Among its supporters there were extremely rightist politicians who talked about the "yellow danger" hanging over the white race [Thebaud, 1985: 283]. P. Haury, one of the leaders of the pro-natalist movement, was a fan of the demographic

policy of Mussolini and Hitler, and was very close to the Vichy Government [Koo, 2014; Nord, 2010]. The political preferences of Landry were, however, quite different — his views gravitated toward Social-Democratic, and he treated the Vichy regime without the slightest of sympathy.

In July 1940 Landry was dismissed from the positions of Mayor of the Corsican city of Calvi and member of the Supreme Council on Population Issues, since he refused to vote for the transfer of full authority to Ph.Pétain, the leader of the puppet *État français* (Vichy regime) [Sauvy, 1956: 613]. Alfred Sauvy, the famous French demographer, later recalled that in 1943, Landry suddenly came to him. “Joyful and easy as a child,” he reported that his *Traité de Démographie* (Landry’s fundamental work) is already in the printing house. “Now, — Landry added, let them come to arrest!” [Sauvy, 1956: 615] On the website of the Corsican Committee of the National Association of Fighters and Friends of Resistance, a separate article is devoted to Landry and his “*discrèt*” sympathy for the Resistance.<sup>1</sup>

The French pronatalism was undoubtedly, based not only on rational calculations, but also patriotic emotions. The belief of pro-natalists that the demographic and family policies would save France from Nazi aggression and occupation was certainly naive and, as it quickly turned out, did not justify itself. However, Landry’s efforts were not in vain. After the defeat of Hitler’s Germany, France continued to develop the demographic and family policies, to the development of which Landry made such a significant contribution. This policy proved to be quite effective in future. Throughout the post-War period France has had higher fertility rate than the Federal Republic of Germany and is one of the leaders in the fertility rate in the developed world.

***Did Kingsley Davis believe in the practical potential of the theory of demographic transition?*** It is well known that Davis is one of the founding fathers of the theory of demographic transition. But did he believe in its practicality? A comparison of the theory and Davis’ practical recommendations makes us doubt this.

In Russian scientific and journalistic literature, the demographic transition is sometimes presented as a process in which the individual gains greater freedom of reproductive choice. Such an interpretation is one-sided. In many developing countries, the demographic transition was nothing more than the replacement of one non-freedom by another. Dependence on the traditional community was replaced by dependence on the state, requesting the family to reduce the birth rate. Analysis of Davis’ views shows that he abandoned liberal hopes for a worldwide Westernization quite quickly and became a supporter of non-liberal non-Western practices of birth control.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.resistance-corse.asso.fr/fr/mediatheque/biographies/landry-adolphe/> (date of reference 02.02.2018)

The American demographer used the metaphor of explosion as applied to population growth even before the pamphlet of Hugh Moore's "Population Bomb" [1954] and Paul Ehrlich's book [1968], which, with Moore's permission, was given the same name. Davis compared the growth of the world population with "long thin powder fuse that burns slowly and haltingly until it finally reaches the charge and then explodes" [Davis, 1945: 1]. At that time Davis was optimistic, although somewhat contradictory. On neighboring pages of one same article he managed to combine the criticism of "implicit racialism in most Anglo-American thinking" with the hopes that the Western civilization, spreading around the world, will have time to save the world before the Oriental one "sink" it to its level [Davis, 1945: 7,8].

In subsequent years, however, Davis connects his hopes for solving global demographic problems not so much with the universal Westernization of mankind as with the Asian civilization. In a 1958 article published in *Foreign Affairs*, a very influential foreign policy journal, it is no longer America that is an example for China, but, on the contrary, China for America. "If the Communist nations, — Davis writes, "are beginning to abandon the dogma that economic development is a panacea, independent of all else, it is time for free nations, and especially the United States in its foreign policy, to do the same." [Davis, 1958: 301].

A 1967 publication in *Science*, one of the most authoritative American scientific journals, represented further abandoning of the principles of liberalism. Seeing the dilemma of demographic policy in the contradictions between the interests of the family and society, Davis unequivocally preferred the latter. He believed that family planning "by stressing the right of parents to have the number of children they want...evades from basic question of population policy, which is how to give societies the number of children they need" [Davis, 1967: 738].

The recommendations made by Davis in 1975 in an article on urbanization in Asia testified to the eventual loss of his hopes that the solution of the demographic and economic problems of Asia is possible on the basis of a repetition of the path that the West had gone through in its time. As Asian cities, he wrote, are "inhabited by poorly educated and impoverished masses", "democracy, private enterprise and personal freedom seemingly produce chaos" [Davis, 1975: 83]. The only force able to control Asian metropolitan cities is, he believed, "a strong government that stand in contrast to the populace in skill as well as power" [Davis, 1975: 83].

Therefore, the basic idea of the theory of demographic transition, according to which, in order to reduce the birth rate, modernization and its components — industrialization, urbanization, emancipation of women, etc. are needed, was declined in favour of the interests of political expediency. Instead, another concept was put forward: under certain circumstances, administrative pressure

is quite capable of forcing families to give birth to fewer children, even where modernization has not yet begun or is just beginning to make its first steps.

### **Once again about the history, geography and practical use of a good theory**

The shortcomings of Vishnevsky's theory are, as it sometimes happens, a continuation of its merits. It is internally coherent and complete, but that is why it (like the Lev Gumilyov's famous theory of passionarity) as they say, has nothing to add to nor detract from. When added with the concept of "demographic eschatology", Vishnevsky's theoretical construction goes so far upward that it inevitably encroaches on the domain of metaphysics, and this excludes its confirmation or confutation on the basis of empirical data.

Historians and methodologists of science have long ago concluded that there are different types of theories. Vishnevsky's theory belongs to one of these types, namely, a type that deliberately allows neither sufficient empirical evidence nor a final empirical confutation. And, to be really accurate, it would be more correct to speak in this case not of a theory, but of a system of interconnected scientific and philosophical hypotheses.

To the assertions that one of the basic theses of the theory of the demographic transition — stabilization of the birth rate at the level of two children per one woman — is confuted by facts [Vallin, 2005], one can, of course, oppose that the process of the demographic transition is not yet complete and it is due to wait with conclusions [Vishnevskiy, 2012]. However, if the arguments are repeated many times, it, with each passing time, will more and more resemble the notorious dispute between adherents of "wide-egg-side" and "sharp-egg-side". References to authority (for example, to the works of L. Bertalanffy) and conclusions by analogy cannot be classified as empirical facts in support of the theory.

Demographers in their overwhelming majority are well-educated people, however, while practicing their chosen profession, they avoid addressing the philosophical issue of free will, which, like the "materialism-idealism" opposition, for centuries divided philosophers into quarreling camps. This issue, however, has a direct bearing on the subject matter in question. If history in general and demographic history in particular is predetermined, is there any sense in trying to influence the demographic development by political, economic and other methods? And, even assuming that it is predetermined, can there exist theorists, who know this predetermination for certain? Of course, it is possible to "solve" the issue of free will as practiced in Soviet social science: "correct" theorists and politicians (in the post-Soviet version — modernization champions) are able to accelerate the course of history, while "wrong" ones (counterrevolutionaries, "counter-modernizers" and etc.) — to slow it down, but not bring it to a halt. The issue, however, does not have a unique solution, and with this approach,

the answer to the question of whose sails the wind of history blows on is inevitably determined by the political preferences of the respondent.

Along with demographic fatalism, in my opinion, the practical significance of the theoretical design developed by Vishnevsky is reduced by two more prerequisites inherent in its basement. One of them is a fundamental refusal to consider “non-demographic” factors of demographic behavior. Another is the rejection of the theory of civilizational and / or national cultural differences.

According to Vishnevsky, only the mode of demographic reproduction — traditional or modernized that has been established in the country is important. The remaining differences, he believes, are nothing more than a statistical variation inherent in any processes and phenomena — Vishnevsky cites as evidence the distribution of people by stature, the variation of which almost does not differ from the variation in the total number of births in cohorts [Vishnevsky, 2015: 127].

In my opinion, such an interpretation of the inter-country variations, is unreasonable and unproductive in practical terms for many reasons, one of which, again, is incompatibility with the laws of the political world. The analogy with the rates of economic development or the level of unemployment explains in this case much more than comparison with the distribution of people by stature. A politician explaining to voters that his country’s economy is going through a recession, and unemployment is much higher than that of neighbors simply because of the random play of chances, is certainly doomed to failure. Voters expect politicians to promise to improve the economic situation and the recipes of how this can be done, but not fatalistic arguments about the irresistible action of the law of large numbers or the inevitability of unemployment under capitalism.

It has already been shown above that the practical actions of Landry and Davis were determined primarily by political logic. It was also the case in Russia. It is worth recalling the results of the content analysis of political and demographic statements held at the very beginning of this century [Klupt, 2003]. While the experts demonstrated different points of view, the scatter of opinions of politicians about how to relate to the current level of fertility in Russia was small - the communists, liberals and centrists unanimously declared the need to undertake efforts to raise it. In this they were unanimous and, of course, not by chance, with the opinion of voters who, according to public opinion polls, expected the state to take measures to increase the birth rate; soon such measures followed.

Let us, however, return to the consideration of processes on a world scale. The demographic transition is coming to an end in most of the countries, but in tropical Africa its level remains very high. It is quite natural to address to a theorist a question from a politician or simply “anybody off the street” — how soon and to what level will the birth rate in the most populous country of the continent — Nigeria — fall? The answer offered by Vishnevsky is roughly the following: theory

cannot go down to such trifles, because it is the key to another castle, the main thing is that sooner or later there will be a transition from the traditional to the modern level of reproduction [Vishnevsky, 2005]. It reminds me of a famous joke about the dispute between Thomas Aquinas and Albert the Great about whether a mole possesses vision. Hearing this dispute, the gardener offered to bring a mole to the pillars of the medieval philosophy. The proposal was rejected with indignation — the dispute was about mole and vision in general, and not about some particular mole!

The reasons for interest in cross-country comparisons are related not only to internal, but also to foreign policy reasons. Western media, for example, are constantly exaggerating the thesis of “dying Russia” and the difficulties that China faces because of a decline in the birth rate. Russian media do not remain in debt, paying significant attention to the problems of the European Union, caused by the influx of refugees and other categories of immigrants. The demand for theories that do not consider it necessary to drop to discussing such “trifles” is certainly limited.

Interest in inter-country comparison of fertility, however, is not always due to the struggle on the propaganda field. In fact, in all developed countries, the search for a harmonious combination of parental and professional duties is now underway. Its natural consequence is the cross-country comparison of legal and informal institutions that determine roles in the family and their impact on fertility.

At the end of the previous decade, Western demographers [Mirskilä et al, 2009] concluded that the reverse dependence of fertility on the level of development not only lost its universal character, but also changed to direct in the most developed countries. In the ensuing discussion, Vishnevsky wrote that “the only publication that raises many questions cannot serve as a basis for revising all views on fertility trends, proved in tens and hundreds of articles and books of recent decades” [Vishnevsky, 2012: 82].

The number of publications devoted to the topics discussed in [Mirskilä et al, 2009], meanwhile, continued to grow [Anderson, Kohler, 2015; Esping-Andersen, Bilari, 2015; Goldscheider et al, 2015]. In [Esping-Andersen, Bilari, 2015], the concept of «female» or, in terms of [Goldscheider et al, 2015], a «gender» revolution is being developed. At its first stage, the authors of the concept believe, the growth of professional employment of women weakens the family, while at the second stage more complete inclusion of men in family matters strengthens it. In [Anderson, Kohler, 2015] the same idea fits into the theory of the demographic transition: according to the authors, a more even distribution of roles between the spouses marks the emergence of new stages of demographic transition, at which the positive influence of the «dividend» of gender equality on the desired number of children in the family and the level of fertility begins to manifest.

In fact, these works essentially develop the theory of demographic revolution, but in a different direction from Vishnevsky's concept. First, unlike Vishnevsky's concept, the period following the end of demographic transition is also divided into phases. Secondly, the homeostatic mechanism is not global, but local both in terms of the involved processes and territorial scope of the character. According to [Esping-Andersen, Bilari, 2015: 381,389], at the age of the most frequent entry into marriage in a number of developed countries there is a deficit of women, this in turn promotes gender equality and greater participation of men in family concerns, reduces the complexity of combining women of professional and family responsibilities and thereby returns fertility to a higher level. Thirdly, Vishnevsky speaks of the random nature of the variation in the birth rate in countries that have completed the demographic transition, whereas in the concept of these Western authors, the differences between the "leaders" of the gender revolution and the "laggards" are, on the contrary, non-random and derived from the history of these countries.

Not only the diagnosis, but also the prognosis is different. Vishnevsky believes that in most post-industrial countries «the final birth rate of real generations is decreasing, there are no signs of serious alternatives» [Vishnevsky, 2012: 84]. The authors of these articles are more optimistic and, although with many reservations, they assume that as gender equality spreads increasingly, fertility will grow [Anderson, Kohler, 2015: 398; Esping-Andersen, Bilari, 2015: 9].

### Interdisciplinary perspective

Although the concept of Vishnevsky differs significantly from the concepts of the women's and gender revolutions, they are united by a common feature - they are all limited by the borders set by the theory of demographic transition and its inherent method of theorizing. Below, I will try to outline, at least in the most general terms, the possibilities of theorizing beyond this framework. The devotion of the community of demographers to the theory of demographic revolution / transition is largely due to their desire to preserve the identity of their scientific discipline that has developed around these theories as a conceptual core. Therefore, I will right away make a reservation that my subsequent reasoning goes beyond the limits of demography in the narrow sense of the term and cover a wider area, usually called population studies.

*Another type of theorizing.* Development in any of the areas of social life consists of processes of different time duration. In view of this, conceptualization needs not only processes of a large temporal extent, but also short-term processes, and theorizing can be directed not only to the search for "laws of history", but also to the description of more short-term and variational laws of- mechanisms [Tilly, Goodin, 2006: 15]. O.Malinova, for example, writes about the mechanism (I would say a description of the mechanism), "it is less than a theory, but more

than a description, because it can serve as a model for explaining other cases” [Malinova, 2013: 14]. In my opinion, theorizing in the field of population research does not need to be aimed at finding “laws of history”; the subject of such a search may be mechanisms — less stable than “laws” cause-effect chains connecting variables, for a relatively short period of time.

An example of such a mechanism is common for a number of countries that experienced a transformational shock in the 1990s, a decline in the birth rate caused by economic difficulties and changes in the system of vital priorities of the population, especially young people. Another example is the sharp decline in the birth rate in Spain and Portugal coincided with the fall of dictatorial regimes there and the integration into the European Union. This article also describes mechanisms with positive and negative feedback linking the growth of the number of immigrant minorities and the electoral process in the host countries.

The investigation of the mechanisms provides an approach to building a demographic policy somewhat different from the reliance on the theory of demographic revolution. The theory of demographic revolution / transition speaks of processes of great temporal extent and, in its non-fatalistic versions, it has to build programs designed for long terms. The study of the mechanisms corresponds, rather with a view to the formation of a strategy as an evolving process of self-education [Mintzberg et al., 2000]. Ch.Lindblom wrote in this connection that «the development of politics is, in essence, an endless process of successive steps, where one good bite is preferred to a series of bites» [Lindblom, 1968: 25, quote by: Mintzberg et al., 2000: 151]. With this approach, the construction of a demographic policy consists of:

- analysis of the mechanisms that determine demographic processes in a given country in a given period of time;
- the choice of mechanisms, the effect of which can affect the demographic processes in a given direction;
- adoption of measures that can strengthen the operation of these mechanisms;
- analysis of their effectiveness and adoption of corrective actions on its basis.

***Countries and their institutional structure.*** Inter-country differences play a fundamental role, in contrast to what Vishnevsky believes. An effective demographic policy is a policy that, on the one hand, fits well into the existing structure of institutions, and on the other, is capable of facilitating their change in a given direction. Carrying out such a policy assumes a fairly clear understanding of the institutional structure prevailing in a given country and, above all, the relationship between society, the state and the individual. This, in turn, excludes a unified approach to the construction of a demographic policy — something that “works” in one country cannot work in another. Conducting a demographic policy, similar to what was conducted in the PRC,

turned impossible, for example, in India and especially in countries of tropical Africa.

*Attractors, not phases.* In population studies in countries that have completed the demographic transition, the use of the term “attractor”, borrowed from synergetics, seems more productive than the division of post-transition demographic development into phases, proposed, for example, in [Anderson, Kohler, 2015: 15]. Attractors of modern demographic processes are created not by their “internal logic”, but rather by an external world-system that is divided into a core, semi-periphery and periphery, and external shocks, such as the Second World War and the disintegration of the Soviet military-political bloc. Currently in Europe, one can talk about four attractors of demographic development.<sup>1</sup>

1. France and Sweden are the core countries, which are characterized by: generous state family policy; infrastructure, greatly facilitating the combination of parental and professional responsibilities; a birth rate close to the level of simple replacement of generations; a constant influx of migrants due to a high standard of living.
2. Germany — a core country in which, for historical reasons, family policy has long been focused on the model of a breadwinner father and housewife mother, which led to a weak development of the system of preschool institutions and low birth rates; the migration inflow due to a high standard of living is numerous.
3. Spain is a country of semi-periphery in which, for historical reasons, family policy has also been focused for a long time on the model of the breadwinner father and housewife mother, but at a lower standard of living than in Germany and being more prone to ups and downs, which caused the instability of migration processes.
4. Ukraine, Moldova — the countries of the periphery, unable to conduct a sufficiently generous demographic policy because of lack of financial resources, as a result of which the birth rate is low; and net migration is sharply negative.

The demographic development of individual countries is a movement in this system with four centers of attraction. The speed of movement is determined by the economic situation, the force of inertia of previously formed institutions and the random component associated with difficult to predict historical events, such as, for instance, Brexit. The methodological advantage of this approach is the possibility of highlighting the specific problems facing countries in the demographic area. For example, the Federal Republic of Germany’s drift towards the “French-Swedish” attractor is complicated not by the lack of economic resources, but by the specifics of informal (stable ideas about the role of women

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<sup>1</sup> Attractor in our understanding is very close to the concept of “ideal type” by M. Weber, with the difference, however, that the latter does not necessarily possess the force of attraction.

in the family, which were formed in the 1950s-1960s) and political institutions. On the contrary, the movement of Russia towards the same attractor is complicated at the present time, first of all, by the lack of economic resources. Note also that the number of attractors is not constant — they can appear and disappear.

In view of the presence of four centers of attraction, the character of the motion is difficult to predict, which, in fact, determines the appropriateness of using the term “attractor”, emphasizing, unlike the term “phase”, the probabilistic nature of the process. The successive transition of all European countries from one phase of post-transition demographic development to another, stemming from Anderson and Kohler’s theory [Anderson, Kohler, 2015], is, in our view, only one of the possible ones and far from the most probable scenario of the sequence of events.

***Building systems that include demographic, social, economic and political variables.*** One can agree with Vishnevsky and other researchers that in a number of cases it is reasonable to consider demographic development as a factor rather than a result of social, economic and political changes. However, a simple “change of places” i.e. attribution to the demographic development of the status of an independent variable instead of a dependent one, is hardly a methodological breakthrough. In reality, demographic, economic social and political development is a system that is permeated with contours of direct and reverse links. When studying them, it is reasonable to model such systems, not giving any permanent status to demographic development, be it a dependent or independent variable, for this status itself is a variable.

As everyone knows, everything in the world is connected with everything and the choice of what to include in the system that is subject to scientific analysis remains at the researcher’s judgment. In Vishnevsky’s concept, this system includes fertility, mortality and migration. I would like to show the perspectives of another approach - designing systems that include demographic, social, economic and political variables. In order not to be too tentative, I use the relevant topics as an illustration of the application of such an approach - the election of US President D.Trump and Brexit. A brief and probably not comprehensive description of the elements of the system looks like this.

1. Demographic variables: migration, ethnic, ethno-social and ethno-territorial structure of the population.
2. Political variables: the positions of parties and groups within them on migration policy issues; the party and electoral system; the results of voting by various groups of the population on the issue closely related to migration and migration policy
3. Politico-demographic variables: migration policy and the ability or inability of the authorities to ensure its practical implementation.
4. Economic variables: levels of employment and unemployment in ethnic and territorial terms.

5. Sociocultural variables: the territorial distribution of conservatively and liberally-minded groups of the population, and in particular of the population groups, satisfied and dissatisfied with the current state of affairs in the field of immigration.
6. Media variables. The size and structure of the audience of liberal and conservative media; the compliance of various groups of the electorate with propaganda of “ideologically alien” media or “deafness” to their arguments.

Migration in such a system acts first as an input, and then as an output variable, which in both cases depends on pre-election population structure, the outcome of elections, the following political struggle and economic situation in the country.

Ideally, studies of systems like the one outlined above should be based on theories explaining the relationship between the named variables or their genesis. In practice, however, there are simply no such theories in some cases, in others they are descriptive and only in the third can they be used to describe the mechanisms that determine the functioning of the system. Without setting out here the goal of summarizing or a review of such theories, let us note, as an illustration, only some of the explanations that follow from them.

Political demography has been focused on the influence of the population and its age structure on geopolitics and internal political processes for many decades. The drawback of most of the work on this topic is that they are implicitly based on the principle of “all else being equal,” trying to formulate certain statements that are true in all cases. Meanwhile, political and demographic processes are closely incorporated in a country and regional context, beyond which their consideration often becomes unjustifiably abstract. From this, in particular, the need to build political and demographic systems and analyze the mechanisms of their functioning in political contexts of various types follows.

Theories of public choice and political markets consider the electoral programs of politicians as goods, and voters as its buyers. Note that the demographic and migration policies can be considered as such electoral goods. The demand for a tightening of migration policy inevitably gives rise to a proposal on the part of political parties and individual politicians - there are numerous examples in recent years.

An analysis of the results of recent voting in the United States, France and Britain in the territorial and social sections [Klupt, 2017; 2018] indicate that the demand for tightening migration policy is posed by quite certain groups of the population — in particular, skilled workers, residents of provincial cities, people over 40, residents of depressed areas with high unemployment. In my opinion, this circumstance is of fundamental importance, since it shows that the demand for stricter migration policy is a consequence of the structural features inherent in the most economically developed countries. Explanations of this circumstance

can be sought with the help of theories of a dual and, more broadly, segmented labor market.

The “ground level” of this market is characterized by a lack of guarantees for permanent employment, “shadow” wages and hard work. This unprivileged segment of the labor market plays a dual role in the life of the most developed countries. On the one hand, it attracts recent labor migrants from developing countries, on the other hand it is a reservoir of discontent for migrants with long-standing experience who have stuck at this level (for example, ethnic Germans who moved to the FRG in the 1990s and now vote for the “Alternative for Germany”), and even more so the old-timers, over whom the threat of dismissal constantly hangs.

A necessary element of the analysis of the system under consideration is the scenario approach. Before the vote, the most likely scenarios for the almost unanimous opinion of the expert community were the victory of H. Clinton and supporters of the continuation of the UK membership in the EU. At the heart of the scenarios, in both cases, although this was not stated openly, lay the experts’ views about the uncontested nature of the course of history in a direction very close to what Fukuyama and his adherents had predicted. The mechanism for implementing this scenario was as follows: the growing number of immigrant minorities is weakening the supporters of tightening of the immigration policy year by year; the power of the liberal media is sufficient to represent those who advocate tightening immigration policies in a very unfavorable light. This scenario assumed the dominance of the mechanism with positive feedback — growth of the number of immigrant minorities increases the number of the “pro-immigration” electorate, which leads to the election victory of supporters of a soft immigration policy, further growth in the number of immigrant minorities, etc.

In practice, however, another scenario came true. The mechanism with negative feedback turned out to be dominant: large-scale immigration entailed the political mobilization of its opponents and the split of the ruling elite. Economically and socially disadvantaged or simply conservative groups of the population turned out to be deaf to the arguments of the liberal media and, especially, of the scientific community; a feature of the American electoral system (the winner in the state receives everything) played the role of the last drop in the sea.

Despite the electoral victories of supporters of tightening of the immigration policy, the issue of the impact of this victory on real immigration flows remained open. In the United States, it seems, there is a situation of political stalemate, in which one of the parties blocks the actions of another in the field of migration policy, and real immigration processes continue to live according to their laws, largely dictated by the economic conjuncture. Radical changes on the scale of immigration are not yet visible in the UK.

In my opinion, the above-described events are a confirmation of a well-known thesis — the development of complex systems is multi-alternative, so that the prediction of which way this development will follow is always of a probabilistic nature. This circumstance is one of the main reasons for my skepticism regarding intellectual designs claiming that they know the finale of demographic history. If the “collective intelligence” of experts, tuned to a common ideological wave, makes mistakes at such short distances, can we expect correct forecasts for much longer ones?

### Concluding remarks

Coexistence of various, at times relatively peaceful but sometimes conflicting, systems of views on the same processes is a phenomenon common to science. Equally common is the question of whether these views are mutually exclusive or complementary. As applied to the problematics of this article, the answer to this question is complex, since in some cases it is a question of conceptualizations fully capable of supplementing each other, in others — of incompatible interpretations.

Consideration of demographic development as a process, whose internal logic is determined only by the interaction of mortality, fertility and migration, is only one of the possible approaches to its investigation. Its potential is inevitably limited — too many important determinants and the consequences of demographic processes remain behind the scenes.

Attempts to squeeze the dynamics of mortality and fertility in Russia in the 1990s in the Procrustean bed of this approach led to at least a controversial, and in my opinion directly erroneous conclusions, that the unprecedented growth in the number of deaths in peacetime was not associated with the hardest economic situation of those years, and the increase in the share of extra-marital births in their total number was due exclusively to processes typical of the whole “civilized world”. The emergence of French pronatalism, the heir of which is the modern family policy of France, and the late consequence — a higher birth rate than most European countries, is impossible to understand forgetting about the mortal threat that the German aggression for France had long represented. Any explanation of the evolution of the Chinese family in the last half-century calls for resorting to the uneven economic development of the various regions of the PRC and the enormous internal migration caused by this circumstance, dividing families into those who stayed at their former place of residence (most often old people, wives) and miners (most often sons and husbands) working in economically developed regions and financially supporting their relatives left behind but not abandoned. The list of similar examples is easy to continue.

Speaking about all this, I sometimes think that I am knocking at an open door. The publicistic works of the Russian supporters of the theory of demographic revolution leave no doubt that they themselves perfectly understand: births,

deaths and migration are associated not only with each other, but also with many other processes in the life of society. However, returning to the world of theory, these researchers again and again insist that in order to explain the course of demographic development it is sufficient to analyze the interrelationships within the “mortality-fertility-migration” triangle. This is their right, of course. All I have left to do, concluding the article, is to repeat that going beyond the given triangle contributes to a better understanding of how demographic development is related to the rest of the areas of social life.

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