

Population Policy in Russia's Northern Regions: Features and Priorities

L. A. Popova

*Institute of Social, Economic, and Energy Problems of the North, Komi Science Center, Ural Branch,
Russian Academy of Sciences*

e-mail: popova@iespn.komisc.ru

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Abstract—This article justifies the formal nature of the smaller demographic crisis in Russia's North. The author selected the most acute demographic problems (the death rate among young people and the large proportion of deaths from external causes and diseases of exogenous etiology; low birth rate in traditional Russian northern areas and in areas with a completed demographic transition among indigenous ethnic groups; increased degree of disruption of family life; relationship of the incomplete demographic transition in indigenous peoples with the adverse quality characteristics of fertility and high infant mortality), defining the goals and objectives of the population policy in the northern regions.

Keywords: northern regions, natural population decline, age structure, demographic transition, life expectancy, infant mortality, quantitative and qualitative aspects of fertility, marital and family relations, population policy

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In the last decade of the 20th century, the demographic problems, which had been accumulating in Russia for a long time, reached a qualitatively new level. As a result of the intersection of counter adverse trends in fertility and mortality from 1992, the natural increase in the population became negative. The maximum value (949000 people) of the natural decline was reached in 2000. After that, it began to decrease. Since 2000 the level of fertility has increased in Russia, and since 2004 there has been a decline in mortality. Nevertheless, in 2008 the natural decline in the population exceeded one-third of a million (363500) people. In general, during 1992–2008, its value was more than 12.6 million people.

However, the migration gain (it is estimated at almost 6 million people for these years), mainly due to migrants from neighboring countries, almost by half compensated for the total loss of the Russian population. At the same time, in most northern regions, migration, on the contrary, each year brings a very significant contribution to the reduction in the population. In addition, both processes of natural population movement in northern territories cannot be assessed unambiguously, although, at first glance, the situation is relatively prosperous, which is reflected directly in the nature and dynamics of the natural growth rate (Table 1). In some northern regions, the natural population decline began somewhat later than in country as a whole. For example, in the Komi Republic, it has become characteristic since 1993. As this takes place,

in northern regions, where there is a depopulation trend, the magnitude of the total attrition rate, as a rule, is significantly less than on average for Russia. The only exceptions are the Republic of Karelia and Arkhangelsk oblast.

In some northern regions of the federation, only some territories were eventually covered by a natural decline. For example, in the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia), depopulation was firstly noted in 1993 in Aldan ulus and in 1995 in Ust'-Mayskii, and by 2006 it had covered 8 out of the 35 uluses [1]. Finally, in some northern regions of the country, throughout the whole period, when depopulation has been taking place in the country, a stable natural increase has been preserved. In the Northwestern Federal District, it is the Nenets Autonomous Okrug; in the Urals, the Khanty—Mansiysk and Yamalo—Nenets autonomous okrugs; in Siberia, the Republic of Tyva*; in the Far Eastern Federal District, a stable natural increase is typical for the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia) and Chukotka Autonomous Okrug; and since 2007, a similar trend has been observed in Kamchatka krai. In the Komi Republic, there is also a territory, in which during the reporting period a natural increase was registered—, i.e.,—is the Usinsk urban district.

* Unfortunately, there is no possibility to analyze the situation in the Taimyr (Dolgan-Nenets) and Evenk autonomous okrugs, as demographic information on Krasnoyarsk krai is only given for the whole subject of the Russian Federation.

Table 1. Dynamics of the total natural population growth rate in Russia's northern regions in 2000–2008, per 1000 population

Region	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
Russian Federation	-6.6	-6.6	-6.5	-6.2	-5.6	-5.9	-4.8	-3.3	-2.6
<i>European North:</i>									
Republic of Karelia	-7.8	-8.0	-8.6	-9.7	-8.1	-8.2	-6.8	-5.3	-5.0
Komi Republic	-3.5	-3.5	-4.0	-4.3	-3.7	-4.1	-2.7	-0.8	-0.5
Arkhangelsk oblast	-7.5	-6.6	-7.1	-7.1	-6.5	-6.3	-4.9	-2.8	-2.6
Including									
Nenets Autonomous Okrug	0.3	0.9	1.6	1.8	1.8	2.3	1.1	3.0	3.7
Murmansk oblast	-0.3	-3.1	-3.4	-4.0	-3.2	-3.6	-2.9	-1.4	-1.3
<i>Asian North:</i>									
Khanty-Mansiysk Autonomous Okrug	4.5	5.2	6.5	6.8	7.2	6.4	6.9	7.9	8.6
Yamalo-Nenets Autonomous Okrug	6.1	6.7	7.3	8.0	8.3	7.7	7.6	8.8	9.1
Republic of Tyva	2.3	2.7	3.8	5.4	6.7	5.4	7.0	12.5	13.9
Republic of Sakha (Yakutia)	4.0	3.7	4.4	4.8	5.3	4.1	4.7	6.4	6.1
Kamchatka krai	-1.7	-2.3	-0.7	-1.4	-1.1	-1.6	-0.3	0.1	0.3
Magadan oblast	-2.1	-2.1	-1.8	-1.4	-1.9	-2.6	-2.5	-2.3	-2.9
Sakhalin oblast	-4.2	-5.2	-4.8	-5.5	-4.8	-6.0	-3.8	-2.4	-2.2
Chukotka Autonomous Okrug	1.9	0.3	0.7	2.3	3.2	3.9	3.7	4.1	2.6

The later development of depopulation processes in Russia's North and their less severity (maintaining a positive natural population growth rate in a number of

northern territories) is due to several reasons, which are mostly formal.

Table 2. Age structure of the population in Russia's northern territories in 2008, % of the total population

Region	Below working age	Of working age	Beyond working age
Russian Federation	15.9	62.9	21.2
Republic of Karelia	15.4	64.1	20.5
Komi Republic	17.3	67.0	15.7
Arkhangelsk oblast	16.3	63.7	20.0
Including			
Nenets Autonomous Okrug	22.2	64.6	13.2
Murmansk oblast	15.6	68.9	16.1
Khanty-Mansiysk Autonomous Okrug	19.7	70.6	9.7
Yamalo-Nenets Autonomous Okrug	20.9	71.2	7.9
Republic of Tyva	28.9	61.7	9.4
Republic of Sakha (Yakutia)	23.2	64.8	12.0
Kamchatka krai	16.5	67.8	15.7
Magadan oblast	16.8	67.9	15.3
Sakhalin oblast	16.5	65.6	17.9
Chukotka Autonomous Okrug	21.9	68.7	9.4

The first reason is the younger age structure of the population, which is typical of the North (Table 2), owing to not only migration processes, but also to the relatively high birth rate among indigenous peoples of the North. All things being equal, such a population age structure in northern regions is determined by the higher total fertility and lower overall mortality rates. Therefore, the higher total mortality rate in the Republic of Karelia and Arkhangelsk oblast is also characterized by a young population age structure, which indicates a significant problem in these regions. At this, in 2003 Karelia was also characterized by a low total fertility rate; that is, the significant extent of the natural decline is caused by both mortality and fertility.

The second reason for the positive natural growth rate in the North is that most of the northern indigenous ethnic groups continue to have elevated fertility levels, which is connected with the incompleteness of the demographic transition: almost all regions with a positive natural growth rate are autonomies with a notable percentage of indigenous peoples of the North.

The third reason is the "mortality export" from the North to southern regions. To the greatest extent, it is typical of areas with resource-oriented economies. It is this circumstance that is primarily responsible for the higher life expectancy of the population of the Khanty-Mansiysk and Yamalo-Nenets autonomous okrugs (Table 3), as well as the Usinsk area of the Komi

Table 3. Life expectancy at birth in Russia's northern territories in 2000 and 2007–2008

Region	2000			2007			2008		
	Entire population	Male	Female	Entire population	Male	Female	Entire population	Male	Female
Russian Federation	65.34	59.03	72.26	67.51	61.39	73.90	67.88	61.83	74.16
Republic of Karelia	62.88	56.42	70.24	65.12	58.70	71.97	65.48	59.12	72.23
Komi Republic	63.53	57.75	70.05	65.83	59.77	72.25	66.20	60.15	72.61
Arkhangelsk oblast	62.77	56.31	70.57	66.27	59.79	73.33	66.94	60.43	73.98
Including									
Nenets Autonomous Okrug	60.57	54.02	68.33	61.98	54.69	70.64	63.12	56.06	71.86
Murmansk oblast	64.51	58.54	70.96	66.72	60.82	72.57	66.70	60.72	72.66
Khanty-Mansiysk Autonomous Okrug	65.87	59.86	72.55	69.35	63.81	75.20	69.91	64.54	75.37
Yamalo-Nenets Autonomous Okrug	66.71	61.64	72.28	70.22	66.62	74.62	70.27	66.05	74.67
Republic of Tyva	55.16	49.68	61.45	59.16	53.61	64.93	60.48	55.14	66.02
Republic of Sakha (Yakutia)	63.66	57.90	70.27	66.17	60.62	72.20	65.78	60.21	71.86
Kamchatka krai	63.30	58.07	69.71	66.15	60.92	71.99	66.36	61.19	72.17
Magadan oblast	62.02	55.73	69.97	63.57	57.91	70.01	63.70	58.06	70.14
Sakhalin oblast	63.34	57.69	69.82	64.48	58.44	71.16	64.39	57.87	71.81
Chukotka Autonomous Okrug	60.17	54.91	67.07	58.72	54.10	65.51	59.65	56.32	64.21

Republic, in comparison with the average national level.

An especially significant excess has been typical of these areas in recent years, and it is mainly determined by the markedly increased difference in the proportion of the male population.

The sharp drop in the ruble exchange rate after the default of 1998 led to a significant expansion in the opportunities for exporting industries and, accordingly, increased the attractiveness of regions rich in raw materials for young healthy men. As that, now people mainly come to these regions for short periods of time: for the watch period or for a period necessary to earn a certain amount of money, for example, sufficient to buy a house or an apartment or to open a small business in another region. That is, in mining areas, a constant rotation of working-age population is taking place, during which its "recovery" always happens, because, as a rule, people in good health come to the north. Besides, among older people, who have worked in northern factories for a long time, many also leave the north for more favorable climatic conditions both in the framework of resettlement programs for northerners and independently. Consequently, the level of their remaining (after the departure from the North) life expectancy, which by definition is substantially less than that of younger men, does not affect the value of the total index of the northern region.

Thus, the relatively high life expectancy of the population in the Khanty–Mansiysk and Yamalo–Nenets autonomous okrugs is provided with a low mortality rate among working-age men from endogenous causes because of their high rotation rate and the low contribution of older age groups to the population mortality rate.

For the rest of the northern territories, lower life expectancy values of the population are typical compared to Russia as a whole. At the same time, in the years of the socioeconomic and demographic crisis, the following pattern was revealed: during periods when the situation with mortality worsened, the gap from the all-Russian level of life expectancy significantly increased; during periods of improvement, reduced to the precrisis values. Therefore, let us draw our attention to the weak points of the mortality rate, which during the development of population policy measures in northern regions should be primarily considered.

An analysis of the dynamics of the mortality level and structure for the past two decades has shown that growth periods are accompanied by a significant deteriorating situation not only in individual regions, which include most of the northern territories of Russia, but also among certain population groups and certain causes of mortality.

In other words, certain factors of mortality in fact determine the major part of the reduction in the life expectancy of the Russian population and, in general, its lower value:

- with regard to age, it is the most active working age, for which in specified periods the most significant growth rates of age-specific rates are typical;
- from the gender perspective, it is men for whom the difference in life expectancy compared to the corresponding indicator for women in periods of growth in the mortality rate reaches 13 years and more;
- with regard to the types of settlements, rural areas have been characterized by a significant reduction in the life expectancy rate of the population during the present mortality crisis;
- in the regional context, not only territories with adverse climatic conditions, but also the most depressed regions in terms of socioeconomic development, significantly increase the gap in life expectancy from the average level during periods of growth in mortality rates;
- by causes of death, i.e., unnatural causes (accidents, poisoning, injuries, homicide, and suicide), as well as diseases of exogenous etiology (infectious and parasitic diseases, as well as respiratory and digestive diseases, outbreaks of which can increase mortality many times), that is, in fact, all external causes.

An improvement in the situation with mortality (which was observed in the country in 1995–1998 and has been taking place since 2004) is usually accompanied by a significant reduction in mortality rates of working-age population, a reduction in the difference in life expectancy for men and women (in the early 2000s, it happened with some delay), a decrease in regional differentiation in the level of mortality, and a significant reduction in the mortality rate from external causes.

Thus, the indicated mortality segments are characterized by great flexibility; that is, they are not only weak points that should be given maximum attention, but are also the most sensitive to changes in the external situation and, obviously, are the most manageable.

All this fully applies to the mortality rate in the northern regions: on the one hand, it is one of the weak points and one of the dynamic segments of mortality in Russian, and, on the other hand, the same patterns can be traced in its dynamics.

Accordingly, the maximum attention in the development of population policy for the northern territories should be paid to the reduction of male mortality at working age due to external causes, largely induced by social diseases (alcoholism, drug addiction, and tuberculosis). This is especially true for rural areas, because even in periods of improvements in the situation with mortality, stable convergence in life expectancy for the urban and rural populations is not observed. There is no doubt that in the 1990s–2000s external conditions, largely determining the modern

high mortality rate, were stably worse in rural areas than in urban ones. This means that the problem of increasing the life expectancy of the rural population is the most acute.

An additional point to emphasize is that about half of all deaths are related to cardiovascular diseases. Therefore, despite the rapid growth in mortality rates from accidents, which among the causes of mortality steadily occupy the second place in the structure of mortality in the north, and diseases of exogenous etiology, with no significant reduction in mortality from cardiovascular diseases on the basis of strengthening public health and developing the health system, it is impossible to achieve a significant and steady increase in life expectancy.

The fertility dynamics in the northern regions of Russia corresponds to the all-Russian tendencies. Here, there has been observed an increase in indicators from the beginning of 2000. At that, at first glance, the situation with the birth rate in the North seems to be better than in the whole country. The value of the total fertility rate in almost all northern territories, except Murmansk oblast and the Republic of Karelia, exceeds the average level (Table 4). Although, among these areas, there are those where the overall rate in some years fell to the national average and even lower (for example, in recent years, it has been typical of Magadan and Kamchatka).

However, the relatively high values of the total fertility rate in the North are naturally due to the younger age structure of the population with a significant proportion of the working-age population, which is the reproductive activity period. In other words, the low values of this coefficient in Murmansk oblast and the Republic of Karelia provide strong evidence of the more problematic situation in these regions than in the whole country. In addition, the high fertility rates among indigenous ethnic groups positively influence the level of total population fertility in some northern areas.

The level of the total fertility rate in terms of the features of the age structure more accurately reflects the situation. At the same time, the degree of completeness of the demographic transition of certain ethnic groups in the respective regions has an affected on its value. In Russia's traditional northern regions and in territories without a significant percentage of representatives of indigenous minorities of the north, as well as places where an indigenous ethnic group made its demographic transition at the same time as Russians (Murmansk oblast; Arkhangelsk oblast, except the Nenets Autonomous Okrug; Kamchatka krai; Magadan, and Sakhalin oblasts; and the Republic of Karelia), the total fertility rate, as a rule, is lower than the national average.

Where the demographic transition of indigenous ethnic groups has been recently completed (Komi Republic), it is about the average level (with fluctuations in some years in either direction). In regions,

Table 4. Dynamics of the total fertility rate of the population in Russia's northern territories in 2000–2008, per 1000 population

Region	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
<i>Russian Federation</i>	8.7	9.0	9.7	10.2	10.4	10.2	10.4	11.3	12.1
Republic of Karelia	8.7	9.4	10.1	10.2	10.4	9.9	10.0	10.6	11.1
Komi Republic	9.4	10.0	10.9	11.3	11.5	11.1	11.1	11.9	12.2
Arkhangelsk oblast	8.8	9.6	10.4	10.8	11.0	10.7	10.9	11.9	12.0
Including									
Nenets Autonomous Okrug	13.2	14.6	14.7	15.9	14.2	14.5	14.0	15.6	16.4
Murmansk oblast	8.6	9.1	9.8	9.9	10.2	9.8	9.8	10.3	10.7
Khanty-Mansiysk Autonomous Okrug	11.4	12.3	13.4	13.7	13.9	13.5	13.7	14.6	15.3
Yamalo-Nenets Autonomous Okrug	11.7	12.8	13.1	14.0	14.0	13.6	13.2	14.2	14.5
Tyva Republic	15.9	16.3	18.8	20.5	20.0	19.4	19.3	24.2	25.2
Republic of Sakha (Yakutia)	13.7	13.9	14.6	15.0	15.5	14.3	14.4	16.1	16.2
Kamchatka krai	9.3	9.5	10.8	10.8	11.1	11.0	11.0	11.3	11.7
Magadan oblast	9.7	10.1	10.8	11.2	11.5	11.0	10.7	10.9	10.9
Sakhalin oblast	9.2	9.5	10.2	10.9	11.4	11.4	11.2	11.8	12.3
Chukotka Autonomous Okrug	11.5	12.7	12.0	13.0	15.4	15.7	15.3	15.9	15.1

where ethnic groups have not completed their demographic transition yet, they make up a quite significant majority of the population; total fertility is above the national average in the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia); Tyva Republic; and the Nenets, Khanty–Mansiysk, Yamalo–Nenets, and Chukotka autonomous okrugs. However, here too the total fertility rate of the urban population is already significantly below the replacement level: elevated levels of fertility are mainly maintained at the expense of the rural indigenous population, characterized by an extended mode of reproduction.

In this way, the task of raising the level of fertility in the northern regions is also very important. However, all the more important among the priorities of the population policy in Russia's North seems to be the improvement of the qualitative characteristics of births and the strengthening of marital and family relations. Among other factors, the increased rates of infant mortality in most northern regions also indicate this (Table 5). An especially significant excess above Russia's average is observed in territories with a noticeable percentage of ethnic groups with an incomplete demographic transition. In other words, regions with relatively high levels of the total fertility rate are also characterized by significant infant mortality. Even in very prosperous, not only in terms of fertility, but also in terms of the population's life expectancy, the Yamal-Nenets Autonomous Okrug, the infant mortality rate is significantly higher than the national aver-

age. Positive exceptions are in the Republic of Karelia, Komi Republic, Murmansk oblast, the Khanty–Mansiysk Autonomous Okrug and Arkhangelsk oblast, except for the Nenets Autonomous Okrug.

Since in the present structure of infant mortality the main role belongs to causes, such as perinatal death and internal malformations, the level of the infant mortality rate depends primarily on the state of health services, especially the obstetric care system, as well as the level of maternal health, including reproductive health. Therefore, the task of strengthening the health of the female population is very relevant in terms of reducing infant mortality. In addition, measures promoting reproductive health can make a very significant contribution to the birth rate, strengthening the measures for increasing population fertility.

The second adverse point in the quality characteristics of fertility that also makes a certain contribution to the increased rates of infant mortality is the extremely high rates of illegitimate births in almost all regions of the North, indicating problems in the field of family relations. Indicators of illegitimate births in northern regions, especially in areas with a notable percentage of indigenous ethnic groups, have traditionally been higher than the national average.

However, in the last quarter century, which has been characterized in Russia by a significant increase in the share of illegitimate children in the structure of births, the growth rate of this indicator in the North

Table 5. Dynamics of the infant mortality rate in Russia's northern territories in 2000–2008, per 1000 live births

Region	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
<i>Russian Federation</i>	15.3	14.6	13.3	12.4	11.6	11.0	10.2	9.4	8.5
Republic of Karelia	14.4	12.9	10.0	8.1	9.7	9.6	7.6	7.2	5.8
Komi Republic	13.0	9.4	10.9	9.4	8.6	8.7	7.0	7.6	6.6
Arkhangelsk oblast	14.1	15.9	12.6	12.4	10.1	12.6	10.2	10.7	8.9
Including									
Nenets Autonomous Okrug	24.4	20.1	18.2	29.3	9.9	16.6	15.2	17.0	7.4
Murmansk oblast	12.5	14.7	12.3	8.9	11.0	11.2	10.3	9.5	9.3
Khanty-Mansiysk Autonomous Okrug	10.2	9.3	8.8	7.8	6.9	7.3	7.5	5.6	5.2
Yamalo-Nenets Autonomous Okrug	14.4	15.6	14.0	12.7	13.4	11.2	13.0	13.3	11.4
Tyva Republic	30.0	28.0	27.8	27.6	20.4	19.3	15.1	16.3	13.2
Republic of Sakha (Yakutia)	17.6	17.5	15.2	13.2	13.5	10.6	10.6	10.4	9.1
Kamchatka krai	16.0	15.3	14.1	14.3	13.0	10.3	12.2	8.7	7.5
Magadan oblast	15.1	11.4	15.1	11.9	11.8	12.0	14.2	14.2	10.0
Sakhalin oblast	15.1	17.1	14.7	12.5	13.8	14.4	12.9	8.9	8.1
Chukotka Autonomous Okrug	23.4	42.1	32.2	28.0	20.9	17.6	23.2	17.6	9.2

has been significantly higher. In recent years, the percentage of illegitimate births in Russia amounts to about 30%; in northern regions, about 40% and often more. In rural areas, especially in places of compact residence of indigenous peoples, births outside of registered marriage exceed half of all births. In the Republic of Tyva, the level of illegitimate births is more than 60%. Therewith, about half of nonmarital births are registered at the request of the mother, indicating the absence of not only actual or common law marriage, but even stable relationships between the parents, which in fact mean that children will be brought up either in incomplete families or families with stepfathers.

In general, marriage and family relations in the North can be assessed as adverse. Owing to the younger age structure with a high percentage of working-age people, which is simultaneously the age of marital activity, for northern regions, as a rule, a high rate of nuptiality is typical. However, in some regions, such as the Komi Republic, the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia), and the Nenets Autonomous Okrug, the level of nuptiality is not much higher than the national average and often happens to be lower. In the Republic of Karelia and Arkhangelsk oblast, the overall marriage rate is in general consistently below the national average rate, and in the Republic of Tyva its value is below the average level quite significantly [2]. On the one hand, it is because, in contrast to the rest of the northern territories, for the young age structure of the Tyva population a relatively small (less than the national average) proportion of working-age population is typical (see Table 2). Furthermore, the low

overall coefficient of nuptiality is correlated here with the highest illegitimate birth rate (in 2007 in Tyva 61.1% of births took place outside of registered marriage, compared with 28.0% for the country as a whole [3]) and a low overall divorce rate. It is obvious that, in this region, the features of the marital and family behavior of the indigenous population are manifested here very much, which have a negative impact on the level of official regulation of marital relations.

Apart from the Republic of Tyva, where the overall divorce rate is below the national average by more than 2 times, almost all northern regions are characterized by elevated divorce levels, which is natural for a younger age structure of the population. A relatively prosperous situation only seems to be in Arkhangelsk oblast as a whole, Nenets Autonomous Okrug, and the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia): here the total divorce rate, despite the younger age structure of the population, is as a rule below the national level. Magadan oblast, Chukotka, and the Khanty–Mansiysk Autonomous Okrug differ with particularly high rates of divorce [2].

Thus, strengthening the family institution, as well as reviving and increasing the spiritual and moral traditions of the family, is a very important task for northern regions. Indeed, in many respects, namely, the crisis of family values currently observed in Russia and the prevalence of interests outside the family, result in a low level of reproductive attitudes of the population, a low degree of their implementation, and the fact that childbirth is becoming more and more “outside family activity.” In northern regions, these adverse aspects

are compounded by more substantial disorganization of family life compared to other areas both because of the significant turnover of the population (the nonindigenous and, particularly, impermanent population differs with a lower level of social control and self-control, so that various kinds of deviations, including in the marital and family area, are more likely among migrants) and because of some peculiarities of the matrimonial behavior of indigenous peoples (whether those are residual effects of polygamy, as in the case of Tuvians, or traditional loyalty to the illegitimate birth rate, as in Komi, or disorganization of marital and family relations on the basis of long-term marginalization of some indigenous peoples of the North).

The "Concept of the Demographic Policy of the Russian Federation until 2025" declared aims of population policy, such as population stabilization by 2015 at the level of 142–143 million people and creation conditions for its growth up to 145 million people by 2025, as well as improvement in the quality of life and increase in the life expectancy of the population up to 70 years by 2015 and up to 75 years by 2025 [4].

Thus, the analysis of the existing demographic situation has shown that all northern territories of Russia face problems associated with population mortality, especially premature male mortality from external causes (particularly in rural areas). The relatively high level of population life expectancy in the Khanty–Mansiysk and Yamalo–Nenets autonomous okrugs is caused by the formal "mortality export" to more southern regions. It is only high enough relative to the rates of other northern territories of Russia and the national average. Compared to industrialized countries, the life expectancy rates of men in the Khanty–Mansiysk and Yamalo–Nenets (in 2008, 64.5 and 66.1 years, respectively) are lower by more than 10–13 years. For example, in Sweden, male life expectancy at birth is 78.8 years (2006); in Australia and Japan, 78.5 (2005); in Israel, 78.3 years (2005). The life expectancy for women in the Khanty–Mansiysk and Yamalo–Nenets autonomous okrugs (in 2008, 75.4 and 74.7 years, respectively) is lower by 8–11 years than in countries with the maximum value of this index. For example, in Japan, the life expectancy for women is 85.5 years (2005); in France, 84.4 (2006); in Australia, 83.3 (2005); in Sweden and Finland, 83.1 years (2006) [2].

In addition, even a very superficial analysis of demographic indicators available for a researcher can identify and formulate a number of acute demographic problems, which in some northern regions are extremely relevant:

(1) In most northern territories of Russia (Tyva Republic; the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia); Nenets, Yamalo–Nenets, and Chukotka autonomous okrugs; Kamchatka krai; and Magadan and Sakhalin oblasts), a significant reduction in infant mortality is needed.

(2) For the Republic of Karelia and Murmansk and Arkhangelsk oblasts, it is highly relevant to raise the

issues regarding the birth rate. In recent years, the quantitative aspects of the fertility rate have also become acute in Kamchatka and Magadan oblasts.

(3) In the Republic of Karelia, the Komi Republic, the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia), and Arkhangelsk oblast, the issues associated with the intensification of the marital process and raising the share of births in registered marriages require special attention.

(4) The extremely high level of the illegitimate birth rate, which correlates with the high infant mortality rate, typical of the Republic of Tyva, Nenets and Chukotka autonomous okrugs, Kamchatka krai, and Magadan and Sakhalin oblasts shows the relevance of solving the problem of increasing fertility in these areas.

(5) For Magadan oblast, and Chukotka and Khanty–Mansiysk autonomous okrugs, the problems of increasing the stability of the family are actual; for the Republic of Tyva, the strengthening of the spiritual and moral traditions of the family and the official regulation of the marital and family processes.

In our opinion, for the regions in the Russian North, the aim of population policies should be defined as the creation of conditions for sustainable and qualitative development of the population, ensuring its stable natural increase on the basis of converging the life expectancy in these territories with the national level, and increasing and improving the quality structure of fertility. Undeniably, achieving the goals of demographic policy is largely dependent on the successful resolution of a wide range of issues regarding socioeconomic development, including sustainable economic growth and improving the population's well-being, poverty reduction and decreasing income differentiation, intensive development of human capital and creation of an effective social infrastructure (health, education, and social protection), market for affordable housing, flexible labor market, and improving the sanitary and epidemiological situation. However, it is essential to clearly define the problems of demographic policy itself on the basis of what issues proved to be the most urgent at the moment for a particular territory.

Due to the characteristics of the contemporary demographic development of the Russian North, the main tasks of the demographic policy of northern regions should be the following:

- mortality rate reduction, especially among men of working age from cardiovascular diseases and external causes;

- overcoming the gap between the life expectancy in Russia's northern territories and the national level;

- convergence of life expectancy indicators for the urban and rural populations;

- maintaining and strengthening population health, increasing the duration of active life, creation of conditions and incentives for the formation of a healthy lifestyle, a significant reduction in the inci-

dence of social significance and representing danger to others diseases;

– improving the life quality of patients suffering from chronic illnesses and disabilities;

– maintaining and strengthening children's and adolescents' health;

– maintaining and strengthening women's health, including reproductive health, reducing maternal and infant mortality;

– increasing the level of fertility through the birth of the second and subsequent children in families;

– improving the qualitative structure of fertility, strengthening the family institution, revival and strengthening of the spiritual and moral traditions of the family.

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SPELL: 1. accumulating, 2. perinatal, 3. nonmarital